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BlackBerry PlayBook launch date, price and specs revealed

RIM to release BlackBerry PlayBook in US and Canada on 19 April, starting at \$499; some features put it ahead of the iPad



📷 BlackBerry PlayBook: the US launch date is 19 April. Photograph: Robyn Beck/AFP/Getty Images

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RIM is to release its **BlackBerry** PlayBook tablet in the US and Canada on Tuesday 19 April.

The BlackBerry **PlayBook** with Wi-Fi will come in three models, featuring 16GB, 32GB or 64GB of storage at \$499, \$599 and \$699 respectively, and go on sale in Best Buy stores and Best Buy Mobile stores in the US, as well as Best Buy and Future Shop stores in Canada.

And the UK? RIM tells us that it will be launched internationally in "Q2" (April to June), but that neither pricing nor distribution channels have

been announced. The software for the machines now out in the field in certain hands is still "pre-final release", we understand.

Would-be customers in the US and Canada can place orders from today. "Previews of the BlackBerry PlayBook have generated tremendous excitement and we know that customers are eager to get their hands on one," said RIM's regional managing director for North America, Craig McLennan.

The pricing for the PlayBook puts it exactly level with Apple's iPad 2, which launched in the US on 11 March and will start selling internationally on Friday.

RIM has released a set of specifications for the PlayBook:

- 7" 1024x600 WSVGA capacitive LCD touch screen

- 0.9 lbs (425g) and 5.1" x 7.6" x 0.4" (130mm x 194mm x 10mm)

- 1 GHz dual-core processor

- BlackBerry Tablet OS with support for symmetric multiprocessing

- MP3, AAC and WMA audio playback

- Support for high resolution video playback (H.264, MPEG4, WMV)

- 1080p HDMI output

- Dual 1080p HD cameras for video conferencing and video capture (3MP front and 5MP rear)

- 1 GB RAM memory

- Up to 64 GB internal storage (16, 32 and 64 GB models)

- GPS, Orientation Sensor (Accelerometer), 6-Axis Motion Sensor (Gyroscope), Digital Compass (Magnetometer)

- Stereo speakers and stereo microphones

- Wi-Fi (802.11 a/b/g/n) connectivity

- Bluetooth 2.1+EDR support

Many of those features give it parity with the iPad 2, and in some cases put it slightly ahead. The key difference is in the screen size, which at 7" gives it slightly less than half the total area of the 9.7" iPad. The iPad is heavier

at 601g (1.33 pounds) and of course larger (9.5" x 7.31") though it is apparently thinner at 0.34in.

RIM has not, however, announced an expected battery life.

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