# Google Hardware quits the tablet business, again




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- The new Google Pixel Slate.
  Valentina Palladino
- New UI additions make the Slate and other Chrome OS tablets easier to use without physical keyboards.
  Valentina Palladino
- The 8MP rear camera.
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- The back of the Slate holds onto fingerprints too much.
  Valentina Palladino
- One of the two USB-C ports for charging and connecting peripherals.
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- The settings and notification menus.

Valentina Palladino

- The updated launcher with all installed apps, a search bar, and predictive app suggestions.
  Valentina Palladino
- Google’s keyboard case for the Pixel Slate, featuring round “hush” keys.
  Valentina Palladino
- Surprisingly, the round keys aren’t horrible to type on—but they don’t have as much surface area as regular square keys.
  Valentina Palladino
- The trackpad is decently sized and responsive to gestures.
  Valentina Palladino
- The magnetic pins attach to the Slate to keep it in place in laptop mode.
  Valentina Palladino
- The $99 Pixelbook Pen just got a new coat of paint.
  Valentina Palladino
- The launcher homescreen for the tablet UI in Chrome OS.
  Valentina Palladino
- Split Screen in Chrome OS makes multitasking easier—for the apps that support this feature.
  Valentina Palladino
- The new floating keyboard makes typing while in tablet mode easier.
  Valentina Palladino
- The expanded Google Assistant window lets you speak or type requests.
  Valentina Palladino
- Some answers appear in the window itself, while others will open Chrome to show more info.
  Valentina Palladino

Google and tablets just don’t mix. The company tried over and over again to make Android tablets work, peaking with the 2013 Nexus 7 and ending with the Pixel C in 2015.

After a three-year hiatus from the market, Google took a second swing at tablets with Chrome OS and the Pixel Slate. Four months later, we heard Google Hardware's laptop and tablet division was in trouble. Seven months later—in other words, right now—Google's Chrome OS tablets are dead.

Following a report from Computerworld claiming Google cancelled two tablets and was quitting the tablet business, Google Hardware SVP Rick Osterloh confirmed the news on Twitter:

> *Hey, it's true…Google's HARDWARE team will be solely focused on building laptops moving forward, but make no mistake, Android & Chrome OS teams are 100% committed for the long-run on working with our partners on tablets for all segments of the market (consumer, enterprise, edu)*
>
> *— Rick Osterloh (@rosterloh) June 20, 2019*

Osterloh later clarified that only tablets would be canceled and that Google is "committed to our many other hardware categories."

## Google kills product

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The Pixel Slate was not well received for a number of reasons. First, the device was too expensive and too slow. The entry-level Intel Celeron-equipped model, priced at $599 (with 4GB of RAM) and $699 (with 8GB), was a complete disaster. It was so slow and so thoroughly panned in reviews that it was never made readily available by Google, and it was eventually cancelled altogether. That made the first readily-available Pixel Slate the $799 Intel Core M3 model, which was already the price of an iPad Pro but without the iPad Pro's high-end performance. From there, the Pixel Slate price rocketed up to

$999 and $1,599 for the faster, more iPad-competitive models.

The second big problem was Chrome OS, which, while it had been around on laptops forever, was just getting off the ground as a reworked tablet OS. It was not really ready for the Pixel Slate launch, with a buggy split-screen implementation, poor performance, and a weird UI that used a full-screen mode in tablet form but allowed normal window operation in laptop mode. There were a host of other quirks and issues, but the bottom line was that Google was charging a premium price for hardware and software that felt more "beta" than "premium."

The Computerworld report that triggered Osterloh's statement says Google cancelled two products, both lacking a keyboard and having a smaller body than the 12.3-inch Pixel Slate.

Osterloh promises Google is still focused on the software part of tablet support, even if it isn't investing in hardware. (Just ask Android tablet users how Google tablet support has worked out for them over the years, though.) Saying the team is "focused on building laptops" should mean a new Pixelbook is on the way—the last version released in 2017. That's potentially exciting news assuming you're still willing to invest in a Google product at this point.

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