

# Apple Vision Pro reviews roundup: stunning potential with big trade-offs

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The first reviews of Apple's Vision Pro headset, from publications with early access to the company's attempt to create the next computing platform, talk of a big leap forward for face-mounted computers, for better or worse. The US-only headset, first announced in June last year, aims to move "spatial computing" beyond the limited mixed-reality offered by rivals from Meta, Microsoft and others. It is packed with cutting-edge technology including 3D cameras on the front to capture videos, the ability to blend the real and virtual worlds with hand and eye tracking, plus a display on the front that shows a simulacrum of the wearer's eyes. But at a cost of \$3,499 (about £2,760) in the US it has a lot of work to do to convince consumers and developers alike that it can be anything other than a super-expensive niche toy for tech enthusiasts. The Verge's Nilay Patel called the Vision Pro an "astounding product" but one with a lot of big trade-offs, including messing up your hair each time you put it on: "Apple is very proud of the displays inside the Vision Pro, and for good reason – they represent a huge leap forward in display technology," he wrote. "They also look generally incredible – sharp enough to read text on without even thinking about it, bright enough to do justice to movies. Apple calibrates them for colour at the factory so they are also vibrant and colour-accurate without looking oversaturated or blown out. They are so small, but they work so well that they seem huge." But he said that while the passthrough view of the real world is the very best yet, "the field of view isn't huge, and the essential nature of looking at tiny displays through lenses makes that field of view feel even smaller. Apple won't tell me the exact number, but the Vision Pro's field of view is certainly smaller than the Quest 3's 110 horizontal degrees. That means there are fairly large black borders around what you're seeing, a bit like you're looking through binoculars." CNBC's Todd Haselton was impressed by the hardware and experience: "I loved watching movies with the headset. I lounged on my couch and put up a huge screen across the wall of my living room and watched an hour of Barbie and the two first episodes of Masters of the Air before the battery was at about 5%. Another night I watched Greyhound. I used the NBA app, which was updated to work on the Vision Pro, to stream four games at once, with the main game in the middle and others pinned to the sides. It's wild," he wrote. But he encountered the dreaded app gap problem that plagues new devices. "The Vision Pro supports more than a million iPhone and iPad apps. But you need to search for each app individually and some of them aren't available. Netflix and Spotify haven't been shy about not supporting the Vision Pro, though you can easily access either using the browser. Still, there are lots of others that I couldn't find: 1Password isn't there, which made logging into some apps a bit of a pain. You won't find Uber, DoorDash (but there's GrubHub!) or Amazon. None of Google's apps are here, including YouTube TV, though it works fine in the browser. "Popular games like Diablo Immortal and Genshin Impact aren't

available. Facebook's apps aren't here, so no Instagram. These are just a few I noticed." The Wall Street Journal's Joanna Stern found the Vision Pro was actually good for getting work done, with virtual windows dotted across your view or replicating a Mac's display, as long as you have other bits of hardware: "There is a built-in virtual keyboard so you can type in thin air. But it will drive you mad for anything longer than a short message. And selecting smaller buttons with a pinch should be a carnival game. I started getting real work done once I paired the Vision Pro with a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse. "I levelled up again by connecting my MacBook Pro, which let me write this review on a giant virtual monitor hovering over my desk." But was it heavy? "Oh yes. The metal and glass build gives it a premium look and a weighty feel. One included band has a top strap to lessen the face crush; the other wraps around your head like a comfy tube sock. The Light Seal (not a breed of sea mammal) acts as a cushion and light blocker. Mine is now covered with makeup." Weight is one of the reasons the headset has an external battery pack tethered to it by a cable, but even then Patel found the magnesium, carbon fibre and aluminium headset a daunting prospect: "You're supposed to wear this thing on your face for long stretches of computer time, and depending on which band and light seal you use, the headset alone weighs between 600 and 650 grams. I keep joking that the Vision Pro is an iPad for your face, but it's heavier than an 11-inch iPad Pro (470 grams) and pushing close to a 12.9-inch iPad Pro (682 grams), so in a very real way, it's an iPad for your face." Mark Spoonauer, of Tom's Guide, found the battery pack to be one of the most annoying things: "The aluminum battery on the Vision Pro always needs to be with you to use the headset, which is not great. So you'll need to put it in your pocket while standing or next to you while sitting. It's 12.4 ounces, which is heavier than an iPhone 15 Pro Max (7.8 ounces). And while the cord is long enough most of the time, if you're really immersed in a game or other experience and you move suddenly, you could accidentally tug the battery off a table or couch on to the floor." He added: "I'm also not a fan of how the cord to the battery can sometimes get a bit tangled. A couple of times I had to disconnect the cable so it would straighten out." Cnet's Scott Stein said the Vision Pro was "a stunning look at the future", including ones envisioned in sci-fi: "Apple is also expecting the Vision Pro to be a place to see all your own life moments, reliving them like a scene out of Minority Report. I tried watching recorded 'spatial videos', which are 3D videos that I previously shot on an iPhone 15 Pro. I also played back 3D videos and photos recorded directly with Vision Pro, which has its own cameras. "The photo and video quality in 3D isn't as good as Apple's stunning 180-degree immersive video format, not even close. But when expanded to a fuzzy-bordered viewing mode, it starts to feel like a replayed memory. I went back to the holidays, to the Museum of Natural History, to a hotpot dinner with a friend in San Francisco, to a snowball fight with my kid. I started to forget where I was and imagined I could just walk into the moment." Stein said the Vision Pro was the best wearable display he had ever put on, but still a tough sell in its current form. "At its price, and with so few VisionOS apps at launch, the Vision Pro isn't a device I'd recommend to any of my friends or family. If you're in the immersive industry and can afford one then that's another story. But for anyone else, I'd recommend you get a free demo at an Apple Store, marvel at its features and wait and see."