

IFP Tech Zone

Can the Samsung Dex Station and Galaxy S8 replace your laptop or desktop?

By Graeme Frisque
Samsung released its Dex Station across Canada in May 2017

with the promise of turning your Galaxy S8 or S8 Plus into an honest-to-goodness desktop computer.

But can this small hockey-puck-looking device really replace your home or laptop computer? Well - sort of.

The Good: The Dex Station is super easy to use and offers a surprisingly good desktop experience. Once set up with a monitor and wireless mouse/keyboard, it's really as simple as docking your S8 or S8 Plus and away you go. The station features two USB ports, an HDMI out to connect a monitor, Ethernet port and a C-type USB port to power the device.

Once docked, the user interface is very smooth and similar to operating systems like Windows. All of your phone functions are laid out in a format familiar to most. I used

my Dex Station for three days as my main home computer and was able to perform most routine tasks fairly seamlessly. In that regard, Samsung has succeeded where competitors have failed. The Dex Station does what it reports to do and can turn your cell phone into a fairly powerful desktop experience.

The Bad: At the moment, it only works with S8 and S8 Plus. There is also no sound functionality or audio

output jack. The dock uses the phone's speakers, meaning you'll have to invest in wireless headphones or a speaker to get more robust sound. With only two USB ports, some Bluetooth accessories are almost a must. There is also currently a lack of compatible apps, which means many non-optimized apps run in a phone-sized window on the screen. One way to work around this is to access desktop versions of apps through the phone's default Samsung browser where possible. When optimized though, apps run as seamlessly as on any desktop. App avail-

ability should improve as more developers jump on board.

The Verdict: Because it requires a lot of extras to make go, the Dex Station just doesn't make sense as a laptop alternative. However, if set up in both places with the right equipment, the station itself is portable enough to function as a sort of desktop you can carry around in your pocket. This is the most likely and obvious application for the device at the moment. At a retail price of \$249 CAD, and given its current limitations and extras required, the Dex Station is a hard sell if you're looking to outright replace your desktop. Either way though, it's a pretty cool little piece of gear and a giant leap forward in the quest to merge the home computer and smart phone. The Dex Station is the closest thing on the market today.

New LG V30 a definite contender in the future of all-screen phones

By Kathryn Boyle
With the introduction of the new iPhone X and the Samsung Galaxy S8, LG has come out with a phone that easily enters

the competition.

Display: This phone has a crisp, clean looking display that is bright and easy to read. Although easily managed in the settings app, the brightness is set quite high at default. The screen itself is 2,880-by-1,440 pixels, which is quite large, but is not large enough to be cumbersome.

User interface: The V30 is very smooth and is very forgiving when it comes to app placement and overall usability. Much like its competitors, the square apps are lined across the pages and can be easily managed into groups. On the home page, a weather app sits in the top of the screen, but

can be easily moved or removed by holding it down. All apps can be adjusted for size using a grid, giving the user complete creative availability.

Camera: The camera has a few unique settings, including a split-screen and a number of filters, including a fisheye lens. The main camera is 16MP and has an f/1.6 aperture, which helps with low-light photography. A second camera right beside is 13MP and has an f/1.9 aperture. Both of these cameras take crisp, clear

photos, but this treatment is lacking in the front-facing camera, where the pictures are a little grainy and can easily come out blurry.

Look and Feel: Although the phone is quite large, it is smooth and can easily fit in the palm of your hand. It is slick and looks futuristic with its silver back and glossy body. It would be wise for

users to install a form of protection on the case; it appears the mostly glass phone would easily crack if dropped. There is also a difference to this phone that former iPhone users might find a little confusing: the power on, or lock, button is nowhere on the front, but instead, on the back of the phone underneath the camera lenses. It has a fingerprint reader, but because of its placement, will take a little while to get used to.

Features: It has smooth tracking, can be wirelessly charged, and has space for an additional memory card. It is also dust-proof and water-resistant, up to 1.5 metres in anything other than seawater or salt water.

Overall, this phone is definitely a contender for the future of all-screen cell phones. The phone is currently being sold at

\$1,099 with no plan.

COD: WWII delivers familiar fare for World War Two fans

By Chris Vernon

Although Call of Duty: WWII could have used some spit and polish before release, fans of the franchise's Second World War offerings won't be disappointed - after all we've waited along time to kill Nazis. COD: WWII is basically three games in one.

Single-player: The single-player campaign will be familiar to COD

fans and has you (Private Daniels) fighting in historic battles on the Western Front. The storyline is gripping and it certainly doesn't shy away from portraying the horrors of war, earning the game a Mature 17-plus rating.

Multiplayer: On the multiplayer front, server crashes have been reported recently and a few more maps would have been nice.

Zombies: And finally, COD: WWII offers players a zombie co-op mode where you can hunt down evil Nazi zombies. The zombie campaign is almost like a whole different game.

COD: WWII offers up great value, great gameplay, and is nostalgic for fans of the franchise.





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