

**APPLE TABLET**

**PRICE**  
£333 exc VAT

**SUPPLIER**  
www.apple.com/uk/education

**SPECIFICATIONS**  
1GHz Apple A5 CPU • 9.7in multitouch 1,024 x 768 screen • Apple A5 graphics • 512MB RAM • 16GB SSD storage • 802.11bgn WLAN • digital compass • 0.3mp/0.7mp cameras • 3.5mm headphone socket • Apple iOS 4.3 • 1yr RTB warranty • 186 x 8.8 x 241mm (WDH) • 601g

**PERFORMANCE**  
★★★★★  
**FEATURES & DESIGN**  
★★★★★  
**VALUE FOR MONEY**  
★★★★★  
**OVERALL**  
★★★★★

# Apple iPad 2

It's thinner, lighter and more powerful than the first iPad, with better battery life too – only the cameras let it down

The new iPad is even smaller and lighter than before: it weighs just 601g and measures a mere 186 x 8.8 x 241mm. That's some feat of engineering. Apple has built magnets into the left edge, allowing the new optional cover (£29 exc VAT) to snap satisfyingly into place: it's divided into four segments and not only protects the screen, but can be used as a stand while typing or watching movies.

There are more changes under the hood, with a dual-core CPU, a new GPU and a doubling of the original iPad's 256MB RAM. In real-world use it's immediately obvious the iPad 2 is faster and more responsive than its predecessor. Apps launch more quickly, websites appear in the blink of an eye and the App Store feels more responsive.

Apple claims the new GPU is nine times faster than the first iPad, although only certain apps will use the extra



power for advanced effects such as more detailed textures. The iPad 2's stamina easily surpasses that of its predecessor – the first iPad lasted 13hrs 44mins in our video playback test; the iPad 2 managed 16hrs 49mins.

The other major new enhancement is the addition of two cameras. The front one has a 640 x 480 resolution and is

serviceable for apps such as Skype, but the 960 x 720 stills/1,280 x 720 video unit on the rear is disappointing. It's responsive, allowing you to shoot shot after shot, but the images are noisy.

Two new apps are also worthy of mention. iMovie makes it easy to edit video shot with the onboard cameras and is a bargain at £2.99. GarageBand is even better, making

eight-track music creation embarrassingly easy. There's a huge array of instruments to play with and what Apple calls "Smart Instruments" to help non-musical students hit

the right notes at the right times.

There's nothing to touch the iPad 2 as a piece of hardware, and it will be many moons before any other tablet can compete with Apple's ecosystem of more than 65,000 iPad-specific apps – a decent selection of which are suited to education. Even the price is sensible. The only downside is the lack of compatibility with existing platforms: no USB or SD card slot, no video output unless you buy the AV adapter (£29), and no support for Flash.

**GOOGLE ANDROID TABLET**

**PRICE**  
£295 exc VAT

**SUPPLIER**  
www.avantisworld.com

**SPECIFICATIONS**  
1GHz Nvidia Tegra 250 CPU • 10.1in multitouch 1,024 x 600 screen • 512MB RAM • 16GB storage • microSD slot • 2 x USB ports • 1 x miniUSB port • docking port • 802.11bg WLAN • 1.3mp front camera • Bluetooth 2.1 • 3.5mm headphone socket • Android 2.2 • 1yr RTB warranty • 267 x 173 x 14.3mm (WDH) • xxxg.

**PERFORMANCE**  
★★★★★  
**FEATURES & DESIGN**  
★★★★★  
**VALUE FOR MONEY**  
★★★★★  
**OVERALL**  
★★★★★

# Avantis LearnPad LP10

The LearnPad offers full integration with a school's existing resources and ICT infrastructure – a great iPad alternative

The LearnPad appears to be a "standard" tablet, with a 10.1in multitouch screen and 1,024 x 600 resolution, and it's unlikely to wow students in the same way as the iPad 2 with its basic and substantially bulkier design. But it's fast and features a number of items some schools will find essential.

The most important of these is the ability to offer Wi-Fi proxy server support for authenticated and non-authenticated proxies, enabling schools to access online Flash-based services such as Espresso Education – a facility currently lacking in other Android tablets. The LearnPad's eight-hour battery life also ensures it will provide service throughout the school day (we managed nine hours on one occasion).



The LearnPad supports mounting Windows network shares and can map these to its SD card. This means viewing and editing network data, such as documents, is very smooth. Apps such

as QuickOffice integrate well with Google Docs and other online cloud file services, including Dropbox.

The LearnPad comes with a small range of preinstalled digital content that pupils can access directly via SafeStart, a controlled interface that allows children to access only approved applications and websites. Setting up "approved" software is straightforward: from the unlocked home screen check the application required, then select the subject category where you would like it to appear. Approving new sites is just as simple.

A folio protective case (£25 exc VAT) and secure desk mount (£20) offer degrees of physical security, the former being an essential item as it doubles as a stand. For £45 you can add a docking station, which adds a physical Ethernet port and HDMI output.

The Avantis LearnPad offers schools a versatile tablet with excellent connectivity and integration. Apps that exploit the device to its full potential are limited at present but this situation must surely change in time. It's a great alternative to the iPad and proved more usable than the Windows 7 tablets too.