Comparing Apples and Fire: iPad Vs. Kindle

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When the smoke cleared this week, Amazon revealed its Fire.

The price alone on Amazon.com's new Kindle Fire tablet computer is enough to warm the buying public's response: an eye-popping price tag of just $199. That's without a two-year contract, ads or any other subsidizing gimmick.

Still, even that low price may be a bit much for what you get in return.

As with any tablet, the Fire is going up against the mighty iPad 2, and everyone is asking for a comparison of the two. I can tell you right now, the Fire doesn't begin to come close to being an iPad-killer.

For example, the hardware on the Fire is lacking. It has a dual-core processor, which is nice. However, the screen is only 7 inches, it has a mere 8 gigabytes of storage and there are no cameras or microphones. Battery life is 8 hours. Additionally, there is no 3G version, only Wi-Fi.

Even when comparing only to iPad 2's Wi-Fi version, the Apple product offers so much more: a 9.7-inch 16GB of storage, two cameras and a microphone, for starters. Battery life is slightly better at 8.5 hours. \ will widen the hardware gap even more.

If Amazon isn't taking aim at the iPad, what's the Fire all about?

Amazon is using the Fire to take on Apple. This is Amazon's opening salvo on Apple's mobile business a

Apple's dominance in the mobile arena isn't just about the iPhone and iPad's hardware. It's about Apple' iPhone and iPad are portals to iTunes, where you can get movies, music, books, apps and more.

The cloud-based nature of the ecosystem means it's both simple and powerful. That's why no other table Many other gadgets have better software and hardware. But they don't have that cohesive ecosystem.

That's why Amazon has set its sights on Apple's ecosystem. Amazon already has instant movie streamir the Android app store and, of course, the Kindle book store. Plus, Amazon has a massive cloud-based r information. All it needs is a mobile gadget to tie everything together.

Enter the Kindle Fire. The low price is the first clue to Amazon's plan. Apple's iPad 2, by contrast, starts

And Amazon has another trick up its sleeve.

For software, Amazon is using its own special version of Android. Amazon has scrapped the usual Andr own easy-to-use system. This is one of the simplest and most responsive tablet interfaces created to da

The reason for all this is that Fire has a very specific purpose. It is first and only an entertainment tablet. find and enjoy movies, music, games, apps and books. There's also a robust Web browser.

As you can see, Amazon put a lot of thought into this move. I'll admit the background technology is impre is: Should you buy the Kindle Fire?

At this point, I'm going to say no. I usually recommend waiting a few months to see how any new gadget world. This is Amazon's first major foray into tablets and mobile ecosystems, so I'm sure hiccups will occ

I'm also not sold on the hardware. I think a 7-inch screen is a bit small for an entertainment gadget. Addi which makes it fine for home use. Travelers, however, won't get far on the 8GB of storage.

This tablet wasn't Amazon's only announcement. Amazon also refreshed its line of Kindle e-readers. An has more tablets on the way. These will likely have larger screens and perhaps improved hardware. I'd v There's nothing wrong with having more options.

For now, if you want the best all-around tablet, the iPad 2 is still your best choice.

Kim Komando hosts the nation's largest talk radio show about consumer electronics, computers and the or find the station nearest you at komando.com/listen. Subscribe to Kim's free e-mail newsletters at kom

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