

Apple VP says 2018 iPad Pro 'meets or exceeds' quality and flatness standards

Days after Apple confirmed to *The Verge* that some of its new iPad Pro devices might come with a slight bend or curve out of the box, a senior executive has reiterated that the company stands by the tablet and its premium build quality.

Dan Riccio, , offered the most informative response yet on the matter late Thursday night when he responded to a customer email, saying that the 2018 iPad Pro "meets or exceeds all of Apple's high quality standards of design and precision manufacturing. We've carefully engineered it and every part of the manufacturing process is precisely measured and controlled." *9to5Mac* published the email in its entirety, and *MacRumors* says it has verified its authenticity. *9to5Mac* editor Benjamin Mayo tells me that the message was sent back to multiple people who emailed Apple over the issue.

Riccio's email goes on to say that Apple's "current specification for iPad Pro flatness is up to 400 microns which is even tighter than previous generations. This 400 micron variance is less than half a millimeter (or the width of fewer than four sheets of paper at most) and this level of flatness won't change during normal use over the lifetime of the product. Note, these slight variations do not affect the function of the device in any way." It's possible that the flat sides of the new design make minor bends easier to spot with the naked eye; older iPads (with the exception of the original) have all had sloped edges.

Riccio does not contradict or deny *The Verge's* initial report that some iPad devices are shipping from the factory with a bend in their aluminum chassis, which the company said is the

result of a cooling process during the manufacturing of what is an extremely thin and lightweight unibody aluminum device.

Photo: Apple

In his note, Riccio said that Apple's official stance on the iPad Pro would be provided to media "today" – likely meaning yesterday, Friday – but no statement was provided as of Saturday morning. It's possible that Riccio's email contains part of that forthcoming statement, as the font abruptly changes in a way that suggests a section was copied and pasted. Riccio mentions that the first story "did not include a company statement." Apple declined to offer a formal statement to *The Verge* on Wednesday, but confirmed the issue and dismissed the notion of it being a defect. Like Riccio, the company was adamant that any bend will not worsen over time or negatively affect the iPad's performance. Apple has since not followed up on subsequent requests for comment.

After that initial response, many were left frustrated and disappointed that it seemed Apple was shrugging off iPad Pro units coming bent (however minor the curve might be) right out of the box, deeming it unacceptable for such an expensive product. At this point, the company has not launched a replacement program for iPads outside the standard return window, and there continue to be reports of customers apparently being charged for replacement iPads – such as this one from *Macworld*. I get the sense that Apple thinks this whole situation is overblown and an undeserved distraction taking away from an otherwise great product.

Photo by Amelia Holowaty Krales / The Verge

The most interesting part of Riccio's email is that he publicly divulges Apple's acceptable tolerances for flatness on the 2018 iPad Pro, which is 400 microns (0.4 millimeters or

around 0.015 inches). I'm not in possession of either of my two bent 11-inch iPad Pros anymore, so I can't exactly grab a micrometer and measure to see whether the one pictured above would have fallen into that spec. But Riccio's data point lacks some context including span and at what point in the iPad Pro's construction process the 400-micron measurement applies.

For now, my advice is this: if you purchase a new iPad Pro, just give it a close look-over right away to be sure your unit isn't affected. Apple currently has an extended holiday return policy through early January in the United States, so exchanges shouldn't be much trouble. If you're satisfied by what you see, and if Apple is correct and this isn't an issue that exacerbates over the course of normal usage – it's still a little early to make that call, I think – you'll have a pretty superb tablet in your hands.

<https://www.theverge.com/2018/12/22/18152161/apple-dan-riccio-email-ipad-pro-2018-bending>