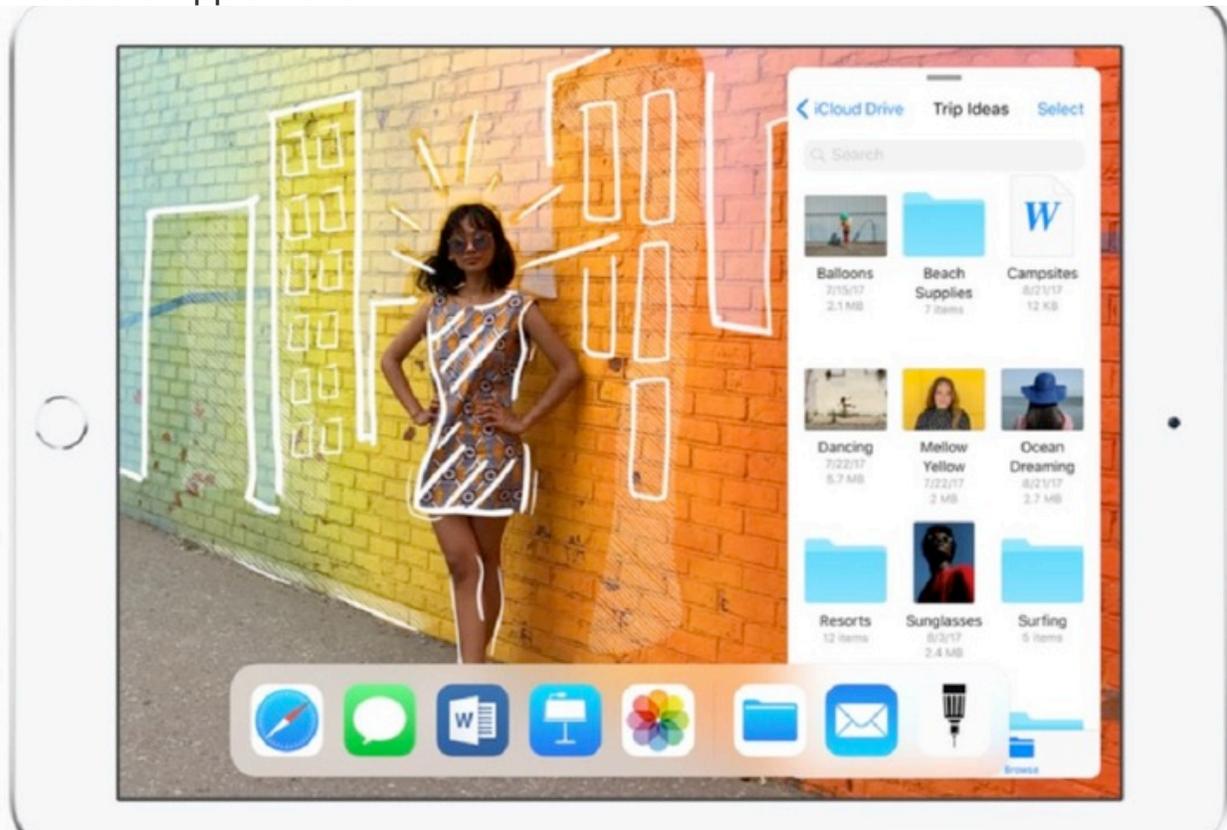


Apple Pencil, Augmented Reality Makes 2018 iPad Work Like a Pro

By: [Wayne Rash](#) | April 09, 2018 - eWeek

REVIEW: The newest version of Apple's iconic tablet offers features and capabilities that are starting to resemble the iPad Pro, including the ability to use the Apple Pencil.



At first glance, the newest version of the standard [2018 iPad](#) seems no different than the one it replaced. It's the same size and weight, the screen is the same size at 9.7 inches diagonally and it comes in the same colors. But that sameness belies some real improvements, some of which move the new iPad down the line towards the iPad Pro.

The most obvious move in the Pro direction is the Apple Pencil, which now works with a standard iPad. The newest iPad also supports augmented reality and it's got a faster processor. However, it does not

include connectors for Apple's Smart Keyboard, so that feature remains exclusive to the Pro models.

Inside Apple has upgraded the processor to its A10 Fusion model, which includes an M10 embedded motion coprocessor. This gives the new iPad the horsepower it needs to do things like augmented reality, a feature that's broadly supported with the new device. In fact, Apple includes its Augmented Reality development kit, or ARKit with the version of iOS 11.3 that's installed on the new iPad when it's delivered.

Another difference compared with the iPad Pro devices is that the 2018 iPad has the old style screen with an air gap between the screen and the cover glass. This is only noticeable when you use the Apple Pencil, where you may notice the slight gap compared to the way the Pencil works on an iPad Pro.

There are other differences that you may not notice. For example the processor memory on this iPad is 2 GB, versus 4 GB on iPad Pro models. You may notice slightly slower operation when multi-tasking, if you compare the two tablets side-by-side. But if you're not an iPad Pro user, you'll never notice it.

The 2018 iPad has the same camera that was in earlier iPads going back to the iPad Air. At 8 megapixels, it's up to the task of augmented reality if you're not picky, but it's not the best for serious photography. If you want to look at photos, you'd be better off using your iPhone and synchronizing the photos.

While the screen on this iPad does not support the full color gamut and it doesn't support HDR (high dynamic range) imaging, the cameras do support HDR. Unless you're doing detailed photo editing, you won't notice the missing HDR capability. If you do, then you should consider buying an iPad Pro. For most uses, this iPad will do what you need with photos, including using WiFi to synchronize your photos with your compatible SLR camera.

Using the Apple Pencil with the 2018 iPad is pretty seamless. You charge it and pair it with the iPad by pulling off the end cap and plugging the Lightning connector into the iPad. Once that's done, you can use the Pencil as a stylus with apps that support it and you can use it as a pointing device.

That means that you can tap on an icon with the point of the Pencil just as you might with your finger, but the Pencil is more precise. With apps that support it, including Microsoft Office as well as a number of free Apple apps, among others, you can use it to draw or write.

For example I used the Apple Pencil with Microsoft Word to mark up a document with edits, I was able to write notes in margins and I could sketch a drawing if I'd wished. The only significant difference between using the Pencil on this iPad versus a Pro is that the Pencil made more noise when tapped on the screen of the 2018 iPad. You can also see the slight gap between the point of the Pencil and the screen if you look for it, but most people will never notice.

The 2018 iPad comes in WiFi-only and WiFi + Cellular versions. You can get either with a choice of 32 or 128 GB of storage. I reviewed the WiFi + Cellular iPad model, which supports CDMA and GSM as well as UMTS and LTE. Unlike models from previous years, there is only one version of the cellular iPad and it operates on all available protocols and bands.

You choose which carrier you use either by inserting a SIM card or by using the automated setup that uses Apple's internal SIM. Using the internal SIM allows you to change carriers when you need to, such as when you're traveling or when you're in an area where your existing carrier's service isn't available.

This iPad is the same size and weight as its immediate predecessor. The 9.7-inch screen has the same 264 pixels-inch resolution as on its predecessor and as on the iPad Pro. The screen resolution is 2048 x 1536. The weight of this iPad remains slightly over a pound.

Apple says the 32.4 Watt-hour battery will run this iPad for up to 10 hours of fairly active use. That time appears to be accurate. The 2018 iPad starts at \$329 with 32 GB and is \$429 with 128 GB. A fully configured 2018 iPad will cost \$559, which is about half the cost of a 10.5-inch iPad Pro. Note that it's also less expensive than the smaller iPad Mini, which costs \$399. The lower price is a nod to the education market that this new iPad is mainly configured for.

While this is another incremental upgrade of the iPad, which is Apple's practice recently, the addition of Apple Pencil support is a significant upgrade. The faster processor is also an important improvement and both of these features add a lot for use in the business environment. While its performance isn't as muscular as an iPad Pro, it will meet most needs.

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