

High-end 'upstream' Linux laptop plans to ship in April

January 27 2015, by Nancy Owano



A unique laptop wastes no time in promoting its worth in its title, the Purism Librem 15. Its team maintain that this is "the first high-end laptop in the world that ships without mystery software in the kernel, operating system, or any software applications." The laptop carries appeal for those who are frustrated over paying for a machine with an OS carrying "suspect proprietary software," without the user knowing

what that software does. The company says the value of going free/libre and open source is for an important reason: "unless every aspect of your kernel, operating system, and software applications are free/libre and open source, there is no way to know that your computer is truly working in your best interest."

They said in working up hardware, they carefully designed the [laptop](#) "chip by chip" to work with [open source](#) software. The 4.4-pound laptop runs Linux. This is a GNU-based distribution, more specifically, the Trisquel GNU/Linux, "the strictest of distributions and strips all binary blobs from the Linux kernel." At the same time, they said laptop owners, if they want, can easily install anything less strict, such as Debian and Ubuntu. The machine has a 15.6" display in either 1920x1080 or 3840x2160 with a 60Hz refresh rate, 720p camera and HD Audio. It has a CD/DVD ROM drive. They used Intel Iris Pro Graphics 5200. It has a 48 Wh lithium polymer battery with about eight hours of usage.

The BIOS is not free. Though the bootloader, Linux kernel, GNU OS, and all [software applications](#) are completely free/libre software without any binary blobs, the BIOS does use coreboot, which includes a binary from Intel, called FSP. They said, "While the BIOS is not yet free, the Librem 15 will be the first laptop ever manufactured to ship a modern Intel CPU fused to run unsigned BIOS code, allowing for a future where free software can replace the proprietary, digitally signed BIOS binaries."

As input, the power adapter takes up to 1.6A at 100-240V and 50-60Hz. As output, the power adapter provides up to 3.4A at 19V. The [power adapter](#) plug is available in EU, UK, and US styles and can be swapped out by the user.

"Bundled with the fully free/libre, no mystery software Trisquel

GNU/Linux [operating system](#), with free/libre professional quality web browser, email, graphics, drawing, word processing, presentation, spreadsheet, and media software, users can easily replace their existing computer." According to the FAQ page in the company site, Purism uses The Onion Router (Tor) and installs it by [default](#).

Availability? Purism has the final prototypes. They have turned to a crowdfunding campaign on Portland, Oregon-based Crowd Supply to push them forward. At the time of this writing, they passed their \$250,000 goal and have raised \$333,240. They aim to start production at full scale in their San Francisco facility and 500 laptops will be in their first batch. Shipping is in April.

You pay an "Earlier Bird" price of \$1,649 for 4GB of RAM, 500GB hard drive, CD/DVD ROM and a 1920x1080 screen with AC adapter plug. A full price list along with their features are on the Crowd Supply [site](#).

John Biggs of *TechCrunch* said this was "a fascinating product" and remarked that "it looks like a very fun and secure way to use free/libre [software](#) on a specific [set](#) of hardware."

More information: www.crowdsupply.com/purism/librem-laptop

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