

What's On

Pro 4 more comfortable; keyboard cover stiffer

New Microsoft Surface Pro finally has laptop feel

By Anick Jesdanun

With the new Surface Pro 4, typing on a Microsoft tablet finally feels like typing on a regular laptop.

Although Microsoft has tried hard to sell the Surface as a laptop replacement, its keyboard has felt flimsy — something to tolerate when a real laptop isn't available. The keyboard attaches magnetically and has to be thin enough to fold over like a book cover.

Consequently, it has felt like typing on cardboard over my lap. Microsoft says the Pro 4 keyboard cover is 20 percent stiffer, so it no longer feels like cardboard. Each key is slightly taller, too, giving it a more natural feel. More room on the cover is devoted to the keys and the touchpad rather than dead space. Microsoft keeps the cover's weight and thickness about the same as before by turning to different materials.

All this translates to a keyboard that's enjoyable rather than tolerable. I made it my primary computer for two

weeks, including travels through upstate New York and Ontario, Canada. The Pro 4 felt comfortable whether I was in a hotel bed, a friend's living room or the tasting room of a winery.

Recommend

Now that Windows 10 is available, the Pro 4 is the first Surface I can wholeheartedly recommend. The cardboard-like keyboard wasn't my only gripe. Windows 8 felt like using two machines at once, with the system constantly kicking you to the one you didn't want. Microsoft's free Windows 10 update in July addresses the bulk of my frustrations.

I also like the addition of a magnet on the left side to attach an included stylus. The stylus still came off a few times during my travels, so I stowed it in my backpack after a few days and didn't have it handy when needed. Samsung's Note devices have built-in holes for their stylus, although in avoiding that approach, Microsoft was able to make the stylus larger and more like



This Oct 6, 2015 image provided by Microsoft shows the Surface Pro 4 at a Windows 10 Devices Event, in New York. (AP)

a regular pen.

The stylus might be useful for note-

taking, though I prefer just typing notes and reminders. Artists might

appreciate having it for drawing and sketching. The Surface is pressure-sensitive and responds differently whether you press hard or lightly. But it won't let you shade from an angle like a pencil, which the Apple Pencil stylus for the upcoming iPad Pro will let you do.

Meanwhile, you can enable facial recognition on the Pro 4 to bypass a sign-in password. The feature wasn't available for testing yet, however. A premium keyboard cover offers a fingerprint reader.

The Pro 4 starts shipping next Monday in the U.S. and Canada. It starts at \$899 and comes with the stylus, though it's unrealistic to have without the \$130 keyboard cover. The base model comes with just 128 gigabytes of storage, which is barely enough for moderate and heavy users.

Configurations with double that storage start at \$1,299, or \$1,429 with the keyboard. The high-end model with 512 gigabytes costs \$2,329 with the cover. The premium, fingerprint keyboard

cover is \$30 more.

Cheaper

Apple's entry-level iPads are much cheaper, but Microsoft is going after customers of the MacBook Air (which starts at \$899) and the iPad Pro (which starts at \$799, plus \$169 for a physical keyboard and \$99 for the Apple Pencil).

I have been using Macs since 1987 and have invested a lot in software and accessories, so I don't see myself abandoning my Mac laptop for the Surface. But the Surface could appeal to those already familiar with Windows and want compatibility with what they have at work.

Battery life isn't as good compared with the MacBook Air. While the 13-inch Air has given me nine to 11 hours of general use, it's closer to six or seven on the Surface. Among other things, the resolution on the Surface's 12.3-inch display is sharper, meaning there are more pixels to light up. The Surface also has a touch screen, while Mac laptops do not. (AP)

Tech

Internet company

Xiaomi 'future' beyond phones

LAGUNA BEACH, United States, Oct 22, (AFP): Leading Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi is aiming for a future as an Internet company with the potential to cross swords with titans such as Alibaba.

Xiaomi co-founder and chief executive Bin Lin on Wednesday shared a vision of a future that includes Segway-like self-balancing scooters and smartphones and a role for the company in e-commerce, digital movies and games.

"We'd rather be called an Internet company," Lin said during an on-stage interview at the WSJD Live technology conference on the Southern California coast.

"We are really focusing on building out smartphones as the center of all these smart devices that are launched."

Xiaomi smartphones can be used to control the company's recently introduced Ninebot mini scooter. China-based Ninebot, owned by Xiaomi, bought US rival Segway early this year.

The Xiaomi handsets can also be used to remotely control a new Mi TV model, according to Lin.

"We think of the TV as yet another smart device," Lin said. "It is almost like a phone except it is a much bigger display."

Content

The path ahead for Xiaomi includes providing online services and digital content, like games, rather than just selling televisions or smartphones, according to Lin.

While most of Xiaomi's revenue now comes from hardware sales, he predicted that would shift as Xiaomi gets deeper into online services, content, e-commerce, and even financial services.

That vision would have Xiaomi challenging Chinese e-commerce colossus Alibaba.

"On the hardware side, we think we have advantages over Alibaba," Lin said.

Xiaomi tailors free Google-backed Android software to power devices. Getting Xiaomi smartphones in people's hands provides opportunity to have software easily connect people to the startup's online offerings.

Apple, a winning model when it comes to combining the power of mobile device hardware and software, is already a thriving rival to Xiaomi in the premium smartphone market in China.

Lin brushed aside a suggestion that Xiaomi copied features from iPhones. "For every single tiny similarity between us and Apple, I can probably point out a hundred differences," Lin said. The Chinese smartphone market is shifting to a flat, if not declining, upgrade scenario after boom years of people snapping up their first handsets, according to Lin.

He said that Xiaomi is doing well in India, and has sold more than three million smartphones there since expanding to that country last year. In just five years, the Chinese firm has become the world's number three smartphone vendor, behind only Apple and South Korea's Samsung, with rapid growth in emerging countries.

It has yet to introduce its handsets to the US market but it has opened an online accessory store in the United States and major European countries, selling fitness bands headphones and other gadgets.



Robert Kyncl, YouTube Chief Business Officer, speaks as YouTube unveils 'YouTube Red', a news subscription service, at YouTube Space LA, Oct 21, in Los Angeles. (AP)

New YouTube Music app hopes to draw dedicated users

YouTube announces ad-free video

Subscription streaming service

LOS ANGELES, Oct 22, (Agencies): YouTube on Wednesday unveiled a new \$10-a-month subscription plan in the US called Red that combines ad-free videos, new original series and movies from top YouTubers, and on-demand unlimited streaming music.

Red builds on Google's existing music streaming service by providing ad-free access to YouTube programming, along with features such as the ability to download videos to mobile devices and have music playing in the background while using other mobile apps.

Current subscribers to the Google Play Music service, which also costs \$10 a month, will also get access to Red.

"It's a major, major evolution of our platform," YouTube's chief business officer, Robert Kyncl, told journalists at an event at its studio space in Los Angeles.

Red targets YouTube fans who want to skip ads, while giving them a chance to pass along some cash to their favorite video creators, who'll share in the new revenues. It comes as streaming services like Hulu, Pandora, Spotify and TuneIn offer ad-free as a paid option.

Toggle

The plan, which launches Oct 28, includes exclusive access to new videos launching next year as well as the YouTube Music Key service - to be called YouTube Music after it launches later this year - for music videos and songs. The new YouTube Music app will allow you to toggle music videos to play audio only.

But you don't have to wait for the new music app to have Red features work across YouTube platforms, with the exception of the YouTube Kids app, starting next week. The apps, including the existing YouTube app, are free to download.

DisneyLife to launch in Britain

LOS ANGELES, Oct 22, (RTS): Disney is to launch next month a subscription streaming service in the UK, which will offer its movies, television series, books and music direct to the consumer online.

The service, DisneyLife, will make available a wide range of titles, including the complete Pixar catalog, which includes the "Toy Story" franchise, and classics such as "Snow White," "Lady and the Tramp" and "The Jungle Book," the Financial Times reported Wednesday. DisneyLife will cost \$9.99 (\$15.43) a month.

"This is the future, in many respects," said Bob Iger, Disney's chief executive. "We're seeing more and more opportunities to reach consumers directly and not through middlemen, and we're seeing consumers wanting product in different

ways." The service will roll out the service across Europe next year, with the aim of launching in France, Spain, Italy and Germany. There are no plans to launch the service in the US, but Iger would not rule it out. "The technology platform that this sits on is scalable to the US and is scalable to our other brands," he said. Netflix has pay TV window rights to Disney theatrical releases for the US, kicking in at the end of next year, and Canada, starting with 2015 theatrical releases.

New content will be added to DisneyLife as it becomes available. Movies produced by Marvel and the Lucasfilm "Star Wars" franchise will not be included, but "Star Wars" and Marvel subscription services could be launched in the future, Iger said.

The service will cost \$13 a month if purchased through Apple's iTunes - but only because Apple takes a 30 percent cut, executives said. If purchased through the Google Play Store or on the Web, the subscription will still work on apps running on Apple's iOS or Safari browser.

The original videos will range in length from a few minutes to feature-length movies and come from established YouTube stars such as the Fine Brothers, who are creating a scripted 10-episode series about a singing competition show called "Sing It." Another new show stars video game-playing star Felix Kjellberg in a reality series co-created by the makers of "The Walking Dead" called "Scare PewDiePie."

Performer and comedian Lilly Singh said that while YouTube helped pay for the creation of a documentary of her world tour called "A Trip to Unicorn Island," the new service won't drastically change how she serves her fans.

"Is YouTube Red going to be the extreme make of my financial career? No," she said. "But that's not why I'm doing it. I'm doing it to give my viewers choice."

YouTube still intends for advertising revenue to remain its core business, and executives say they believe it could take a while for paid subscribers to grow significantly. Some original content will also be made available to non-subscribers later with ads.

Kyncl said the subscription will bolster YouTube's revenues and that of artists, and said \$10 a month is the upper limit of what consumers would pay for such a plan. He said YouTube's advertising revenues will not be hurt, given that the number of users switching to the new service won't likely make a dent in YouTube's billion-plus users.

Impact

"It wouldn't really impact the amount of eyeballs we're providing through our platform," he said.

One challenge is getting people to pay for a service they long associated with being free, said RBC Capital Markets analyst Mark Mahaney in a research note Wednesday.

The move comes amid a boom in consumer appetite for ad-free experiences.

Ad-blocking software has become popular on personal computers, and Apple's iOS 9 operating system update last month allowed ad-blocker apps to run on its mobile Safari browser for the first time. Worldwide usage of ad blockers rose 41 percent last year to nearly 200 million people, according to PageFair, a firm that seeks to counter ad blockers.

And yet content providers are finding a way to make money from eliminating ads, too.

Internet radio giant Pandora Media Inc. made \$54.6 million on subscription and other revenue in the quarter through June, mainly from its \$5-a-month ad-free plan, Pandora One. Its subscription revenue is growing faster than ad revenue itself.

Hulu launched a "No Commercials" plan in September for \$4 more per month than its regular \$8 subscription, and TuneIn added a premium tier for \$8 a month in August that throws ad-free music together with audio books and sports play-by-play coverage.

their age, to play in the Swiss pairing format. Medals and certificates are awarded to all participating children and first 3 positions in each group win trophies.

Youngest player of the tournament will be awarded a certificate and a trophy. For more details, registration forms, rules of CRYchess 2015, please visit <http://www.fockwt.org/> or contact FOCC members. Sponsors are also welcome to encourage the participating young chess players. The last date for registration is Sat, Oct 31, 2015. Contact of FOCC members: Salmiya: 25618471, 97990162,

66810338; Abu Halifa: 99364073, 66204295; Ahmadi: 99578073; Hawally: 99300257; Abbasiya: 97226589. With CRY everyone wins.

Nov 13

FOCC Calendar of Events: FOCC (Friends of CRY Club) announces the calendar of events for the year 2015-16:

CRYchess: Nov 13, 2015 (0900 to 1700); CRYwalk (Mahboula) Nov 27, 2015 (0900 to 1130); CRYwalk (Abassiya) Dec 18, 2015 (0900 to 1130); CRYwalk (Salmiya) Jan 22, 2016 (0900 to 1130); CRYcket Apr 8, 2016 (0630 to 1830).

All events are on Fridays. Notices and press releases will be issued approx. 1 month in advance. But don't wait, get yourselves in the training gear, right away. Contact No: 99364073, 99578073, 66810338, 97990162, 66204295.

Almass Volley 2015: ALMASS-Kuwait, the Alumni Association of St Stephen's College Uzhavoor, Kuwait Chapter will conduct its 3rd Annual General Body Meeting and 'Almass Volley 2015' volleyball tournament at Indian Central School, Abbasiya on Nov 13, 2015.

The first ever volleyball tournament by ALMASS-Kuwait will start at 9:00 am and will end up with the final 4:30 pm followed by 3rd anniversary celebrations and various cultural programs from 6:30 pm. For details log on to www.almaskuwait.com.

KALA-Kuwait drawing contest: Kerala Art Lovers Association, KALA-Kuwait, the oldest among Indian Associations, is working constructively in the Indian Society, upholding the rich cultural heritage of the nation. Now KALA-Kuwait is again putting here a milestone ... with 'Mazhavillu-2015' drawing and painting competitions for Indian school children, to discover the true talents. The competitions are classified into four categories, as follows, with several prizes. Kindergarten (LKG & UKG), Sub-Junior (Class I-IV), Junior (Class V-VIII) & Senior (Class IX-XII).

The competitions will start at 1:30 pm on Nov 13, 2015 at Indian Central School, Khaitan and results will be announced on Nov 20, 2015. The school with highest aggregate points will be awarded with the 'Mazhavillu-2015 Trophy'. The prize distribution schedule and venue shall be announced later.

Online registrations are open at our web sites www.kalakuwait.com participants may please carry the filled form to be handed over in the venue while collecting chest numbers. For any further details, the following numbers shall be contacted. 97262978, 97817100, 66013891.

Dec 15

IKFS announces competitions: Indo-Kuwait Friendship Society, (IKFS) a non-profit socio cultural NRI association whose chief patron is Rajindar Sachar, the former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court and Head of Sachar Committee. Padmini Dr Kiran Bedi, Dr M.K. Munir, Minister of Kerala, Father Davis Chiramal, Chairman, Kidney Foundation of India are some of the patrons of IKFS.

In a press release, AKS Abdul Nazar, IKFS General Secretary announced conducting of competitions in public speech. Both Arabic and or English can be chosen by the participant. Also calligraphy competitions in Hindi and Arabic languages. Students of 10th, 11th and 12th class of any nationality can participate in these contests. The last date of registration is set on Dec 15, 2015.

The competition will be held on Jan 8, 2016 at 3:00 pm.

Program venue: Paragon Hotel Auditorium, Mirgab, Kuwait city. Darshana TV Malayalam Channel has endorsed as being the co-sponsor of the program, and their TV crew will be present on the day. In addition to several distinguished Kuwaitis and Indian community leaders will attend during the award ceremony and the time is expected at 8:00 pm on the same day, in order to hand over the cash prizes as well as encrypted memento to the winners. Students are requested to register thru email with the consent of their parents. Attention: Program convener, ikfsociety@gmail.com (www.indo-kwtfriendshipsociety.com)

Jan 4, 2016

NRI Divas in Agra: The Government of Uttar Pradesh is organizing the first ever NRI Divas focused on the State's diaspora on Jan 4 and Jan 5, 2016, in Agra. During the flagship event, in the presence of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Akhilesh Yadav, major policy decisions and initiatives planned for the State's diaspora will be unveiled. The NRIs from UP are welcome to join & celebrate the vibrancy created by them for Uttar Pradesh around the world during the event.

Continued on Page 26

click

Latest

Continued from Page 24

results of hard works are beginning to tell with the IBAK juniors bagging 13 medals in the 2nd GCC Junior Championship held in Bahrain early this year and as well

as in the 2nd GCC invitational Badminton tournament recently held in Kuwait.

The motto of Inspire, Train and Achieve is what we have been doing for the last five years and our efforts have not gone in vain. With more than 500 trainees who have passed through our modules, many youngsters have gone on to achieve resounding success and many recreational adult trainees have won competitions too.

As part of promoting the game we are introducing the game to our younger generation, we would like to invite interested children/adults to come and be part of the

11th Module which will be held at the IBAK gym premises in Salwa. We presume you will make use of this wonderful opportunity and be part of the endeavor to promote badminton in a big way. You can visit our website for more information www.ibakwt.org

Interested trainees may please contact the following: Shyam Sadhwani (Coaching Secretary) - shyamnathu@yahoo.com 66248704 Dr Mani (Director-Coaching) - ibakchozhan@gmail.com Sreekrumar Gopinathan (Asst Director-

Coaching) - gsreekumar@hotmail.com 96663065

Nov 6

FOCC announces CRYchess 2015: Friends of CRY Club (FOCC), announces rescheduled dates for children's chess tournament 2015. "CRYchess 2015" will be held at the Gul Indian School (GIS), Fahaheel, on Friday, Nov 6, 2015, from 0930 - 1630 hrs. It is open to all school children upto 12th Standard. The players will be placed into groups, allocated by