

Wacom Intuos Pen & Touch

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I've been using Wacom tablets since 2006 or so, beginning with the Graphire. It had a small working surface (6"x8") but it mapped fully to my screen. At that time I traveled a lot (it packed beautifully) and since I was teaching *Photoshop*, it really paid its way with its pressure sensitivity.

Since then I've used multiple different Wacom tablets and have never had a poor experience. This latest, the Intuos Pen and Touch (Medium), really is a neat move forward.

As the name implies, this tablet accepts input from both the stylus and your finger(s). I wasn't really sure I wanted to use a tablet with touch recognition. Would it recognize a finger while I was trying to do something precise with my stylus? If I (or the cat) touched or brushed across it while I was typing, would my stylus unexpectedly jump?

After several weeks of use I happily report a trouble-free experience.

Today we're so accustomed to swiping to turn a page or switch between applications, we wind up doing it on devices without that capability. When



switching from my tablet to my Kindle, for instance, I find myself trying to swipe instead of using the next page/last page buttons.

Now when I'm at my computer and swipe on the tablet – and it works! Plus I have the stylus for precise work. With its 1024 levels of pressure I can vary my brush/pen strokes in an imaging program.

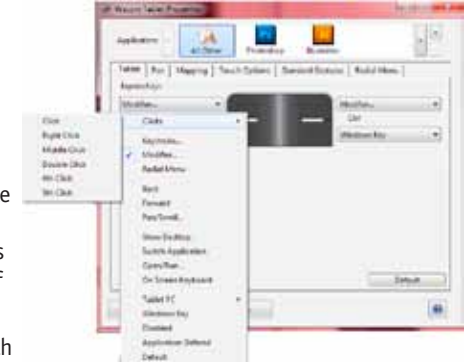
I now find myself switching between stylus and finger without thinking about it. It's better than having just the stylus, because I can touch the tablet surface without the extra motion of picking up the stylus.

The Pen & Touch has a much smaller footprint than the Intuos 4 I've been using, but its working surface (red outline) is only slightly smaller (8.5" x 5.3" versus 8.8" x 5.5"). It gives me more desk space, and balances better on my lap.

The Pen & Touch has four Express Keys (buttons), two at each top corner (also outlined in red). The default assignments are the usual "modifier keys:" Ctrl, Shift, Alt and the Windows key. But wait – there's more! As shown below you have complete freedom to change the assignment for any or all. You can also set one or more to work differently in specific program(s).

While I'm using it at my desk, I see this tablet as the perfect laptop/portable accessory. For one thing, having those little buttons so handy saves me a lot of reaching for my keyboard.

Using the Pen & Touch with my laptop was so easy (both in transporting and in using), not least because it can run wirelessly. When we're talking about using it in mobile settings, what may be the best part is the little sleeve to hold the stylus. No more worrying about where I can store it without losing it!

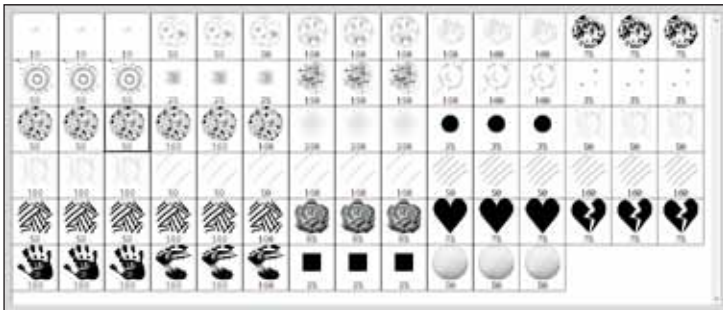


The stylus comes with three replacement nibs (pen tips) as well as a black sleeve and ring if you're not a blue sort of person (default color). To find the nibs, turn the tablet over and there's a little slide/pop-out door below the sleeve. It's not the easiest thing to open, but it does open.



Another nice touch is the included USB connector (if you use it). It goes to the side instead of sticking straight out. I've damaged one of the two USB connectors inside my Intuos 4 and have my fingers crossed that not moving it any longer will keep the other unharmed. However, if you are a Wacom user and own an Art Pen, it's not compatible with the Pen & Touch and there's no comparable stylus available for it.

With your purchase come several very nice extras: a free 8" x 8" Photobook from Shutterfly, a free 8" x 10" print on metal (imagecom.com), several pieces of software (*Photoshop Elements 12*, *Nic Color Efex Pro 3.0*, *SketchBook Express 6.2* from Autodesk and Corel's *SketchPad*). Oh, and a very nice set of *Photoshop* brushes (below). Some of them may look like duplicates, but each one has very different settings.



This tablet has become a permanent part of my laptop setup. It's perfect for casual use at home in the living room, and if I'm teaching at a client's home it gives a modern, professional impression. Plus it works great! Definitely recommended.

About: Wacom Intuos Pen & Touch (Medium)

Vendor: Wacom
<http://www.wacom.com/en/us/creative/intuos-m>

Price: \$199; \$174.99 @ Amazon