

## New Laptop - Surface Book 2 or Other Recommendations?

Hi all,

My Surface Pro 2 is getting a little long in the tooth and I want to upgrade. I like the Surface form factor for the most part, but the Surface Pros are a bit small and I want something bigger. I don't really do anything graphically intensive so I don't need a discreet graphics card.

I'm thinking about the Surface Book 2 13.5 inch with the i5 processor. Is anyone using that (or any of the other Surface Books)? How do you like it?

How is the stylus for taking notes?

Or, does anyone else have a laptop they really like?

Thanks!

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I love my Surface Pro! I got one a few months ago, so it's the latest model. It's the mid-range model, not the fanciest one. For daily use at my office, I set it up with a docking station, large monitor, and external keyboard and mouse, so the small-ish size doesn't matter. When I'm on the road, I love that it's so portable. What about setting it up with some external bells and whistles when you're in the office to get around the size issue?

Katie Burghardt Kramer, Vermont

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I just got the Dell latitude convertible .... it's really fun!!!

David Crosson, Pennsylvania

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I'd be interested in hearing how everyone is using their Surface Pro or Convertible in their work - do you take notes in meetings with the pen?

Then where do you save it? What else do you do to maximize the potential of the computer? Thanks!

David A. Rubin, Missouri

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I've got a Surface Pro as well, which I like. Keep in mind that, as Katie notes, you can set up pretty much any laptop with external monitors, keyboard, etc. these days. My laptop is connected via a standalone Dell docking station to two 28" monitors and a full-sized, ergonomic keyboard.

The docking station (I've got this one:

[https://www.amazon.com/Dell-Display-Docking-Station-D3100/dp/B0000M46KO/ref=asc\\_df\\_B0000M46KO/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=309776868400&hvpos=1o2&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=10591989194837037815&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvwmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmld=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9008450&hvtargid=pla-406164589633&pssc=1](https://www.amazon.com/Dell-Display-Docking-Station-D3100/dp/B0000M46KO/ref=asc_df_B0000M46KO/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=309776868400&hvpos=1o2&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=10591989194837037815&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvwmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmld=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9008450&hvtargid=pla-406164589633&pssc=1)

is really handy because it handles my etherport connection, both my monitors, my keyboard and a number of other USB connections (such as my iPhone), so if I need to take my laptop I don't have to spend half an hour unplugging it from all the peripherals.

Kevin Grierson, Virginia

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Note that Noel was initially asking about the "Surface Book", which is a completely different machine than the "Surface Pro".

I have the Surface Book original ("with Performance Base").

On one hand, it's the best computer I've ever owned. It's amazingly lightweight, super powerful, and the battery life is phenomenal. Only about twice have I actually had to care about running low on juice, and I use this thing all day, every day - about half the day I'm out & about at court with it. (I've also used it on my airplanes, and the form factor fits nicely on a tray table even with my long legs.)

On the other hand, I will likely replace it in a few months. The fulcrum hinge (which is neat!) is too wobbly, and now after 2 years of opening & closing it, the connector between the screen and the keyboard is a tiny bit loose. That means when you tap the screen it fairly often disconnects the keyboard for about 2 seconds. Over time that little annoyance is becoming a major pain, and I'm getting tired of dealing with it.

I bought the Book because I thought I'd use just the screen detached a lot or I'd use it in clipboard mode. I don't. I carry my laptop all morning at court for my cases (traffic defense - high volume - several clients each day), and I used to use an Android tablet for my notes in court. I thought the Surface Book would be similarly great with its touchscreen but also allow me to do any work that I wanted while waiting between cases at court.

Frankly, the Windows virtual keyboard sucks so bad that I use the Book in regular laptop mode 99% of the time. Because of that, my next computer will likely be a traditional laptop with touchscreen. Maybe the Surface Laptop, maybe some other brand. But based on my use case and the loose connector issue, I don't think I will buy another Surface \*Book\*.

I hope that helps,

Andrew Flusche, Virginia

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Yeah, I have a Surface Pro 2 now that I have hooked up to a 24-inch external monitor, which is great for office work but the small size of the Surface Pro 2 itself kills me when I find myself working outside of the office. Keep in mind the Pro 2 is smaller than newer Pros; its closer to the Surface Go in screen size, I think.

To David's question, when I first got the Surface Pro 2 I was hoping to use it take notes in meetings with the pen, but it didn't work for me and I went back to legal pads. My handwriting is bad to begin with and it was atrocious writing on the screen. Also, again, smaller real-estate which I just couldn't get used as I'm used to having lots of space in margins as I'm writing. I was hoping a

Surface Book would make for a better writing experience, but from Andrew's description it sounds like that might not be the case. The quality issues you describe with the loose hinge is also a downer. This is actually my second Surface Pro 2 as the first one bricked right before the warranty expired because of a common Surface Pro issue with sleep mode and BitLocker. It seems like Microsoft still has a lot of issues getting the details right on their devices. That's unfortunate because the concepts are fantastic.

Thanks for the suggestions and sharing experiences with Surface devices.

There's a Microsoft store not far from here so I'm going to go play around with the Surface Book a bit as well as the Yoga and Latitude this weekend.

Noel French, Michigan

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I do all my heavy work on a custom-built desktop with four monitors. No laptop can match have 4 screens of real estate to work with. But when in court, I use my trusty Surface Pro 5. It has great battery life and never fails me. I think I have all of the surface pro iterations except for surface pro 6. I still use the original surface pro if you can believe it (but just for web surfing). I can tell you that each generation has improved on the other, and the surface pro 5 has fixed every problem I had with the previous iterations. I sometimes write on the screen when standing in front of the judge, but it's rare. Mostly I prefer to type. But writing on the screen was a very good experience when I did it. I would probably use it more if I didn't have such horrible, illegible handwriting, hence my preference for typing.

Eugene Lee, California

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I picked up a Surface Pro in early November. I've really been enjoying it. I purchased it as a replacement for my iPad with the ability to act as a 'real' computer when necessary.

I've been very successful in utilizing it so far. Hope to increase its utilization in court.

Geoff Wiggs, California

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Geoff, how do you use it?

David A. Rubin

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Funny, I get a Surface Pro as well to replace my iPad Pro for work. Much as I love the iPad, Apple's iOS is still not ready for prime time as a work computer. The Surface Pro is thicker, heavier, and slower than the iPad, and it kind of sucks as a tablet, but it will function as an honest-to-G\_d laptop computer when you need it to.

David, to answer your question, I use my Pro just like a laptop that's easier to carry around. I generally take notes in OneNote, though I have found that it's easier to type my notes than to write them out--the problem is my handwriting rather than the Pro's ability to handle handwriting.

Kevin Grierson

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Kevin, I agree with you and others about the handwriting - I've just never been able to be neat enough. Is One Note preferable to DropBox for any reason? Once saved, do you all keep your notes in that place or do you move it to an office drive or cloud at some point?

What else can we do with the surface to increase productivity?

Thanks so much!

David A. Rubin

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Check out Lenovos. In my experience the Thinkpads have some of the best keyboards around.

The Thinkpad X1 Yoga is a convertible tablet/laptop and you can get it with their new Dolby Vision 14" 2560x1440 touchscreen and the 8th gen Intels, either i5 or i7. I have yet to try it but I plan to do so.

Erik Hammarlund, Massachusetts

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David, OneNote is more akin to Evernote than to Dropbox. The files within OneNote can be set up to sync across devices. I use OneNote because it has multiple connections to Outlook--for example, you can open an Outlook appointment and send it to OneNote, which creates a note record that shows all the participants in the meeting and links the note back to the appointment. You can type notes on the OneNote record, or write them out as you prefer (I experimented with handwriting for a while but eventually gave it up). You can also create Outlook tasks from your notes in OneNote, so it's easy to go back through your notes and create a list of To-dos.

'Sezzer Ben Schorr wrote a good introduction to OneNote for Lawyers:

[https://smile.amazon.com/Microsoft-OneNote-One-Hour-Lawyers/dp/163425676X/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1545250553&sr=8-1&keywords=onenote+for+lawyers](https://smile.amazon.com/Microsoft-OneNote-One-Hour-Lawyers/dp/163425676X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1545250553&sr=8-1&keywords=onenote+for+lawyers)

If you like OneNote, you should use the OneNote 2016 version rather than the Windows 10 version. Both come with an Office 365 subscription, but the Windows 10 version does not yet support the connections to Outlook.

Kevin Grierson

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So, keeping in mind that I work at Microsoft...

I have a Surface Pro (which is my personal device) and a Surface Book 2 that is my work laptop. I like them both but for work purposes the Surface Book, with its more substantial keyboard, works a lot better for me.

I frequently show up to meetings here at the office carrying only the Surface Book's detachable screen and the Surface Pen - I ink my notes in OneNote. I find that works really well - though I think OneNote for Windows 10 is actually a better ink experience than OneNote 2016. I say that because the pen palette is more usable and I like to switch between black, red, green, and blue pens...plus the yellow highlighter, as I take notes. I use both versions of OneNote and luckily they sync seamlessly.

I don't have great handwriting but OneNote does a really good job of recognizing my inked text for search.

I also tend to use the camera on the Surface Book to take pictures of the white board, where appropriate, and insert those into my notes.

Whatever computer you decide on (Surface or something else) I strongly recommend you get as much RAM as possible. It can make a world of difference in performance and reliability.

Happy to answer any questions about the Surface devices, or OneNote...though keep in mind that my area of expertise is Office, rather than our first-party hardware, even though I do work in the division of the company that produces the hardware. ش

Disclaimer: Still never been a lawyer at Microsoft or any other company

Ben M. Schorr, Washington

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Thanks, Ben. I want to like OneNote for Windows 10 but the lack of connectivity to Outlook makes it a nonstarter for me. Any idea when they might integrate it better with their other Office products?

Kevin Grierson

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Hi Ben!

Does the Book 2 have the same loose connector issue with the display? If my keyboard didn't come disconnected about 100 times a day, I'd never leave the

Surface Book tribe. It truly is an impressive machine - except that rather big problem.

Any idea when Windows will get a virtual keyboard that doesn't suck? Maybe I'm just using it wrong, but I can't seem to reliably input text without my keyboard attached.

Thanks!

Andrew Flusche

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Ben, thanks for your detailed message. Does OneNote integrate well with Windows 7? Dropbox business account? ---- Maybe no one has an answer to these particular questions.

Roberta Fay, California

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OneNote 2016 should work with Windows 7. You may be able to store the "notebooks" in Dropbox (I know you can store them on a local hard drive), but they are stored in Microsoft's OneDrive by default.

Kevin Grierson

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Okay, Ben, keeping in mind that you work at Microsoft...

There used to be a product called Credenza (I think), that was basic project management software that essentially sat on top Outlook, and allowed one to link together Outlook contacts, emails, appointments, etc. I believe that the product was purchased by Microsoft (your employer) several years ago.



What are the chances that these capabilities will be built into Outlook (and when)? Or will this be another case of "catch and kill"?

Happy holidays,

John Varde, Illinois

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I bought the Surface Pro 6, i5 8g edition, which is great on the go and in court, and have a Razer Blade as my main work machine. After using the Surface Pro 6 for about a month, I am planning to take it back and upgrade to the i7. It isn't responsive enough for me, but I really like it as a work machine, and I've never used a pen with a tablet that worked so well before. The Alcantara (Alcantara?) type cover feels great as well.

Best regards,

Joshua P. Gotto, California

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butbutbut what about Wordperfect? \*ducks and runs\*

Naomi C. Fujimoto, Hawaii

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I'm with you, Naomi. I bought a SP 4 in September 2016. I take it along if I'm traveling and anticipate a business need, otherwise it's the iPad. But I wasn't able to install WP 8 on it, mostly because of licensing [I resent that, since I'm the only one using WP, so I think I should be able to put it on many devices because it will still only be used in one instance by me at any given time], but also because of no DVD drive, and no other means of installing it. So, I'm making do with some essential form files that I've saved to or created in \*.odt and I have LibreOffice on the Sp 4, which I otherwise love. Except for its jumpy erratic cursor, which has a mind of its own and will suddenly move to another

location in the middle of my working, so that the text lands somewhere other than where I thought I was putting it.

Miriam N. Jacobson, Pennsylvania

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I do not have OneDrive — or at least I don't believe that I have OneDrive on my windows 7 system. In that case, my OneNote files would not be on a OneDrive location – I guess.

As for WordPerfect, I love it (compared to Word) and I did not know that WordPerfect could not be installed on SurfacePro (or any specific Microsoft products). I did purchase the WordPerfect, so I don't see how the licensing would matter. If you cannot do full-blown word processing on the SP platform, that is a severe liability. What are acceptable alternatives to the SP that will allow using WordPerfect? Maybe no one knows.

Thanks for this thread of messages.

Roberta Fay

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If you have Office365 you have a OneDrive account.

As for WordPerfect, since the Surface Pro is a fully functional Windows PC, I don't know why you wouldn't be able to install and run word perfect or any other windows compatible program on it.

Kevin Grierson

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Is the issue a lack of a CD/DVD drive to install from?

If so, can you use an external drive via USB? Or you can create an image of the disc and then use the image and a virtual drive. I backup all my program CDs with an image for later reinstallation if needed. I also do this with the CDs that come with any treatise I get. Rather than find the cd when I need something, I just load the image into a virtual drive.

Phil Taylor, Massachusetts

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When installing Word Perfect from whatever media, it looks for a previously installed version. This is because I started out with version 4. in DOS, which came on 5.25" Floppies, for those of you who remember them. My subsequent versions were upgrades, and many more recent upgrades were downloaded but couldn't find the previously installed versions. Those are all on my desktop. Of course, I no longer have Floppies or any other installation disks at this point. I also do not have any backed up media versions of the original installation disks and even if I did, there would be no real way of making them accessible to the surface pro 4. That is the dilemma.

Miriam Jacobson

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