

New Windows 10X aims for simplicity

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Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Leaks of Microsoft's Windows 10X for single screen PCs reveal a simplified OS with an emphasis on simplicity.

Windows Central and The Verge obtained pre-release copies of the system, originally designed for foldable and dual-screen devices but later repurposed for single-screen PCs. Introduction of the dual-screen

Surface Neo has been delayed since a prototype was unveiled in 2019 and Microsoft subsequently positioned its new OS for use on low-cost devices that will compete with Google's Chromebook.

Windows 10X features a new Action Center and Start Menu. Gone are the lengthy displays of system display icons. The old System Tray has been removed from the Task Bar and instead, the Action Center shows the time and a list of commonly used functions such as volume, bluetooth, audio device selection and wi-fi.

Devices using Windows 10X will automatically synch with Microsoft's OneDrive accounts, so users will have copies of their documents, music and photos secured in the cloud. Basically all files will be synched, except for downloaded files. Windows 10X will require users to create a OneDrive account if they don't already have one. Connections to local accounts will not be accommodated.

The Start Menu will no longer feature Live Tiles, which permitted customized notifications of new emails, app updates and calendar appointments, but instead will display a simple list of apps and recently accessed documents. Settings for notifications have been moved to the Action center. And File Explorer also simplified, will resemble to sparse interface familiar to users of OneDrive.

The search function, now built into the Star Menu, appears to be faster than previous versions, according to early testers. Results show local files along with data collected from the Bing search engine.

Apps such as the Registry Editor, Group Policy Editor, Control Panel, Windows Run and Task Manager have been removed.

Legacy desktop apps will not work in windows 10X. All apps must be purchased through the Microsoft Store, at least for now. Support for

desktop apps may be available later this year.

A handy new gesture has been introduced. The three-finger swipe, along with snap-assist function, allows users to swiftly connect two apps side by side. There is no need to position and resize the apps, it's done automatically and instantly.

But app screens in windows 10X cannot otherwise be resized. On the assumption that the OS will be used on smaller devices that will not clearly display small text on shrunken portions of screen real estate, Microsoft restricts apps to full screen size only.

Windows 10X cannot be purchased separately. It will come pre-installed on new PCs specifically built for the new OS. These computers are expected to be low-cost models targeted for educational or corporate use.

The first models featuring Windows 10X are expected from Microsoft partners Dell and Lenovo, possibly as early as this spring.

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