

ET economictimes.indiatimes.com<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/hardware/datawind-breaks-ties-with-supplier-aakash-delayed/articleshow/12665454.cms>

Datawind breaks ties with supplier, Aakash delayed

By Harsimran Julka , ET Bureau | 14 Apr, 2012, 09.49PM IST

Datawind, the maker of the world's cheapest tablet [Aakash](#) has said that it is running two weeks behind schedule in deliveries for retail sales of its tablets, due to a break up of its relationship with Hyderabad based vendor [Quad Electronics](#).

[Datawind](#) ended its relationship with Quad in January. In a statement, chief executive Suneet Singh Tuli said that Electronics breached Datawind's intellectual property rights.

"Quad circumvented our relationship with IIT-Rajasthan, signed a direct memorandum of understanding with them and then sold off its inventory in the open market," Tuli said.

People close to the development said that Datawind is evaluating new manufacturing partners in [Noida](#) and Cochin but nothing has been finalized yet.

Datawind had made a commitment to deliver the devices by end of March. "We started taking pre-payments at the end of January, offering delivery in 8 weeks starting end of March - we're about two weeks late from that date," Tuli said. "We expect to catch up to our promised delivery schedule by end of April." he adds.

Founded by Raminder Soin, former managing partner of [Tata](#) Cellular, Quad is a product lifecycle management company that also undertakes electronics manufacturing for original equipment makers. For Aakash project, Quad was responsible for making the touchscreen panels for the Android tablets. The touch panels were later claimed to be faulty, in a communication between IIT Rajasthan and Datawind, a copy of the letter is with ET. Quad's Soin did not reply to a questionnaire sent by ET.

With much fanfare, Indian government had announced plans to use the Aakash tablet as a digital learning aid in schools across the country. Touted as the world's cheapest tablet, multiple delays in bringing out Aakash have dented popular perception about the device. With the delays, consumer complaints have also started surfacing on internet forums.

But customers are getting anxious and flooding consumer websites with complaints. In response to concern over a faulty customer care, Datawind said that its toll-free number is working. "Since it receives almost 40,000 calls per day, there is often a logjam resulting in incomplete calls," clarified Tuli in a statement, after media reports highlighting customer complaints. "Any person who has made a deposit, is responded to within 48 hours of receipt of payment, and is being provided a specific phone number to call for queries - instead of the toll-free number," he added.