

2024 in laptops: it's shaping up to be a big year for Windows

2023 has been a fairly uneventful year for laptops. Apple continues to dominate in both performance and battery life, while Microsoft only had incremental upgrades for its Surface line, and Intel has waited until the very end of the year to try to respond to Apple's dominance. But 2024 looks set to be one of the most interesting years for laptops since the Windows 8 days, thanks to a new version of Windows, a big AI push, and another attempt at making Windows on Arm a reality.

Apple's iPad pushed Microsoft into creating Windows on Arm more than 10 years ago, and laptop manufacturers followed with some weird and wonderful designs to match Windows 8. While I'm not expecting a big design overhaul for Windows 12 (or whatever Microsoft calls it), the changes in laptops in 2024 and beyond will be largely focused on the chip side for an era of AI.

Intel is kicking off things a little early in December with its Meteor Lake Core Ultra chips. These are Intel's first processors with different chiplets for each component, the first on the Intel 4 process (equivalent to 7-nanometer), and its first with an AI coprocessor inside. All of this will hopefully add up to improved battery life that can rival Apple's MacBook lineup, and perhaps the performance to match.

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a:hover]:text-black [>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63">Two of the latest laptops running Intel's Core Ultra chips.

a:hover]:text-black [>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63">Microsoft has been trying to push Arm-powered Windows devices for more than 10 years.

a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin dark:[>a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin [>a]:shadow-underline-black dark:[>a]:shadow-underline-white">Arm on the Surface: too little too late?

Microsoft originally shipped its first Arm-powered Surface RT in 2012, over a decade ago, so it's about time that Windows on Arm finally became an option for the masses and not just executives browsing the web on an expensive Surface Pro X device. Otherwise, Windows on Arm is quickly becoming a meme, like the year of desktop Linux.

I'm also expecting to see new Surface hardware next spring. Microsoft has been reportedly working on a smaller Surface Pro with an 11-inch display, so if that device is still in the works, then 2024 and a new version of Windows seems like the perfect time for a new Surface device. The main Surface Pro and Surface Laptop systems are also due for an upgrade, so it could be a busy year for Surface hardware.

There are still plenty of questions over the future of

Surface, though – particularly after Panos Panay, the main force behind Microsoft's device efforts, departed for Amazon just weeks before a Surface event earlier this year. We haven't seen what Panay is working on at Amazon just yet, but he helped bring Surface to life as a secret project more than 10 years ago, so he's bound to have big ideas for Amazon's devices.

We now need to see how Microsoft will reinvent Surface under new leadership, and how the company moves beyond the success of the Surface Pro. With a PC industry eager to push AI features as a laptop selling point, all eyes are on 2024 to see exactly how this new AI era starts to change the devices that millions rely on every day.

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