

Tablet PCs

Go mobile with these innovative designs

Tablet PCs are mobile computers that run Windows XP Tablet PC Edition, a version of XP that features built-in handwriting recognition. The devices come in two general form factors. The pure slate design looks like an overgrown Pocket PC and doesn't have a keyboard (although all Tablet PCs can accept external USB keyboards). The convertible units are basically notebook PCs with a swiveling display that you can fold down to cover the keyboard. When the keyboard is covered or removed, you control the Tablet PC by using an electronic stylus that communicates with the display's built-in active digitizer.

The Tablet PCs in this Buyer's Guide expand on the basic form factors. Some of the listed products are as light as 2.2 pounds; others offer displays as large as 14.1" and processor speeds as fast as 1.6GHz. Tablet PC prices, however, remain somewhat higher than conventional notebook PC prices.

Both pure slate and convertible designs have advantages and disadvantages. Pure slate units are usually thinner and lighter than their convertible brethren, but propping up a pure slate Tablet PC in your lap or on an airline tray table isn't particularly convenient. The convertible form factor makes you carry the keyboard with you even when you don't need it but is easier to use on your lap or in a small space.

HP, Intermec, Motion Computing, NEC Solutions America, and Xplore Technologies make pure slate Tablet PCs; Acer makes convertibles. Fujitsu Computer Systems, Gateway, and ViewSonic make both pure slate and convertible designs, whereas HP and Motion Computing offer add-on keyboards that transform their pure slate Tablet PCs to convertibles.

All the Tablet PC vendors use Intel Pentium M processors (even HP, which used Transmeta's Crusoe processor in last year's Compaq Tablet PC TC1000). Most vendors also use Intel Centrino mobile technology. Intel claims that the combination of Centrino and Pentium M technologies provides a significant increase in battery life, although you'll probably still need a spare battery if you expect to use a Tablet PC on a coast-to-coast flight. Most Tablet PCs are optimized for weight rather than long battery life.

If you need a display that's viewable in the sunlight, you have a choice with this year's designs.



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Fujitsu's Stylistic ST5000 Tablet PC and Intermec's CT60 Rugged Tablet PC are available with reflective displays for outdoor use. The CT60 also features a one-piece vacuum-sealed aluminum housing that's designed to the MIL-STD-810F military standard. It competes with Xplore's iX104RD Renegade Dual Mode Tablet PC, a rugged unit that's designed and tested to survive a 4' drop onto a concrete floor. The iX104RD is also the first Tablet PC to accept both pen and touch input.

The OS that all these units run, XP Tablet PC, hasn't changed significantly in the past year (although it's gone through rounds of patches and hotfixes). XP Tablet PC includes all the XP Professional Edition features, plus handwriting-recognition and electronic-ink support. One Tablet PC-specific application—*Windows Journal*, which allows on-screen note taking—is built in. XP Tablet PC's pop-up input panel lets you use the stylus to input printed characters or cursive writing to text fields in any Windows application. You can also bring up an on-screen keyboard and use the stylus to tap letters one at a time.

Some XP Pro features are enhanced in XP Tablet PC. For instance, speech recognition is integrated into the same input panel that handwriting recognition uses. The speech-recognition feature works best with a headset and boom microphone.

Microsoft plans a major XP Tablet PC upgrade sometime this summer, when the company releases XP Service Pack 2 (SP2). The upgrade will offer handwriting-input improvements, along with XP SP2's security enhancements (including a built-in firewall that's on by default). I received a review copy of the enhanced Tablet PC OS as this article went to press. In an upcoming issue of *Windows & .NET Magazine*, I'll review the updated OS and tell you about its new features.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This Buyer's Guide summarizes vendor-submitted information. To find out about future Buyer's Guide topics or to learn how to include your product in an upcoming Buyer's Guide, go to <http://www.winnetmag.com/buyersguide>.

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Contact Information	Product Name	Price	Description
Acer 408-432-6200 800-733-2237 http://www.acer.com	TravelMate C110	\$1499	A 3.2 pound unit with Pentium M processor, XP Tablet PC OS, Intel PRO/Wireless 802.11b network connection, and 10.4" XGA (1024 × 768) Thin Film Transistor (TFT) display; uses Intel 855 chipset family with Intel Extreme Graphics 2; includes 512MB of Double Data Rate (DDR) SDRAM and a V.92 modem; supports hard disks as large as 40GB, an optional CD-RW/DVD combination drive, 802.11b/g or 802.11 wireless LAN (WLAN), and 10/100 Ethernet LAN
	TravelMate C300	\$1899	Includes a 1.5GHz Pentium M processor, XP Tablet PC, 512MB of RAM, a 40GB hard disk, a CD-RW/DVD combination optical drive, a 14.1" TFT display, Extreme Graphics 2, 802.11b WLAN, Gigabit LAN, and a V.92 modem
AVERATEC 714-429-8999 http://www.averatec.com	AVERATEC Convertible Notebook C3500 Series	Starts at \$1300	A convertible full-featured combination notebook and Tablet PC; includes CD-RW/DVD combination drive, AMD PowerNow! and QuantiSpeed technology, 802.11g wireless connectivity, 12.1" XGA color TFT display, removable hard disk, and stereo speakers; provides as much as 4 hours of battery life
Fujitsu Computer Systems 800-831-3183 http://www.us.fujitsu.com	LifeBook T3000 Tablet PC	Starts at \$1799	Includes 1.4GHz Pentium M processor, bright 12.1" XGA display with active digitizer, innovative one-touch application buttons, integrated WLAN (802.11b or 802.11b/g), modem, and Ethernet bridge battery; features dual functionality for notebook and tablet use
	Stylistic ST5000 Tablet PC	Starts at \$2099	Features a bright 12.1" XGA indoor display, active digitizer with a multifunction pen, 1.0GHz Pentium M processor, thin and light pure slate form factor, innovative one-touch application buttons, integrated PRO/Wireless 2100 (802.11b), and Microsoft Office OneNote 2003
Gateway 605-232-2000 800-221-9616 http://www.gateway.com	M275XL	\$2100	Features a 1.6GHz Pentium M processor, 512MB of DDR SDRAM (two 256MB modules), 60GB Ultra ATA hard disk, 4-in-1 memory card reader, 24x/10x/24x CD-RW and 8x DVD combination optical drive, 14.1" XGA TFT active matrix display with rotating hinge, Extreme Graphics 2, and 802.11b wireless networking card with Centrino mobile technology
	Tablet PC Deluxe	\$3058	Includes an Ultra Low Voltage (ULV) 1.0GHz Pentium M processor, 256MB of DDR SDRAM, 40GB hard disk, external 8x/8x/24x CD-RW and 8x DVD combination drive, FlexDock docking station, 12.1" XGA TFT display, integrated Extreme Graphics 2, and 802.11b wireless networking card
HP 281-370-0670 800-752-0900 http://www.hp.com	HP Compaq Tablet PC TC1100	\$2099	Offers a mobile and versatile form factor; features a ULV 1.0GHz Pentium M processor or a ULV 800MHz Celeron processor, 256MB DDR 266MHz (Celeron) or 333MHz (Pentium M) SDRAM standard memory, a 10.4" TFT XGA display with sparkle-free glass, two integrated speakers, two USB 2.0 ports, and an HP Tablet PC Docking Station
	HP Rugged Tablet PC tc3000	Starts at \$3500	Features a ULV 933MHz Pentium III processor, 256MB of SDRAM, 8.4" TFT SVGA outdoor transmissive display with digitizer control-panel touchscreen, shock-mounted 40GB rugged hard disk, integrated wireless connectivity for as many as three radio frequency (RF) modems, and CompactFlash (CF) slot; exceeds the MIL-STD-810F military standard and meets the Ingress Protection IP-54 rating for dust and water penetration

Contact Information	Product Name	Price	Description
Intermec 425-348-2726 800-934-3163 http://www.intermec.com	CT60 Rugged Tablet PC	\$4250	Features a rugged, vacuum-sealed aluminum housing that's nearly indestructible and perfect for transportation, distribution, and logistics applications; runs XP Tablet PC; includes 256MB of RAM, 20GB hard disk, and dual hot-swappable batteries; docks for a wide range of applications
Motion Computing 512-637-1100 866-682-2538 http://www.motioncomputing.com	M1400 Tablet PC	\$1999	Features an ultramobile pure slate form factor powered by Centrino mobile technology; serves a variety of vertical markets, including health care, field-force automation, government, and education; includes 256MB to 2GB of 333 DDR memory, 12.1" display with a wide viewing angle, and 20GB, 40GB, or 60GB hard disk
NEC Solutions America 916-463-7000 800-632-4525 http://www.necsam.com	Versa LitePad	\$1635	Offers a thin and light Tablet PC form factor at 2.2 pounds; includes 10.4" XGA TFT color display with digitizer, 20GB hard disk, 256MB of RAM, ULV 933MHz Pentium III processor, external USB CD-ROM drive, 10/100 Ethernet and integrated WLAN connectivity, XP Tablet PC, and one CF card slot; ships with several business-productivity applications
Toshiba 949-583-3000 800-867-4422 http://www.toshiba.com	Portégé M200 Tablet PC	\$2399	Features a 1.5GHz Pentium M processor, a 12.1" Super XGA+ (SXGA+) display, PRO/Wireless connectivity (802.11g), 512MB of RAM, 256MB to 2GB of DDR SDRAM, a 12.1" polysilicon TFT display, two USB 2.0 ports, innovative docking functionality, and a convertible form factor; provides new computing and communication capabilities to businesses and consumers
ViewSonic 909-444-8888 800-888-8583 http://www.viewsonic.com	Tablet PC V1100	\$1599	Features integrated WAN, LAN, and Wi-Fi, the 802.11b wireless standard; weighs just 3.4 pounds; includes 866MHz Pentium III processor, 20GB hard disk, 256MB of RAM, and high-resolution 10.4" XGA color display; an optional dock adds one-touch access to common USB peripherals, LANs, the integrated CD-ROM drive, and the AC power adapter
	Tablet PC V1250	\$1799	Offers a convertible form factor that weighs just 3.9 pounds; features 12.1" LCD display, 1.0GHz Pentium M processor, 256MB of RAM, 30GB hard disk, and integrated 802.11b wireless capabilities; includes five easy-launch keys, built-in scroll button, and full-size stylus with eraser; features multilevel BIOS password security and BIOS-level signature authentication
Xplore Technologies 512-336-7797 888-449-7567 http://www.xploretch.com	iX104RD Renegade Dual Mode Tablet PC	\$2995	Features 30 unique rugged characteristics, ULV Pentium III -M processor, 4X Intel AGP graphics accelerator, 10.4" XGA TFT display, as much as 48MB of video memory, amplified stereo speakers, and long-life Lithium battery pack; includes internal radio bays and performance-matched embedded antennas; supports WLAN, WAN, and Global Positioning System (GPS); features a dual mode that provides both active and resistive finger-touch input