

Microsoft prices Pro version of Surface at \$899 (Update)

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The new Microsoft Surface tablet on display in New York in October 2012. Microsoft announced Thursday that its Surface Pro, a version of its new tablet aimed at business users, would be available in January starting at \$899 for US customers.

Microsoft's Surface tablet running a full version of Windows 8 Pro will start selling in January for \$899 and up, the company said Thursday. But

you'll have to pay more if you want a keyboard cover and the popular Office suite of software.

The current Surface uses the slimmed down Windows RT operating system. As a result, it runs only specially designed applications from Microsoft and others sold through the company's online store. The Pro version of Surface will also run regular Windows applications written for desktops and laptops.

"It's a full PC AND a tablet," Surface general manager Panos Panay wrote in a blog post Thursday.

The Surface represents Microsoft's first foray into manufacturing its own general-purpose computer. In doing so, the company is competing with some of its partners, the manufacturers of PCs and tablets.

The announced price is in line with Microsoft Corp.'s earlier statements that the Pro version would cost about the same as slim, lightweight laptops known as ultrabooks.

The price includes a stylus and software that disregards touches from one's palm while writing on the touch screen. But the detachable touch-sensitive keyboard cover is sold separately. The Touch Cover with keys printed on it costs \$120, while the Type Cover with depressable keys is priced at \$130.

The Pro version of Surface will come with Intel's Core i5 processor, which Microsoft said gives it a graphics boost compared with the RT version.

The \$899 version will come with 64 gigabytes of memory, while \$999 gets you 128 GB of memory. It was not immediately clear how much memory would be used up by the operating system and pre-installed

apps. For the RT versions, the 32 GB model has only 16 GB of usable memory, while the 64 GB model has 45 GB available.

The RT version of Surface, which starts at \$499, comes with the popular Office programs Word, PowerPoint, Excel and OneNote included. The Pro version does not, according to the specifications listed on a Microsoft website. The cheapest version of Office available is priced at \$120.

The RT versions went on sale Oct. 26, the same day Windows 8 was out.

The RT versions are available only at Microsoft's stores and websites. The Redmond, Washington, company did not say whether the Pro versions will be sold elsewhere as well.

All versions of Surface come with a slot to expand memory and a USB port for peripherals. The Pro version of Surface comes with a newer, faster USB 3.0 port, while the RT version has 2.0.

Price, details of Surface models from Microsoft

There are two models of the Surface, one with a low-energy processor featuring Windows RT, and another with an Intel processor featuring Windows 8 Pro.

On Thursday, Microsoft released pricing details on the Pro version.

Here are the specs for both tablets:

—Windows RT version of Surface

Weight: About 1.5 lbs. (676 grams)

Thickness: 9.3 mm

Screen: 10.6 inches (26.9 centimeters)(diagonal) with ClearType HD Display

Connections: microSD, USB 2.0, Micro HD Video, 2x2 MIMO antennae (for wireless communications)

Processor: Quad-core Nvidia Tegra 3

Storage options: 32 Gigabytes and 64 Gigabytes

Price: \$499 for 32 GB version, \$699 for 64 GB version.

Availability: Sales began Oct. 26 at Microsoft's stores and website.

Extras: Touch Cover, which has working, printed keyboard on inside surface but whose keys don't move when pushed, will cost \$100 extra when purchased with the 32 GB version (It's \$120 if bought separately). It's included with 64 GB version. Type Cover, with keys that move, costs \$130.

— Windows 8 Pro version of Surface

Weight: About 2 lbs. (903 grams)

Thickness: 13.5 mm

Clear: 10.6 inches (diagonal) with ClearType Full HD Display

Connections: microSDXC, USB 3.0, Mini DisplayPort Video, 2x2 MIMO antennae (for wireless communications)

Processor: Intel Core i5 with HD Graphics 4000

Storage options: 64 GB and 128 GB

Price: \$899 for 64 GB version; \$999 for 128 GB version.

Availability: January.

Extras: Stylus is included. Optional Touch Cover for \$120 or Type Cover for \$130.

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