

Welcome to the Event Tech Podcast, where we explore the ever-evolving world of event technology every week. This show is brought to you by Endless Events, the event AV company that doesn't suck. Now, let's talk tech.

Brandt Krueger:

Hello everybody, and welcome to another episode of the Event Tech Podcast. That gentleman over there, he is the zonked Will Curran of Endless Events.

Will Curran:

And that guy over there is the ill-informed Brandt Krueger of Event Technology Consulting.

Brandt Krueger:

Now, is that hyphenated? Is that a hyphenated adjective?

Will Curran:

There is a hyphen in it, yes there is a hyphen.

Brandt Krueger:

I was not aware that we were allowing hyphenated adjectives, because that opens up a whole new can of worms.

Will Curran:

Well, apparently according to Random Adjective Generator, when I choose one adjective, it considers that hyphenated is part of the adjective. So, consider hyphenated words fair game, play ball.

Brandt Krueger:

All right. Because now we've got all kinds of nouns that we can throw in. Okay. It's dangerous. Very dangerous.

Will Curran:

Very dangerous.

Brandt Krueger:

So what are we talking about today, Will? We kind of teased it on one of our other episodes, that there might be some more hardware news coming from you. And we've been doing this journey, where we've talked about the various types of hardware and laptops and phones and things like that. And I hope that's been informative. We've gotten some good positive feedback on that and, be sure and let us know.

Brandt Krueger:

Because I think a lot of times planners are wondering, can I just get away with having an iPad? Can I, what are the advantages to...

Will Curran:

What does my work flow look like?

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, what does the workflow look like when you're just using Mac versus PC, versus Chromebooks. And so in our CES episode, we talked a little bit about Chromebooks again, and how it might work for most people, but for some of us, when you'd have to deal with PowerPoints and things like that, it's just not getting the job done.

Brandt Krueger:

So what is getting the job done for you these days, Will?

Will Curran:

Yeah, so before we jump into what it was...

Brandt Krueger:

Okay, all right, all right.

Will Curran:

I think now it's in the title, probably, of this one, so you probably know what it is. So spoiler, but quick little recap of Will's history before I dive in, because as soon as we bring it up, there's going to be a lot of discussion around it. Is, Will was traditionally, when he first grew up, Windows user. Then he got his first MacBook, then he was hardcore Mac all day long, until eventually the touch bar ruined his life and he decided he was going to go full-kilter Windows at that time.

Will Curran:

The more recent history of my laptops is that I sold my MacBook Pro, and picked up a Surface Pro 5, at the time. That's what year I think it was that it came out. It was the much better version, everyone loved it, and I think they just called it Surface Pro.

Will Curran:

They were trying to drop the numbers, and then they realized that was really confusing. And I used that for a solid year or so, until I started having these weird overheating issues. It wouldn't run Zoom. I couldn't, literally couldn't host event icons sometimes, and I eventually just was like, "Okay, I think I've just ... This is not what should be happening. I'm going to take it in the store. They basically offered to take it back in, or offer me full credit a year later, which was insane.

Will Curran:

And I used that credit and picked up a Surface Book 2, which is the thicker version that has a weird kind of crazy hinge, but also has way more powerful specs, things that I ... It's not the

fabric-y keyboard, it's the one that's almost like a traditional laptop, that has that really wild hinge that you've seen before, that can hold the whole screen.

Will Curran:

And I'd been using the Surface Pro two now, for a year and a half, until this point. And I loved that laptop, it was super powerful. The one thing that sucked about it is it was huge. It barely fit inside my backpack because it is a beefy, thick, 15-inch laptop. But I threw things at it, like Photoshop all day. Pretty much everything ran on it except for, I tried editing 4K footage on it a little while ago, and I realized that was not going to work out. So I tried that for a while.

Will Curran:

But basically had that laptop. I obviously also built myself a desktop computer that is now my like main workhorse machine when I'm at home. Now I built myself a second computer since then in two years. So I have a big machine, I can utilize that. If I really need something intense like Photoshop, video editing, I can technically do it on here very, very easily.

Will Curran:

Also, I think important to know as well, is what I'm usually doing on the computer. I went from, when I first ... Probably in early college, doing a lot of Photoshop work, graphic design work for our company and then stuff like that. Now I pretty much spend most of my time answering emails in Gmail, using Chrome, Slack a lot, and doing a lot of Zoom video calls with people.

Will Curran:

The occasional video podcast like we're doing on here right now, and the occasional Event Icons episode when I'm on the road. And I pretty much probably only opened up Photoshop maybe an hour a year now. Like really quick, oh, I need to open this PSD, I can change the font, or I just need to make a really rough logo.

Will Curran:

But most of the time it's because I have spare time and I want to do it. Nothing intense at all. I don't use photo, I don't video edit and, but I'm probably the typical knowledge worker, Chrome, Slack, video calls all day.

Brandt Krueger:

And just, I mean, I'll tack in and say that I went Surface Pro X, last year. Sorry, Surface Pro 6. Surface Pro 6 is what I have. Surface Pro 6, which is again, that lighter-weight tablet style with the kind of fabric-y keyboard that folds around. And I really, really like it. Really like it. I get really decent battery life for a laptop, and I've been really enjoying how light my backpack is when I travel these days. And I'm able to get everything done that I need to get done.

Will Curran:

I love it. And I loved my Surface Pro five at the time and it was fantastic. I loved how small it was. Minor gripes is, for example on the Surface Pro 5, is that because that has a kickstand

element. If you're laying in bed and wanting to watch it a YouTube video, it doesn't quite sit straight. If you're using a laptop on your lap it's a little bit better, but still kind of awkward. You get a little bit of flex with the keyboard, things like that.

Will Curran:

But my main gripe with the form factor is just when I'm laying in bed, trying to watch a YouTube video, so I end up putting on the bed side me, and turning on my side to watch a YouTube video, or something like that.

Brandt Krueger:

I've also had a fall-off-the-back-of-a-airplane trade table.

Will Curran:

Yes, that was the other thing too. You have the tray table.

Brandt Krueger:

Literally, it did a somersault and flew upside down, and landed down at our feet. And I was, I'd really thought I'd lost it. Because it was like fa-boom, bam, flip, boom, bam down. And it was fine.

Will Curran:

It's totally fine. I mean that's the one thing, is I think they're pretty well built devices too, and pretty solid. But yeah, that was a very interesting thing about the form factor, which again, we're kind of teasing where Will's going with this.

Will Curran:

So, interestingly enough, I think we covered it on the news, with all the Microsoft devices that got announced, the Duos and the fabric and everything like that. fabric and the Duos aren't out yet. So let's hope that I can make it that long without having to change my laptop again.

Will Curran:

But one device that was announced was the Surface Pro X. And initially when I first saw it, I just thought it was a gorgeous hardware piece of device. Super thin, this all-metal black design is so slick looking. It just blacked out, murdered out, as they called it. It is just very beautiful device, and the things we'll talk about that I like about it, and then things I don't like about it. But the interesting thing about it is that it uses a different architecture, which we'll talk about very, very soon.

Will Curran:

But I was always very interested in it, waited for the reviews, and all the initial reviews that came out were from tech YouTubers blasting it. Talking about how it doesn't get the battery life it's looking for. That was probably the initial thing that came out. But then very apparently people

were realizing that they were running those type of apps on it that don't really utilize the battery life the best.

Will Curran:

And for example, Chrome destroys the battery life on this. And people hated on it. They said not worth it. It's got too much time to go, pick up the second gen one. And I was like, okay, I'm not interested in device any more. I started looking for smaller traditional laptops, Dell XPS 13, that sort of thing. And was just kind of peeking out. And then also just realizing my Surface Book X is totally fine too.

Will Curran:

So just Will, kind of like always, looking for the next thing, try and make a laptop a little bit smaller. But then the trigger point that made me pick up and buy the Surface Pro X was Daniel Rubino's review on Windows Central. And Daniel basically, similar editor in chief, kind of knowledge worker, writing a lot of articles, doing a lot of video calls, things like that.

Will Curran:

I doubt he's doing a lot of Photoshop and video editing. Said he loves his laptop, it's his daily driver. He's getting the battery life they promised. And here's how you need to think about it now. And it's kind of a little bit of a mind shift in computers. Not too much. It's not a Chromebook where you have to figure out how to really change your entire life and how it's going to run. But it definitely forces you to think differently.

Will Curran:

So I read that review and I said, "Yeah, let me go check out one in-person." I hadn't even seen one in-person yet. I went down to the local Best Buy and literally took their, it's like the base spec, the boring version.

Will Curran:

It was like eight gigs of RAM, and 120 gigs of space, and I was like, You know what? My number one thing I that I feared this wouldn't do is Zoom calls. So let's download Zoom, and thank God computers in stores let you download stuff by the way. So I downloaded the actual Zoom installer, I logged into my account, and I video called myself. I put my phone on one side and I put the other one. I saw, was it sluggish? I tried sharing my screen simultaneously while doing it, and it ran totally smooth.

Will Curran:

And I don't think Zoom's even optimized for this computer, but it ran better than my Surface Pro five did. Granted, that had heat sync issues and things like that, that I didn't realize I had until later. But it ran perfectly fine. And I was like, okay, well what will I do to it that will slow it down? And eventually I got to the point where I loaded up a PowerPoint with the 3D animated, you can throw it up, a model in it, and shift it.

Will Curran:

And that was the only time it ever struggled. Even then, it just kind of took a second to do it, but I realized, I was like, I'm not loading in PowerPoints with 3D models in it. I'm PowerPoints with static slides, and most of the time I don't do transitions, it's just slide, slide, slide.

Will Curran:

And I said to myself, all right, I'm going to buy it. And we'll see, a there's a 30 day return policy, let's see how far I can get into doing this. And now it's been two whole weeks of having it. I've done two trips on ... A full trip on it, I think. Yeah, full trip on it. It's done lots of coffee shop work. It's been at home, it's been doing the watching the YouTube in bed sort of stuff, my daily workflow, normal stuff.

Will Curran:

And I'm ready to give my review. Was that long winded intro?

Brandt Krueger:

Well thanks everybody. Another great podcast.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, no, I think it's great. It gives people plenty of background. I think where we could probably start is to talk about this change in architecture from a very top level. Obviously people don't need to get all of the nerdy details, but just understanding that part of the reason that you're seeing difference in battery life, depending on what kind of program you're running, or just in general, or that there's any kind of restrictions on which programs you can use has to do with this fact that they're using a different kind of chip.

Will Curran:

Yep. Yep. So it's based on a Qualcomm Mobile Processor, the same kind you have in your, phone actually. So normal laptops are based on AMD or Intel-based processors, and kind of the traditional computer processor.

Will Curran:

This uses a mobile processor, which, big benefits; battery life, because obviously our phones can last lot longer than our laptops, hopefully. But also things like 4G connectivity, which is really cool. But it means that, essentially, they run on a completely different architecture of software, even though it runs full Windows.

Will Curran:

That's the one thing I think most people don't realize, full windows it can run, but it runs on what's called Arm 64 technology. And if you have ever seen it before, where you install a computer app and it says to download it, you can get the 32 bit version or the 64 bit version? 64 bit is the modern day architecture that runs on Intel and AMD processors. 32 bit is a little bit closer to what these kinds of apps are doing. So there's a lot of apps that are compatible with it,

but the apps that really utilize that mobile processor, and don't destroy the battery life, are called Arm 64 versions of apps as well.

Will Curran:

And you might be thinking to yourself, this is so complicated, I don't even want to have to deal with this compatibility. Honestly, there's a really great article I'll link to on here that is about, basically what apps are compatible, and it helps you understand the compatibility of the two.

Will Curran:

And even I was so confused. So I was like, Arm 64, well then can I install 64 bit, can I install 32 bit, what's the difference? The one interesting thing I think to think about is, it can technically run any ... Okay, not any app. It can run 99% of apps. The issues it has struggles with is drivers that aren't compatible with the hardware.

Will Curran:

So some for example, maybe your like headset might not work, potentially. And then some apps just don't quite work. But technically, for example, you can actually run Photoshop on this. What it does is it emulates it, and kind of does this crazy magical computer stuff to make it run on it.

Will Curran:

The thing that you get sacrificed though, is battery life. So that's just something to kind of keep in mind, is it can kind of do anything, technically. But the question becomes, there's definitely a use case that this is perfect for, which I've kind of already highlighted a bit. So did I explain that well at all?

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, I think that's exactly it. The average person doesn't need to know anything other than, it is a slightly different thing. It's a slightly different beast. Just like you can't run full real Photoshop on an iPad, you can do that here, it's just going to be really slow, or really impact your battery life, or something along those lines.

Brandt Krueger:

So like you said, it requires just a little bit of a shift in the way that you're thinking. Now, we've talked about Chromebooks. That if you're not doing video editing and you're not doing photo editing, you're probably going to be fine with a Chromebook. And we've talked about my own personal challenges with trying to do PowerPoints and things like that in a Chromebook.

Brandt Krueger:

This is kind of taking that next step. So you can't quite do what you need to in a Chromebook, sounds like you might be able to go this route to get you another 10% of, these are the things that we're able to do here.

Will Curran:

Definitely. Definitely. And and one important thing to know too, is these Arm 64 base processors, these mobile-based products, it's not new. Laptops actually been doing this for Windows for a while. But now that it's coming directly from Microsoft, you're seeing a lot of product support now for Arm 64-based stuff. So PowerPoint, for example, runs like a breeze. All the Microsoft apps were on so, so well. And I think that, because it's going to hit a wider market, we're also going to see developers realize, I need to develop mobile-based processors, processing apps as well.

Will Curran:

So I think you'll see a lot of improvements on there as well. Is it worth talking about apps that work and don't work on my workflow at this point?

Brandt Krueger:

I would say if there's show stoppers, sure.

Will Curran:

Yeah. I mean, so for example, in my entire workflow, I'm planning on never using Photoshop on this thing. So that was already out of the gate, don't worry about Photoshop at all. So that was obviously something that doesn't work. However, Adobe has said they're working on an Arm 64 version. When that does come, I bet you it's going to run buttery-smooth, I think.

Will Curran:

That's the one thing, I think, to keep in mind too, is this computer's fast. And I didn't believe it until I started using it, but it is lightning fast with the right apps. So once I run into that I can't use, one is called Text Expander, it's an app that allows me to type in short codes and get expanded text.

Will Curran:

However, I haven't had a chance yet to find an alternative. I'm sure there's an alternative out there. The only other app I had an issue with was my VPN, Express VPN. However, the alternative is that Open VPN, a software that allows you use any VPN and basically have a little bit more customized, it's not as easy as just download software, connect, it auto-picks, the best server, things like that.

Will Curran:

I had to do a little bit of copy and pasting of information in, but there's a good tutorial on Express VPN. I had to start using that instead of the traditional Express VPN. And the only other thing is the app that manages my headset for calls doesn't install at all on it. The Plantronics, it's called the Plantronics Hub Software, doesn't work with it.

Will Curran:

However the headset works totally fine, and works via Bluetooth no problem, and USB no problem at all. Haven't had any issues at all. That just means that I can't get some granular

control. However, I think I could technically plug it into another computer, change the granular control, and then just plug it right back into the other computer and it'll be fine. So that's really interesting.

Will Curran:

The big advancement, for sure though, is that you don't want to use traditional Chrome with this computer at all. And I know we talked about Chromium and how it's our new ... The Edge Chromium's our new favorite browser. You definitely want to use Edge Chromium for this. In fact, I don't know which version it has, but I think it's only in the developer version, in the Canary version, like the new beta kind of tested versions of Chromium, that there's actually an Arm 64 Edge Chromium, and that thing runs so fast, it runs faster than the normal Chrome.

Will Curran:

And that's the mind blowing part of it. But I saw a lot of people giving bad reviews to it, and they're like, "Yeah, I can only have maybe four tabs open and doing Gmail, blah, this and that. And yeah, Chrome just destroys a battery life.

Will Curran:

Well, Microsoft knew that that was going to happen, because it's not an Arm 64 software. So they came out with an Arm 64 version of browser, and man it's so fast. And I think that browser came out after the laptop went on sale. So a lot of people didn't even have the chance to use an Arm 64-based browser on there, which is why it got dogged on so much.

Will Curran:

But man, I have 10 tabs open while video calling, sharing my screen, drawing on the screen. No problem at all. I'm blown away by how fast it is, for the fact that it's running the same chip that's in my phone. It's just, pshew.

Brandt Krueger:

And that's another one of the things that we talked about in our other hardware episodes, is that all of these surface devices have really good pen recognition on them. And so you're able to yeah, pop open a PDF of the show file and draw over the top of it, and then send it to someone. And annotate PDFs and things like that super easily.

Brandt Krueger:

And so yeah, I would imagine it's even better on the X than it is on my Pro 6, just because of that mobile speed. I'm a little surprised to hear about Express VPN, just because they're on everything, and they have an app for my phone, which is Android. And it's going to be, it was running off the Qualcomm processor. So it's probably just a thing that there's some little thing that's holding them back, and I'm sure they'll get that banged out and make it go.

Will Curran:

Yeah, and I mean, as these become more common too, I think that'll become way more common that it does work. But yeah, I mean the important thing to know is my workflow is pretty much unaffected. I'm going to find an alternative to text-expander that will work, and I'll be back to normal, no problem at all. And yes, if I need to Photoshop something, I might not load it up on this machine and should give it a try.

Will Curran:

But to be honest, if most people's computers probably can't run Photoshop anyways, if you're using a Dell, you don't even know the model laptop and it's not brand new from this year, you're probably not running Photoshop, you're probably not video editing anyways. And that's the important thing to know about this device, is that this is probably for you, then. And I think that's just really important to know. That was my big thing, is the workflow and how I was going to use it.

Will Curran:

But one way you can test this, too, is if you have a critical piece of software that's not standard, go install it on the computers. For example, if you have a proprietary accounting software that your company built, or maybe not accounting, but something like that, go give it a try. Install it on the computer, uninstall it, or by the laptop. And yeah, I don't know if I can done this a hundred percent, but I have seen some people who will buy a device and then try it out for thirty days and return it. Feel free to give that a try on there. We're not at all endorsing that, at all.

Will Curran:

But you will be really surprised, there is not many computer apps out there that people are using now that aren't compatible with this sort of thing.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, I think as long as you're straight up about it. So I mean, when I bought my Chromebook, I brought it back and wound up getting a much more expensive HP two-in-one laptop, and they were pretty cool with that because they actually sold a more expensive machine than that. So it's the kind of thing that, yeah, I think you can give it ... If you're in the market for a new laptop, why not give it a try? Especially if you're a road warrior, you're traveling all the time, you want something thin and light and amazing.

Will Curran:

So thin and light.

Brandt Krueger:

Like I said, it has been really freeing to just have this super light laptop. It takes up hardly any space in my bag. When I'm back at the tech table, it's not taking up all kinds of crazy room at the tech table, those kinds of things. And it runs just fine. You've definitely got me a little jealous of trying to do this.

Brandt Krueger:

Now there's some other new features in addition to that stuff. I believe there's a new pen and things like that. How's that working for you?

Will Curran:

Yeah, so maybe highlight some of the favorite things about it. So let's talk about the Pen system. So let's not even talk about the pen itself. Obviously the pen is fantastic, and we'll talk about the actual pen in just a second. But the way it charges and stores the pen is the best design I've seen, ever.

Will Curran:

In tradition with the Surface Pro seven and the Surface Book, you've got the pen and it had this magnet on the side that was nice, but when you put it in your bag, it always came out, and you always up ... I always store the pen in a separate pocket because that was why, and then because of that I'd pull the laptop out and the pen wasn't always with me, so I used it way less.

Will Curran:

Because I was like, "Oh, it's in the bag. I don't really need this. Okay, I'll just use the, blah, blah, blah." This mechanism. And watch a video. If you haven't seen this device in person, you got to see it in video.

Will Curran:

But essentially what happens is you have the keyboard, and I'm going to try and do this, we have video on, so let me know, Brandt, if I don't explain this via words well. But the keyboard basically attaches to the bond just like a Surface Pro 7. But what happens is, when you kind of unfold it, when it's sitting up at the normal angle used to type, if you push down on it, it reveals this secret pouch within the keyboard where the pen goes.

Will Curran:

And it magnetically ... I'm holding the laptop vertically, it magnetically holds the pen in there, but also wirelessly charges the pen so you don't have any more batteries on this pen anymore, and it stores within there. And then when you fold the whole thing up, you don't even know there's a pen. Literally it's super duper thin, and you don't even know there's a pen inside your keyboard, and it keeps your pen with you all the time.

Will Curran:

It is one of the most brilliant designs I've ever seen inside of a computer. And honestly Microsoft should get an award for figuring this out, because everyone's going to copy this. This is going to be the new way pens get stored inside of two-in-ones, I think, for sure.

Brandt Krueger:

So I actually had, I had a keyboard case for My iPad Two, that had this kind of thing. Well actually, it couldn't have been the two, because it was one of the ones that had a pen. It was

one of the first ones that had a pen, because I think I had the Pro briefly. And as soon as Apple revved it to the next version, I think it was a Logitech case. They stopped making it.

Will Curran:

Wow.

Brandt Krueger:

So they had this, and it was the same thing where, neatly tucked away the pencil. Didn't have the cool charging, because you had the lightning connector on the Apple Pencil.

Brandt Krueger:

So yeah, this is really cool. And like I said, I'm a little jealous.

Will Curran:

I mean, it took a little bit of ... It was a risk. Because I wasn't sure if it was going to work, too. So you told me, you said get it and then let me know what you think of it. And that was, I think, a big part. It's definitely very, very cool how it stores in there for sure.

Will Curran:

But yeah ... Yeah, go ahead.

Brandt Krueger:

Oh, I was just going to say, are you using the LTE capabilities? Are you using...

Will Curran:

Yeah. Yeah, yep.

Brandt Krueger:

So you've got a plan for it.

Will Curran:

Yep. So I ended up just paying 10 extra bucks a month for my Verizon account, and I went and stopped by a Verizon store and bought this in there. And there is eSIM ability in it, so you can technically just start connecting right away if you don't care about being on Verizon.

Will Curran:

But I want Verizon's coverage. And yeah, I paid 10 extra bucks. It uses the same existing data I have. Most of the time when I need LTE on it, I'm posting on a hotspot. So one of the coolest things, I might end up getting rid of my hotspot because of this. That's because now the only reason I had my hot spot was a, the sharing ... That's the only thing I'm thinking, is sharing with other people. But you can technically actually turn this thing into hotspot, which is kind of neat.

Will Curran:

But yeah, I mean the fact that I don't have to, "Oh there's no internet here, or it sucks. Let me get my hotspot out, turn it on, wait a second for it to boot, connect.

Brandt Krueger:
Right.

Will Curran:
Now, literally, I can hop off of wifi, and if wifi is not connected, it automatically connects to LTE, which is a positive and negative, and you can set it to do some cool settings. But very, very cool.

Will Curran:
I honestly haven't had a chance to utilize it 100%, because I've been mainly in coffee shops and things like that. But I bet you there's been a couple of times where I actually didn't realize I was on wifi, and I wasn't on wifi, and I just had the connectivity to go.

Will Curran:
So if you're looking, get online really fast, I don't have time to connect to wifi, this 4GLT connection is pretty freaking cool. I'm excited. I'm kind of sad because we're obviously seeing 5G come out, so probably in two years or so. Phoenix is a 5G spot.

Will Curran:
There is a node right down the street from my house, I would have loved to install the 5G, but I think the Surface Pro X Two, as they're probably going to unfortunately call it, will probably have five G in it and that'll be really exciting as well.

Will Curran:
But just having a built-in modem saves you so much time. It's very, very cool.

Brandt Krueger:
So you said you got, it was the base model, so that's the eight gigabyte, 128 gigabyte?

Will Curran:
No, that was the one I tested in Best Buy. I actually picked up the top spec, one step down. So instead of being the 512 gigabyte hardware, I think I had the 256, if I remember right. But I got the 16 gigs of RAM, just because I'm going from the most powerful Microsoft laptop to what could be considered the ... Not actually, probably not the least, because a Go is probably less powerful than this. But considered a little bit different, so I was worried about RAM, even though it ran Zoom fine, everything like that. But I did the 16 gigs of RAM, and I think the price difference was just a little bit more. So definitely not the full bled out spec of version as well.

Will Curran:

But that, and while we're bringing up price though, it's probably worth talking about price on this thing. And I think that's the part that's also gaining a lot of hate. It's pretty expensive.

Will Curran:

I mean, for what it is...

Brandt Krueger:

Compared to an iPad for sure.

Will Curran:

Compared to an iPad, compared to a Surface Pro Seven, which is what a lot of people compare it to. You're paying a little bit for bleeding-edge tech, you're paying for size. And that was the thing I ended up deciding to buy it, versus going back to a Pro Seven, was just that it's way thinner than a Pro Seven. You get a little bit more screen size, a little bit higher resolution screen, things like that. But you're paying a little bit of a premium on it.

Will Curran:

But to be honest, I think you and I talked about that, I think it's just because laptops are kind of, people are realizing that people are willing to pay a ton of money for a MacBook Pro, that they're willing to pay almost anything for a good laptop as well. So I think, to be honest, it's not overpriced if you're coming from a MacBook. Let's just say those things.

Brandt Krueger:

It adds up fast, though. Because you pay extra for the pen and the keyboard kit.

Will Curran:

Yeah.

Brandt Krueger:

So, looking at the one that you got, so 16 gigabyte memory, 256 gigabytes of hard drive space, which I think that's comfortable now. I have trouble getting below that. But using things like, One Drive or selective sync on Dropbox, I'm comfortable with 256 at this point. Then the pen and keyboard bundle is an additional 270 bucks.

Brandt Krueger:

So as configured, you're looking at about 1700 bucks, little under 1800 bucks. Yeah, that's spendy.

Will Curran:

Yeah.

Brandt Krueger:

I think, yeah, you're paying for the size, you're paying for the lightweight, you're paying for the battery life.

Will Curran:

The beautiful design, for sure.

Brandt Krueger:

If you're in the Microsoft ecosystem, then you're in at that point. Yes, you could absolutely get yourself an iPad and be in iPad land. But an iPad is, to a certain extent, hamstrung, again, by the apps that are available. This is basically full Windows.

Will Curran:

Full Windows.

Brandt Krueger:

It's a full, full windows laptop. And that's the thing that I've really been liking about my Surface Pro Five, is that it's not in any way hindered by the fact that it's real windows. It's not, some kind of fake version of windows.

Will Curran:

Totally, totally. And again, the app compatibility thing, it's going to get better over time. So I mean, if it's one of those things where you're really, you have this one app that might not work, or you're really not the bleeding-edge kind of person, maybe wait for the next generation. But I think that I'm really worried that people, for lack of better term spat all over this laptop, that I'm worried that Microsoft is also going to feel like, well, people didn't like this, it didn't sell as well.

Will Curran:

But the interesting thing is, I haven't seen any in-person yet. But I think it will come as time goes on. And I really hope that this product continues to improve, because I feel like this might be the future of laptops, is this Arm 64 based stuff. Because the battery life is unbelievable. When you're using Edge Chromium and you're not ... If I'm not Zooming, Zoom's, the only thing that really kind of hurts my battery life.

Will Curran:

But if I'm just in Chrome, just emailing and Google doc-ing and doing probably all the normal stuff, man, I get that 10 hours all-day battery life that they talk about all day long.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah. Like I said, I don't think it is a fair comparison to compare it to an iPad Pro, because it's a real machine. I mean, and to be fair, also, the iPad Pro does get pretty spendy, pretty quick. So I mean, if you do the 12-inch display, that's 1000 bucks. And then you got to add in storage, and let's see here. Let's just do this quick.

Brandt Krueger:

Oh, funny. By the way, when you search for iPad Pro on Bing, the top result is the Surface Pro...

Will Curran:

Surface Pro X. That's awesome, good job, good job Microsoft.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, that's hilarious.

Will Curran:

I mean, that makes sense.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah. All right, so let's see here. 12.9 inch iPad Pro, space gray, 256 gigabytes of storage, cellular, right? So let's add that. So we got to add that in. We're already up to 1300 bucks. And so now you got to get a keyboard, right? Or, you got to get the nice, you got to get the tight cover, let's see here.

Will Curran:

And the Apple Pencil.

Brandt Krueger:

Let's see here. So let's see, and we add that in. Apple Pencil is 100 bucks for show. So you're up to 1400. Keyboards, I think, what, another a hundred bucks? So you're up to 1500. You're within 200 bucks.

Will Curran:

Wow.

Brandt Krueger:

And, and you're hamstrung to iOS. So you're not going to be able to run full version of Chrome with all the extensions and things like that, that you can get on Chrome. Apple's slowly opening that up, but this is available today.

Brandt Krueger:

So I think it's a little unfair, like I say, to ding it on price. Because you're, for a thin, powerful laptop, we know that gets all-day battery life, that's two grand easy.

Will Curran:

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. And that was the one thing I was kind of looking at too, is I was looking at the XPS 13, was kind of my alternative. And interestingly enough, I bought this and it was the next day Dell announced the new refreshed version of the XPS 13, it's perfect. And I was like, "Ah, did I make the wrong decision?" But no, I don't feel like I've made the wrong

decision. I think this is the advice I want to support, and I think it's been made clear in my past hardware purchases for all of our long time event tech podcast listeners, they know that I'm willing to pay for a product to see it, kind of donate to see the future of it continue to come, evidenced by me buying a folding phone.

Brandt Krueger:
To test the model.

Will Curran:
Yeah, yeah, exactly, exactly. But yeah. Great computer. I didn't even think about the pricing of the iPad, which is fantastic. And it's interesting, a lot of people are comparing it to the iPad, but again...

Brandt Krueger:
Well, Apple itself is pitching the iPad pro as like, this can replace your computer. So all right, if we're going to have that conversation, that needs to be part of the conversation.

Brandt Krueger:
So what do you think? Overall, big picture? I'm a planner, I'm doing multiple site visits a year. I've got my couple of big conferences, or I'm going to a hundred little shows a year. What do you think? Am I going to be able to run my show off of this thing?

Will Curran:
Planners, I think you're 100%, this is for you. This is a great laptop, because you're not opening Photoshop, you're not video editing. You probably aren't using any proprietary software to execute your day to day job stuff. It opens up docs super fast. It's super thin. This is just fantastic, I think, for you. I think this is the way to go, if you feel like an iPad just hinders you, and you feel the need to bust out in a laptop, but you like the idea of an iPad, this is for you.

Will Curran:
This is going to make your workflow so awesome. They have full windows in your pocket, has all-day battery life, super thin and light. You're going to love this thing. It's fantastic.

Brandt Krueger:
I'll tell you one more sneaky trick that I've started to do, is I actually have been leaving my Mac at home. I don't travel with it anymore. And every now and then, when I do need something from my Mac, or something that's in a pages document or a keynote document, I'm actually just VP heading back home and using it.

Will Curran:
Yeah, you know what...

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, it's so fast these days, it's relatively easy to do, and I'm using my Chrome remote desktop to just go back to my Mac and bang it out, whatever it is. And then close it.

Will Curran:

And what's funny is, I saw so many people, because I was watching kind of the Surface Reddit, subreddit for Surface. And one person was like, "Look, I got Photoshop to work on the surface products." Everyone's like, what, no way. And they're like, wait, that doesn't count, you're remote desktop-ing in.

Will Curran:

But he's like, look, it's just as fast, and if I have a stable internet connection, it's totally fine. And most of the time it's like you're not ... If you're buying the store device too, you're not looking at like, I'm going to spend three hours building out this beautiful design. You're like, I just need to open it real quick, copy some data out, and then get on with it.

Will Curran:

And I think that's the future too. I don't remember if we've talked about it on the show, but I definitely think cloud computing is definitely going to be a huge future, and this is where this sort of device is going to be the future of cloud computing.

Brandt Krueger:

It's certainly been part of our discussion around 5G. So when the 5G model of this comes out, it's really got the potential to be a screamer to, if you do need to go back to your home base to check in on something or run something, opening up this kind of thin client idea where things are being streamed to you from another machine that's doing all the heavy lifting.

Will Curran:

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

Brandt Krueger:

Very cool. All right. Any other thoughts on the Surface Pro X before we wrap this puppy up?

Will Curran:

Well, my verdict is that I'm keeping it.

Brandt Krueger:

That's probably the biggest, that's the biggest recommendation right there, right, is that you didn't send it back.

Will Curran:

Yeah, sure. Yeah and really, I thought it was going to happen within the first week, which was, I was right in the middle of a very, very busy week when it decided to happen. But yeah, it was

definitely worth the purchase, and really, really happy with it. Again, it's not for everybody, but know what your workflow is, and that's where it's going to be fantastic.

Will Curran:

I think one thing to keep in mind, this is just longterm, also thinking about, and I'm seeing a lot of great conversation around this on the review sites, is that tech YouTubers who are out there reviewing devices too, a lot of times they're pushing this stuff to the very edge of things. They're using things like KikBench to see its maximum score count of cores and this and this and that.

Will Curran:

And I think that a lot of times, look for those reviews that are people who use it day to day, not the person who's going to try to burn it to the ground in the first week, and really compare it across a hundred different devices and things like that.

Will Curran:

Find the person who says, "It does my workflow, it does it perfectly. Here's my gripes I dislike." Almost like this review in some ways, not to toot my own horn. But I think one of the reasons why this device got such poor reception is because techie people were treating it as, how does it compare to a MacBook Pro 16 inch that's the bleeding-edge technology? How does it compare to this device, when in reality, I wanted Daniel Rubino's review, to say, "I'm a person who utilized it for a month and a half and I love it, and here's how I use it, and here's the workflow you need to look at it."

Will Curran:

And I think that's something to keep in mind as you're looking at your hardware, is look for those kinds of reviews on top of the spec reviews. Don't just compare it on specs.

Brandt Krueger:

Really good point. Don't just dive into those first look reviews when something first comes out. Most of the really good tech reporters will come back at it and say, "Here's my 30 day review", "Here's my three month review." They'll try and live with those devices for a while, rather than do it.

Brandt Krueger:

Which is what I've tried to do a little bit here as well, is I don't want to know what your first impressions are. I want you to know, what are you a week in, two weeks in, a month in.

Brandt Krueger:

So I guess it's worth checking in real quick before we go. How are things going with the fold, since we're talking hardware? Still digging it?

Will Curran:

Still doing the fold. A crossover again with our other podcast episodes, I was at a hockey game with Dustin Wessling from the Event Brew Crew, and my phone slipped out of my pocket and onto the floor where I spilled a bunch of Mountain Dew.

Brandt Krueger:

Oh no.

Will Curran:

And so I got some Mountain Dew on the back of it. And then I think I made the power button a little mushy now because of that, but it's running great. Still fantastic. I mean, nothing that wouldn't have happened to a normal phone, but still loving it. I still can't believe that now, what is it six months later now at this point? No, not even, four months later, I still get, "I haven't seen that. What the hell is that?" No, I haven't even seen another one of these in person yet. Yeah, very, very cool. I'm really enjoying it though. And this honestly made me rethink my laptop purchase a ton too, because this has replaced a lot of my workflow on it, but still working fantastic, I'm excited for the unpacking event coming up in February, where they're going to announce, definitely, some sort of clamshell device. And my hope is they're going to announce the version two of this with a bigger front screen, much better camera hopefully, and just a couple of tweaks.

Will Curran:

But I still love this, and if they do not announce another one of the normal fold in this form factor, this will be my phone until someone else does.

Brandt Krueger:

Boom. There you go. All right, well folks, we hope you enjoyed this kind of hardware update. We enjoyed doing them, because I think it is part of the greater discussion of event technology. Now that we're moving more and more things to the cloud when it comes to registration software and our mobile apps and all this kind of stuff, I think it's important to slow down and talk about, a little bit about the hardware that we're running these things on.

Brandt Krueger:

So I certainly appreciate it. We've had some good comments from you out there. Please do let us know though if, hey, you know what guys? Ease up off the hardware a little bit, or love it. Send it, bring it more, we want to find out more. Then please do let us know, #EventTechPodcast, or send us an email eventtechpodcast@helloendless.com.

Will Curran:

I love it. I love it. Well yeah, thanks everybody for giving me a chance to let me know what, how do you like my devices?

Brandt Krueger:

How do you like Will's device?

Brandt Krueger:

Well I certainly appreciate it. Like I said, you buy the stuff so I don't have to, and then I can decide down the way. So hopefully that works for you all as well. We let Will buy the expensive stuff and be the bleeding edge, and then we can kind of sit back and watch. Let's see how that goes before we decided to jump all over it.

Brandt Krueger:

So thank you for being the guinea pig for us, Will.

Will Curran:

Absolutely. And thanks to audience for listening, and thanks for always chatting with me, because I think I had a couple of conversations with you before I even decided to buy it. And I was just like, I think I'm ready for this thing. I'm ready to give it a try.

Brandt Krueger:

All right, be sure and check everything out at eventtechpodcast.com, there you're going to see all the show notes, the links to all the resources that are there, the transcripts.

Brandt Krueger:

We'll drop some links, maybe to some of the tech specs and things like that on the Surface Pro X so that you can see for yourself some of the nerdier, geekier stuff that's involved. Be sure and check that out. Again, eventtechpodcast.com. You're going to find all of the links to all your favorite podcast apps, Spotify, Apple Podcast, pocket cast. Your Apple pockets, your Google-y casts. All of those things are going to be there, and be sure and rate us and review us on of those various platforms, because it does help folks find the show.

Brandt Krueger:

If you are not going to give us five stars, please do let us know what we could be doing better with the show, what kind of topics you want us to cover. We've got some more interviews coming up with event tech folks.

Brandt Krueger:

Really, I was just kind of going by, I'm way behind on my podcasts, and I went back and listened to our interview with Ashley, with Mixed Rose, and I really enjoyed that conversation, so be sure and go back to hear another one of those kind of entrepreneurial stories.

Brandt Krueger:

Kind of the ... I always like to hear the origin stories of the tech. And then in addition to, what does it do, and all that kind of fun stuff. So go back. We're going to have a few more of those coming. Again, let us know what those are the kinds of things that you like, or if you'd like these hardware reviews.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, thank you all so much for listening. Really appreciate it. Once again, if you're not out there listening, then this is just a phone call between Will and I. So glad that you're joining us each and every week on the Event Tech Podcast. Thanks so much for listening. Bye-bye.

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