

Microsoft Surface and Inclusive Design



With more than 1 billion people with disabilities in the world, Microsoft believes that accessibility is essential to delivering on their mission to “empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.”

Their inclusive design principle means including & learning from people with a wide range of perspectives



Recognize exclusion

Designing for inclusivity not only opens up our products and services to more people, it also reflects how people really are. All humans grow and adapt to the world around them and we want our designs to reflect that.



Solve for one, extend to many

Everyone has abilities, and limits to those abilities. Designing for people with permanent disabilities actually results in designs that benefit people universally. Constraints are a beautiful thing.



Learn from diversity

Human beings are the real experts in adapting to diversity. Inclusive design puts people in the center from the very start of the process, and those fresh, diverse perspectives are the key to true insight.

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While their journey is by no means complete, below are some of the ways Microsoft is being intentional about including people with disabilities in their design today:



Recognize Exclusion:

Dexterity can be a challenge for people with limited motor skills or pain. The smallest Surface 2-in-1, Surface Go 2, has a Type Cover (sold separately) that allows younger students and those with limited dexterity to better reach all the keys on the keyboard. At just 1.2 lbs (excluding keyboard), it comes with full Windows 10, supporting both portability and productivity.



Solve for One, Extend to Many:

They've included accessibility features on Windows and Teams for all users, including:

- Live captioning on for meetings on Teams*
- Limit distractions with Do Not Disturb Mode on Teams
- Dark, light and high contrast themes
- Learn more: [Accessibility overview of Microsoft Teams](#)
- Learn more: [Windows 10 Accessibility Features | Microsoft Accessibility](#)



Learn from diversity:

By working with the blind community, their engineers identified some challenges with the keyboard that they needed to change, including:

- Ensured the Function key state is known by Windows so that a screen reader can read it out. Before, the only way users would know if the Function key was on was through a light on the key.
- Moved the mute button from F4 to F2. Alt + F4 is how blind people and keyboard users close applications. If you don't know the state of the function lock key and you hit F4, it could mute the computer, effectively turning off the computer, because blind people use computers through audio.
- Added tactile bumps to the F4 and F8 Keys to help blind users orient their hands on the keys

*For US English only

Ready to learn more about their accessibility journey?

- Learn more about [Microsoft Accessibility](#)
- Learn more about Surface at [surface.com](#)
- Watch [this 5-minute video](#) on Accessibility in Surface for Education
- Check out the Accessibility Category of [Designed for Surface Accessories](#)