

Little Raspberry Pi 4 debut marks big upgrade

June 25 2019, by Nancy Cohen



That credit card-sized computer that has been a standout learning experience for students and hobbyists at affordable cost just stole the

show, again. The new Raspberry Pi, announced Monday, "packs significant upgrades that could let it finally pass as an incredibly cheap desktop computer," said *Gizmodo*'s Andrew Liszewski.

"The latest iteration of the hardware has many upgrades that have come at the request of business customers specifically, including improved I/O speeds across the board," he wrote.

A number of tech watchers, actually, joined him as they reacted to the foundation's announcement with a pointed message that this was no numbered iteration with some added features. The Raspberry Pi 4 spelled change.

The organization site, meanwhile, wrote about a "desktop" experience. "Whether you're editing documents, browsing the web with a bunch of tabs open, juggling spreadsheets or drafting a presentation, you'll find the experience smooth and very recognisable—but on a smaller, more energy-efficient and much more cost-effective machine."

Matthew Hughes in *TNW* wrote that this was "a radical re-imagining that sees the company transcend its spiritual homeland, the [education](#) market."

Romain Dillet in *TechCrunch* had two words for the news: "awesome upgrade." The "awesome," however, was not that apparent in its looks. Dillet said, "When it comes to physical design, the Raspberry Pi 4 Model B looks a lot like the Raspberry Pi 3 Model B+, the previous flagship model. It's a single-board computer with a lot of connectors that is the size of a deck of cards." Looks were not the story, though, as Dillet wrote about an updated-everything.

Over to the Raspberry Pi 4 promotional video, which begins as "Your new desktop computer from \$35."

The device pictured in somebody's hand on the Raspberry Pi blog is the tiny, [dual-display](#), desktop computer. The new upgrade had "robot brains, smart home hub, media centre, networked AI core, factory controller, and much more."

Three RAM options mean you choose from 1GB, 2GB (\$45) or 4GB (\$55). Monday's Raspberry Pi announcement that the Raspberry Pi 4 was on sale walked readers through what was new and noteworthy.

Evan Upton, the CEO of the Raspberry Pi Organization, took to the blog and described the newcomer as "a comprehensive upgrade, touching almost every element of the platform" and he described it as delivering a "PC-like level of performance."

Upton stated "we are shipping a radically overhauled operating system, based on the forthcoming Debian 10 Buster release." Also, users will notice a modernized [user interface](#), and updated applications including the Chromium 74 web browser.

Liszewski touched on this modernized interface. "The polished UI should be less intimidating to those already [familiar](#) with commercial OS products like Windows and MacOS, and that also goes for the included applications like the Chrome 74 web browser."

Actually, Upton, speaking to *TNW*, revealed that specific features in Raspberry Pi 4 were a response to market feedback. The ability to power dual displays, for example, was to support requirements of most thin-client customers. Another was to support interfaces commonly used with industrial equipment.

The blog said the Raspberry Pi 4 was available now at the Raspberry Pi Store in Cambridge and through approved resellers.

The majority of reader reactions have been positive. "(It seems) the entire world is entranced by thousand dollar phones and thousands of dollars computers, and they're all missing the big (small) picture," said one comment on the video.

Another: "Double displays, Gigabit Ethernet, More RAM, USB C Power, USB 3.0... Sweet."

Still, one would not want to treat the Raspberry Pi 4 as a direct replacement for the kind of mainstream PC that would cost many hundreds more. Liszewski for one would not want you to kick yourself "for spending \$1,000+ on a new desktop workstation. At \$35, the new Raspberry Pi 4 is the last thing you'll want to rely on for tasks like Photoshop, video editing, or gaming."

At the same time, its features "should go a long way to making the Pi 4 more viable as a web browsing and email machine straight out of the box."

Yet another mistake would be to assume the Raspberry Pi is walking away from its classroom roots. The Raspberry Pi Foundation retains its interest in the classroom. "What's changed with Raspberry Pi 4 is that in addition to being a device for learning about computing, it's also much more suitable than its predecessors for use as a general-purpose classroom computer," Upton added.

Dillet on Monday shared his experience in learning through working with the Raspberry Pi. "While the Raspberry Pi first started as a simple computer designed to teach kids how to code, it has become a versatile device with many different use cases. I've been using a few for the past couple of years and I [learned](#) a lot about programming, system administration, Docker containers and networking."

More information: www.raspberrypi.org/blog/raspb...on-sale-now-from-35/

www.raspberrypi.org/products/r...pberry-pi-4-model-b/

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