Vizio VTAB1008 tablet: symbiosis of man and machine

Patrick Mannion - January 19, 2012

There's just something about the 8-in. Vizio VTAB1008 Android tablet: You take it out of the box, turn it on, start using it, and immediately get attached to it. I did, and so did my family, to the point that they're asking for a new one now that this one is shredded. Few designs generate that natural symbiosis of user and system, but all designers know how hard it is to achieve it. In the case of the Vizio, which is not a design house but instead a provider of generic, reasonably priced, midrange consumer devices, it came about through close collaboration between the application engineers at Marvell, whose 1-GHz, dual-core ARM Version 7 Armada 610 processor is at the heart of the device, and contract manufacturer Foxconn.

For more on the Vizio, see the full teardown on the Design Cycle blog and click here for more teardowns.

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The basics: Vizio introduced the VTAB1008 in August 2011 at $329, but the price quickly dropped to $269, and you can now nab one for about $150. For that price, you get a 1024×768-pixel LED display, a 1-GHz processor, GPS, 802.11n, and Bluetooth wireless. The device has a capacitive, multitouch panel; a 1.3M-pixel, 30-frame/sec front-facing camera; and 4 Gbytes of storage, though only 2 Gbytes are available to the user. That said, storage is expandable to 32 Gbytes through an external memory card.

The device fluidly performs the basics and adds an IR emitter, which, with a universal remotecontrol app, controls your entire home-entertainment system. It also features HDCP compliance, to allow streaming of secured HD content from Netflix, Hulu, or other sources to your TV, and a three-speaker system that allows multiaxis stereo sound using SRS TruMedia. You just know that its designers put some thought into it.
1.3M-pixel, 30-frame/sec front-facing camera

Speaker 1 of three for full stereo in horizontal or vertical position using SRS TruMedia

802.11n Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and GPS antennas

6000-mAhr Li-ion battery for up to 10 hours of normal use theoretically; six to seven hours in reality

Maxim MAX925 PMIC

IR emitter for universal remote-control app; main power switch is on the left

Speaker 2

Volume-control board and switches

Toshiba 356764XBG MIPI DS/LVDS transcoder

Speaker 3