

Windows Surface RT or Windows Surface Pro at Wichita State University

Written by Corey Ray, Manager of Instructional Technology



This guide is intended to help you better understand the differences that may affect your decision of which Microsoft Windows tablet to purchase.

Common Reasons for Choosing

Surface RT: battery life, weight, general web or app use, app updates while in standby mode

Surface Pro: processing power, detailed inking or writing, traditional Windows programs (Photoshop, SPSS, Respondus), greater security options, full Windows PC in compact form factor (cf. MacBook Air)

Key Differences

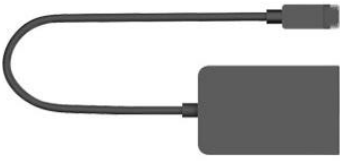
Cost: Windows RT starts at \$499 while Windows Surface Pro starts at \$899.



Pen input: If you have an interest in writing notes the Surface Pro offers a digitizer pen for high quality inking similar to writing with a standard pen and paper. Surface RT can utilize capacitive pen input but the quality difference is noticeable and would not be recommended for detailed notes or those who prefer less “chalkboard” style writing.

WSU elearning Tools: Since Surface RT has limitations regarding browser plugins and users cannot install traditional Windows programs, there are known issues with Panopto (recorder), Respondus (assessment builder), Respondus LockDown Browser and Turning Technology Clickers (PowerPoint plugin). Users can perform most activities in Blackboard but users will not be able to view Panopto recordings from Blackboard links. Users options for Surface RT and using these programs require “Remote Desktoping” into a full functioning PC.

Expect from Both



Connecting in the classroom: Currently, VGA (analog) is the standard connection in WSU classrooms. While a few master classrooms already have HDMI digital input options it is best to plan or expect to need to connect using an adapter. Users can buy single adapters, one for VGA and one for digital when available (\$40 each) made for Surface or can purchase a USB-based Kensington Multi-Display adapter which will connect to VGA or DVI/HDMI (\$60). For additional questions about specific classrooms or connectivity contact Campus Media Services at 978-3588.

Keyboard and Mice: Both offer the same options for keyboards which attach directly to the Surface, have touchpads and double as a cover. The touch cover keyboard is ideal for those comfortable with typing on a glass screen but wanting to not sacrifice screen space. The type cover keyboard is aimed more at traditional PC users who prefer a tactile response when pressing keys. Additionally, standard wired, wireless USB or Bluetooth keyboards and mice.



External drives: Both Surface RT and Surface Pro support USB drives and external DVD drives. Users may want to check compatibility for external drives that require installing additional software if considering Surface RT to avoid issues.

Additional Considerations

Do you use web services that require plugins (Java, Flash, etc.)?

If the answer is yes, you may need to consider Surface Pro.

Do you have access to a desktop or PC to remote into?

If the answer is yes, then both will provide the capability to Remote Desktop to your fully functional PC. If you use a desktop software program to remote in you will want to check to see if an app is available for use on Surface RT.

Do you use Google Drive or Microsoft Skydrive?

Microsoft's Skydrive has an app that allows touch friendly access and editing options that tie directly to Office365 (Microsoft's web editing suite). Currently there are only 3rd party apps for viewing Google Drive files. Editing must be done via the browser but can be done. If you use syncing features of Google Drive for Desktop you will need the Surface Pro.