Microsoft takes the stage at the 2nd Qualcomm Snapdragon Technology Summit in Maui, Hawai, to further detail Windows 10 notebooks running on Qualcomm chipsets-- now referred to as "Always Connected PCs."




As described at previous events , the Always Connected PCs run on an ARM-based Snapdragon 835 chipset, and promise 20+ hour active use battery life together with mobile device-style instant-on functionality from standby mode (or what Microsoft calls "Modern Standby Mode"). Cellular connectivity is integrated, allowing for low-power, always-on connectivity superior to what is currently available on current notebooks.

The companies stress the notebooks can run all Windows 10 apps, through a choice of either Universal Windows Apps (compiled for ARM directly) or x86 apps run via emulation. Microsoft gives no mention on the performance of x86 emulation, instead announcing an "optimised" version of Office 365 for use on the machines.

"For the last few months, I have been using an Always Connected PC, running on Qualcomm's Snapdragon platform," Windows boss Terry Myerson says. "In the last week, I watched the movie Moana with my daughter, worked in PowerPoint, browsed the web every day, reviewed budgets in Excel, checked email while waiting to pick up my son from soccer, marked up a few PDFs with Ink, played some games on the plane-- all of this without plugging in my power cord all week."

The event hosts the reveal of two Always Connected PCs-- the Asus NovaGo and HP Envy x2. The NovaGo will be the first of such machines available on the market, since it should ship by before end 2017. It offers a 13.3-inch touchscreen, 4/16GB of RAM and 8/256GB of storage, and promises 22 hours of continuous video playback and 30 days of standby.

Meanwhile the Envy x2 is to ship sometime on Q1 2018 with up to 8GB RAM and 256GB storage. It is a hybrid device, with a detachable a 12.3-inch touchscreen complete with pen input for tablet-style use and a hinged stand on the back. A keyboard comes included, and HP claims battery life reaches up to 20 hours of continuous use or 700 hours in standby mode.

Of course, one needs to actually test out the Always Connected PCs to check whether they actually live up to the hype, but the development of such machines sounds exciting enough. Should they prove a success expect the likes of Intel and AMD to follow Qualcomm in the quest for faster, more mobile notebooks.

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