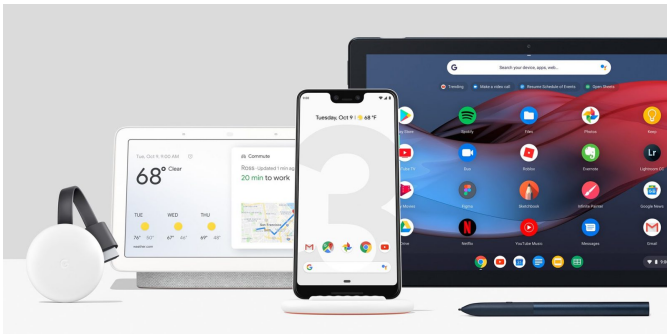


Google Celebrates 20th Anniversary With Hardware

Written by Marco Attard
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The next company with an October hardware event is, of course, Google-- and the search giant looks to celebrate its 20th birthday with a slew of products, namely the Pixel 3 smartphone, Pixel Slate tablet and the Echo Show-style Home Hub.



The next flagship Android phone, the Pixel 3 comes in two variants, the 5.3-inch regular and 6.3-inch XL. Both feature the Snapdragon 845 SoC with 4GB RAM inside a matte glass body complete with notch for the front-facing dual-lens 12MP camera array. Such a camera should allow for better selfies, since one of the lenses offers a wider field of view. Interestingly the rear-facing camera is a single-lens affair, if one beefed up with cloud-powered AI smarts and a "Visual Core" co-processor developed with Intel.

The Pixel 3 also swaps the traditional plastic construction with a matte glass back allowing for wireless charging. As such, Google also offers a companion dock dubbed the Pixel Stand able to turn the smartphone into something akin to a smart display. Connectivity comes through USB-C, and Google does like other companies by ditching the 3.5mm headphone jack (at least an adapter comes included in the box), while a Titan M chip promises nothing less than enterprise-level security.

On the tablet front Google goes for a new name with the Pixel Slate-- a first Chrome OS tablet from the company. Designed as an iPad Pro and Microsoft Surface rival, it features a 12.3-inch display and turns into a notebook via detachable keyboard. The keyboard is interesting, since it has round, backlit keys and connects to the tablet via magnetic connector able to provide power. The Slate also supports stylus input with the Pixelbook Pen, and includes front-facing speakers and a front-facing camera optimised for videoconferencing.

Not being one to ignore trends, Google also has a smart display dubbed the Home Hub. Essentially a 7-inch touchscreen on top of a stand, it provides easy access to Google Assistant

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while adding an extra screen in the home. As such it does everything a smart speaker does, and the asking price even covers a 6-month YouTube Premium subscription. However it does lack cameras (arguably a plus for the privacy-concerned customer), and can act as a digital photo frame when not in use.

The final piece of Google hardware involves the update of a humble device-- the 2018 Chromecast is near identical to the 2015 version, aside of the addition of 5GHz wifi support and a new matte finish. It still streams 1080p video, meaning 4K and HDR streams remain the remit of the Chromecast Ultra.

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