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1

Tablet PCs

This chapter examines how Tablet PCs have developed and evolved into the various types, discusses what's involved in selecting your Tablet PC, and looks in detail at Microsoft Surface, the example that is used in this book.

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Don't forget

The Tablet computer may be a simple device that is used mainly for displaying information such as books, videos, music, website pages and messages.

Hot tip

In 2012, 31% of Internet users in the USA were reported to have a tablet, used mainly for consuming published content.

Tablet Computers

The Tablet computer is a device that is designed for mobility and use in a variety of situations where keyboards would be unsuitable or difficult to use. The devices are larger than cell phones or PDAs (personal digital assistants) and are integrated with a flat touchscreen. They are principally operated by touching the screen with a stylus, a digital pen or with fingers.



There's usually no physical keyboard, though they often use an on-screen virtual keyboard. Variations on the tablet form include hybrid computers with a detachable keyboard, convertible computers whose keyboards can be hidden by swiveling or sliding the screen, and computers with a keyboard connected by wireless link or USB port.

Tablet computers will use a variety of operating systems, including Android (Google), QNX (RIM) and iOS (Apple) as used in the Apple iPad.

Such devices are used mainly for displaying published material such as videos, music, books and news. They are also used to create and exchange messages and photos through services such as Email, Facebook, Flickr and Twitter.

Screen sizes range from 7 up to about 13 inches.



...cont'd

Tablet PCs, on the other hand, are full computers in tablet format, based on a multitasking operating system such as Windows or Linux. This allows support for functions such as creating documents, reports, spreadsheets and presentations. Microsoft initiated this approach with the Microsoft Tablet PC, a niche product used in hospitals and outdoor businesses. This used the Windows XP Tablet PC Edition which incorporated support for pen input.

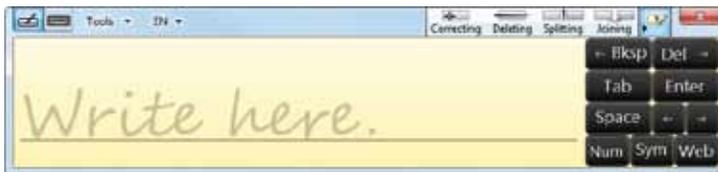


Don't forget



The Home and Business editions of Windows Vista and Windows 7 provided a built-in set of Tablet PC functions, including the Tablet PC Input Panel.

Later releases of Windows did not have Tablet PC – specific editions of Windows but instead pen – and touch support was built in to the main editions of the operating systems.



Hot tip



ARM processors use a RISC based approach to computer design which results in lower costs, less heat, and less power usage. However, they are incompatible with the Intel and AMD class of processors used in conventional PCs.

This approach has been continued with Windows 8, for Tablet PCs that are based on the standard Intel and AMD processors, as used for desktop and laptop computers. It also supports variations of these processors such as the Atom processor first used for Netbook PCs to improve battery life.

To further extend the battery life, there is an edition of Windows 8 specifically designed for Tablet PCs based on the ARM processor. This is known as Windows RT, and is provided preinstalled on PCs with ARM processors which are designed for use in light, portable, battery-powered devices such as smartphones and tablets, and this has been extended to Tablet PCs.

Hot tip

The minimum resolution for full function on a Tablet PC is 1366 x 768, significantly larger than the 1024 x 600 used by Netbook PCs.

Don't forget

The Intel-based Tablet PC supports conventional apps as well as Windows 8 apps, and allows you to install applications such as Adobe Photoshop which are not supported under Windows RT.

Types of Tablet PC

Pure Tablet PC

The simplest form of Tablet PC consists of a touchscreen device that incorporates all the components, storage and connections and is preloaded with the operating system, either Windows 8 or Windows RT, depending on the processor type. There will be no physical keyboard, and you'd use the touchscreen for all input, with an on-screen virtual keyboard for text entry.

For example, the Asus VivoTab RT has a 10.1-inch, 1,366 x 768 pixel display and an Nvidia Tegra 3 (ARM class) processor. It comes with 2GB RAM and 32GB storage, and Windows RT and Microsoft Office RT are included. There's an 8-megapixel rear camera and a 2-megapixel front camera, and sensor support for orientation and direction. The Vivo Tab RT weighs 1.15 lbs and has a thickness of 8.3 mm.



The Vivo Tab is slightly larger, with its 11.6-inch display (also 1,366 x 768 pixels), and it features an Intel Atom (x86 class) processor, with 2GB RAM and 64GB storage. This machine has Windows 8 installed. There's no edition of Microsoft Office included as standard, but you can add this as an extra. Like the RT model, the Vivo Tab has front and rear cameras, and sensor support. It weighs 1.54 lbs and is 8.7 mm thick.

...cont'd

Hybrid Tablet, with Add-on Keyboard

Tablet PCs will usually be offered with some form of keyboard as a clip-on option. This may include other functions as with the Asus Tablet PCs, where the add-on keyboard provides additional battery power. The keyboard usually includes a touchpad that operates as a mouse, controlling a pointer and providing two buttons giving left- and right-click functions.



Other Tablet PCs may include the physical keyboard with the case, as with the Microsoft Surface Tablet PCs (see page 18). These offer two options: the Touch Cover with audio feedback and the Type Cover with physical buttons.

Such an option means the Tablet PC can be used as a hand-held device, or as a traditional laptop computer.



Don't forget



The add-on keyboard may also be used as a docking device to provide additional connections or to allow for extra storage.

Hot tip



The Touch Cover is ultra-thin to maximize portability. The Type Cover is thicker and has keys that move when they are pressed.



Don't forget

Unlike a hybrid Tablet PC, the keyboard remains with the convertible computer, even when it is in tablet mode.

Convertible Computers

The convertible computer can be used as a Tablet PC or as a laptop, without having to remove the keyboard. The screen is rotated so that the keyboard is hidden and the computer can be operated by touch alone.

There are various mechanisms for switching between tablet and laptop, depending on the manufacturers. For example:

Dell XPS 12 Convertible Ultrabook



This is a powerful machine featuring the latest Intel processors and having 4GB or 8GB RAM. There's also a 128GB or 256GB SSD (solid state drive), and the display is full HD (high definition) at 1920 x 1080 pixels.

The monitor frame allows the screen to swivel through 180 degrees, from tablet mode to laptop mode.



This computer comes with Windows 8 (64-bit edition) with the Pro edition available as an option. There is no copy of Microsoft Office provided with the operating system.

Hot tip

Machines such as this may be purchased with Microsoft Office as an extra feature. This would be one of the full editions (Office 2013 or Office 365) not Office RT as supplied with Windows RT.

...cont'd

Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga

The Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga comes in two models. The Yoga 13 has an Intel processor with up to 4GB RAM and 256GB SSD, and runs Windows 8. The Yoga 11 has an Nvidia ARM-class processor, with up to 2GB RAM and up to 64GB eMMC storage, and runs Windows RT.



Both models feature a 360-degree hinge that allows you to open the computer and select one of four modes - Laptop, Tablet, Tent or Stand, whichever suits your purpose.



Lenovo ThinkPad Twist

The ThinkPad Twist features an Intel processor with 4GB RAM and up to 500GB hard drive. The operating system is Windows 8 Pro 64-bit. This is a more traditional convertible, using a single hinge and a spin-round, fold-down screen that allows laptop, tablet, tent and stand modes.



Hot tip



The Yoga 11 screen is 11.6" HD (1366 x 768) while the Yoga 13 has a 13.3" HD+ (1600 x 900), both screens with the 16:9 wide angle ratio.

Hot tip



There are two USB 3.0 ports and a 4-in-1 card reader plus a 720p camera. The screen is 12.5" HD (1366 x 768).

Don't forget

The ARM processor provides extended battery life, at the cost of some limitations on function and performance.

Don't forget

For the business user, the main choices are the Professional and the Enterprise editions.

Windows 8 versus RT

There are three editions of Windows 8 for computers based on the Intel or AMD processors (until now the usual processors for Windows PCs) and these are provided in 32-bit and 64-bit versions. For PCs based on the ARM processor there is just one edition called Windows RT, currently available as a 32-bit version.

Windows 8

Windows 8 is the base or entry edition that is intended for consumers and contains the main features of Windows 8, including touchscreen and keyboard/mouse support, Windows 8 apps, Windows Store access, Internet Explorer 10, enhanced Task Manager and multi-monitor support.

Windows 8 Pro

Windows 8 Pro is the edition designed for advanced users and for business or technical professionals. It includes all the features in Windows 8 plus extra features for encryption, virtualization, PC management and domain connectivity. Windows Media Center is not included in any edition of Windows 8 but is available as a chargeable media pack add-on for Windows 8 Pro.

Windows 8 Enterprise

Windows 8 Enterprise is the edition for customers with Software Assurance agreements and includes all the features of Windows 8 Pro plus more features for the IT departments, to enable PC management and deployment, advanced security, virtualization and mobility. Unlike the Windows 8 and Windows 8 Pro editions, it will not be supplied as a separate retail pack.

Windows RT

Windows RT is only available pre-installed on Tablet PCs and convertible computers powered by the ARM class of processor. It is designed to enable new thin and lightweight form factors with enhanced battery life. Windows RT includes Office RT with touch-optimized desktop versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote. It does not support conventional Windows desktop applications.

Regional Variations

In China and some other emerging markets, a region-specific Windows 8 Single Language edition is provided. For European markets there are Windows 8 N editions that do not include a copy of Windows Media Player.

Selecting your Tablet PC

When choosing your Tablet PC, you should first of all decide which edition of Windows 8 is necessary for your purposes, since this will have a major influence on the ranges of Tablet PC that might suit.

You'll need Windows 8 (and an Intel/AMD processor-based Tablet PC) if you want to run conventional Windows applications such as Adobe Photoshop or Windows Media Player or many of the Windows games, or if you want to add a full edition of Microsoft Office.

If you feel mobility and battery life are the most important issues, you could be satisfied with a Tablet PC that is ARM processor based. This will have Windows RT plus Microsoft Office RT with its somewhat limited set of applications.

If your requirements lie between these two positions, you should look at the hybrid Tablet PCs and the convertible PCs. These will give you a physical keyboard, either attachable or integrated. You'll normally be able to choose between models that run Windows 8 or Windows RT. You will find yourself trading off mobility factors such as weight and size against higher levels of memory and storage or additional connectivity options.

When you are reviewing your possible Tablet PCs, the questions that you should be asking include:

- What editions of Windows are supported?
- What editions of Microsoft Office are supported?
- Will it run programs compatible with Windows 7 or earlier?
- What size and resolution is the screen?
- What connection does it offer, e.g. Wi-Fi or 3G/4G?
- How many cameras are there, and what size?
- How much RAM and storage space is offered?
- How thick is it, and what does it weigh?

We look at some of the tablet PCs currently available, to see the range of features you can expect, and then look more closely at Microsoft Surface, used as the example system.

Don't forget



Existing versions may be for Windows 8 only, but you may find some Windows applications being re-issued in new versions that are designed for Windows RT.

Hot tip



In the following chapters, the Microsoft Surface Tablet is used to illustrate the options and actions discussed. However, the topics covered apply to any Tablet PC running Windows 8 or Windows RT.

Don't forget

The Windows RT Tablet PCs feature Microsoft Office RT and are usually lower weight, with thinner profiles and longer life batteries because of the ARM processors.

Windows RT Tablet PCs

Examples of Tablet PCs running Windows RT include:

ASUS Vivo Tab RT

Tablet/hybrid



\$599.00
10.1" screen, 8MP + 2MP cameras
Up to 8 hours battery life
1.15 lbs weight
10.33" x 6.71" x .33"
32GB/64GB storage
2GB memory
Nvidia Tegra 3 processor

Dell XPS 10

Tablet/hybrid



\$499.99 – 749.00
10.1" screen, 5MP + 2MP cameras
Up to 10 hours battery life
1.4 lbs weight
10.8" x 6.9" x .36" (+ .41" dock)
32GB SSD storage
2GB memory
Qualcomm S4 dual-core ARM

Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga 11

Convertible



\$799.00–899.99
11.6" screen, 720p HD webcam
Up to 13 hours battery life
2.8 lbs weight
0.66" thickness
64GB SSD storage
2GB memory
Nvidia Tegra 3 processor

Samsung ATIV Tab

Tablet/hybrid



\$649.00
10.1" screen
8MP + 1.9MP cameras
8200 mAh battery
1.28 lbs
10.46" x 6.62" x 0.35
32GB–64GB
2GB
Qualcomm APQ8060A

Hot tip

The prices shown are average prices in the USA, and correct at the time of printing. Prices will vary in different regions, but these prices will still give an indication of the relative costs of the systems.

Windows 8 Tablet PCs

Examples of Tablet PCs running Windows RT include:

ASUS Vivo Tab



\$799.00
11.6" screen, 8MP+2MP cameras
Up to 8 hours battery life
1.54 lbs weight
11.58" x 7.43" x 0.34"
64GB eMMC
2GB
Intel Cloverview processor

Tablet/hybrid

HP Envy x2



\$849.00
11.6" screen, 8MP+1080p cameras
Up to 14 hours (tablet and base)
Tablet 1.54 lbs, total 3.13 lbs
11.92" x 8.11" x .37" (+ .39" base)
64GB eMMC storage
2GB memory
Intel Clover Trail SoC processor

Tablet/hybrid

Lenovo ThinkPad Tablet 2



\$699.00–799.99
10.1" screen, 8MP + 2MP cameras
Up to 10 hours
1.3 lbs weight
0.38" thickness
64GB SSD storage
2GB memory
Intel Clover Trail processor

Tablet

Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga 13



\$949.00–1,000.00
11.6" screen, 720p HD webcam
Up to 8 hours battery life
3.09 lbs
0.67" thickness
Up to 256GB SSD
Up to 8GB
Up to Intel Core i7

Convertible

Don't forget



The Windows 8 Tablet PCs are generally more powerful, but heavier and with lower battery life, though a second battery in the keyboard or docking unit can compensate for this.

Hot tip



Some Windows 8 Tablet PCs use versions of the Intel Atom, which is more power efficient than the Intel processors used in most laptop and desktop PCs.

Hot tip

The pressure-sensitive 3mm Touch Cover senses keystrokes as gestures, allowing you to touch type faster than with an on-screen keyboard. It is available in cyan, magenta, black, red and white.

**Hot tip**

The 5mm Type Cover features real keys with actual key travel, for the more traditional typing technique.



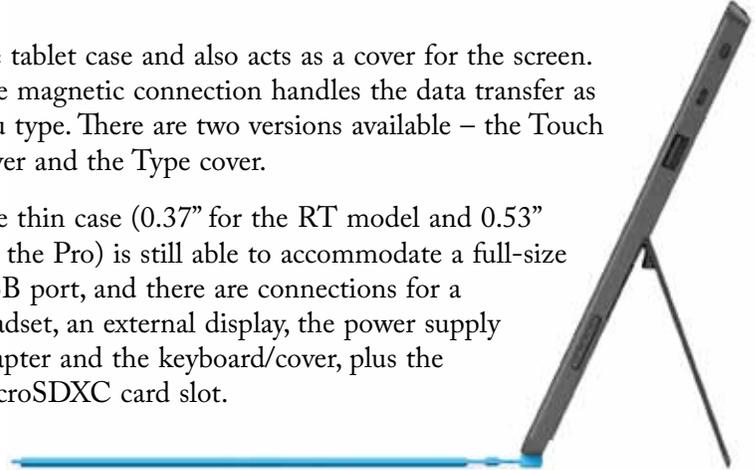
Microsoft Surface

Microsoft has designed and marketed its own Tablet PCs – the Microsoft Surface for Windows RT and the Microsoft Surface for Windows 8 Pro. They are tablet format, with an integrated kickstand and an optional keyboard. This connects magnetically to



the tablet case and also acts as a cover for the screen. The magnetic connection handles the data transfer as you type. There are two versions available – the Touch cover and the Type cover.

The thin case (0.37” for the RT model and 0.53” for the Pro) is still able to accommodate a full-size USB port, and there are connections for a headset, an external display, the power supply adapter and the keyboard/cover, plus the microSDXC card slot.



The case also incorporates the volume and power buttons, and there’s a Windows key on the front of the screen that performs the same functions as the Windows logo key on a standard PC keyboard.

Inside the case for either model there are sensors (ambient light, accelerometer, gyroscope and compass) and adapters for the Wi-Fi and Bluetooth wireless connections. There are also two 720p cameras, microphones and stereo speakers. However, there’s a number of significant differences between the devices, including size, weight and screen resolution. There are also differences in the operating system they use and in their processing capabilities.

...cont'd

Surface RT

Operating system

Windows RT

Software

Office 2013 RT

Size

10.81 x 6.77 x 0.37
27.45 x 17.19 x 0.93

Weight

1.5 lbs
676g

Storage

32GB, 64GB

Memory

2GB RAM

Display

10.6"
ClearType HD
1366 x 768 pixels

Multi-touch

5-point

Pen Input

Supported
No pen supplied

Processor

Nvidia Tegra 3
Quad-core

Battery

31.5W-h
Up to 8 hours

Ports

Full-size USB 2.0
HD video out port

Power Supply

24W power supply

PTypical Cost (USA)

32GB \$499
64GB \$599
n/a

Surface Pro

Windows 8 Pro

Windows Desktop apps

10.81 x 6.81 x 0.53 (ins)
27.45 x 17.29 x 1.32 (cms)

2 lbs
903g

64GB, 128GB

4GB RAM

10.6"
ClearType Full HD
1920 x 1080 pixels

10-point

Supported
Inductive pen supplied

3rd Gen Intel Core i5 with
Intel HD Graphics 4000

42 W-h
4 to 5 hours estimated-

Full-size USB 3.0
Mini DisplayPort

48W power supply
including 5W USB for
charging accessories

n/a
64GB \$899
128GB \$999

Don't forget



Both models will run Windows 8 Apps from the Windows Store. Only the Pro model is able to run the Desktop Apps listed at the Windows Store or Windows applications available from the suppliers and developer websites.

Hot tip



Both models support a full-size USB port that can handle most types of devices. However, only the Pro model can handle USB 3.0 devices or provide charging facilities for USB devices.

Don't forget

There are versions of these accessories available for the Surface RT and the Surface Pro. However, they are not generally interchangeable between the two.

Hot tip

If you want to plug in more than one USB accessory at once, for example a mouse and a printer, you should use a USB hub with its own power supply.

Accessories

Microsoft offers accessories for the Surface Tablet PCs, in addition to the Touch Cover and Type Cover. For example:

Surface HD AV Adapter

Designed to match the angled profile of the Surface PCs, this adapter lets you connect your Tablet PC to any HDMI-compatible display (HDTV, monitor, or projector) and stream movies, play video games and watch slideshows in high definition.



Surface VGA Adapter

This adapter lets you share your photos, video, and presentations by connecting the Tablet PC to VGA-compatible displays, monitors or projectors.



Both adapters are around 12" in length but need an HDMI or VGA extension cable, as appropriate, to complete the connection.

USB Devices

Microsoft Surface PCs include a full-size USB port, so you can add USB accessories such as a printer, camera, music player, a mouse, or even an external hard drive. You should confirm that the devices you want to use are compatible with Windows RT or Windows 8 as appropriate.

Wedge Touch Mouse

This is a special edition of the Wedge Touch Mouse Inspired by Surface. It is small enough to fit in your pocket, features a dark titanium finish and is easily paired with your Surface PC using Bluetooth technology.



MicroSDXC Memory Cards

The Surface tablets include a microSDXC card slot, and suitable memory cards are available from independent suppliers. The tablets can accept cards of up to 64GB to provide additional storage.



Surface Sleeves

There are protective padded sleeves available that fit either model.