

## Lenovo ThinkPad X200 Tablet Review

To compete in the tablet market, Lenovo offers a touch-screen and Wacom-enabled version of its 12-inch ThinkPad X200. Lenovo has a standard Wacom-enabled X200, as well as a two-finger multi-touch version for a \$125 upgrade. With a starting retail price of \$1,909, it is priced almost \$500 under the Dell Latitude XT2, which is its primary competitor. In this review we put the standard and touch-enabled ThinkPad X200 Tablet head to head, to see how well they perform in our tests.

### Lenovo ThinkPad X200 Tablet with Multitouch Specifications:

- Windows 7 Professional
- 1280 x 800 WXGA with MultiTouch and Wacom LED Backlit (Matte finish)
- Intel Core 2 Duo SL9600 (2.13GHz, 1066MHz FSB, 6MB Cache)
- 4GB DDR3 RAM (2GB x 2)
- 160GB Seagate 7200.2 Hard Drive
- Intel 5300AGN, Bluetooth 2.0, AT&T WWAN
- Intel X4500M Integrated
- Built-in web camera
- 8-cell 11.1v 66.2Wh
- Dimensions: (LxWxH) 11.6 x 10.1 x 1.04-1.31"
- Weight: 4lbs 3.9oz
- Retail Price: \$2,579 (\$2,199 Street)

### Lenovo ThinkPad X200 Tablet Specifications:

- Windows 7 Professional
- 1280 x 800 WXGA Sunlight Readable with Wacom LED Backlit (Glossy, Anti-glare)
- Intel Core 2 Duo SL9600 (2.13GHz, 1066MHz FSB, 6MB Cache)
- 2GB DDR3 RAM (2GB x 1) (Benchmarked with 4GB)
- 160GB Seagate 7200.3 Hard Drive
- Intel 5100AGN, Bluetooth 2.0
- Intel X4500M Integrated
- Built-in web camera
- 8-cell 11.1v 66.2Wh
- Dimensions: (LxWxH) 11.6 x 10.1 x 1.04-1.31"
- Weight: 4lbs 1oz
- Retail Price: \$2,464 (\$2,084 Street)

### Build and Design

The design of the Lenovo ThinkPad X200 Tablet is all about business, with no superfluous frills. The color scheme

revolves around black, with the screen lid and bottom painted with a rubberized black paint and with the inside being lightly textured black plastic. Following the trend of function over form, Lenovo includes an externally mounted WWAN antenna, palmrest rubber bumpers for when the screen is in the slate position, and quick access buttons along the lower edge of the screen. From tech-geek standpoint it is also nice to see that Lenovo didn't hold anything back when they planned the port layout, using all available space for ports, expansion slots, and internal component access. On the bottom the design is fairly busy, with two access panels for the hard drive and system memory, as well as numerous rubber bumpers for a solid grip on flat surfaces.

Build quality is excellent, with a great match of a sturdy magnesium chassis and durable plastic panels. Chassis flex isn't present anywhere, feeling solid in your arms in its slate position or sitting like a notebook on your desk. Keyboard support is very good, with only a small amount of movement on the right side of the keyboard above the hard drive bay. This wasn't noticed unless you really squeezed it in that spot. The upper half of the notebook feels very strong, which is important for any tablet that might be gripped along the screen edge. The plastic bezel feels firm under a tight grip and even under strong pressure doesn't transmit any force into the screen edge, which can cause color distortion.

A potential weakness of any tablet is the single pivoting hinge design, which also happens to be one of the first components we look at when we review any convertible tablet. Lenovo uses a 360-degree pivot mechanism on the X200 Tablet, which allows you to spin the screen in either direction. To go along with this feature, they also provide a visual indication of which direction you need to spin the screen to get it back to its default orientation. The hinge itself feels durable, with firm locking points in each of the three positions. When it is tilting the screen forward or back, it feels as strong as a standard notebook. When fully open it has some slight wiggle, which seems more like flex near the attachment point than play in the clutched hinge.

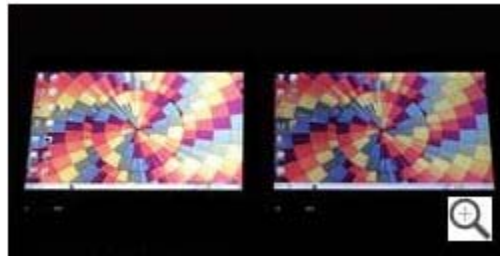
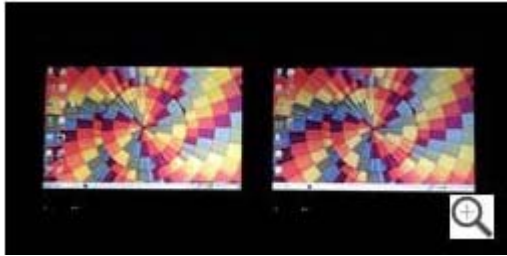
The X200 Tablet offers easy access to the hard drive and system memory through two access panels. The large panel on the bottom of the X200 exposes the two RAM slots, while the thinner access panel on the edge lets you slide out the hard drive.

### Screen and Speakers

Lenovo uses an In-plane Switching display (IPS) in all versions of the X200 Tablet, but incorporates a different covering and backlighting method for each version. IPS displays are renowned for their color accuracy and superior viewing angles, which is a must if you are viewing the screen from many viewing angles. In the two models we reviewed, each showed the identical screen part number, but looked vastly different when put side by side. The touch-sensitive layer put over tablet screens almost always gives the display a hazy look, but this was the first time we saw both versions side by side. Below in the screen comparisons shots, the model on the left is the standard X200 Tablet, while the one on the right is the multitouch



version.



The multitouch version looks faded and dimmer, even when both displays are set to the exact same brightness. One thing that becomes very clear is the non-touch X200 Tablet has one of the best screens we have seen in our office since the Flexview-era Thinkpads. Color saturation is excellent, contrast is through the roof, and black levels are excellent. Compared to my T60 with an IPS panel and CCFL lighting, the newer LED-backlit X200 display is much brighter and visible outdoors in full sunlight. Another interesting feature is the glossy but anti-glare surface. This display has a special coating which significantly reduces the amount of reflection you see. The only way we even saw anything reflected back at us was to tilt the screen back completely and get one of the overhead lights to bounce off of it. I personally wish other manufactures tried to do something similar. Viewing angles are nearly perfect, with colors staying accurate to the steepest angles. The only thing that changes is outside of the 10-15 degree "sweet spot" you can notice the screen dim slightly; other than that it looks perfect.

The Wacom support on each X200 Tablet was very good, with high accuracy once the pen was calibrated. Out of the box each model was pretty good, with a 2-3mm deviance from directly under the tip of the pen. Each screen surface was smooth to move a pen across, but the finish on the touch-screen model seemed to edge the glossy one out. For drawing or direct manipulation of objects on the screen the Wacom screens are very hard to beat. For slightly less accurate, but easier to use input, the touch-screen model offers excellent two-finger multitouch support. Finger presses were recognized quickly, with no lag or forceful press needed. I wish the screen supported more fingers like the T400s, but with the Wacom support included on both models, I can't complain much.



The onboard speakers are lap-firing, mounted directly below the palmrest. When situated on a flat desk surface they sound clear but very tinny. For video-conferencing or VOIP needs they work very well, but are lackluster for music and video. If you plan on using this tablet for multimedia, a pair of headphones is highly recommended.

### Keyboard and Touchpad

The ThinkPad keyboard really deserves its own class when it comes to comfortable and durable business-grade keyboards. The X200 Tablet continues this trend with a full-size keyboard that is great to type on. The 12" widescreen size allows for a 100% size keyboard, no exceptions. Keyboard support is very good, with only one minor soft spot noticed on the right side above the hard drive bay. Under normal typing you would never notice the spot, but if you grip the tablet from that side you notice some give in that area. Individual key action is springy and precise, with great tactile feedback. Each key gives off a very mild click when pressed, which may get louder if you are a very forceful typer. Overall if you can get past the rather short palmrest, it is a very comfortable computer to use when typing.

Since this model has very little real estate south of the keyboard Lenovo went with a pointing stick only, just like the X-series models before it. If you have never used a pointing stick before it takes a bit to get used to, but once you get the knack of it is a very precise way to control the cursor. Sensitivity is great, with a wide range of adjustment possible in the driver menus. On occasion the mouse might move on its own for a few millimeters before it auto-adjusts on occasion, but that is fairly common with most pointing sticks on the market. As with notebooks with touchpads, you are still free to use an external mouse if you chose to go with an alternative input device.



### Ports and Features

Port selection is very good when compared to other notebooks and tablets in the same size range. The X200 Tablet offers three USB ports, VGA-out, LAN, modem, and audio in/out jacks. Expansion slots include an ExpressCard/54 slot and 5-in-1 SD-card reader. When compared to the Dell Latitude XT2, the only features missing are a FireWire port and eSATA connection. For additional ports as well as an optical this model also offers a docking station connection on the bottom.

