

Lenovo ThinkPad X61 Tablet PC Review

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Lenovo's ThinkPad X61 has been the talk of the Tablet community since its release and after spending a few days with it, I can see why. The matte black finish and rugged feel of the X61 is right away appealing. The overall design is solid and its based on the new Intel Santa Rosa platform. It seems that the X61 has taken care of all the flaws its predecessor, the X60, had. Meaning it has better performance, benchmark results and battery life.

Front view of the ThinkPad X61 in notebook mode. (view large image)

The Lenovo ThinkPad X61 Tablet PC specs as reviewed (tested price about \$2,100)



| | |
|----------------------|---|
| CPU | Intel Core 2 Duo L7500 1.6GHz |
| OS | Windows Vista Ultimate |
| RAM | 2GB DDR2 |
| Display | 12.1" MultiView/MultiTouch XGA (1024×768) TFT |
| Graphics | Intel GMA X3100 graphics, Intel 965 Express Chipset |
| Audio | Integrated speakers |
| Hard Drive | 100GB (7200 rpm) |
| Optical Drive | None |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| I/O ports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 x USB • 1 x VGA – 15 pin • 1 x Microphone-in • 1x Headphone • 1 x PC Card • 1 x SD Card |
| Communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intel PRO/Wireless 3945ABG • 10/100/1000 Ethernet • ThinkPad 11a/b/g II • WLAN and WWAN • Bluetooth |
| Dimensions/Weight | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10.8" x 9.6" x 1.1-1.3" • 3.8lbs. |
| Battery/power | 8-cell Lithium Ion |

Design and Build

The ThinkPad X61 maintains most of the same design features as its predecessor, the X60. All of the X series models have that signature flat black casing which is quite nice. There are no annoying issues with fingerprints on the case, and who said you have to be shiny to look good anyway? The design is very minimalistic, but solid. Out of all the Tablets I have reviewed so far, the X61 is one of my favorites in terms of design, mostly due to its simplicity and functionality.

The X61 making its way into Tablet mode. (view large image)

There is no flex in the overall case and the chassis is sturdy. The X61 Tablet is easy to carry around as well, only weighing in at 3.8lbs. When it was in my notebook case I hardly even noticed the extra weight.



Students or on-the-go business professionals may want to take a look at the X61 because this little Tablet is lightweight and rugged. The X61 has a small hinge, yet it still eliminates almost any hint of screen wobble. It also has the ThinkVantage Active Protection System, which protects the hard drive in the event of a system shocks or drop.

The X61's hinge. (view large image)

Display

The display on the X61 is nice. I know many users have said that the Lenovo screens are washed out, but I didn't find that to be the case with the X61. It does look a little faded when the screen is mostly white, but colors come through just fine. Especially impressive is that

there's no graininess issue with the screen that I've seen on just about every other dual touch screen and pen enabled Tablet I've tested. The only real issue I had was with the screen's brightness. Even when set on the highest setting it was a little dim, which is probably why the screen looks washed out to many users.



The X61 in Tablet mode. (view large image)

The X61's touchscreen is great, it is very responsive to the touch of your finger. It also has Wacom active pen technology, so you can choose between input methods of pen or finger. The screen converts into Tablet mode with no problems, thanks to the secure hinge, which pivots 180 degrees clockwise. Once in Tablet mode the screen automatically adjusts itself to Tablet orientation or you can choose how you want the screen to be with the touch of a button.



The X61 in Tablet mode, with vertical screen. (view large image)



Processor and System Performance

The X61 has improved in the performance department compared to the X60, it beat the X60 on all of the benchmarking tests. The Core 2 Duo L7500 1.6GHz processor doesn't have any problems running multiple applications at the same time.

The X61 I reviewed came with 2GB of memory, which is pretty much a necessity when running Vista, but you can get up to 4GB if you are interested. It also had a 100GB (7200 rpm) hard drive, which leaves you plenty of space to store those media files or documents. Boot-up time was a little slow, but nothing major, and that's more a symptom of Vista.

Benchmarks

Comparison Results for PCMark05

PCMark05 measures the systems performance as a whole: The ThinkPad X61 kicked butt in the PCMark05 test, blowing away all the other notebooks in its class.

| Notebook | PCMark05 Score |
|--|-----------------------|
| Lenovo ThinkPad X61 (Intel Core 2 Duo 1.6GHz, Intel GMA X3100 graphics) | 3,436 PCMarks |
| Gateway E-155C (Intel Core 2 Duo ULV 1.06GHz, Intel GMA 950 graphics) | 2,205 PCMarks |
| LG C1 (Intel Core Duo 1.2GHz, Nvidia Go 7300) | 2,568 PCMarks |
| Toshiba R400 (Intel Core Duo ULV 1.2GHz, Intel GMA 950 graphics) | 2,187 PCMarks |
| HP tx1000 (AMD Turion X2 2.0GHz, Nvidia Go 6150) | 3,052 PCMarks |
| Asus R1F (1.66GHz Core Duo, Intel GMA 950 graphics) | 2,724 PCMarks |

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Lenovo ThinkPad X60t (1.66GHz LV Core Duo) | 2,860 PCMarks |
| Panasonic ToughBook T4 (Intel 1.20GHz LV) | 1,390 PCMarks |
| Asus R2H (900MHz Celeron M) | 845 PCMarks |
| Toshiba Tecra M6 (1.66GHz Intel T2300E, Intel GMA 950) | 2,732 PCMarks |

Super Pi

In the below results of Super Pi, where the processor is timed in calculating Pi to 2 million digits:

| Notebook | Time to Calculate Pi to 2 Million Digits |
|--|---|
| Lenovo ThinkPad X61 (1.6GHz Core 2 Duo) | 1m 11s |
| Gateway E-155C (1.06GHz ULV Core 2 Duo) | 1m 58s |
| LG C1 (1.2GHz Intel Core Duo) | 1m 49s |
| Toshiba R400 (1.2GHz ULV Core Duo) | 2m 10s |
| Asus R1F (1.66GHz Core Duo) | 1m 20s |
| Lenovo ThinkPad X60t (1.66GHz LV Core Duo) | 1m 24s |
| IBM ThinkPad X41t (1.5GHz LV Pentium M) | 2m 02s |
| HP TC4400 Tablet PC (2.0GHz Core Duo) | 1m 13s |
| Dell Latitude X1 (1.1 GHz ULV Pentium M) | 2m 40s |
| Dell Latitude D420 (1.06GHz Core Solo ULV) | 2m 11s |
| Toshiba Portege M400 (1.83GHz Core Duo) | 1m 19s |

Comparison Results for 3Dmark05

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