

Microsoft's new Surface Pro 3 computer and tablet

NEW YORK, USA: Microsoft has unveiled a new Surface Pro tablet designed as a powerful all-purpose computer fit to replace a laptop.



Microsoft's Surface Pro 3 is a combination of a tablet and a serious business computer claims Microsoft's Satya Nadella. Image: Wikimedia Commons

Surface Pro 3 was touted as slimmer, bigger and more powerful than its predecessor and crafted for a world in which people want to work as well as play on tablets.

"We want products and technologies that enable people to dream and get stuff done," Microsoft Chief Executive Satya Nadella said at a press event in New York.

Pro 3 has a high-resolution screen that is 12 inches (30.5 centimeters) measured diagonally, weighs about 800 grams and is slightly more than a 0.9cm deep.

The tablet has the Surface trademark keyboard cover that has been modified to let users tilt it as they wish and more securely anchor the device while being used, say, in a person's lap.

It also comes with a "pen" that can be used to remotely activate Pro 3 with clicks or to write on it as though it were a notepad.

"We are super proud of Surface Pro 3," Microsoft's Corporate Vice President Panos Panay said while introducing the tablet at the event.

"I am sure that this is the tablet that can replace the laptop," he added.

Combination of a serious computer and a tablet

Surface Pro 3 will be available for pre-order from Wednesday (21 May) with a starting price of \$799. A version of Microsoft's latest tablet, powered by an Intel Core i5 chip, will be available in the USA from 20 June.

According to Microsoft additional models, including a top-end Pro 3 with an Intel Core i7 chip, will be available in the US and 26 other countries including France, China, Australia and Germany by the end of August.

Microsoft is being innovative and counter-intuitive with the Pro 3, with its large-screen tablet while rivals boast smaller, pocket-sized devices, according to Gartner Analyst Mike Silver.

Much care and thought went into technical features of the Pro 3, and a challenge for Microsoft is to get that message to mainstream consumers who aren't geeks.

"There is a lot of elegance in the device, but they have to prove they can communicate that," Silver said at the unveiling event.

"If everything works as well as it looks, you are getting pretty close to a device that can replace a notebook computer for a high percentage of people," he said.



The Surface Pro 3 will go on sale from 20 June but is available for pre-order. Image: [Microsoft Store](#)

Aimed at people who want a single device

Silver said the Pro 3 has the potential to strike chords with those who want to leave their laptops behind and just carry a tablet when they are on the move.



The Surface Pro 3 has a keyboard cover for easy typing. Image: [CultureMob](#)

Panay cited research indicating that more than 95% of laptop owners also have tablet computers. But Microsoft has barely made a dent in a tablet market dominated by Apple's iPad and others using Google Android.

Gartner's survey showed the Microsoft operating system had just two percent of the global market in 2013.

Nadella stressed that Microsoft, which built its software empire working with partners who make computing hardware, wants to pioneer a merging of laptops and tablets and not to compete with device manufacturers.

"We clearly are not interested in building refrigerators or toasters; we are not building hardware for hardware's sake," Nadella said.

"The motivation is to create new categories; we want to build productivity experiences," he added.

Microsoft in March released Office software tailored for iPads, and it soared to the top of the charts at Apple's online App Store.

While Office applications for iPad are free, subscriptions to Microsoft's online Office 365 service are needed to be able to create or edit documents, spreadsheets or presentations.

Microsoft says that more than a billion people use Office. The Pro 3 indicates that Microsoft has decided to play to its strengths in business software and avoid going head-to-head with bargain-priced tablets according to analyst Jack Gold of J. Gold Associates.

"Further, Microsoft finally seems to understand it can not go head-to-head with Apple's iPad," Gold added in a research note, saying the Pro 3 is a great business device for work.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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