

# Lenovo ThinkPad X201 Review

The ThinkPad X201 is the newest 12-inch ultra-portable business notebook from Lenovo. As a refresh to the X200-series, the X201 showcases Intel's latest Calpella platform. One of the most interesting new [processor](#) options included in the X201 is the new 32nm Core i7-640LM dual-core CPU clocked in at 2.13GHz. In this review we take a look at the entire X201-lineup including the X201, X201s, and X201 Tablet and see how well they stack up against previous models.

## Our Lenovo ThinkPad X201 Specifications:

- Screen: 12.1-inch WXGA (1280 x 800) LED Backlit (Matte finish)
- Operating System: Windows 7 Professional (64bit)
- Processor: Intel Core i5-540M (2.53GHz, 3MB Cache)
- Memory: 4GB DDR3 RAM (2GB + 2GB)
- Storage: 320GB Hitachi HDD (7200rpm)
- Wireless: Intel 6200 802.11AGN, Bluetooth
- Graphics: Intel GMA HD Integrated Graphics
- Power: 94Wh 9-cell, 65W 20V AC adapter
- Dimensions: 11.6 x 9.2 x 0.8 – 1.4"
- Weight: 3.52lbs
- Retail Price: \$1,625

## Our Lenovo ThinkPad X201s Specifications:

- Screen: 12.1-inch WXGA+ (1440 x 900) LED Backlit (Matte finish)
- Operating System: Windows 7 Professional (64bit)
- Processor: Intel Core i7-640LM (2.13GHz, 4MB Cache)
- Memory: 4GB DDR3 RAM (2GB + 2GB)
- Storage: 320GB Hitachi HDD (5400rpm)
- Wireless: Intel 6250 802.11AGN, Bluetooth
- Graphics: Intel GMA HD Integrated Graphics
- Power: 57Wh 6-cell, 65W 20V AC adapter
- Dimensions: 11.6 x 8.3 x 0.8 – 1.4"
- Weight: 2.77lbs
- Retail Price: \$1,335

## Our Lenovo ThinkPad X201 Tablet Specifications:

- Screen: 12.1" Multitouch LED WXGA (1280x800) panel with Wide Viewing Angle
- Operating System: Windows 7 Professional (64bit)

- Processor: Intel Core i7-640LM (2.13GHz, 4MB Cache)
- Memory: 4GB DDR3 RAM (2GB + 2GB)
- Storage: 320GB Fujitsu HDD (5400rpm)
- Wireless: Intel 6200 802.11AGN, Bluetooth
- Graphics: Intel GMA HD Integrated Graphics
- Power: 66Wh 8-cell, 65W 20V AC adapter
- Dimensions: 11.6 x 10.1 x 1.04 – 1.31"
- Weight: 3.95lbs
- Retail Price: \$1,900

### Build and Design

The ThinkPad X201 carries the same delightfully-intimidating, ultra-portable business-notebook-on-steroids [design](#) as all the X-series notebooks before it. At first glance it looks like any other T-series notebook with a boxy frame and rubberized paint but much smaller. With the notebook open, you see that the design is as small as it can be without reducing the size of the keyboard. Keeping the large keyboard on the small frame does have consequences, however, such as a short palmrest that's too short to support most wrists with your fingers in their typing position. The X-series notebook is essentially the smallest ThinkPad that still allows Lenovo to incorporate a full-size keyboard in its design.



Build [quality](#) is great compared to many of the small netbooks and CULV notebooks that have hit the market in the past couple of years. Just like the larger T-series counterpart, the X201 retains the strong stainless-steel screen hinges, durable ThinkPad keyboard, strong plastic cladding, and alloy chassis. The thinner design does introduce some minor flex and the screen hinges feel "weaker" when scaled down but this is all relative. For a 12-inch notebook the X201 can easily be tossed around with little worry about it breaking ahead of schedule or wearing out before its useful life is up. Try to do the same thing with cheaper consumer competition and you won't like the results.



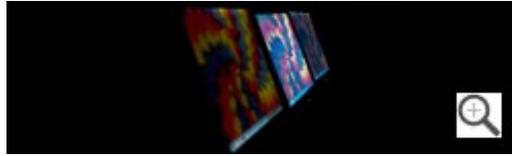
End-user servicing is still taken into consideration with easy memory and [hard drive](#) access. The X201 retains the side panel to quickly swap out the hard drive and the bottom cover to upgrade the system memory.

### Screen and Speakers

While the build quality surpasses many CULV-notebooks one area the X201 really falls behind is in the screen category. Compared to many of the [modern](#) 11.6- and 12-inch glossy screens found on new consumer ultraportable notebooks, the panels on the X201 and X201s fall behind in color saturation and contrast. Colors appeared faded and weak while black levels felt washed out. This seems to be the downside to most business notebooks. Vertical viewing angles are average with colors starting to invert quickly when you tilt the screen 10 to 15 degrees forward or back. Horizontal viewing angles are better with colors staying consistent even at



steep angles.



The X201 Tablet screen is a step above the X201 or X201s and offers much better color saturation and contrast. Viewing angles are also greatly improved with minimal color inversion even when tilted 45 degrees forward or back. One problem we noticed on our X201 Tablet review model though was the screen appeared very warm (yellow/orange). This gave the screen an aged look and was not very pleasing to the eye.

The backlight brightness of all three notebooks was plenty bright to be viewable in an office setting. The X201 was the brightest of the bunch and measured 250cd/m<sup>2</sup> at its brightest point. The X201s was second and measured 232cd/m<sup>2</sup> at its brightest point. The X201 Tablet came in third measuring 182cd/m<sup>2</sup> at its brightest point. If you plan on using the X201 outdoors, Lenovo offers a high-brightness outdoor-viewable screen on the X201 Tablet as an option.

### Keyboard and Touchpad

Each of the new ThinkPad X201-series notebooks we have in for review offers the same keyboard that was previously seen on the X200. After the huge change with the T400s and T410 we were expecting to see a similar redesign with the X201 models but that wasn't the case. With that said the typing experience is everything we have come to expect from the trusted ThinkPad brand. The keyboard size is 100% with the 12-inch widescreen chassis which is an improvement from the 4:3 aspect ratio X61 which had condensed keys along the perimeter of the keyboard. The typing surface has excellent support with barely any flex under moderate pressure. The tactile feel from each key is great with soft clicks emitting very little noise when fully pressed. If you plan on spending hours sitting in front of [your computer](#) typing the ThinkPad keyboard is hard to beat.



One entirely new feature on the X-series ThinkPad is a narrow Synaptics touchpad on the X201 and X201 Tablet. The X-series has always had the limitation of being TrackPoint only which is a huge turnoff for some users. With the majority of buyers preferring the touchpad interface it was a no-brainer to see Lenovo adding it to the X201 to help increase sales. The small touchpad is odd to see at first it is about half the height of a normal touchpad but you get used to it really quick. During the review process I favored the touchpad over the TrackPoint and had no trouble using it with common multitouch gestures. The touchpad had an excellent response time with no noticeable lag and each axis offered the same acceleration rate to prevent unwanted ovals.



## Ports and Features

Port selection has stayed the same as previous models with three USB ports, VGA-out, LAN, ExpressCard/54, audio jacks and a modem jack. For [storage expansion](#) Lenovo also includes an SDHC slot located on the front edge of the palmrest. I was really hoping to see some form of digital video out but as this is a business-oriented model most business users still demand VGA-out for legacy projectors.

