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This article is from July 5, 2005, and is no longer current.

Review: Wacom Cintiq 21UX Interactive Pen Display



Ben Long



While the phrase “the pen is mightier than the sword” is dubious advice for many practical situations (fending off invading barbarian hordes, etc.), the phrase “the pen is mightier than the mouse” is almost always true when you’re talking about digital painting and graphics work. [Wacom Technologies](#) has long been the market leader for pressure-sensitive graphics tablets, thanks to their innovative tablet design and excellent battery-free, cordless pen.

The [Cintiq 21UX](#) (\$2,499 street, \$2,999 list) is the latest and largest of the company’s

Petitioner Shenzhen Qianfenyi Intelligent Technology Co., Ltd.



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The Wacom Cintiq 21UX

Same Design, Larger Size

The 21UX follows the same design as Wacom's previous 17" Cintiq. You can easily adjust a solid metal stand that comes with the tablet to incline it anywhere from 10 degrees to 65 degrees. The tablet is roughly 5" thick and measures 21.1" x 16.5" inches. It weighs 22 pounds. A sturdy round tab protrudes from the middle of the back of the tablet and slides easily in and out of a corresponding socket on the Cintiq stand.

The screen itself measures 17" x 12.75" with a resolution of 1600 x 1200 pixels (UXGA). A single cable at the back of the tablet splits into a power and video cable. Wacom provides all the adapters you need to connect the Cintiq 21UX to VGA, DVI-D, and DVI-I ports, meaning you should have no trouble connecting the Cintiq to just about any type of graphics card.

The Cintiq 21UX ships with a Grip Pen, a rubberized fat-barreled pen that provides 1,024 levels of pressure. The pen has a two-way rocker switch on the side and an "eraser" on the top. Like the nib, you can program the eraser to automatically switch to the tool of your choice.

In addition to pressure-sensitivity, the Grip Pen also includes tilt and bearing



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higher. Wacom also bundles Adobe Photoshop Elements 3, Corel Painter Essentials 2, and nik Color Efex Pro 2 IE with the Cintiq.

Screen As Far As the Eye Can See

Like all Wacom tablets, the Cintiq is easy to set up, driver installation is a snap and, on the Mac, doesn't require a restart. No special calibration is required, and the tablet is ready to go as soon as the driver installation is complete.

You can use the Cintiq 21UX as your primary display, or as a secondary monitor, which is how I tested it, driving it from my 15-inch PowerBook. As with any additional monitor, you must tell the operating system how the monitors are physically arranged, so that your computer knows how to wrap graphics from one screen onto another. However, if you're using your mouse on your primary screen, when you touch the stylus to the Cintiq screen, the cursor will automatically jump screens to your pen location.

Wacom's early pen/tablet combinations had trouble with parallax between the tip of the pen and the surface of the screen. Because the surface of the tablet was covered by a thick glass plate, the pen was noticeably removed from the drawing surface. The 21UX doesn't suffer from this problem. The front of the screen is directly below the drawing surface, making it feel like you're truly drawing directly onto the LCD.

However, because the screen is so big, you'll often be looking at the pen and screen surface at extreme angles, which can make the cursor appear to be out of registration with the pen tip. Registration is actually fine, as you can see if you re-position your head directly behind the pen. At first, I found this distracting, but once I got in the habit of focusing on the on-screen cursor rather than the tip of the pen, it didn't matter that the two didn't line up perfectly. This is the only downside of having so much screen real estate. The upside, of course, is that you can open huge windows and work at extreme magnification levels with no bothersome scrolling.

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Anonymous

March 7, 2010

In addition to pressure-sensitivity, the Grip Pen also includes tilt and bearing sensitivity. If you're using applications that support these features (such as Adobe Photoshop), you can control brush size and shape by how hard you press the pen and how far you tilt it

This is what I'm waiting for. More: <https://bit.ly/wacom-cintiq-21ux-info>

Reply



Anonymous

January 7, 2010

You may want to also consider this blog, which discusses Cintiq alternatives:

<https://www.conceptart.org/forums/archive/index.php/t-76928.html>

\$\$\$ is the biggest drawback to Cintiq, for a small animation studio that requires multiple drawing tablets/screens and this product is just too high-end priced for many of us feeling the recent economic pinch.

Reply



Anonymous

September 20, 2009

IF YOUR THINKING ABOUT BUYING THIS PRODUCT, READ THIS BLOG FIRST... <https://animation-animator.blogspot.com/> ...WHICH WILL GIVE YOU GOOD INFORMATION ON IT AND WHERE TO BUY FROM.

Reply



Anonymous

July 5, 2009



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Last question, sorry... If you aren't a professional artist, if you can draw but you are just learning, would it be better to learn on the cintiq if you can buy it or should you just stick to paper? I can draw decent but never took any classes, I really want to learn animation and play around with painting, but I am disabled and it is hard for me to deal with all the supply's you need when working with paper, pens, paint ect, plus it seems like learning on a cintiq would be a lot better for the environment, instead of wasting all that paper when I mess up. But I am afraid that I will get the cintiq and just be way in over my head. I considered just trying a cheaper tablet but I really like the idea of being able to draw directly on the screen and hopefully being able to sit on the couch a few feet from the computer and be a lot more comfortable using the cintiq all by itself. Am I misunderstanding how it really works? Do you recommend anything else instead in my situation? Thank you so much for your time and input!

Lara

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Reply



image editing



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