

Microsoft® Wireless Laser Desktop for Mac

by Jim Tetzlaff



Here's an item that you can truly have a love-hate relationship with! Microsoft's wireless desktop for the Mac is a Mac-only desktop set that is a very good-looking piece of work. It is a silver colored keyboard and mouse set with a very comfortable hand rest and ergonomic key layout. The mouse is a rather responsive, high definition unit with tracking as fine as 1200 DPI. It is a 4-button mouse with a scroll wheel that offers both vertical and horizontal scrolling. There is a magnifier feature activated by the small thumb button. The main buttons are set by default as the normal left click and right (Ctrl+click, for secondary options such as contextual menu access), secondary click. The large thumb button acts as a back button for your browser.

The mouse is very smooth and responsive. The scroll wheel does not have the typical geared feel to it, but rather uses a damping feature that gives you the feeling that you're cutting through soft butter. I really like that!



As for the keyboard, well, that has been an interesting subject of various reviews I've read on-line. Typical complaints about it is that it's too big, that there's too much "Microsoft®" logo on it because the mouse also has a Microsoft® logo. As I'm writing this I'm looking at the Apple logo on my iMac, the Apple logo on the iPod connector cable, the Apple logo on the Firewire dock for my older iPod and, if I recall correctly, there's an Apple logo on the one-button mouse that came with my iMac. No I'm not going to dig it out just to make sure, but I'm sure you're catching my drift. Well, the board is larger than normal, but it has conveniently placed buttons for the usual items that a Mac-user commonly uses. To the left of the standard keyboard are several actuator keys, set up by default to open your web browser, iPhoto, iTunes, iChat and your mail application. The keys use your preferences to open the appropriate applications you've already set up. For instance, on my computer, pressing the web browser key opens Safari and the email key opens Entourage without my having to again specify those applications within the Microsoft® Keyboard app.

Along the top of the keyboard, you have keys for mute, volume up and down, then there are 5 keys that you can set to open any application you wish them to call. These are assigned using the

Microsoft® Keyboard App that comes with the desktop set. The software does install in the typical Microsoft® way. In other words, items get installed all over the place. Since I'm already using Microsoft® Office, well, I've done that already so there's no real additional intrusion. There are additional keys above the number pad that are set by default to open Calculator (if you prefer to use a different calculator, then reassign the key), log off and sleep. There is also a key to invoke the search function. The function keys are set by default to use the OS settings.



So, what don't I like? Well, as nice as the mouse is, both my wife and I have grown accustomed to using a trackball. It was when that broke when I thought I would give this new set a whirl. I still prefer the trackball despite its less sensitive movement control. I think we'll be

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getting another and we'll use the mouse for the times when accuracy requires the increased control. Also, the range of the wireless RF transmitter is stated to be six feet. No way! I found that the signal was constantly getting compromised when it was a mere 12 inches from the desktop set! Now I have the receiver in the way just behind the keyboard. Perhaps something we're using is causing the interference, but I have not discovered what that might be.

So there you have it. I find this desktop set to be generally comfortable to use, but being spoiled with using trackballs, I'll never get completely comfortable using a mouse. The components

are quite attractive and I don't think the Microsoft® logos are any more intrusive than the Apple logo I've come to associate with pure elegance of design. I would give this item four out of a five star rating. 🐭



ABOUT: MICROSOFT® WIRELESS LASER DESKTOP FOR MAC.
COMPLETE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT <HTTP://WWW.MICROSOFT.COM/>
SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: MAC OS X VERSION 10.4x (EXCLUDING 10.0) USERS OF MAC OS X v10.2.x MUST INSTALL ENCLOSED INTELLITYPE PRO AND INTELLIPOINT SOFTWARE BEFORE CONNECTING THE HARDWARE.
USERS OF MAC OS X v10.3.x MUST UPGRADE TO MAC OS X v10.3.9 BEFORE CONNECTING

HARDWARE OR INSTALL THE ENCLOSED INTELLITYPE PRO AND INTELLIPOINT SOFTWARE BEFORE CONNECTING THE HARDWARE.
30 MB OF AVAILABLE HARD DISK SPACE
AN AVAILABLE UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS (USB) PORT
CD-ROM DRIVE
A WIRED MOUSE AND KEYBOARD MAY BE REQUIRED FOR INSTALLATION
MSRP: \$99.99. STREET PRICE: APPROX. \$75.00.

