Canonical trumpets Ubuntu tablet's convergence features

February 5 2016, by Nancy Owano

How about that, a tablet running Ubuntu? A new tablet is scheduled to go on sale this year. Canonical announced the launch in a news release datelined London on Thursday. The tablet goes by the name Aquaris M10 Ubuntu Edition, shipping with the latest Ubuntu software.

What's so special about this one? The key promotional word is "convergence," Ubuntu-style. The company said the table is capable of

"providing both a true tablet experience and the full Ubuntu desktop experience."

Users can expect to make use of a range of desktop applications, desktop notifications, communication from the desktop interface using the phone's telephony and messaging application and thin client support for mobility. Capabilities include file browsing, file and folder creation and management.

Namely, you can let your tablet double as a PC: You connect a Bluetooth mouse and keyboard to convert the Aquaris M10 Ubuntu Edition into a full Ubuntu PC and also "connect the tablet to an external display for a full-sized PC experience."

The tablet-PC interplay did not escape notice on Thursday by Eric Brown in *Linux.com*. "If you plug in a Bluetooth dongle for a keyboard and mouse, Ubuntu immediately recognizes the new input methods, and if you connect the tablet to a larger display, Ubuntu immediately scales to the larger screen. With a larger display, a 'side stage' feature kicks in that presents multiple open windows for different applications, as well as multi-column text options."

Chris Velazco in *Engadget* also made note of the interplay once peripherals are connected, "Ubuntu's touch-friendly interface shifts into a more familiar desktop view, allowing you to multitask, run desktop apps and manage mobile apps you already have installed."

Ubuntu as an operating system has a good reputation and *CNET*'s Richard Trenholm, a senior editor, offered some background to the tablet launch news: " Ubuntu is a long-established open-source operating system originally for computers, beloved among developers and tinkerers looking for an alternative to Windows or Macs. But in recent years, Canonical, the British company behind Ubuntu, has expanded the operating system so it works in other devices, from phones to drones. The unique selling point is that the same software underpins phones, tablets and computers."

Two points that will attract buyers are that (1) it is Ubuntu, as stated and (2) one is getting a tablet that also works like a laptop and a desktop. The announcement said, "Ubuntu is now the only platform that runs both a

mobile-based full touch interface and a true PC experience from a single smart device."

This Ubuntu environment may also be seen as offering good security for enterprise buyers. The announcement said, "Excellent security comes as standard as part of the Ubuntu OS but Ubuntu convergence brings unparalleled enterprise-grade, system-based security. For many organizations wanting to take tight control over their own systems, avoiding third party access, Ubuntu is ideal." Canonical said it will be on sale online from Q2 2016.

The Aquaris M10 Ubuntu Edition tablet has a 10.1 inch screen. The screen is protected by Asahi Dragontrail glass, said *CNET*. It has 8.2 mm of thickness and 470 grams in weight.

Eric Brown in *Linux.com* stated in a few words what highlights the significance of the launch: "It's not a stretch, then, to say the Aquaris M10 is the first real Ubuntu tablet."

Velazco nonetheless found it "a little surprising that it took this long for a full-blown Ubuntu tablet to hit the market, but better late than never, we guess."

Brown offered more details. The Aquaris M10 is equipped with a 64-bit, quad-core, Cortex-A53 MediaTek MT8163A system-on-chip clocked to 1.5GHz and high-powered ARM Mali-T720 MP2 GPU. He said the product ships with 2GB of RAM, 16GB flash, and microSD slot.

Price? The news release did not state the price.

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