Apple's Touchscreen MacBook Pro is finally here, and yes, touching a MacBook screen feels totally and wonderfully natural

Features
By Lance Ulanoff

Confirming one of Apple's worst-kept secrets, Apple finally unveiled its first-ever touchscreen MacBook Pro in 14-inch and 16-inch models on Wednesday, October 28, in Los Angeles. The news comes just days after Apple unveiled M6-class MacBook Pros. Notably, the new PROLED touchscreen laptops are running M5 Pro and M5 Max Apple silicon.

Apple CEO John Ternus didn't waste much time on stage, quickly announcing the laptops and running through key innovations like the tandem OLED (PROLED) screens and relatively lightweight (3lbs for the 14-inch model and 4lbs for the 16-inch one) before leaving the stage and directing the assembled group of media, analysts, creators, and Apple execs to an adjacent space where I got my first experience ever with a touchscreen MacBook.



(Image credit: Lance Ulanoff / Future)



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You've been waiting for this

If you read no further, know this: it felt totally natural to tap, swipe, gesture with three fingers, pinch, zoom, and more on a MacBook Pro display. It feels like I've been waiting my whole life to do this on a MacBook (or at least as long as I've been using MacBooks).

As a former Windows user, and more specifically a longtime Surface Pro fan, I'm actually quite used to touching a screen, though maybe not one quite as beautiful as this.

For those unfamiliar with tandem OLED technology, which Apple first introduced a few years ago with the iPad Pro, it sandwiches two ultra-thin, light-emitting OLEDs together. This increases the brightness while maintaining incredibly inky blacks (they're gorgeous). It also allows for a far thinner display panel because you don't need a backlight.



(Image credit: Lance Ulanoff / Future)

Though there now is a "backlight of a sort. This touchscreen MacBook Pro lineup marks the return of the glowing Apple logo on the back of the display. It lights up when you open the laptop and turns off when you close it (people at the Hollywood, California, event were cheering for that).

I played mostly with the larger, 16-inch model, which still features the expansive, backlit Magic Keyboard and a huge ForceTouch Trackpad, which honestly is gonna get a little bit less use now that a touchscreen is just inches away.



(Image credit: Lance Ulanoff / Future)

A pair of large speaker grills sits on either side of the keyboard, though I couldn't hear them over the din of the demo room. As with previous MacBook Pros, there's still an SD Card slot, three Thunderbolt 5 ports, one USB-4 port, HDMI, and the headphone jack.

In my hands, the 4 lb, 16-inch model felt a tad lighter than previous 16-inch MacBook Pros, though the 14-inch (which might be my preference) felt lightweight at 3lbs.

Touch it, touch it, please say you want to

Let's talk, though, about using the touchscreen.

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- Here's the secret behind the return of the illuminated Apple logo on the back of the new touchscreen MacBook Pro

I tried a 3D design app where I used a couple of fingers to spin a model of a guy in battle armor and then a single finger to paint gold on some of the armor.

I opened Maps and used two fingers to spin the map, then pinch-and-zoom.

I used three fingers to swipe through desktops.

I could use two fingers to grab a window, flip it to one side of the screen, and watch it instantly dock itself as a half-screen app (yes, I've done something very similar on a Surface Pro).

I played touchscreen piano with all my fingers.

At no moment did I hesitate and wonder how I did this or that thing. It's obvious. It never felt uncomfortable, and my arm never got tired. Put another way, a touchscreen is a perfect fit for the MacBook Pro family,

Now, you cannot take the screen and flip it all the way to the back of the laptop (something many touchscreen Windows laptops can do). That might be a shame because I could also use my finger to paint and, though I haven't done it yet, draw.

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(Image credit: Lance Ulanoff / Future)



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Speaking of which, there is no indication that the touchscreen MacBook Pro supports the Apple Pencil. Honestly, if it can't fold back at least flat, there's no point in this support anyway.

There is, by the way, a Dynamic Island that's basically copied from the iPhone, but I didn't see it do very much.

As I used the touchscreen MacBook Pro, I was not only reminded of my time with the Microsoft Surface Pro but of my initial weeks and even months with the MacBook after I switched platforms. Yes, I found myself touching the inert MacBook screen and had to retrain myself to stop doing it.

Point is, touch was something I reflexively used on the Surface Pro, and I am now certain I will happily use it on the touchscreen MacBook Pro. You probably will, too.

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