Microsoft’s new Surface Dock tosses the proprietary port, uses Thunderbolt 4

Enlarge / The new Thunderbolt 4 version of Microsoft’s Surface Dock.
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Microsoft is introducing a new version of its Surface Dock, the first to rely on Thunderbolt 4 instead of Microsoft’s proprietary Surface Connect port. The Microsoft Surface Thunderbolt 4 Dock costs $300 ($40 more than the regular price of the previous-generation Surface Dock 2) and is available starting today.

The new dock measures 5.91×2.95×0.84 inches—a bit flatter, wider, and deeper than the Dock 2—and includes a total of three USB-C/Thunderbolt 4 ports, three 5Gbps USB-A ports, a 2.5Gbps Ethernet port, and a headphone jack. The dock can provide up to 96 W of power to a connected laptop, which should be sufficient to power most laptops that charge over USB-C.

Microsoft only advertises compatibility with its own products, but because it uses Thunderbolt 4, the dock should work with most devices that include USB-C or Thunderbolt ports, including most PC laptops and MacBooks (though we don’t know

whether macOS includes drivers for its built-in Ethernet port, and the number of external displays supported may depend on how many your MacBook natively supports). Microsoft says laptops with plain USB-C ports can drive a single 4K display at 60 Hz, whereas driving two 4K displays at 60 Hz requires Thunderbolt.

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Microsoft puts one Thunderbolt 4 port and one USB-A port on the front; the power jack, Ethernet port, two more USB-A ports, two Thunderbolt 4 ports, and the headphone jack are on the back. There’s also a lock slot on the right.

We don’t want to read too much into the introduction of a single accessory, but switching from Surface Connect to Thunderbolt 4 for the Surface Dock does suggest that the next Surface devices could come without a Surface Connect port. The

current Surface Connect port dates back to 2014’s Surface Pro 3, ensuring interoperability between many generations of Surface chargers and other accessories. Like Apple’s resurrected MagSafe port, it will also come detached easily if tripped over or pulled on, saving your PC from tumbling to the floor.

Surfaces with USB-C and Thunderbolt ports can generally be charged using those ports *or* Surface Connect, giving users the option to use whatever charger they prefer. But the majority of new PC laptops charge via USB-C—many *only* include USB-C or Thunderbolt ports—so killing the Surface Connect port brings Microsoft in line with what most of its competitors are doing.

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