

The Next VR Contender: Microsoft

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Microsoft quietly announced virtual reality plans at the tail end of its recent Surface event, as a number of partners will be selling headsets taking advantage of the VR and holographic capabilities of Windows 10.

The partners in question include HP, Dell, Lenovo, Asus and Acer. Very little is known about the actual headsets, but Microsoft says the devices feature "inside-out" tracking sensors able to handle 6 degrees of movement freedom, eliminating the need for the external cameras or laser systems used by the Oculus Rift and the HTC Vive.

One also has to keep in mind these headsets are distinct from the HoloLens, the other Microsoft headset with a focus on mixed and augmented reality. This is due to their being full VR headsets, with no display transparency.

Interestingly, the companies listed as Microsoft partners have other VR plans-- Acer is making the Starbreeze StarVR headset, Asus showed off a headset (if behind glass) at Computex 2016, Lenovo is working on mobile VR with Chinese startup AntVR, and HP and Dell have both produce backpack-mounted PCs. Will they manage to lead Microsoft to the leadership of a living room VR arena currently contested by HTC, Sony, Samsung and Oculus?

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