

Quick lil' update... After having the Deck for a while now, I am absolutely in love.

If you want the tl;dr, it's this: The Steam Deck brings power first with portability second. It's a great machine not only for gaming but general web tasks, too, given its a Linux machine. It is a game-changer for sure!

The longer bit of it is this...

The Steam Deck in hand feels great. The button placement is reasonable with the exception of the start and select buttons. All of the buttons on the system are snappy and tactile, not mushy at all. The touchpads with their haptic feedback feel AMAZING, especially for use in games where a mouse is more prominent. The back-buttons (L&R 4 & 5) are well placed and don't feel like I'd be hitting them accidentally.

The display is pretty solid, given the size to resolution. Looks more than good enough to do games like The Witcher 3 justice. Keep in mind, I am using the 256GB model, so I am not using any protector or etched glass. I tend to keep the brightness around half.

The speakers are more than acceptable, sounding crisp and clear even at higher volumes.

Storage is where it gets iffy. I've thrown a 256GB SD card in alongside the base 256GB storage and it's already full. That's with maybe twenty or so games installed. Mind you, they are larger games and technically I could free up some of that space removing certain titles but you get the idea. I'd recommend a 512GB SD if you plan on expanding the storage on your deck.

Battery life is pretty solid. For games that aren't too demanding, I've been able to squeeze three days of playtime out of the deck. Mostly playing games like Dust: An Elysian Tail, Rocket League, and Stick it to the Man a couple hours at a time, between the coffee shop, work-time and others. On the other side is when I have played an hour or two of DMC 5 or TW3, and ended up with a nice 40% battery. It's a balancing act.

Using the deck as a Linux machine is nice. Being able to jump between desktop and gaming mode to make tweaks to the filesystem directly is *wonderful*. As a power user, it makes installing mods to the deck incredibly fluid.

As a real world example, that most people might encounter... Terraria doesn't give you cloud saves for your character or worlds. As such, I had to move my old data from my desktop PC to the deck. This was done by simplying FTPing into the deck, because again... Full Linux machine means you can just do that. (And SSH in too!) Dropped the files directly into the Terraria saves location, switched to gaming mode, ran Terraria and boom! There it was.

Having the dock is certainly a useful asset if you're someone like my fiance who absolutely hates 60% keyboards and wireless mice, and *only* uses wired tech... I personally just use an Anne Pro 2 & Corsair Harpoon Wireless to control the deck in desktop mode. But, by having the dock, you've opened up two more USB 3.0 A ports. Plus full size ethernet, if that's your thing. (Yes pls.)

There was some game crashing here and there on certain titles, but nothing that was enough to put me off the device or game. There is also a serious dilemma with certain titles and companies like Call of Duty Modern Warfare 2 (2022). Due to Activision not wanting to budge and allow Linux support for the Richochet anti-cheat, you literally cannot play MW2 on the deck unless you install Windows... Which... pls no. Rockstar

has kind of wllowed support but there is some issues with Red Dead Redemption 2 where it requests file validation which makes you go online, even if you're playing offline, which... Is doable, sure! But I don't want to *always* have to connect my deck to the internet.

Though, if you wanted to... OpenVPN support *is* available, allowing you to tunnel even in gaming mode.

All in all I believe that the Steam Deck is an incredibly valuable asset to the gaming world. It stands for its own merit, really. A portable gaming machine with a powerful set of hardware on a clean and light operating system, allowing root access to said OS. It's all bundled together in a clean, usable configuration. Whats not to love? If you're considering picking up a Steam Deck, go for the 256GB model and pick up a high capacity SD card. You can find 512GB models for as little as 60 quid.

If you're on the fence, take this as my recommendation. Buy one!

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