

Consumer Report – A Tale of Three Laptops

INCLUDING

- **A review of the HP ENVY X360 15 Laptop**

AND

- **A report on HP Envy and HP Pavilion Laptop Hinge Problems**

A Tale of Three Laptops

- **This story covers three similar laptops purchased over a five year period, and shows support issues by all three manufacturers.**
- **All had:**
 - **A 14” or 15” Touchscreen**
 - **A 500 GB or 1 TB Solid State Drive**
 - **8 or 12 megs of memory**
 - **A Backlit Keyboard**

A Tale of Three Laptops – Lenovo Flex 2-15

- **Bought in 2015 from the Lenovo Canada website with a guaranteed 2 business day on-site service warranty.**
- **When the unit died after nine months, the 2 business day on-site service ended up being 2 weeks.**
- **The on-site guy (a contractor) couldn't fix the problem (but his screwdriver slipped and he put a big scratch across the keyboard), it had to be sent to the Lenovo repair depot where they diagnosed a dead video card, for which they had no spares in stock.**
- **After three months of waiting for the part to come from China, and with no end date in site, I bought another laptop (an Acer Aspire).**
- **Over a month later, I finally got the Lenovo laptop back. They also replaced the keyboard their repair contractor had scratched.**
- **I sold it to a friend. Three years later the SSD drive failed and it cost him over \$400 to get it fixed.**

A Tale of Three Laptops – Acer Aspire F15

- **Bought in 2016 from Best Buy to replace the *‘missing in action’* Lenovo.**
- **Worked OK until the original Windows 10 Creators Update (~2017) killed the Bluetooth (this also affected an Asus Transformer laptop).**
- **Acer support was aware of this issue affecting many of their laptops but had no fixes for it (*‘shrug their shoulders’* kind of attitude).**
- **I tried all sorts of fixes I found online but to no avail, and none of the following Microsoft updates and patches fixed the problem either.**
- **Put it away when I bought the HP Envy laptop in 2020 to replace it.**
- **When I had to use it while the HP Envy was being repaired, I wiped it clean and did a fresh install of Windows 10. The Bluetooth now sort of works sometimes (screencasting to my TV still doesn’t work), but the overall performance of the laptop is somewhat slow. Note that while the HP Envy is thin and lightweight, in comparison the Acer is thick and heavy.**
- **The 1366 x 768 screen picture quality is mediocre, and fades if you view it even slightly off-axis.**
- **I am using it now to do this presentation while the HP Envy is having the hinge fixed for the third time.**

REVIEW - HP ENVY X360 15 Laptop

- In September 2020 I bought a Hewlett-Packard (HP) ENVY X360 15 laptop at Costco, along with their ExcellencePlus+ 3-year warranty (\$99)*.
- This was about 6 months into the Covid crisis when laptops, webcams, routers, smartphones, etc. were very hard to get due to many people suddenly working from home.



* - Note: Costco doubles the manufacturers warranty on most electronics at no charge.

REVIEW - HP ENVY X360 15 Laptop

The GOOD:

- **The 1920 x 1080 screen with AMD Radeon graphics has a great picture.**
- **The Bang & Olufsen sound system gives awesome sound for a laptop.**
- **The AMD Ryzen processor, 8GB memory, 1TB SSD gives fast boots and good performance.**
- **It is Windows 11 compatible.**

REVIEW - HP ENVY X360 15 Laptop

The BAD:

- Despite following the directions in the '*User Guide*', the '*Maintenance and Service Guide*' as well as the latest directions from HP online, etc., I cannot get into the BIOS Setup Mode.
- The fan is VERY noisy (a problem noted in several reviews).
- The backlighting on the keyboard times out in a few seconds, even when plugged in, so if you pause to think about something in a dimly lit room the keyboard lights go out (very annoying).
- One of the USB ports on the left side has a little flap thing, and when you have something plugged into the port the flap sticks down and scratches the table.
- The rubbery strips on the bottom won't stay stuck on.

REVIEW - HP ENVY X360 15 Laptop

The UGLY:

- **The hinges between the screen and the keyboard have broken 3 times, despite the laptop being treated very carefully (especially after the first hinge breakage). Note that the screen was never folded back to tablet mode.**
- **The hinges of HP Envy and Pavilion laptops are apparently a weak point (more to come on this).**
- **Costco's Concierge warranty service has fixed it free each time, but their ExcellencePlus+ 3-year warranty runs out soon.**

HP Envy and Pavilion Laptops – Hinge Problems

- The hinges on HP Envy, Envy 360, Pavilion, Pavilion 360, HP 14, HP 15 and HP 17 laptops sold during or after 2017 are defectively designed and can break after only a few months of use (Note: Some of these laptops can be converted into tablet form with the screen folding backwards 360 degrees).
- The defect is caused by HP Inc.'s decision to anchor the devices' hinges with *“poorly designed parts constructed from weak plastic”*.
- Opening and closing the laptops in the course of ordinary use can cause the anchors to separate from the device, snap or otherwise fail, rendering the computers *“useless”* and unable to be used for their intended purpose.

HP Envy and Pavilion Laptops – Hinge Problems

- The hinges are connected using brass screws held in place by “*fragile plastic*” that can easily wear and crack with normal use.

Note: All quotes in italics are from the class action lawsuit brief.



HP Envy and Pavilion Laptops – Hinge Problems

Depending on various reports online, either:

- HP will fix the hinges no questions asked under warranty, but after that you will be left paying for any repairs yourself.**

OR

- HP will claim the hinge breakage is a result of abuse and force you to pay for any repairs yourself.**

HP Envy and Pavilion Laptops – Hinge Problems

- This problem has been ongoing since 2017 and apparently HP has yet to fix it.
- A class action lawsuit in the USA was dismissed when HP settled out of court with the original complainant.
- For more information on the hinge issue:

<https://www.classaction.org/blog/useless-computers-lawsuit-claims-hp-laptop-hinges-break-easily-due-to-defect#:~:text=The%20lawsuit%20claims%20the%20laptops,adequate%20fix%2C%20the%20suit%20says.>

OR

Google '*hp envy hinge issues*'

- There are videos on YouTube showing how to fix the hinges yourself.

HP Envy and Pavilion Laptops – Hinge Problems

- **Over the years, between my own personal laptops, my family's laptops, my work laptops and all the laptops used by my staff and colleagues at work, I have never heard of a broken hinge before.**
- **HP doesn't have a great reputation for supporting their products (just try to find an HP driver for an older HP printer, although they're still happy to sell you overpriced ink).**

A Tale of Three Laptops – Summary

- **Overall, the product support from HP, Acer and Lenovo has been somewhat disappointing.**
- **The service from Costco's Concierge warranty service has been great, especially considering the initial cost (~\$99). Keep in mind that Costco already doubles the manufacturer's warranties on most electronics (computers, TV's, etc.) at no extra cost.**