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Aldi £80 tablet sells out within 24 hours

By Sally Davies and Duncan Robinson



Cut-price supermarket chain Aldi sold out of its £80 tablet within 24 hours after it launched in the UK this week, in a sign of burgeoning consumer appetite for cheap mobile devices in a competitive market.

The success of the Lifetab device opens another front in the battle between the big UK supermarkets, from whom Aldi is stealing market share. [Tesco's](#) Hudl tablet – which has sold out twice since it was launched in September – sells for £119 and uses the same Android operating system as Aldi's device.

Both businesses are using the products to drive shoppers to their stores, said Francisco Jeronimo, analyst at technology research group IDC.

“This is not the sort of product that a consumer will think too much about before buying it,” said Mr Jeronimo. “It’s a kind of disposable technology.”

IDC projects that tablets under £120 will make up a third of the market by 2017.

Mr Jeronimo said the Lifetab could appeal to people looking for gifts for children, or as a second device to complement a higher-end tablet such as the iPad that they might be scared to take away on holiday.

“The fact that Aldi sold out their low-cost tablet does mean there is a strong appetite for cheaper tablets since many consumers cannot necessarily afford to pay for a premium brand,” said Thomas Husson, of Forrester, a technology research company.

Among UK adults, cost was cited as the second most common reason for why they did not use a tablet, according to data from Forrester. The first was that they did not need one.

Tesco, Britain's largest retailer by sales, has sold more than 300,000 Hudls – which can cost as little as £60 for Clubcard holders – since it launched the tablet in September. Phil Clarke, the grocer's chief executive, said he expects this figure to double over Christmas. Aldi would not confirm how many tablets it had sold.

While Tesco appears to be using its tablet to drive digital sales following its acquisition of movie-streaming service Blinkbox in 2011, Aldi's gambit looks to be purely about footfall, said Mr Jeronimo.

Supermarkets have found creative ways of cultivating new kinds of relationships with their customers – such as Tesco's move into the mortgage market.

Some people framed the Lifetab's place in the market using toy metaphors. “iPad: Optimus Prime. Nexus: Rodimus Prime. Aldi tablet: a Gobot your gran bought you thinking it was a Transformer,” tweeted technology writer Craig Grannell.

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