



# Congolese inventor puts African tablet on sale

BRAZZAVILLE, REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Africa has its first handheld tablet, Way-C, to rival the iPad and similar western inventions, which went on sale in the Republic of Congo on Monday, 30 January 2012, its inventor Verone Mankou said.



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"We have set up a team and logistics to sell the tablet since Friday. Today, anyone can buy one," if they are in the main cities of the capital, Brazzaville and the oil port of Pointe-Noire, the 26 year old told AFP.

The tablet is called the Way-C, "the light of the stars" in a dialect of northern Congo. It measures 19x17x1.2cm (7.4x6.7x0.5 inches) and weighs 380g (13.4 ounces) and has integrated Wi-Fi circuitry and a 4.0 GB memory.

"In technological terms, this tablet is equivalent to all those to be found on the market," said Mankou, referring to the US giant Apple's iPad and its competitors. The Way-C was conceived in Congo, where it was first presented to the public in September 2011, but it is assembled in China, "for the simple reason that Congo has no factories and for price reasons," Mankou added.

His tablet will sell for 150 000 CFA francs (€229/US\$299), which the developer, who is also an advisor on new information technologies to the ministry of communication, considered "acceptable and relatively low, considering the technology used."

For the moment, the Way-C will be sold exclusively in Airtel Congo stores in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, a private mobile telephone company which is a subsidiary of the Indian group Bharti. Mankou's firm, VMK, has cut a deal with Bharti. "With this company, we are also going to conclude a partnership to use 3G (mobile telephony), because the tablet only has an integrated wi-fi."

The financing of the project, launched in 2006, cost more than 80 million CFA francs (almost €122 000), essentially provided by VMK. The tablet is planned to be marketed in 10 west African countries, and in Belgium, France and India from 15 February 2012.

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