



What's on the Surface?



STUDIO

Hot on the heels of Apple, Microsoft have just held their Surface event for 2021 announcing a number of exciting new products. Four of the new devices were updates whilst one was a surprising, and slightly odd edition to the range; the Surface Laptop Studio. With no update for the Surface Book 3 it's looking like this could well be the replacement for the laptop released almost a year and a half ago.

Laptop Studio is a flexible device and can change between three modes. Laptop mode is as you suspect and actually the new device has a distinct MacBook look to it. Shifting the screen forward places the device into "Stage" mode placing the screen and content centre stage. Ideal for gaming or watching movies. Folding it over completely places it in "Studio" mode providing a tablet style environment to work on. What is particularly noticeable is the plinth that Laptop Studio rests on. This raised area is covered in grills that allow the powerful machine to kick out excess heat, and also provides a nook

where the new Surface Slim Pen 2 can be stowed.

The 3:2 display is a 14.4-inch touchscreen with a 2400x1600 resolution display at (201ppi) and a refresh rate of 120Hz. At the top of the display is a Windows Hello camera and the laptop features four speakers compatible with Dolby Atmos.

The system can be configured with either Intel i5-11300H or i7-11370H and features Intel Xe graphics or can be configured with an NVIDIA GeForce RTX3050Ti with 4GB GDDR6 RAM. There is also an Enterprise option of RTX A2000 for creatives and developers. It can be configured with either 16 or 32GB of LPDDRx system RAM. Storage is removable with options ranging from 256GB up to 2TB.

Support for Thunderbolt has made its way to Surface with the system featuring two USB-C Thunderbolt 4 connections as well as a Surface connector and a 3.5mm headphone jack.

Surface Laptop Studio launches early 2022 starting at around £1200/AU\$2200.





Surface Pro 8 was announced replacing the 2 year old Surface Pro 7 which was unsurprising but also welcome given the delay of an update.

Dubbed as the most powerful Surface Pro ever, Surface Pro 8 has 40% higher sustained CPU performance and 74% faster graphics performance thanks to 11th gen Intel processors with Intel Xe graphics. The system can be configured with 8, 16 or 32GB of LPDDR4x of RAM.

Like the Surface Laptop Studio the Pro 8 features a 120Hz display (as an option). Resolution is 2880x1920 with a pixel density of 267 PPI which has improved upon the previous model. Housed within the bezels is a 5MP Full HD Windows Hello camera for authentication and video conferencing. On the rear is a 10MP camera capable of Full HD and 4K video. Battery life is reported to be 16 hours with an 80% charge possible with just an hours worth of charging and like the Surface

Laptop Studio, the Pro 8 features two USB-C Thunderbolt 4 ports.

Of course, the Surface Pro 8 will have a range of keyboards available. The Surface Pro Signature keyboard, as well as an option with Fingerprint Reader, and a Signature keyboard with Surface Pen 2 which has a slot for storing and recharging the stylus which does end up pushing the cost of the device up from its initial RRP.

Surface Pro 8 is available on the 28th October starting at £999 and in Australia at AU\$1649 on the 3rd November.

Also receiving an update is the Surface Pro X line, that a couple of years back looked quite promising. Unfortunately, the silicon was not quite the performer that many had hoped for this lacklustre performance left the Surface Pro X being quite disappointing and with no x86 and x64 emulation, there was a distinct lack of apps available.

Microsoft have made steps to improve this new model. Windows 11 on ARM will include emulation for x86 and x64 so the new Surface Pro X will be a much more versatile device than its predecessor.

Two processor variants will be available. Two SQ1 models with 8GB RAM and 128GB or 256GB storage, and two SQ2 models with 16GB RAM and 256GB or 512GB storage options. All of these will feature a cellular connection but Microsoft have stated there will be WiFi only models coming. The 13-inch PixelSense touchscreen display

has a resolution of 2880x1920 and built into the bezel is a 5MP front-facing camera with Full HD video and features Windows Hello face authentication.

Finally, the new Surface Pro X will have all-day battery life up to 15 hours and like other new Surface models has two USB-C Thunderbolt 4 ports.

The new Surface Pro X models will be available to pre-order starting at £999/AUS\$1699.





Another quality device that did not exactly set the world on fire when it launched was the Surface Duo. What looked like a solid product when it was announced unfortunately did not sell amazingly well, but Microsoft are not throwing in the towel just yet and announced the Surface Duo 2.

This time round, Microsoft changed the messaging focusing on selling the Duo as a phone first demonstrating it being used to take photos, play games and browse social media. The hope here is that the device resonates with more people than those just looking to be more productive when out and about which is what the marketing for the first device targeted.

This phone first mentality means that Microsoft have built-in a rear triple camera system featuring 12MP wide and telephoto cameras with built-in OIS. There is also a 16MP 'ultra-wide camera with 110 degree

viewing angle. Duo 2 is powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon 888 5G processor which has been a staple in high-end android mobile phones with the device coming installed with Android 11.

The PixelSense Fusion displays are larger coming in at 5.8-inches, which when opened measure 8.3-inches. The displays feature 90Hz adaptive refresh rates, and support HDR and wide colour 100% SRGB and DCI-P3. These are capable of 800nits of brightness and are protected by Corning's Gorilla Glass Victus.

Surface Duo 2 is available to pre-order now and releases on the 21st October starting at £1349. Australian pricing not available at this time.

Let's



Finally, Microsoft announced the replacement for their cheapest Surface product.

The new Surface Go 3 gets new faster Intel Pentium Gold processors, with an option for an i3 model with choices of 4 or 8GB RAM across the range. Microsoft are stating that the spec bump makes the new Go 3 60% faster than its predecessors.

Other than that, the new Go 3 is very much the same as the Go 2. Same 10.5-inch display, same 1920x1280 resolution, same cameras and the same connections. Battery life has

been boosted to 11 hours up from 10. Like all the new Surfaces discussed, Windows 11 will come pre-installed on the system which itself offers a number of improvements over Windows 10.

The Surface Go 3 launches early October starting at £369/AUS\$629 with a 4G model due for release in early 2022.

