

Product name: Sony Xperia Tablet S / SGPT121US/S

Price: *Est. \$400 and up

Pros and Cons

Pros

- Multiple account creation
- Full SD card slot for storage expansion
- Universal remote control feature
- Splash-proof design

Cons

- Losable removable multiport plug
- Sluggish sleep mode wake up

Bottom Line

The Sony Xperia Tablet S is a solid notebook with great ergonomic design and good visual display and sound. It also provides some impressive features including multitasking mini-apps, guest account creation, an SD card expansion slot, and customizable universal remotes.

However, if you're just looking for the basics, there are comparably priced tablets that offer identical or better specs out there.

Breaking it Down

Performance

Fast and responsive -- until it goes to sleep. The Sony Xperia Tablet S is a premium device that sports the latest NVidia Tegra 3 quad core CPU making it great for game play. Boot up time is quick and Sony has fixed the Wifi disconnecting issue whenever the S sleeps. Even though that issue is resolved, the tablet seems to be a sluggish waker which can be frustrating to users who might find rebooting easier than waiting. All versions offer Wifi and Bluetooth, except in the UK where a 3G (16GB tablet only) version is available. The latest Android Ice Cream Sandwich is onboard with an upgrade promise to Jelly Bean hopefully in the near future.

There has been some disagreement on the battery usage period, but overall, reviewers have been pleased with the time before the tablet needs to recharge.

The sharp and clear display makes reading easy on the eyes with no jaggy text. The front camera is more than adequate for webcam use and the rear 8 megapixel camera shoots decent 1080p video. According to Joseph Volpe from Engadget, "... the tab managed to mute most environmental noises without dampening the overall sound."

Features

Novel ideas with potential and missteps. The IR Blaster is a universal remote that has buttons and controls for all major AV gear types and brands and has a macros that can be set up to do multiple things with one touch. However, control does not extend to game consoles. Used with the Watch Now TV guide app (that doesn't ship with the tablet), a user can change the channel on the TV to a chosen show with a tap. The user can also post comments to social media directly from the app. The Guest Mode option allows creation of multiple accounts with access permissions to apps and data. This is especially good for parents who want to keep what junior sees in check.

The tablet handles SD and USB mass storage devices. Although specs state there is only support for SD cards up to 32GB, comments under reviews have reported usage with much larger storage cards by formatting the cards to FAT32.

If the 27 pre-installed apps (which include weather, video, music, e-reader, and others) are too much, all but Sony's custom apps can be uninstalled. Users may be selective because of the plethora of similar 3rd party apps. Be aware, new PS3 games are supported, but Amazon instant is not.

Small Apps is a great widget feature that appears at the top of any app that's being used allowing for quick multitasking such as note taking or web searching.

Ease of Use

Grip-easy. The fold-back magazine design makes the Xperia Tablet S standout from its competitors and provides an ergonomic advantage they don't have. The texture and solid feel makes the tablet easy to hold and the light weight minimizes wrist strain better than any other tablet. The aluminum back also gives the appearance of quality and durability. One user even put the tablet through the paces with his infant daughter. After months of banging, the S is still going strong.

Value

Extra features mean extra cost. The biggest complaint most reviewers and users had with the Xperia Tablet S was the price. For budget-conscious users not in favor of the innovative offerings, the Google Nexus 7 (*Est. \$250) and the Amazon Kindle Fire (*Est. \$200) are better tablet options that give similar performance and better screen resolution.

Sources:

1. TheVerge.com

<http://www.theverge.com/2012/9/24/3333106/sony-xperia-tablet-s-review>

Sony Xperia Tablet S review: After trying something different, Sony tries something better

David Pierce

September 24, 2012

Review Credibility: Excellent

Impressed with the battery life, the potential the design and the universal remote feature had, and lauding the Guest Mode as a feature that should be standard on all Android devices, David Pierce overall

liked the tablet, but could do without the Sony ecosystem as Amazon and other 3rd parties already provided the same (or better) options.

2. Engadget.com

<http://www.engadget.com/2012/09/24/sony-xperia-tablet-s-review/>

Sony Xperia Tablet S review: Sony's second-gen Android slate has a slimmer design, faster guts

Joseph Volpe

September 24, 2012

Joseph Volpe gave the tablet high marks for its ergonomic design, but had issues with software stumbles during real-world use. The most notable was the sluggish-ness of the tablet while trying to wake up from sleep mode.

3. CNET

http://reviews.cnet.com/tablets/sony-xperia-tablet-s/4505-3126_7-35426708.html

Sony Xperia Tablet S review

CNET Editors

September 17, 2012

Review Credibility: Excellent

The great design, storage expansion, and universal remote alternatives couldn't win over CNet editors when the funky wifi and steep price knocked the S tablet out of the running against its competitors.

4. Mobiletechreview.com

<http://www.mobiletechreview.com/tablets/Sony-Xperia-Tablet-S.htm>

Sony Xperia Tablet S

Lisa Gade

September 14, 2012

Review Credibility: Excellent

Lisa Gade addressed the same issues as other reviewers, the most prominent being the wifi disconnecting during sleep problem. There are updates in the comments about the firmware upgrade that fixes this as well as a recommendation for an app on Google play called "Advanced Wifi Lock" which would solve the issue.

5. Techradar.com

<http://www.techradar.com/us/reviews/pc-mac/tablets/sony-xperia-tablet-s-1093685/review>

Sony Xperia Tablet S review: Thinner, lighter and splash proof

James Rogerson

December 18, 2012

Review Credibility: Excellent

As with other reviewers, James Rogerson was impressed with at least one of the novel features Sony has come up with. In this case, the mini-apps which he wishes other tablets would also have.

6. Expertreviews.co.uk

<http://www.expertreviews.co.uk/laptops/1296445/sony-xperia-tablet-s>

Sony Xperia Tablet S review

Tom Morgan

December 23, 2012

Review Credibility: Excellent

Tom Morgan's verdict was that it was Sony's best Android tablet yet, especially with the splash-proof design and family-friendly guest mode, but the price puts it at a disadvantage compared to the significantly better screen for the same money Google Nexus 10.

7. Phonearena.com

Sony Xperia Tablet S review

Daniel P.

October 9, 2012

Review Credibility: Excellent

Like Tech Radar, Daniel P. really appreciated the Small Apps dock and he goes into a little more detail than other reviewers about the Sony Entertainment Network's Sociallife app. It aggregates FB, Twitter, and news feeds and arranges them according to user preferences. However, another reviewer reported that this app is prone to crashing, but luckily doesn't hinder the tablet running other apps while Sociallife restarts.

8. Amazon.com

http://www.amazon.com/Sony-Xperia-9-4-Inch-Tablet-SGPT121US/dp/B008RRAY68/ref=cm_cr_pr_product_top

Sony Xperia 16 GB 9.4-Inch Tablet S SGPT121US/S

Contributors to Amazon.com

As of February 1, 2013

Review Credibility: Good

Over 44 users gave reviews and feedback on their experiences with the Sony Xperia Tablet S, mainly the 16GB version because the SD slot made higher memory offerings unnecessary. Despite the initial hiccup with the wifi disconnecting during sleep mode, (fixed with the firmware upgrade), the overall comments were positive earning the tablet an average of 4 out of 5 stars. What was really impressive was Sony customer service responding multiple times in a review chain to clarify, update and provide information.

Ratings Worksheet (should use 10-point scale)

Attribute	Rating	Notes (no more than 25 words)
Performance Speed rendering pages, navigational response times, battery life, display issues, sound, cameras, connectivity, etc.	8.5	Same issues as other tablets. Camera and video shots look better than reviewers gave it credit for.
Features (access to app stores, special modes, etc.)	9.5	App options from Sony / 3rd parties. Connectivity usage fixed with firmware update and settings adjustments. Extra features include Guest mode, Watch Now, IR Remote.
Ease of Use (ease of navigation, design, responsiveness, include any size and weight issues, screen glare, appearance, durability, etc.)	8.5	Ergonomic design, light weight.
Value (with respect to hardware, software, and feature offerings.)	7	Biggest complaint: price. Good, but not the greatest resolution.
Overall	8.4	[No notes needed here]