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ASUS Zenbook UX330UA

Tony's ASUS Zenbook UX330UA Review

Before switching to the Thinkpad E495, my daily driver laptop was an Asus Zenbook UX330 DS74. I used it from September 2017 to February 2020.

Specs

Internals

- 7th gen Intel Core i7 (2 core, 4 thread)
- Integrated graphics
- 16GB RAM
- 512GB SSD
- ~50Wh Battery
- 13“ 1920×1080 IPS display
- Elantech Trackpad+Fingerprint reader

I/O

- 2x USB 3.0
- 1x USB-C
  - USB ONLY. NO DISPLAYPORT/HDMI/CHARGING/THUNDERBOLT.
- 1x Micro HDMI
- Power input
- SD card reader
- 3.5mm combo jack

Opinions

- Keyboard was OK (maybe a touch mushy, but decent travel, and very usable)
- Display was fine, it has a slight green tint vs my desktop displays, but isn't too bad
  - Viewing angles were good, as expected with IPS.
- Build was metal top/bottom, but feels more fragile then the plastic Thinkpad.
  - Could be due to how small/light it is.
  - The build shape definitely feels like an older Macbook Air, especially with the think bezels.
- The screen hinge is VERY LIMITED. It only opens to about 120 degrees, which is fine when it is on a

table, but makes is painful to use on a couch, where you want to open the screen more.
    - It definitely feels like that mechanism can break if you push it a bit too hard.
- There were some reports of buzzing type noise, AFAIK, it seems to be a cable brushing against a fan. I didn't encounter it very often but it is something to note.
- The webcam and dual mics are average, nothing special to say.
- The speakers are under the laptop, and so sound a bit tinny. It definitely sounds better and louder when on a flat surface, where the sound can reflect.
    - I can't get mad though, since where else would they put it on such a compact machine.
- Battery life is fantastic on Windows and Linux, lasting over a 6 hour school day (with CPU on powersave, and display dimmed)

- There is minimal upgrade ability. All 16GB RAM is soldered on, there is no free DIMM slot, so if you bought the 8GB version, you can not upgrade to 16GB.
- The SSD is a standard M.2 SATA SSD, so it can be swapped out. Unfortunately, it is wired for SATA, not NVME.

Linux support

- Works almost perfectly under Linux, better then the Thinkpad. No CPU/GPU errors encountered.
- Fingerprint reader was historically unsupported, but works under fprintd/libfprint now!
    - Support depends on your DM. GDM supports logging in with either, SDDM is very janky.
    - SDDM forces you to pick pass or fprint based on how you setup PAM (if set fprint as sufficient, then you need to fail it 3x before you can try password)
    - Fprintd is worse then Windows, you need to swipe, not tap, and the detection isn't very good.
- Brightness sensor works under GNOME on Fedora 29, and allows you to auto-set the keyboard backlight and display backlight.
    - I could not get it working under Arch and Fedora KDE, it could be a DE thing.
- Touchpad not works under libinput, no janky other drivers needed, though the zoom gesture isn't supported.

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