Microsoft-branded mice and keyboards are going away after 40 years



Enlarge / Microsoft’s “green-eye” mouse, the first Microsoft-branded mouse the company sold.

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If I asked you to name Microsoft’s best-known and longest-lived product, you’d almost certainly say “Windows.” But another one of the company’s products has been on the market for even longer: its mice.

Microsoft started selling its first computer mice in 1983, a year or two before the Macintosh and other computers made pointing devices standard-issue and two years before the first

version of Windows was released. The Microsoft Natural Keyboard followed in 1994. Since then, the company has offered a range of Microsoft-branded PC accessories, from successful ones like the Microsoft Ergonomic Keyboard to short-lived experiments like Microsoft SideWinder gamepads and joysticks.

Microsoft-made mice and keyboards aren’t going away, but the Microsoft brand name is. The company told The Verge that it will stop selling Microsoft-branded keyboards, mice, and other accessories following a series of layoffs that affected its hardware division. The company will refocus its efforts on higher-end Surface-branded keyboards and mice, which represent just a tiny fraction of all the accessories Microsoft currently sells.

“Going forward, we are focusing on our Windows PC accessories portfolio under the Surface brand,” Microsoft’s Dan Laycock said. “We will continue to offer a range of Surface-branded PC Accessories—including mice, keyboards, pens, docks, adaptive accessories, and more. Existing Microsoft-branded PC accessories like mice, keyboards, and webcams will continue to be sold in existing markets at existing sell-in prices while supplies last.”

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The biggest question is whether Microsoft intends to keep making cheaper, more budget-friendly accessories under the Surface brand or if it wants to discontinue these products entirely and focus entirely on higher-end, higher-margin devices.



Microsoft’s Ergonomic Keyboard and Mouse could be on the chopping block as the company refocuses on Surface-branded accessories.

Microsoft’s cheapest Surface-branded wireless mouse, for example, usually costs $40, and higher-end versions can cost even more. A Surface-branded Bluetooth chiclet keyboard normally runs $100. Non-Surface-branded versions of functionally similar products cost about half as much, though they’re generally also made of cheaper materials.

Microsoft also offers a range of ergonomic accessories, like the Ergonomic Keyboard and Mouse, the Sculpt Comfort Desktop, and the Sculpt Ergonomic Desktop, that don’t currently have Surface-branded equivalents. (Microsoft *did* offer a Surface Ergonomic Keyboard at one point, though it has been discontinued). There also aren’t any inexpensive standalone webcams in the current Surface lineup.

We’ve asked Microsoft to clarify its plans for its low-end and ergonomic accessories and will update this story if we receive a response.

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