

## Press Clipping

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REVIEW | RELIANCE 3G

# When 3G's for everyone

**Reliance launches the most affordable Android tablet—but is it really a game changer?**

BY GOPAL SATHE  
gopal.s@livemint.com

With the launch of the Reliance 3G Tab, 3G tablets may really catch on in India—for the company has brought us a tablet that has a good combination of hardware and software at a price that's almost a third of high-profile tablets such as the iPad and Galaxy Tab. At the same time, the company has also bundled it with 3G data plans that are priced extremely reasonably because the goal, according to a Reliance spokesperson, is to introduce people to 3G and bring tablets to the masses.

People who have been inter-

ested in an iPad but put off by the high costs are very likely going to be tempted by this device, because of the aggressive pricing.

The Reliance 3G Tab costs ₹12,999 and is locked to Reliance, with three data plans. Each plan is for 12 months, and the cheapest option of 1 GB data every month costs ₹375 per month. The 2 GB monthly plan costs ₹458 and the 5 GB plan, ₹583. The speeds are good—not quite meeting the advertised 7.2 Mbps, but when downloading apps we were able to get 20 MB per minute. For comparison, that's a download of four or five songs in 1 minute. Video-streaming works fine on the connection as well, with minimal buffering while watching a movie on YouTube.

One issue, considering that the 3G bundles are a big selling point for the device, is that connectivity and speed is still reliable only in parts of the country, and even has its ups and downs in different parts of cities.

The Reliance 3G Tab is a 7-inch device, weighing 389g, making it easy to carry around with you everywhere, but the battery is one of its weakest points—it will die after about 6 hours, so heavy users will end up charging it twice a day. The design is basic, with a boxy shape and the three Android soft keys below the screen, with a power button and the volume rocker on the side. One minor quibble with the design is that the Android soft keys are not backlit. You have to use them all the time, and finding them at night is really difficult.

It has a capacitive multitouch screen, and runs Android 2.3.4 (Gingerbread) with all the standard Android features in place and the Android Market preloaded. This means that you can set up live wallpapers, and have widgets for apps such as Facebook and Twitter on the home screen. The device also comes preloaded with Gmail, Google Maps, Google Search,

Google Talk, YouTube, Orkut, Facebook, Twitter and Documents to Go (which allow you to view and edit Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents). Since the apps are already on the system, even people who don't want to use Android Market can access a wide range of features from the moment the device is out of the box. The company has given no word about upgrades to the Android version, but today, the majority of apps are still designed for Gingerbread, not the newer Honeycomb.

The touch screen doesn't seem as sensitive as it is in some of the top-end devices, and while typing occurs without significant lag, swiping across home pages or scrolling lists can feel imprecise and jumpy.

While the touch screen works with no real problems, the screen itself is hardly as sharp as most of the high-end tablets today, but at that price some compromises must come with the

package. In outdoor conditions, the tablet has some problems, but looks all right indoors. Held vertically, it functions as a nice e-book reader, running the free Kindle app. An 800 MHz processor powers the device, which is also good enough for most uses. Running some games with 3D graphics can be a somewhat painful experience, and is best avoided. Augmented Reality (AR) browsers such as Wikitude and Layar

worked with only a little lag, while simple apps such as Twitter and Facebook work smoothly.

While the top end tablets have 1GHz processors, the hardware on the Reliance Tab is at par with more expensive smartphones like the HTC Wildfire and Motorola Defy.

The Reliance 3G Tab comes with two cameras, a serviceable 2-megapixel camera in the back and a VGA camera in the front for video calling. The camera is definitely a weak point, and clearly one of the compromises made to keep the price down.

Video chat, through Google Talk, works well too, though there were occasional problems with pixellation and sync, but that could have been because of the connection on the other side of the conversation.

The Reliance 3G Tab would be easy to write off as just another me-too Android tablet, and if you have the money for it then the premium experience of an iPad is in a league of its own. But I'm considering buying one for my parents because it answers all their needs, and offers tremendous value with the 3G plans.



**Reliance 3G Tab:** A balance of features and value, the Reliance 3G Tab is a good economy device.