

**wp** [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/innovations/wp/2013/12/16/the-man-behind-the-37-99-tablet-wants-to-sell-one-for-19-99-within-two-years/>

## The man behind the \$37.99 tablet wants to sell one for \$19.99 within two years

By Matt McFarland



Datawind began selling three of its 7-inch devices in the United States on Monday. The least expensive model, the UbiSlate 7Ci, a 7-inch, Android-powered tablet, will sell for \$37.99.

The tablets can't match the technical specifications of the latest Apple or Samsung tablets but are designed for a price-sensitive consumer who may have been priced out of the tablet market in the past.

"My customer says, 'I want something that's good enough and functional enough and gives me a good experience; I don't have to pay an arm and a leg for it,' " Datawind CEO Suneet Singh Tuli said.

He calls it the innovation of good enough.

While Internet access is as common as oxygen for many of us, roughly a fifth of Americans [don't have online access](#). Price can be a sticking point for the less affluent, and that's where Datawind is at its best. The company views bridging the digital divide as a social good worth contributing to. The tablets aren't selling at a loss, but margins are intentionally kept thin.

"In the Indian market, we could've gotten away with prices 30 percent higher, could've done the same in the United States. Would we sell any less at \$49.99? Maybe not? But to break that price barrier and drive it down is very important," Tuli said.

While the \$37.99 price tag for the UbiSlate 7Ci seems low, Tuli isn't done yet.

"Where do I see this in a year or two? I think it's \$19.99. I think you'll be able to get a reasonable 7-inch tablet for sub-20 where the guy selling will make a couple bucks," Tuli said.

The mid-priced model, the UbiSlate 7C+, is \$79.99, and for \$99.99 it comes with a year of data that is processed through a Datawind proxy server. The average page loads in three to five seconds. It won't excel at streaming videos but is made for text-heavy pages such as Wikipedia. The most-expensive version, the UbiSlate 3G7 is \$129.99, and \$149.99 with a year of data. Both devices are phablets and come with a SIM chip for a year, giving a user the option to add a plan to make phone calls.

Datawind also makes money off the devices through ads that appear in the Web browser, plus sales in its app and eBook stores. The devices, manufactured in China and India, can currently only be purchased at [ubislate.us](http://ubislate.us).

© 1996-2014 The Washington Post