

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:00

Hello, personal productivity enthusiasts and community Welcome to Anything But Idle, the productivity news podcast, of course. I'm Ray Sidney-Smith. Couldn't find a button there, and we're your hosts for Anything But Idle. This is Episode 82. Correct me if I'm wrong. So is this episode 8282 82. Look at that. And we're coming to you for a special commentary episode, in response to Microsoft's product event yesterday. And so what we're going to do is we are going to introduce our guest, Art Gelwicks. You know him as the productivity blogger at the idea pump, and he's our friend of the various podcasts, Art Gelwicks. How's it going?

Art Gelwicks 0:47

Hey, guys, I'm getting rained on here right now. But doing well.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:51

Yeah, we can. We can hear that. We can hear the pitter patter.

Art Gelwicks 0:54

It's coming down pretty good. So hopefully it stays on the outside of the house. so

Raymond Sidney-Smith 1:00

fantastic. So let's get right into the event. There were supposedly eight product announcements, I tried to capture all of the product announcements, I think I got all eight. And so talk to me about the event. What did you think about the event? What were the things that stood out for you? Initially?

Art Gelwicks 1:18

Well, watching the event I right away, I'll say it was short, from beginning to end. I think the total duration was, what, 45 minutes. So they didn't drag a lot of the stuff out?

Augusto Pinaud 1:30

Well, actually, it was three of the four because the event could have been really

Art Gelwicks 1:39

six. Okay. So yes, that is one of the first takeaways is that, and unfortunately, I don't remember the gentleman's name, but the first speaker does tend to dry out his speech a bit he it, it has a very Bob Ross kind of vibe to the initial part. So

Augusto Pinaud 1:57

I was watching it on YouTube, I couldn't watch it live. And I was doing to x and I came two or three times to check that the 2x was actually working. Yeah, it's

Art Gelwicks 2:06

his his pacing could use a little little bit of a goose up. I mean, when you when you compare it to some of the other events, when you compare it to the Samsung in the apple there there, it was definitely lower key than you would normally expect. But that's not necessarily a bad thing. It's just kind of a thing. So from a messaging standpoint, and a targeting standpoint, they stayed on topic. I mean, they didn't dig into Windows 11, or Microsoft 365, or anything like that. This was a hardware event. And that's what they talked about was hardware.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 2:44

Yeah, so you're talking about panels, pan a and his delivery, I thought, you know, it was remarkably on point, I felt like they stuck to the script. This was a hardware event. Microsoft has been in the hardware business now for you know, about a decade. And you know, they launched that first surface and have gone from surface to the failed Lumia. They're their foray into the phone market. Now they have this surface duo line of phones, and they're now calling

them phones, they're not just tablets. And they of course, have a successful hardware market in the Xbox gaming console space. So you know, it's a little interesting to see them in the productivity space now, and putting out a line of hardware that is quite successful. I mean, they're putting out strong products. And so let's get into it. They they launched with the Surface Pro eight. And what did you think about the Surface Pro eight?

Art Gelwicks 3:41

No question about it. My mind, this is their flagship, I don't want to call it a tablet, because the surface isn't isn't a tablet. But this is their flagship that they're hedging their bets on. I mean, we'll talk about later about their laptops, which are equivalent devices. But if you want something that's to be considered an iPad Pro killer, that would be this. Now, there's a lot of different those comparisons fall apart when you start to dig into them. But that's the space that this is playing. And I think it's a it's a wonderful device. I think they've done a lot of good work on it. And it's setting. It's meeting the expectations that a lot of people have had around what the Surface Pro age should be, and the type of functionality it should be. They've also done some very interesting little things. And there are things throughout all these products where you can tell Microsoft was listening very carefully to the feedback they were getting. One of the things and looking at the Surface Pro eight. They've gone all in on the pen their slim pen too. And they've modified the touch keyboard to hold the pen Now you would think, okay, that's not that big of a deal. But actually it is when you look at all the other devices in the space that have to go through, and you have to get a special case for it, or you have to magnetize it to the side. This is a big consideration to a little nagging concern that this type of device carries along. And if you're going to hang your hat on something like the slim pen to, well, you got to have a way to keep it with you all the time. So I even hinted at it. Exactly. This is the type of thing that Microsoft in their hardware line now is showing that they're listening to all of the different feedbacks that they're getting. And they're saying, can we work this into it? Is it worth taking into consideration? So based on its specs, and what I think and the price also, you're getting what you pay for?

Raymond Sidney-Smith 5:53

Yeah, they hinted at, you know, I think pandas actually was the one who ended up the fact that you can't even lose it, because you're gonna put it right into that little, you know, recessed area of the keyboard, and it will just basically become a part of the device. So they really have thought through a lot of these pieces. And my question to you all are, what is the difference between the pro eight and the Pro X, this refreshed set of models of the Surface Pro eight and the Surface Pro X?

Art Gelwicks 6:25

actually an excellent question, I have no idea. And that's, to me a branding concern on their part. Now, Microsoft has always fumbled around with that a little bit.

Augusto Pinaud 6:35

Oh, I thought I thought the pro was an Intel base. Well, they X was an arm based. So that was a big difference between what

Art Gelwicks 6:43

could be could very well be that's the case, they did tout the fact that many of the applications are being tuned to work on arm, which, to me says this is an arm, if it is arm based, which I'm sure it is, we can look at the specs that takes this to where it needs to be in, in terms of battery life, and portability. And we've been wanting an arm based Windows machine, or at least a major one for quite some time. So it's, it's good to look at it that way, it's good to have that choice. The problem that I get into is that's really an inside baseball kind of decision, though. I mean, if you've decided on that form factor, and now you're starting to dig all the way down into the chipset, you really understand how this hardware works. And while it may be an early

adopter device, I don't know that the regular population is going to be purchasing this thing. So I would see a lot of business deployment of it well, is business going to really make that much of a determination between Intel or arm based unless it's support based. So

Raymond Sidney-Smith 7:53

yeah, that was really the only difference I saw between the x and the eight is that it is an arm based in the X version, having an LTE version and a Wi Fi only version now as well. And so I can see why some people would want to go with arm but again, as you noted, I just didn't understand why they were not just ripping off the band aid and going in a direction when they very well and easily could do so. So I'm curious why that was a why that was a choice at all, you know and even even even made so

Art Gelwicks 8:26

I mean, I I get it from a technical technical standpoint and from a pure hardware standpoint, and their desire to have something more than just an Intel chipset available in their products. But like I said, I think it creates branding confusion at the top end of the table. So

Augusto Pinaud 8:46

well not only that, you know when when you go The difference is 200 bucks if you're claiming that Windows 11 will not work arm wide you didn't kill the machine. That didn't make any or a lot of sense to me. That said i what i like I'm one I like the form factor. Okay, I like tablets I live on an iPad. And I love that form factor. I love the fact that it works that way. I love the fact that they put the pen in there because it's true that when you look into the iPad line, and you look at the pencil one one of the annoying things on the pencil one is charging that thing okay because it charged really quick but you need to take the cap plug it in, you know yeah. They when you go now to the pencil to just put it in the device and it's always charged always perfect so that it makes a great difference. I think that was the same issue with the Surface Pro seven and before on the pens is okay, I need to charge his charge no charge this way. You will always have the full battery. I like how they put it inside of the keyboard. So that way when you close This thing, you have zero chances to loosen, because the magnet is cool. But the magnet when I put it in my bag, it makes the iPad Pro a little bit wider. So I need to take it out, put it into the back, otherwise doesn't fit on the back. I have Yeah, I can get a larger bag, but I don't want to. Okay, but this way, it's really when you carry that thing there is I think no way to lose that surface pencil. And that was really, really nice.

Art Gelwicks 10:29

No, it is going back to those design nuances. Again, it's one of those small features, that makes a big impact in long term usability. And looking at the Surface Pro eight, specifically, because it is arm based. This is a device that you're you're going to carry around with you all day, they they touted the fact it's has 16 hours of battery life. Okay, I'll believe that when I see it, but the fact if you get any device pushing over 12 hours of usable battery life, you're going through a full workday. And then you charge it, and then you go through another full workday. That's a big hurdle to cross, if you're able to cross that hurdle, man, now you're set because you can count on this device all day long, dedicated use. So that's, again, I can really see them starting to position is and you could feel it a little bit in their messaging, that they have the laptops, the laptops are really designed for the heavy duty users, I mean, the big iron users, everybody else, unless you are a developer, or or a dedicated graphic artist, they're going to push you towards one of the surface pros. And based on what I'm seeing so far, I don't think that's a bad option at all.

Augusto Pinaud 11:55

No, it is not. It is not i think i think they make the Surface Pro really interesting. And, and we will discuss more about some of the things that they did that. That I think I like what I'm seeing. So the next one was the surface go tree and the go the initial surface go was kind of on their

power. The second one was a little better, but this one now. Is this enough? Is this now a good play on? I will say yes, the answer to that and you get the foreign factor in a cheaper model. You know, I this was an interesting thing that go because now it's a machine that is on the \$400. Mark. But that is pretty okay, but really can compete with whatever you find on the market for 400 bucks is as capable apps.

Art Gelwicks 12:54

Yeah, this is designed to go head to head with the iPad. There's no question, no question. They've really pushed it. And it's also designed to go head to head with the high end Chromebooks. The reason why I say that is it's 399 list for the low end model. When you add to that, if you go in the maximum configuration and add the keyboard to it, you're looking at about \$760 that's not an unreasonable price for something that for all intents and purposes, can replace a lot of your standard laptops, the configurations good, the size is good, the battery life is good. It's a highly portable device. So yeah, when the first goes came out, they were like, okay, you you showed up, but that's about it. Now, they're really showing up and showing out. And I think this is this is a device when I looked at the listing of items, I knew that the majority of the items on this list well out of the price range I'm willing to invest in right now. Surface go three, absolutely within the price range I would be looking at to replace one of my my daily driver laptops with it without a doubt.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 14:07

Now I was really impressed with the go three, I think that it's a it's a good set of options. And I like the I like the fact that we have the continued optional LTE versions here 10.5 inch screen, so maybe a little bit smaller than than I want. But that's the size of the current Chromebook Lenovo duet. And, you know, obviously they're they're sizing that up with the with a 13 inch variant. And that seems to be about the right size for me for a you know, a laptop on the road. But you know, I'm really I'm really pleased with the specs here. I think they've given a lot of good thought to upgrading this in a way that makes it a competitor to the iPad in the education market. And you know, I think I think it's a good good specked out affordable device.

Augusto Pinaud 14:54

So the next one was the surface laptop is studio and

Art Gelwicks 15:01

interest. This one surprised me, I did not know this was coming. I've been a studio fan since they bought out the original desktop studios, that was always one of my bucket list items if I could have one of those. If and if you've never seen one of the studios Go Go YouTube it because it's just amazing to watch something with a screen that big pivot down to your desktop, and be able to work with it as as a designer or architect or artist. It's just a beautiful implementation, to see a laptop configuration, do the same thing. Go from that clamshell to what they call stage mode, where it's actually covering the screen covers the keyboard, but not the touchpad, which I thought was interest, an interesting choice, all the way down to a flat configuration of kind of like a tablet with a slight incline to be able to use for the graphic pieces. What intrigued me about it was two things. One, the fact that they touted that the software adjusts based on the configuration. So I believe it was Photoshop or something like that they which are video editing, when he pivoted it all the way down to the flat configuration, the software said, Oh, you don't have a keyboard. So I'm going to adjust the UI accordingly. That's a big step for the devs to take in modifying their software to work with these particular applications. The other thing though, it intrigued me as soon as they started that pivot, I immediately thought, oh, a gousto would love this because it's like the apple magic keyboard. But it's not. Because the apple magic keyboard has that pivot range at the top end, I don't believe this does the same thing. I think this only has three positions, clamshell stage and flat. That said, I don't know that it needs that capability. Because if you take that clamshell and you

take it to a stage angle, it's going to be hanging out over the keyboard anyway, so it really doesn't lend itself to that. But that was my first immediate impressions.

Augusto Pinaud 17:02

I don't get to that either. When What was interesting for me about that machine is how it looks, you can look it in three parts the screen, then the body of the machine. And then under that they didn't make any noise about that. But they basically have all under that, you know, ventilation for that machine. So that thing, it's going to get hot, really quick and really hot.

Art Gelwicks 17:30

That's an interesting design. If you if you watched when they did the initial video, and he pulled it over, which I thought was interesting, I couldn't tell if they had staged him coming down and stealing the the one lady's laptop to demonstrate it or if he actually just did it, because she kind of had an expression on her face like, Oh, crap, I need to close all my windows now. But if you look at the bottom design of the laptop, it's actually it's not curved, like most laptops are, it's actually stepped. And the second step is all ventilation openings. So it's really configured to be able to move the air through that device, I can only imagine how much dust and you know, animal hair, it's going to suck in through that. That'll be a long term maintenance thing, but short term, I think they've really thought that part out that this thing can cook itself if it's not careful. And we're going to ventilate it as many ways as we can.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 18:25

I'm really curious who's going to be the guinea pig here to try, you know, to experiment with these this type of form factor. It really does have a very small audience. And so I'm really curious about its its marketability here. I thought it was unique and interesting, but not really willing to put myself out there for it. And, and to your point about the studio to when the studio two came out, I thought well, this is this is really like an iMac, you know, competitor. But reality it's 25 inches, it feels like it needs to be a bigger display. The laptop studio again, nice size smaller display, though. And when you're really trying to do that heavy productivity work. It seems like, like it's too small for me for the price and for the specs.

Art Gelwicks 19:11

This is what intrigued me about this when they demonstrated it because I had the exact same question you did. Who's this for? I thought, okay, if it's for artists and designers, the screens too small. There's not enough real estate, the positions good but the real estate's wrong. If it's for devs, well, devs really don't need that capability. It's nice, it's cute, but it's not critical. And anybody who's going to really heavily use it in that studio position is going to get a Surface Pro. They're going to they're going to do the same thing cut their price down by the fancy add ons for it and have something that works in the exact same configuration. So the only people I can really see carrying this thing around are executives who want to show toy That's great

Augusto Pinaud 20:01

a shout toy. And I wonder I don't remember how heavy how heavy it was. But then the the multiple step thing, make it look heavier than

Art Gelwicks 20:13

you know, you're absolutely right it. That was one of my first reactions and I couldn't, I couldn't put words to it until you just said it. It does, it makes it look chunky. It just physically looks uncomfortable. The other thing that I thought about is when that's closed up in that laptop configuration with that stepped base, that's got to be uncomfortable to carry around. And I can only imagine it's not to talk to us Mary Jo Foley's term from Windows weekly, it's not really laughable, because the edge on that is gonna cut into your leg, and it's going to block the ventilation and I

Augusto Pinaud 20:51

know that is going to get so so hot that

Art Gelwicks 20:56

I think it's it's really designed to be a showpiece. But not really an actual working tool. I don't think I don't think they're gonna sell a lot of them.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 21:07

Yeah, no, I don't think there's gonna be a lot sold. But I also I don't agree that this won't be a useful device in an environment where the laptop doesn't move that often, so to speak, right. So you're not, you don't want it to be laughable, you don't want it to necessarily move around too much. But you can if you need to, right. And so again, my only fault here is that you put it at 14 inch, a 14 inch display at that point is kind of a waste, you know, you should have, you should have increased it to at least 15 inches, and that would have given at least palatable desktop, you know, parity and you know, to most you know, decent sized screens, and it would have felt the right size, it just feels smaller, it would have intrigued

Art Gelwicks 21:49

me It's 17 inches, seven inches would have really surprised me on that. And I think it would have fit much better. Because again, you're you're right, you're not talking about something that you're going to throw in your bag and carry around with you all the time. But you can take it where you want it to go. That to me if you do that device at 17 inches. Now you have something that has enough real estate for a good artist and you've got a heck of a gaming machine. So

Augusto Pinaud 22:18

if I Phillies 3.8 pounds. Okay, I don't know that I guess I carry heavier thing that that I remember. Okay, I

Art Gelwicks 22:27

don't want to carry heavy you don't want something with a handle on it?

Augusto Pinaud 22:31

No, I had already one of those.

Art Gelwicks 22:35

Okay, but here's again, here's here's the point, that type of a device goes to an audience and a customer base, who will probably not have to choose between that and a Surface Pro, they will probably get both. They will probably have that because they're not. It's the classic argument. If you have to ask how much it is you can't afford it. Well, that's to me. That's where that laptop studio falls into that thinking range. I mean, they might pick up possibly a surface go three as the peril as the companion, or if they're that much about the showcase. They're going to be looking at a duo to

Augusto Pinaud 23:14

Oh, are we ready to talk about the duo two?

Raymond Sidney-Smith 23:17

Let's do it. Let's let's move on along from the laptop studio.

Augusto Pinaud 23:21

has a phone again. Microsoft has a phone again. I said when the duo came one came that it was not a phone according to Microsoft that I really love that dual screen thing. The improvements they did in this one? Yeah. I mean, if he's not only because he's an Android, and

I will not I'm not willing even though they're doing really well. They put it integrated with the computer integrated with the surface, like you will leave on an on an apple environment. They did that incredibly well. That said, I want one of those with an iOS inside. I don't want to use Android. I understand it's never going to happen. Well, you

Art Gelwicks 24:05

know, you notice send your emails to one Cupertino way, so they can send them back to you.

Augusto Pinaud 24:12

They don't they're not receiving ideas right now.

Art Gelwicks 24:15

Now. And here's the thing about the duo Two, one, they are finally admitting it is a phone because they recognize the fact that it needs to have that capability. Second, though, and this is what what really intrigues me about it is they're not being shy about the fact that it's taking on the foldables in a different way. It's not trying to be a foldable phone, it's a different device entirely. And when you look at the mechanisms, for example, the display across the back, they've gotten around the whole issue of having to have a screen exposed all the time, because the display across the spine of it gives you those notifications for that That's all you really need until you go to open the device. And the thing that they only showed one time, and they did it really quick. So if you, if you weren't paying attention you didn't see it is the fact that it's not that it folds open, it folds all the way back, you can flip it all the way around. So now you've got one of those screens that you can use with the pen and hold in one hand, or you can have both, or you can have it in a tent, you can have it you know, in what I call the Gameboy configuration where you're trying to sideways and flip the one part up, which there was a showcase demo, right, they're showing game pass games being played on that thing that

Raymond Sidney-Smith 25:40

way, now, they announced three of them, right, but that we're gonna hone in on it,

Art Gelwicks 25:43

oh, they've got Well, you can play the entire game pass, they've got over 50 games right now that have touchscreen controls already. So all of those would be candidates to play on that. That's the kind of thing that sets this up. Because it's now catering to all these different audiences, you can hook an extra I believe, I would think you could hook an external display to this thing. This thing could be that one device that you take everywhere you use everywhere, you could use it flipped around in that clamshell configuration with the touch key with a keyboard on it. And, you know, respond to a quick email or text and tap on it. It's about that size. The price points intriguing to me, though, it's only they're only listing that I believe for, like 1415 \$100,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 26:30

that's starting at 1500. Now, that's flagship phone territory.

Art Gelwicks 26:35

I mean, that is right in the face of Samsung fold three, that's going to take on the pixel fold, whenever that comes out. there and they're really the only ones playing in that space, it's taking on everybody to say, Hey, this is a totally different way of playing this game. The way they work those dual screens in my book is way better than a folded screen, I would I would take that dual screen configuration over the the galaxy fold three any day of the week.

Augusto Pinaud 27:09

Same here, I think what they what they did, I don't praise Microsoft often but what they have been doing with the surface tool, it is really Baylor ish, and it's outstanding. It's a device that even if I will not get it is a device that I will look and and crave and want. It's

Art Gelwicks 27:30

interesting, there was an article I can't remember, one of the big tech blogs was putting out and they said, the duo three or the duo two is the best device you won't buy. Which I kind of get because again, this is one of those challenges that Microsoft has, they've created a product that competes in all of these different spaces, but doesn't completely win any one of these particular spaces. So if you think about it, like a phone, for example, you flip it around the phone configuration, it's like holding the Nexus seven up to your head. It's huge as a phone, but you can then open it up use it as a full tablet, you can use it for display, it can do all the things that everybody else can do. But it does, it doesn't excel at any one particular one of them. And that's what worries me a little bit. Now granted, it's powered by Android, the updates are there, I believe it's going to release with Android 11. So the update to 12 won't be far behind. behind it. The integrations with 365 are there. I mean, like I said, when I'm looking at a new phone, now, I will give this serious consideration instead of looking. I hate to say it, but it's that of looking at another galaxy device. I mean this, this now falls into that conversation, which up until this point, now I wouldn't have even I would looked at the the old duo as kind of a broken tablet more than anything else.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 29:05

Now I'm looking at this in comparison to not the galaxy fold or the Z folds. I'm looking at this as in comparison to the upcoming surface NEOs and how the this duo two will compare to the upcoming surface Neo. And for folks who aren't aren't aware. It's basically a bit bigger than the duo. It has a believe a physical keyboard and basically a touchscreen trough above the keyboard where you can basically manipulate it. That to me seems like a very interesting convergence device. And I'm curious how that's going to compete with the duo two. I like a lot of what the duo two is doing here. And I'm curious where Microsoft is going with regard to the entire surface line of foldables and the Neo kintz maybe at the differentiation between what they want the duo to Or the dual line to be for people. And again, high end flagship phone versus a miniature laptop that can also do a couple of, of tricks like the duo. So I'm curious what they're gonna do with the Neo, the Neo seems a very interesting device to me, especially for travel and just being flexible in that environment. But I see the duo being the phone, and then cutting it off at the Neo being in the range of now, computing devices, these are laptops or conversions, devices, whatever you want to call them. And these are not right. And so I think that's going to be the dividing line. I don't know how successful the Neo is going to be either in the market. But it'll be really interesting. Once they do go ahead and announce the Neo, I'm really curious to see that one coming out. All right, moving right along from the duo. We can move on to some of the smaller items. So they announced the ocean plastic mouse. And what did you think about the ocean? Plastic mouse?

Art Gelwicks 31:07

It's a mouse. And it's me. Yeah, I was in the ocean. I have a shirt that was made that way. So it's a thing. If it makes you feel good, get it?

Raymond Sidney-Smith 31:21

I did not see a point. I didn't see a point. I mean, they could have they could have made anything out of that plastic. They decided to make a mouse I just didn't.

Art Gelwicks 31:32

Yeah. Again, it's it's one of those things like, hey, it's at least it wasn't cutting out Katara. So I don't know, it was one of those things. It's like, what was it? Was it galaxy? Samsung event is one of those things like, wait, we need to draw this out a little more, is there anything laying

around that we can throw into the event? Oh, wait, we have a mouse, and they put the mouse out. I hope

Raymond Sidney-Smith 32:00

they're donating some amount of that money to a to a nonprofit.

Art Gelwicks 32:04

I agree. I think that would be fantastic. If they are and kudos to them for being environmentally conscious. That said they should give them away free with their Surface devices. So

Augusto Pinaud 32:19

but then the disability product that they came to help. That was building

Raymond Sidney-Smith 32:29

the surface adaptive kit. Yeah,

Augusto Pinaud 32:31

that was instead, something worth.

Art Gelwicks 32:35

That was interesting how that was included and worked into it. Of all the different presentations we've seen so far this year. The the accessibility piece was one of those where I'm telling you, they thought it through, they put a lot of dedicated effort into it. And they have really decided that this is something they're going to double down on.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 32:58

Well, I'll have to say that, you know, Microsoft, from the very early days have been very pro accessibility, they've done a really great job of not just providing accessibility features within Windows. I mean, to this day, I still, you know, I extol the virtues of Microsoft accessibility in not just the platform, but also in its capabilities. In terms of if you think about it in terms of, you know, just speech recognition, from a productivity perspective, you know, you can command and do voice dictation and everything else utilizing speech recognition all on the Windows environment. And there is a compatible version of comparable parallel in and on the Windows, Mac, Mac OS. So so those are there as well in terms of accessibility. And honestly, iOS and Android both have great accessibility features. But the but the reality is, is that the, the point of talking about this accessibility kit, this adaptive kit, was really, like interesting to me from a couple of perspectives. One, they're showing that the reality is, is that we are all and he said it in such a great way that the gentlemen we're all going to lose abilities over time, right? And we need to be cognizant of that reality, you're gonna say art.

Art Gelwicks 34:13

Now that was it in the nutshell, when he got to that line at the end of it. And in mentioned, the fact that their implementation of these types of features and accessibility kits is not just for people who need them now, but for the fact that everyone will need them eventually, is huge. It's hugely compelling message, it it. It was very poignant. And it was one of those types of things that I kind of wish the other companies would take a note from and and recognize that fact. It made me recognize some of the challenges that my own father had before he passed away. And many of the people I know who have similar challenges. didn't start off with those. That was a good one. Somebody agree He's with me. It's one of those. One of those things, I like to see a company take this step, what intrigued me more is the fact that Microsoft dedicated, a good five minutes, maybe six minutes of this 45 minute presentation on this topic, not just a passing, hey, we've got an accessibility kit.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 35:23

Yeah, so so so the big folks have a good idea, this adaptive kit basically allows Surface devices to have applied to it various types of accessibility features that aren't native to the, to the physical hardware itself. So there are applique that you can place on various keys, so that you can quickly identify by feel those particular keys, they're also shaped and colored for high contrast, and they have little tabs that you can attach to various cords, cables, so that, you know, if you cannot, you know, pick it up and move it into the into the cabling devices kind of have a little extra, you know, thing there to grab onto to place into the, into the, into the ports, and and then color coding those courts ports to each other with, again, kind of like Braille, but basically these raised bumps so that you can tell what matches up with what. So just like some really interesting features there. And there's also a component that has basically a lanyard attached to it so that you can flip open the surface kickstand so that you can do that with ease as opposed to having to struggle to do so the gentleman even quipped that, you know, oh, so that you don't have to use a fork. And I thought to myself, Oh, my goodness, I bet that people actually have to do that with these devices. And that was really just eye opening. Well,

Art Gelwicks 36:41

he was commenting on the fact that that's literally what he had to do. And you have those improvised methods that have to be used. And to take that into consideration. And something that we would think is, you know, if we don't have that challenge, you think, Well, why is this even a thought? Because it is because it's a thing, and it needs to be included. So I'm glad they dedicated the time to this, they could have taken a little bit even more time and not even not even talked about an ocean going mouse and focused on this instead. So,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 37:15

you know, I know, I was being a little bit flippant earlier about the ocean plastic mouse, I just, I felt like they could have done better and more in stating that we are dealing with really, you know, a potentially human ending climate experience right now, this is this is a disaster waiting to happen. And we are going to see great ills from from climate change,

Art Gelwicks 37:36

it felt very filler ish.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 37:40

Yeah, they could have, they could have easily have said so much more about their dedication to becoming, you know, you know, whatever, carbon neutral, and, and so on and so forth. But it just seemed very blocked to me. Anyway, I'm glad that they are themselves trying to be environmentally friendly, they need to be a little bit, if they're going to take a stand, they might as well take a full stand and be mindful of what that stand means and how that means to people, certainly down the supply chain, and to the vendors and partners, all of whom they have great power over. And so if they could say to all of their suppliers and vendors, hey, we're just not going, you know, you know, global in terms of our, you know, our climate activism, we are going to extend that to all of our partners, so that we can actually make a real impact, that would be a that would be a bold statement, but the statement was we we made a mouse out of plastic, I just did it, I'm glad I'm glad they made a statement as to the climate, I just wish they had done more, because this is something that affects all of us

Art Gelwicks 38:44

what they might, and this would be something that I would encourage, you can stop that this is something that I would encourage them to do is to offer an entire product line, offer mouse, keyboard, you know, the job covers controllers, and the whole thing, go all in on it if you're going to do it, but don't don't just, you know, don't go small.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 39:09

Right, and they could donate part of those proceeds to Ocean Conservancy and two real projects that are doing real good in the world. And and that would that would go a long way to building not just goodwill, but also a furtherance of the brand, right, if they're putting, you know, their name and logo on the covers along with major, you know, Conservancy and, you know, climate change focused nonprofits that would that would be useful to me that would that would that would make me feel good about what they're doing. This didn't really do anything for me. Either way, let's let's just talk about what this all means from a productivity perspective. What are these devices really due to impact? anyone's productivity today going forward? Where do you think these things might fit?

Art Gelwicks 39:56

I think the surface pros, no question about it. Those are laptop replacements, highly portable, they have a natural fit. This the surface laptops, they're very special case in my book, the surface go, I think is a great option, it's a high, it's a low cost, high value item that you could introduce into anybody's productivity solution set the duo to has potential, I don't know that it has mind, space necessary yet to make major impact for a large group. But if you're somebody who's dedicated into, again, portable to the extreme, something like a duo two is worth worth considering. So there isn't in this entire set of things that they outline, there isn't anything that I would say, it really doesn't make a difference for somebody. There's somebody that every one of these things can affect and can help out when it comes to productivity.

Augusto Pinaud 41:06

Yeah, I was impressed. I agree with you that this the surface go, it's a great introductory machine. For the surface, you know, for those people who want just a machine on that price range, that's great. The Surface Pro, again, that's a full now let's work really do your thing. machine. The laptop, I don't know, again, it requires a really special case. for that to work really, really well. They do a thing, if you are in an Android environment, that is the phone to go above the fold. If you like that more real estate, I will get this one before I will get default. And Microsoft really following what they the work they have been doing with Samsung, they demonstrate how much now their phone will integrate with a PC. And as the Apple has done this for a really long time, that is a game changer being able to go from the device to the computer back to the device in a simplest way, it's really increased your productivity incredibly. So just for those two things, I will get them.

Art Gelwicks 42:20

Yeah, and that's that's really the thing to consider with this. When we talk about phones, we have to keep in mind that the duo two is not a Windows Phone, to Microsoft phone. But it's running Android. So it has all those all the apps available to it, it has the configurations, all of that stuff's there. So there's an ecosystem that was never there for the Windows based phones that make this a much more viable option in that range. And I will be very interested to see when the pixel event happens coming up, or when the Google event comes up? Do they release a foldable, and which is it more like my money is on it's going to be like a fold three, it's going to be like the galaxy one, because for some reason, we've got a burrow under our saddle that all all of them should be a screen that folds down the middle. But I think in daily use daily operation and true functionality, I think the duo two is the better configuration. And I think this is where we're going to see we're going to see quite a bit of interest in this particular product, as well as the other ones. With back to school going on, I think they're going to be a little late with the go three to hit that that market space. But holidays are coming up and the price points going to be in the right place. Mike, one question across all of these products. And this is because it's affecting everybody. Are there going to be any supply chain challenges in availability, because the last thing you want is to get a hype up around the products and then be able to deliver them?

Raymond Sidney-Smith 43:57

Yeah, all of the products are currently available for pre order. And then they will start shipping on October 5. And the only difference is with the surface duo two, while they'll while everything else will ship on the fifth those will ship on the 21st of October. I know there's some differences in terms of, you know, geographic location, whether there'll be available in certain countries, but at least in the US, all of them are available for pre order immediately. And then there'll be start shipping on the fifth of October. I will say for me. From a productivity perspective, I see the ability for all of these things to integrate to being the most important component for Microsoft to have success here. And I couldn't agree more that it being an Android based phone gives it a leg up in the way in which is operating. I don't think it's a strong leg up of Samsung's general perspective on how you know their earbuds, their their phones, their tablets, and integrating with my windows itself. is all just seamless. If you use all of them, the watch, everything works together, Microsoft seems to be behind the eight ball here, they just don't have enough in the wearables market. And they don't have enough in the hardware market to really create a strong place here. And so that's the part that concerns me. And from a productivity perspective, I want my devices just work together, right. And so I've chosen Google because I know that no matter what the form factor and the platform, they're going to work together from that perspective, but somebody who's not like me and techie enough to patchwork those pieces together, you just want your tools to work together. And I feel like Microsoft is a little bit behind the eight ball there.

Art Gelwicks 45:41

That's the one thing that Microsoft's always had a challenge with is the fact that they have such deep relationships with their OEMs, that they really have never been able to create their own ecosystem. Now they've had the people have argued, oh, you know, Windows locks everything in and But no, when you look at it from the hardware side, Microsoft has to provide a platform that works on so many different hardware configurations that they have, they can't really come in and say, no, it works best on our stuff. They don't have that latitude they do in gaming, they can do it with the Xbox, but they can't do it with PCs and things like that, because they literally cut their nose off to spite their face. So I think they will continue to have that challenge with this and the best implementation, they can have his to stay out of the way or not hamper connectivity of multiple providers products. So if you want to use Samsung earbuds with a duo Pro, or with a duo two, it should work and it should work. Well, I can't say it's going to be as seamless as just pure Samsung devices. But they should stay out of each other's way. And if they can do that, then Microsoft has done the right things as least as far as I think they can. Down, what

Raymond Sidney-Smith 46:59

I would really love to see is the duo to integrating with Windows 11 in some key ways that are beyond what Samsung has currently done with their Samsung, you know, devices, their galaxy devices with Windows, I would really love to see some some features really built out. That's all software based, they can bring it out after the devices are released. But I would really love to see some of those connectivity pieces. So the like, so that, as you noted, I think the duo two is absolutely for the road warrior who wants a nice device that you can sit down on an airplane on in a train and, you know, be a passenger in a vehicle, flip it open and still get worked on. But also close it up, have a phone conversation, do some tablet based work, and you have all of those form factors available to it. But then when you get back to the office, it should just sync right up with your device,

Art Gelwicks 47:48

they did show some interesting features about that duo, two configuration, being able to drag something from the duo to over to your other device literally drag and drop across. That makes it a seamless, seamless part of the extension. So I can I can see people doing that. Those are use cases, though, that they're going to have to explain people, they're going to have to do a much better job of getting that messaging out, especially for the early adopters to try it. And

then being able to push that information out to everybody else to say, hey, guess what? This is possible and people are actually doing it. And I would compare that to Samsung's approach with dex. dex has great functionality. Nobody knows it's there and nobody uses it. Well, I don't want to say nobody very few people use it, even though the capabilities are all there. And it's because their messaging has been weak.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 48:40

Yeah, and this all comes down to Yes, it's highly convenient. It's very cool technology. But the setup, I bet is not as seamless as you might think it should be. And so it's like you have to pair the device with the phone, you have to install the Windows phone application, you've got to do X and Y for security purposes, and then it will work. And a lot of people that's just too high a bar to get across for that to actually be useful for them. I know it sounds strange, but it just is I deal with this issue quite often because you know, I use zoom with a lot of client meetings. And Mac OS has a unique set of security provisioning, both on iPad and on iOS, as well as on Mac OS to do that first screen sharing, right. And the number of times I see clients frustrated by just getting zoom to screen share by just you know, clicking a few buttons and clicking a few security provisioning components to make it work just becomes this non intuitive and high bar to doing something that's very, very simple. And so we get to that point and we're like, Okay, great. Well, we've got a bunch of really great features, if they were already set up for that individual, and we could overcome the burden of the non intuitive setup process. Yeah, I

Art Gelwicks 49:53

think where we'll see this start to have its watershed moment is as Microsoft gets Their feet under them with this product line and then is then starts to say, okay, teams users, okay, 365 users, this is how you take advantage of it on these devices. That becomes the compelling stories. I mean, I can see, based on the demo they showed with the duo two, I'll go back to that. Having a team's meeting where you have it in that kind of clamshell configuration, you can see what's going on what's being shared, and also still see the meeting in or invitees in that same display taking advantage of those dual screens. And I don't want to underplay the dual screen importance. I mean, if you think about how many times you buy a machine and you say, I wish I had a second monitor, or immediately set up a second monitor Well, now you've got them in your pocket.

Unknown 50:48

Yeah, it would be really,

Art Gelwicks 50:49

yeah. And I think they've proven that they can, they can make it work. From a hardware standpoint, I haven't heard a huge number of hardware, complaints about the original duo. All the complaints I heard were around the software and the lack of componentry like LTE and things like that. It sounds like they heard all that stuff. And they said, Okay, this is the second shot at the at the target. Let's see if we can really get on on the center. And I think they did.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 51:16

Yeah, so just so everybody knows where the surface laptop studio starts at 16 \$100. The surface duo two, we already talked about that starting out 15 \$100 baseline, the Surface Pro eight, I believe that's at was added the 16 \$100. Mark, also 1100 I'm sorry, that starts out at 11 \$100 in pre order. So for the lowest, you know, tear the surface slim pen to that's 129 \$130 the Surface Pro X, that base model starts out at \$900. So they're they're starting off there, the the LTE model is \$100 less than what was the LTE model? Does anybody have the LTE model price there, the Wi Fi model is 900. I think the LTE model is 100 or 200 bucks more than that, but you can look that up under bucks more. Yeah. So then the surface go three, that's starting at \$400, as we talked about the adaptive kit is it didn't give pricing. So they're they're going to be available later this year. So they'll come out with pricing, I didn't see pricing on that. And then

the ocean plastic mouse is going to be 25 bucks. So as a Bluetooth mouse, I know I don't I don't know if we noted that. But it is a Bluetooth mouse. So it does not have a cable.

Art Gelwicks 52:33

Just remember all the Surface devices, the keyboards are extra. Yes, they're not in the box. And that's something that I think hangs, I still can't get over that if you've got this device. I know you want to do a low price on the offering, that's fine, but then just raise the price for the cost of the keyboard and put the keyboard in the box and say the heck with it. I mean, it's the basic go three keyboard is \$99. Just jack the price up 99 bucks and give me the keyboard as a default. I mean, it's it's not it's not worth that confusion in my mind. But it's Microsoft.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 53:09

Yep. And with that we have reached the top of our time together covering the Microsoft event. Art. Thank you for joining us, and where can folks keep up to date with you and what you've got going on on the interwebs

Art Gelwicks 53:21

you can always pop over to the idea pump calm and hit slash follow me and you'll find out all the places I am. And now that the thunderstorm has ended, I will continue to be so

Raymond Sidney-Smith 53:33

wonderful. Thank you so much for joining us here on Anything But Idle art as always.

Art Gelwicks 53:37

My pleasure, guys.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 53:40

Alrighty, gousto

Augusto Pinaud 53:43

we've done it, we have done it again.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 53:46

Thanks so much for joining me as always on Anything But Idle and making the show happen. Really. It's my pleasure. All right, everybody. That's the end of this commentary show. You can find the show notes for this episode with links and all that other fun stuff on Anything But idle.com forward slash 082. And that will take you to the show notes that will include our transcript, both readable on screen, there's a text transcript you can download as well for offline reference. And if there's anything that we missed, you have thoughts about the Microsoft event and the various surface products, feel free to leave comments right there on the episode page. We also do have a community inside of personal productivity club that you can join and discuss this as well. So if you go to www.hp.com/personal/productivityclub, you can go ahead and join that it's free. And then you can find the Anything But Idle channel and, you know, engage in the conversation around all of the various productivity and related technology news each week. And so with that, on behalf of Augusto Pinaud, I'm Ray Sidney-Smith. Here's to your productive life, everybody.

Augusto Pinaud 54:47

Thank you