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**BUSINESS CENTER**

Nov 11, 2011 7:56 am

# Kindle Fire Creates Dilemma for Android

By **Tony Bradley**, PCWorld

The Amazon Kindle Fire is living up to its name by setting the [tablet market on fire](#). Pre-orders of the as yet unreleased tablet have been phenomenal. The success of the Kindle Fire, however, puts Android tablets in general between a rock and a hard place.

It should be great news. The Kindle Fire is expected by some to [exceed demand for the Apple iPad](#) this holiday season, and could be the first tablet to put a dent in Apple's tablet dominance. There is finally a rival tablet that seems worthy of [competing with the Apple iPad](#)--and it is based on Android.

Despite impressive hardware specs, and grandiose claims tablets like the HP TouchPad, BlackBerry PlayBook, Motorola Xoom, and Samsung Galaxy Tab have ranged from utter failures to mediocre sales at best.

The Kindle Fire presents some problems for Android, though. For starters, it is not a pure Android tablet. The Kindle Fire is built on a proprietary Amazon tablet OS that is based on Android. It is a fork of the Android OS that is Android-ish.

As time goes on and Google continues to develop Android in one direction while Amazon continues to take the Kindle Fire down its own unique path, the two platforms will be less and less alike. At some point in the future, the main thing tying the Kindle Fire to Android may be the fact that they're both not iPads.



The Kindle Fire creates an identity crisis for Android.

The second problem facing Android comes from both the Kindle Fire and the [recently-unveiled Nook tablet](#). With the Kindle Fire selling for \$200, and the Nook tablet coming in at \$250, other Android tablet makers are forced to either justify or cut their prices. If you can get a Kindle Fire for \$200, why would you spend \$500 for an Android tablet from another vendor?

Ultimately, the Android ecosystem has to walk a fine line between claiming some small victory

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over the success of an Android-based tablet, and differentiating media consumption tablets like the Kindle Fire from the full-features tablets like the [Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1](#).

With other Android tablets still trying to sell at prices on par with the iPad, Android needs to either distance itself from the Kindle Fire, or present a solid argument for why anyone should spend more than twice as much for some other Android tablet.

Android may be able to get away with claiming the Kindle Fire as one of its own for now. But, the success of the Kindle Fire is a testament to Amazon more than Android, and other Android tablets will now [struggle to compete](#) against both the iPad and the Kindle Fire.

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You can follow Tony on his [Facebook page](#), his [Google+ profile](#), or contact him by email at [tony\\_bradley@pcworld.com](mailto:tony_bradley@pcworld.com). He also tweets as [@TheTonyBradley](#).

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By **pbr35586**

Fri Nov 11 09:00:23 PST 2011

Price has been the problem with Android tablet's all along. Why pay the same price for an imitation. Some have cut the the price by \$50 or even \$100 dollars but if you are going to pay that much pay a little more and get an iPad. Android tablets needed to be priced around the same price as net books or a little less. This could only be accomplished by a content provider. Like game consoles or printer makers the real money is made after the sale. The next question is what is the life expectancy of the device. Not a lot of people in a recession can afford a \$500 device that only lasts 12 to 18 months. People want affordable personal content consumption devices. Amazon has created quite a stir and I have yet to read a hands on review of the Fire.

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By **JustSomeDude**

Fri Nov 11 09:05:01 PST 2011

It appears as if Tony Bradley is somewhat ignorant as to the capabilities of the Kindle Fire and Android Honeycomb and ICS tablets, or any of its other flavors for that matter.

Amazon's adaptation of Android on their Kindle Fire is severely handcuffed, with limitations on what apps can be installed, and with what functionality those apps even have. It's my understanding that there is no support for external Google Market email apps like Exchange, or Gmail, just the native "mail" app that Amazon lets you have. Heck, there's not even support for the Google Market - just Amazon's App Store.

These strict limitations alone make it very clear why some one would opt for a \$400 or \$500 unrestricted Android tab, than the \$200 Android-ish experience that Amazon let's you have on their Fire.

Get your information straight before spewing SEO link candy on PCWorld's website.

[Recommend](#)[Report Abuse](#) | [Reply](#)By **nonseq**

Fri Nov 11 09:16:57 PST 2011

This supports the contention that a viable "Tablet Market" has not yet emerged. There seems to be a "iPad Market" and now a "Kindle Fire" market. Yes, some Android tablets have been sold (Samsung has shipped a whole bunch of them on spec) along with a million TouchPads, and a PlayBook or two (I kid, I kid).

Amazon seems to have no interest in selling the Fire as an Android tablet. For them, Android provided a foundation for their own fork (as Tony points out) which operates as it's own "walled garden" comparable to iOS.

[Recommend](#)[Report Abuse](#) | [Reply](#)By **CodeHonor**

Fri Nov 11 09:17:23 PST 2011

Its still Google's software, they could charge Amazon licence fees at any point, or cut a deal for Google ads or something else beneficial to them. I'm sure Google would want more recongintion in the future for the Kindle Fire's success. After all it was built on the foundation of Android, and its Apps...

[Recommend](#)[Report Abuse](#) | [Reply](#)By **DavidJenkinsdvw**

Fri Nov 11 09:45:24 PST 2011

Why would I buy a tablet to be locked into some walled garden?

Transformer Prime; best tablet that is (almost) available.

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Fri Nov 11 09:48:40 PST 2011

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By **milliganp**

Fri Nov 11 10:21:38 PST 2011

Your price comparisons are slightly skewed since most of the devices you mention are 10.1" with 16Gb-32Gb vs the Fire's 7" and 8Gb. There are many low cost 7" Android tablets out there.

Amazon and B&N both anticipate future revenue streams from content which is not quite the model for Samsung, Motorola et al (used to making money from connectivity).

Finally there is the issue that both these tablets are 7", has Apple missed this sector of the market - good-enough tablets.

[Recommend](#)[Report Abuse](#) | [Reply](#)By **thewazak**

Fri Nov 11 10:24:43 PST 2011

Both the iPad and Fire devices suck - both proprietary, inside their own little world - making money only for their masters.

I'll continue to wait for a wall free Windows tab.

And before the jokes about waiting start, just remember, "He who laughs last, laughs longest".

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Fri Nov 11 11:34:10 PST 2011

"There is finally a rival tablet that seems worthy of competing with the Apple iPad-- and it is based on Android."

You couldn't resist, could you?

Let's cut to the chase. This is not an iPad challenger. It is a Nook Color (1 year late) challenger and already B&N has jumped over and announced the Nook Tablet. Let's stop comparing this to an iPad. Another reader mentions a "walled garden" and this is true for all 3. However, B&N's Nook Color and Nook Tablet are easily upgraded to a full blown Android system with access to the Android Market. "Mr. Gorbachev tear down this wall!" This has already happened to the B&N device. For god's sake stop the media hype with Apple and Amazon and focus on the product. Buy a B&N device and be happy or turn it into a real tablet/e-reader. Buy a Kindle Fire and just be happy with what you have. Buy an iPad and be happy with what Apple tells you to be happy with.

[Recommend](#)[Report Abuse](#) | [Reply](#)By **thewazak**

Fri Nov 11 11:42:57 PST 2011

"Buy an iPad and be happy with what Apple tells you to be happy with."

Lolololol!

Or wait for W8 and make yourself happy.

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By **John7ct**

Fri Nov 11 11:51:10 PST 2011

Not sure how more competition is a bad thing in the tablet market?

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By **Nuke61**

Fri Nov 11 13:25:27 PST 2011

“ thewazak said ”  
*Both the iPad and Fire devices suck - both proprietary, inside their own little world - making money only for their masters.*  
*I'll continue to wait for a wall free Windows tab.*

Why wait? [http://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B004D6R9T2/ref=mp\\_s\\_a\\_5?qid=1321046590&sr=8-5](http://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B004D6R9T2/ref=mp_s_a_5?qid=1321046590&sr=8-5)

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By **nonseq**

Fri Nov 11 13:43:59 PST 2011

“ Nuke61 said ”  
“ thewazak said ”  
*Both the iPad and Fire devices suck - both proprietary, inside their own little world - making money only for their masters.*  
*I'll continue to wait for a wall free Windows tab.*  
  
Why wait? [http://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B004D6R9T2/ref=mp\\_s\\_a\\_5?qid=1321046590&sr=8-5](http://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B004D6R9T2/ref=mp_s_a_5?qid=1321046590&sr=8-5)

I have yet to find any mobile device that wasn't originally conceived as a way to make money for somebody's masters.

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By **rfmodeler**

Fri Nov 11 13:44:33 PST 2011

Ummm... what about the Lenovo Ideapad A1? It's a non-crippled Android tablet for under \$250 from a respectable computer company. Why doesn't anyone want one of those?

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By **ginigrace**

Fri Nov 11 18:38:21 PST 2011

Why would anyone want a Kindle Fire when the B&N Nook Tablet will do so much more for very little more?

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