HTC announces a PC-powered VR headset called the Vive Cosmos

HTC has announced a new virtual reality headset called the Vive Cosmos. Based on a very brief appearance during the company's CES presentation, the Cosmos is HTC's bid at a relatively mainstream VR headset. It doesn't require external sensors and uses fully tracked motion controllers, and it's being pitched as a convenient device with "absolute comfort" and "easy setup," intended for either home or mobile use. But we don't know how much it costs, what its exact capabilities are, or when it's going to launch – although HTC posted on Twitter that it's "coming soon," and a press release says it will offer development kits in "early 2019."

The Cosmos is supposed to connect to a computer at first, but could potentially expand to other platforms. HTC suggested that you might be able to link the Cosmos with a smartphone in the future, and a teaser video shows it alongside a phone. In a press release, HTC said that it will have "the capability to be powered by more than a traditional gaming PC," though that's a nebulous description.

On a , HTC says the headset will have an "ever-increasing suite of modular customizations." That would echo its tactic of releasing modular upgrades for the HTC Vive.

HTC's video shows off a rendering of the headset hardware, including features like a flip-up screen that lets you see the real world without taking off the headset completely. It appears to feature tracking cameras on both the front and sides. The video also shows controllers that look different

from either the original HTC Vive wands or the second-generation “knuckles” controllers that HTC’s partner Valve is making — if anything, they look closer to the controllers on the upcoming Oculus Quest headset, with a joystick and buttons instead of the original Vive’s trackpads. (HTC describes them as “gamer-friendly” but “versatile.”)

HTC filed a trademark for the name “Vive Cosmos” last year, and there was speculation — well-founded, as it turned out — that the Cosmos might show up at CES. It’s the third major line of Vive-branded headsets, after the original tethered Vive and the self-contained Vive Focus, which launched in China but was finally released worldwide in November. There’s also a super-high-end option called the HTC Vive Pro, which offers a higher-resolution display than the original Vive, and was updated with eye tracking today at CES.

The Vive Cosmos fills a niche between those two products. It looks more convenient and less setup-intensive than the Vive, but higher-end — and more squarely aimed at consumers — than the Vive Focus. But there’s still a lot we don’t know about the Cosmos, so we can’t fairly compare it to the rest of the headset ecosystem yet.

Update 5:25PM ET: Added detail from press release and HTC’s site.

Correction: An earlier version of this article referred to the Cosmos as wireless, but it appears that this refers to potential future capabilities, not ones that will be available at launch. An HTC spokesperson would not confirm whether the headset would be hardwired to a PC at launch, or whether it could connect wirelessly — as the HTC Vive can with an adapter.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/7/18172740/htc-vive-cosmos-vr-headset-announce-ces-2019