

'Foldable' PC? Lenovo ThinkPad laptop screen bends in half like a book

May 14 2019, by Edward C. Baig, Usa Today



The display on this Lenovo ThinkPad prototype folds. Credit: Lenovo

Samsung has gained a lot attention lately for its Galaxy Fold hybrid smartphone/tablet, though given the recent display snags that have prompted a delay in the product's release, not necessarily for all the right

reasons.

Just the same, many of the leading global tech companies are all bent on developing flexible display-based products of their own, suggesting that foldables, in one form factor or another, will have some kind of future. Even if there's no telling how big that future might be.

Next up is Lenovo, which on Monday is showing off not a foldable phone—at least not yet—but rather an intriguing nascent prototype of what the Chinese company claims as the first "foldable PC," an unnamed addition to its premium ThinkPad X1 laptop family.

(Rumors are that Lenovo-owned Motorola is also developing a foldable display version of its once-iconic Razr phones.)

For sure, the release of any foldable ThinkPad is still a ways off—it is expected to ship in the first half of 2020.

Nor has Lenovo revealed at this stage what the computer will cost, though if the near-\$2,000 Samsung Fold offers any clue, this thing won't come cheap either.

By now, of course, you may be asking, don't most laptops fold like a clamshell?

They do, of course, but the difference here is that what bends is the 13.3-inch OLED 2K display, which Lenovo produced in collaboration with LG Display. In "half screen" mode, you're left with a 9.6-inch [display](#), and folding the computer reduces the machine's overall width by 50%.

Even in that position, you can't shove it in your pocket like a smartphone, so you're still more than likely left stashing it in a bag,

where at least it will hog less room. It's about the size of a Moleskine planner.

I got an early peek at the prototype, and the tech on this promising, but unproven technology, is unquestionably cool. But you still are left questioning the need for one.

Lenovo will have to make that case eventually. For now, it is positioning the computer as a "primary" laptop replacement, outlining a few possible scenarios.

Folding it like a book, for example, so that you can scan your social media feeds in bed. Or standing it up in the kitchen so that you can peek at news feeds hands-free.

At the office, you might dock it to multi-monitors or use it as if a tablet to jot down notes with a Wacom stylus during a meeting.

The computer, three years in the making, uses a torque hinge that allows the screen to bend and hold into a variety of angles, much like a notebook. And yes, given its very nature, Lenovo expects you to fold and unfold this device more frequently than a regular laptop and thus is doubling the number of "hinge cycles" during testing.

This early in the game, Lenovo isn't revealing a ton about the specs inside the [computer](#). It will be Intel powered and run a version of Microsoft Windows. It will sport an infrared camera and pair of USB-C ports and support a wireless Bluetooth keyboard. And Lenovo says it'll feature an all-day battery.

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