Apple's 12" MacBook Is All-New: Retina, Fanless, Full-Sized Keyboard, 1x USB-C Port for Everything
by Julio Franco, TechSpot

Apple surprised by revealing a lot more than just Apple Watch details. A long-rumored new MacBook was part of that surprise, bringing a reinvented MacBook that is thinner, more portable and certainly more minimalistic than the popular MacBook Air.

The all-new MacBook sports a 12-inch Retina display (2304x1440) with edge to edge glass and thinner bezels. Going from the pictures, it doesn't seem like those bezels are as thin as on the new Dell XPS 13 but still make for a more svelte design that Apple claims is 24% thinner than the MacBook Air at 13.1mm and weighing in at 2 pounds.

March 2015 GAAB Meeting

The next GAAB Meeting will be Tuesday, March 10, 2015.

Meeting: March 10, 2015
7:00 PM
Panera Bread
161 Washington Ave Ext, Albany, NY

A map can be found at the GAAB website at
http://applebyters.com/index.php/meeting-information/meeting_map/

GAAB Meeting Agenda
Discussion: Topics to be presented by members and March 2015 Special Event
News from Apple including Yosemite and iOS8 Updates
GAAB Help Desk: Bring your questions to the meeting

Next GAAB Meeting
March 10, 2015

Apple Special Event
7:00 p.m.

Panera Bread
Crossgates Common, Albany

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Serving the Apple Computer User Community Since May 1984

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by John Buckley

First Look:
Microsoft Office 2016 for Mac Doesn't Feel Like an Afterthought
by Jeffery Battersby, MacWorld

You may not have noticed, but of late there's been a mind shift at Microsoft. First with the introduction of Office for iPad in 2014, then the addition of OneNote for Mac and iOS and an updated and useful version of Office for iPhone. Then, just a few weeks ago, Outlook for iOS, which may just be the best email app you'll find for iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch. Today? The preview release of Office 2016.

What's key about all of these releases is what seems to be a significant philosophical shift at Microsoft. What was once a "PC first. Mac? Whatever…" way of thinking has now become, "All features, all platforms, all at once." No half measures. No, "Our studies show that Mac users aren't interested in those features." Quite simply, Office 2016 is Office on the Mac, as it should be, without compromising Office's features or requiring Mac users to conform to a Windows way of working.

A Preview of Office is free for anyone starting today, but Microsoft is quick to note that Office 2016 will not follow the same model that Office for iOS has. Which is to say that while the Preview is free, when the suite ships for real a little later this year, it will require an Office 365 subscription or the purchase of a standalone copy for anything more than read/print-only access to Office documents.
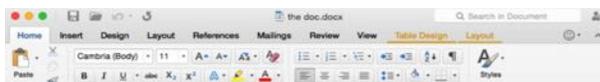
The ribbon does a great job of unifying the Office experience across platforms.

This is a Preview (née beta) release and, thus, this is not a review. So, while I'll take a deep dive First Look at the Office for Mac 2016 Preview, I'll save any critical assessments for the final release. (Hey you! Yeah, you! I

Internet SIG

5 Dangerous Apps You Don't Know Your Kids Are Using
by Kim Komando

If you're a parent or grandparent, you know that kids pick up the latest technology lightning fast. Of course, that means the children in your life can also be using apps and visiting sites that are totally inappropriate for their ages. Worse yet, you might not even realize it.

Let's look at five dangerous apps that the children you deeply care about might be using and why they're dangerous.

1. SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is a picture-messaging app whose claim to fame is that the messages only last for a few seconds once they're opened. Then the messages supposedly evaporate into thin air. In theory, you can send embarrassing or risque pictures without being afraid of someone stealing them or distributing them.

Unfortunately, the claim that Snapchat makes it safe to send risque pictures is just plain wrong. It's way too simple for anyone to grab a screenshot of the image before it's deleted. In fact, several teenage boys have gotten in serious legal trouble over the last few years for capturing and distributing illegal photos sent to them by underage girls.

Also, in October 2014, hackers got their hands on thousands of "deleted" Snapchat images that had been stored on third-party servers. While it wasn't exactly a breach of Snapchat, it's further proof that pictures don't always disappear.

In fairness, many teens use Snapchat for innocent picture-conversations with each other. And as Snapchat grows in popularity, the company is moving further away from its sexting association, but it's still a big concern.

If your teen is using Snapchat, ask them to show you how they're using it. Make sure that your teen is only communicating with people that they know, and that they realize the pictures they send don't just vanish forever. Remind them, "Once on the Internet, always on the Internet!"

2. TINDER

While Snapchat has uses besides sharing inappropriate images, Tinder is all about meeting new romantic partners, which probably isn't something you want your teen doing with strangers.

Tinder allows a person to create a profile and see images of potential romantic matches in the immediate area. The person can choose whether they're interested in another user or not. If two people like each other, then they can have a conversation through the app and potentially "hook up." Again, broadcasting images to strangers and potentially meeting them on a whim is not something teens should be doing, in my parental opinion.

Actually, underage teens aren't even supposed to be using this app. The only way to get on the app is to have a Facebook account with a birth date that indicates the user is over 18 years of age. Of course, it is just a simple keyboard entry for a child to set any birth date they wish. There is no verification of the user's age claim.

Any child who ends up on the app will be meeting people who are over legal age. They might come across predators, scammers and any variety of creeps that no one should have to deal with.
In short, Tinder is dangerous for kids. Keep them away from it.

Education SIG

iPad or Chromebook:
4 Questions to Ask Before Choosing
by Beth Holland, Edudemic

Crude mashup for your enjoyment.

For the past few days, I've been playing with a Chromebook. Though I have been an advocate of Google's myriad web products since the beta-test Gmail account that I was invited to open over 10 years ago, I had not previously put my hands on one of these devices. I may be in love.

This may come as a shock since I have spent the past two years completely immersed in iPads. I love my iPad too, and my iPhone, and my mostly retired iPod Touch. However, as mobile devices go, I don't see the need for a monogamous relationship.

With schools and districts across the country, there seems to be this preconception that a single relationship exists with regard to technology, and in particular, with regard to making a decision about mobile devices.

However, my colleagues at EdTechTeacher and I think that rather than asking which device should my school use, the more poignant question may be 'what do I want my students to do?' or w'hich tool will best support my students learning needs?' In this push to pick a platform and enter into a committed relationship, teachers, administrators, and even school boards have focused on the single device instead of 'why do you want a mobile device in the first place?'

Why?

More often than not, the answer is access. Students need access to the Internet for research, access to writing tools, access to digital creation tools. Maybe teachers need better assessment tools and want to integrate forms, student response systems, or electronic portfolios. A school could be making a fundamental curriculum shift towards the Flipped Classroom or more student centric learning. The district could embrace the 4Cs – communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity – of 21st Century Learning or the Common Core. All of these are great reasons for why, but they do not answer which one.

For right now, let's focus on iPads and Chrome Books as they seem to be the leading contenders in the device debate. If I was still the Director of Academic Technology in a school, before making a decision, I would also ask…

What will best support my students learning?

What do my students need in order to succeed at their own level? Would they benefit from text to speech or speech to text? Do they need accessibility features such as optical character recognition (OCR), voice over navigation, or the ability to use an adaptive device? Are my students early elementary and just learning to read, write, and type? Or advanced high school students who write lengthy essays and run math simulations?

iPads are completely accessible devices, natively supporting text-to-speech, voice-over navigation, speech-to-text (new iPad as well as some apps), and a host of other features. They can accept input from Braille keyboards,

and the touch screen responds to a number of external devices for those who have challenges with fine motor skills. While there are a number of Chrome extensions to support diverse learners, the entire environment is not quite as customizable.

For early elementary students, iPad lets non readers instantly create – listen, watch, draw, record audio, take pictures, shoot video – all without needing to read. At the higher grades, when students are reading, writing, and collaborating in addition to creating, the device choice becomes more closely aligned to the learning needs of the individual student as well as the curriculum of the faculty. Will a trackpad and keyboard better support those learners rather than a touch screen? Maybe.

What do I want my students to do?

When we first started asking Why iPad, we lauded the ability to create, edit, and publish from a single device. We looked at how iPad empowered students as creators of their own learning through screencasting, digital storytelling, and eBook creation. However, iPads are not computers. They require a significant shift in thinking and approach in order to be leveraged successfully.

Chromebooks incorporate the best of the web and integrate seamlessly with Google Apps – a major advantage for Google Apps Schools. Students have complete access to their Drive accounts, a full browser, the ability to install additional apps such as Evernote or Skitch, and a standard keyboard. Much like iPad, Chromebook has the charm of "easy on/ easy off" and total mobility. Though it lacks the touch screen and dual camera functionality, the overall similarities to a traditional laptop can make for a smooth transition especially when the curriculum still relies heavily on traditional assessments such as papers, presentations, and spreadsheets.

Both devices offer tremendous capabilities, so my next question might be…

Where does my school/district want to go?

This is really the big picture question. Identify a strategic vision, and then choose the best device to help get there. Chris Dede, Timothy Wirth Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, uses vignettes when describing his vision of classrooms in the future. By telling a story, he creates a tangible image what he hopes to achieve.

Start with a pedagogical framework, create clear measures for assessment, identify specific learning objectives, and paint a clear picture such that the teachers – and consequently the students – can start to innovate in order to get there. In many ways, we can follow the principles of Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe). Start with the outcome and then plan how to achieve it.

iPad or Chrome Book?

I started writing this article on my iPad in a Google Doc – how iPad has changed my writing process sits at the heart of another post. When I felt ready to start editing, I opened the Chromebook and signed in with my Google Account. Instantly, I accessed my Drive and continued to edit with the facility of the keyboard, trackpad, and keyboard shortcuts. From the Chrome browser, I logged into WordPress, uploaded images, and published this post.

What if we didn't have to choose? What if we could have a polygamous relationship with mobile devices? I understand the realities of budgets, networks, and replacement cycles. But for a moment, imagine this: what if we could give every student an iPad – which is intended to be a single user device – and place carts of Chromebooks – which work seamlessly with multiple users – in strategic locations?

I wonder what the learning environment might resemble if students could consume and annotate custom content, create with an unlimited set of options, curate their work into a variety of portfolio formats, and then connect to other learners as well as to the work that they created….

Internet SIG
Continued from page 3.

3. VINE

Vine, the app that lets you record and share six-second videos, seems like a totally safe app at first. It gets dangerous when you consider how strong peer pressure is on social media.

Teens, as I'm sure you remember, will do almost anything for acceptance and attention. The best way to get attention on social media is to do something edgy or crazy. Last year, in the most dramatic example yet, teens across the world took to setting themselves on fire.

I'm not kidding. The #FireChallenge hashtag was one of the most popular in August. Click here for my coverage of the shocking trend. This isn't the first or last dangerous "game" to appear online. Click here to learn about seven other "games" your kids shouldn't be involved in.

In response to this, Vine just released the Vine Kids app, which features hand-selected videos that are supposed to be appropriate for younger audiences. Unlike the real Vine app, Vine Kids can't record videos. This might be good for younger kids, but I can guarantee older kids and teenagers will want to use the real Vine app.

If your kid does use Vine, or any social media site, be sure to friend, follow or join them on it to monitor what they're doing and saying. You might also occasionally look at their phone to confirm which apps they have installed, or even review their activity on the site. You'll want to know if they're running with a dangerous crowd or doing something stupid or worse.

4. WHISPER

Whisper is an app built specifically for spreading rumors and secrets. It lets users post pictures and text anonymously. Apps like Whisper could potentially be a good outlet for teens as anonymous confessions can help people unburden themselves.

However, Whisper shares the secrets based on geographic location, so the users nearest to you are the ones more likely to see your secret. If your child reveals too much, it can put them in a dangerous situation with friends or adversaries.

The most dangerous apps for teens use GPS tracking to bring people physically together. Cyberbullying is much more hurtful when the person bullying your child moves from online to in-person abuse. In this case, Whisper seems like it could cause teens more harm than good.

5. 9GAG

9Gag is one of the most popular apps to distribute memes and pictures online. The risky part for teens lies within the fact that all kinds of pictures are shared on 9Gag. These pictures aren't moderated and could come from any uploader and feature terrible images you don't want kids seeing.

Not only that, but some 9Gag users are cyberbullies and abuse other users online. Many of the people guilty of "swatting," or getting the police to raid an innocent person's house, come from 9Gag. Click here to learn more about swatting and how to protect your kids from becoming a victim.

If your child has to get their humor fix from somewhere, always try to make sure that they're getting it from a place with rules and regulations that commit to keeping underage users protected.

If your parenting today, here are two more important tips you might find useful:

7 dangerous games the kids play

5 places the kids hang out online (Hint: It's not Facebook!)

Apple Ambassador
Continued from page 2.

see your finger poised over the comments section ready to chew me out for schilling for Microsoft. Save it for the review, pal! I know who you are…)

The suite

The Office 2016 Preview updates all five apps in Microsoft's office suite: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, and Outlook. The suite requires that your Mac is running Yosemite and, while the interface remains familiar, every application has a softer Yosemite-like look and feel. All the apps designed to work with Microsoft's OneDrive services, including OneDrive for Business and private SharePoints, and are optimized for retina displays.

According to Microsoft, Office 2016 is designed to unify the look and feel of the applications across all platforms, so that no matter where you use Office—Windows, Mac, iOS, Android, Web—the way you work remains the same. To that end, Microsoft has updated the "ribbon," that tabbed toolbar running across the top of every Office document, so it looks like Office 2013 for Windows, and according to Microsoft, the user interface is now the same across all versions. Looking at the Windows and Mac versions side-by-side I'd say that's accurate, although, to my somewhat biased eye, Office 2016 is easier on the eyes.

If you want a little more workspace, the ribbon can be hidden with a single click on the currently active tab or by clicking a small arrow appearing at the ribbon's far right side. Microsoft has also added a new "Help Improve Office?" button to the ribbon, which you can use to send feedback. According to the rep I spoke with, this isn't a beta-only feature that will disappear once the product ships. It's designed to let you tell Microsoft about the things you do or don't love about a particular product.

True story: The Microsoft rep I spoke with said that this feature is no joke. He acknowledged that there is a public perception that any feedback of this sort gets sent directly to the bit bucket, but he assured me that he sees "telemetry reports" from these submissions on a daily basis. The aim of this feature is to help eliminate that public perception by proactively responding to reported issues.

Office now supports Yosemite's native full-screen mode, but does not support Yosemite's native auto-save features

nor does it support renaming, moving, tagging, or locking documents using the document title bar. And it should be noted that it's unlikely you'll see support for these features in any future versions of Office, as, according to Microsoft, Yosemite's autosave feature and OneDrive don't play well together. The one notable autosave exception is (pun intended) OneNote, which has had its own version of autosave and synchronization since it was first released.

Word

Word and PowerPoint share two new collaboration features: co-authoring and threaded comments. Co-authoring allows several people to work on the same document at the same time. The Microsoft rep wouldn't commit to a specific number of total editors that could simultaneously make changes to a document, but did state that they'd seen it handle at least 10 collaborators at once. (A number that's quite a bit north of what I'd hope to see working on any one document.) While editing, you can see who is working alongside you and also see the changes those users are making in real time.
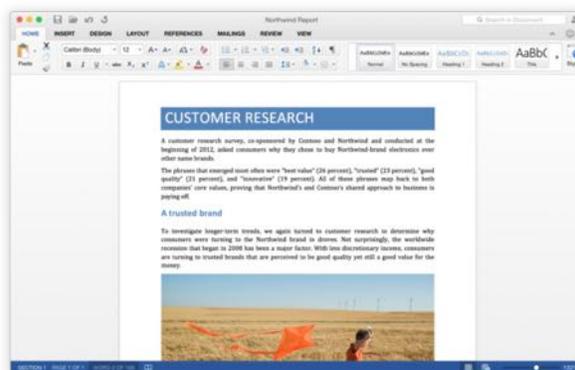
To handle synchronization and change commitment, Microsoft uses a technology they call cobalt syncing. Cobalt is able to determine which changes users have made, and in the event that two users edit the same information at the same time, marks those changes and conflicts for human intervention.

Threaded comments let editors interact within document comments, in much the same way as threaded comments work on websites, but hopefully with far less snark.

Word also includes a new document navigation pane that tracks your location within a document and makes it easy to move your way through a document. A new style pane allows you to make quick changes to styles being used in your documents.

Excel

Excel offers several new features, but one in particular really caught my eye, as it's likely to make the transition from Excel for Windows to Excel for Mac much easier for switchers. Excel for Mac now supports a majority of the Windows version's keyboard shortcuts. So while all your favorite Mac keyboard commands still work, you don't have to learn a completely new set of commands if this is your first time using Excel on a Mac. Control-C copies text in a cell, and Control-V pastes it.
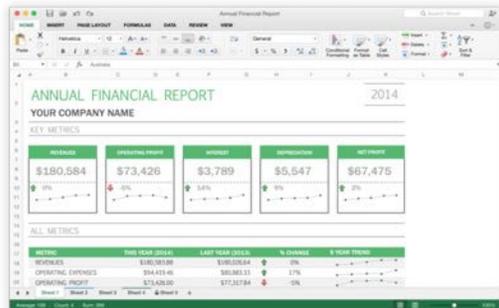
You'll also find that Excel has more sophisticated analysis tools, including advanced statistical functions, slicers for pivot tables, and auto-complete features for inserting functions and filling in cell data.

PowerPoint
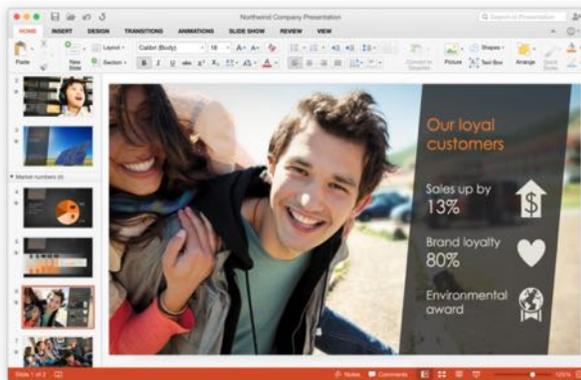
In addition to the collaboration features mentioned above, PowerPoint offers a redesigned Presenter View that makes it easy to switch your presentation from one display to another and offers a customizable presenter window where you can view notes, your next slide, and where you are in the current sequence of slides.

There are also several new transitions and a new animation pane that helps you to better see, manage, edit, and update the animations being used on every slide.

Outlook

Outlook for Mac has been available to anyone with an Office 365 account for a few months now, and offers a few interesting features, chief of which is a side-by-side calendar view that lets you look at two different calendars together. Even better, using this side-by-side view, you can drag one calendar on top of the other, merging the view of those calendars so you can easily see conflicts or crossover for specific events.
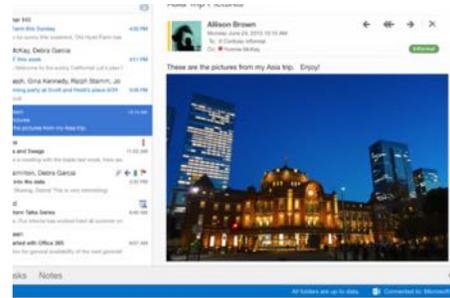
While I stated earlier that, because this is essentially a beta of Office 2016, I wasn't going to take a critical look at any of the apps in the suite, I do have to point out that Outlook isn't quite where it needs to be. While I was able to easily add my personal email account hosted on a private server, Outlook could not add my Gmail or iCloud accounts and, when attempting to connect to my Gmail account I immediately received a message from Google letting me know that someone knew my account password and was using unsecure methods to connect to their mail servers.

OneNote

OneNote remains one of my favorite Microsoft applications for collecting information on the fly. As this app has been regularly updated and remains free on the App Store, there's not a whole lot more to report here, with one exception: If you're using OneDrive, OneNote can now provide OCR for documents added to the cloud.

Final thoughts

I've only had a few hours to play with the Office 2016 for Mac Preview, which is not enough time to dig deep into each of these applications, but so far, I'm impressed. While this is essentially a beta, with the exception of Outlook's connection issues, Office 2016 seems like a solid collection of well-designed applications. But more importantly, Office 2016 for Mac shows that Microsoft is no longer treating Mac users as an afterthought. This is Office on your Mac, just like it is everywhere else. Solid, seamless, and ready for work.

New MacBooks
Continued from page 1.

As it's often the case, Apple highlighted its success selling products, saying that while the PC market overall is stagnant, Mac sales grew 20% last year. While mentioning

that portability is core in products like iPhone and iPad, the new MacBook is as closest as the company has got to the same philosophy on a full fledged PC. And it shows: the new MacBook will be available in gold, silver and gray, drawing a parallel with its other consumer-friendly iDevices.

The redesigned MacBook is all-metal unibody, sporting a full sized keyboard and new trackpad technology. The keyboard has received a new typing mechanism that allows for the thin design, while decreasing wobbling. The trackpad is also new, with haptic feedback and force sensors, adding a new 'force click' option, so a deep press in the trackpad allows for different options depending on the software interface, much like a right-click does.

Drawing another parallel to how iPads are built, the new MacBook is all battery inside. The logic board is tiny, even when compared to the 11" MacBook Air's, it's 67% smaller. Apple claims 9-hour battery life when web browsing, and up to 10 hours of movie playback on iTunes. As for tech specs, there will be two models of the new MacBook when it goes on sale next April 10. Both models share the same 12" Retina screen and are fanless.
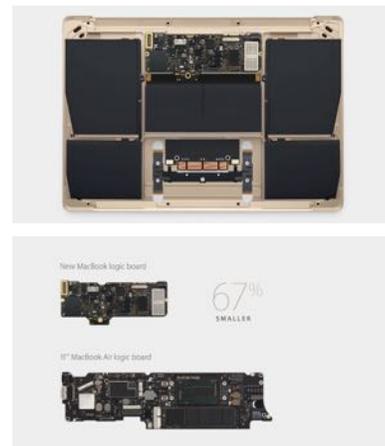
For $1299, you get a 1.1GHz dual-core Intel M processor, Intel HD 5300 graphics, 8GB RAM and a 256GB SSD. For $1599, you get essentially the same machine, but with a slightly faster 1.2GHz Core M CPU and a 512GB SSD. Actual performance for the MacBook remains to be seen, and reminds me when the original Air was launched and it came a bit underpowered, but was the most portable machine you could get regardless.

As rumored, USB-C is the only port in the system. The reversible USB port will be used to power the new MacBook as well as provide connectivity for DisplayPort, HDMI, and VGA, assumingly with required adapters depending on your needs.

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