Microsoft announces preorders for the HoloLens augmented reality (AR) headset are now open-- if only for qualified developers an invite from the company allowing purchase of a Developer Edition of the headset.



The announcement is still relevant to consumers, since it represents a "monumental step" towards a commercial version of the device. It also provides some hardware details, such as the fact HoloLens carries a 32-bit Intel CPU and a Microsoft "Holographic Processing Unit," allowing it to run independently of a PC.

Further details include 2GB RAM, 64GB built-in solid state storage and a battery promising up to 3 hours of active use on a single charge. The headset also features multiple sensors (specifically ambient light, gyroscope, magnetometer and accelerometer), 6 cameras, 4 microphones, built-in 802.11ac wifi and Bluetooth connectivity, speakers, and a 3.5mm headphone jack.

Also included with the Developer Edition are a number of accessories, such as a remote control, carrying case, extra nose pads and a strap.

HoloLens app development requires a Windows 10 PC, Visual Studio 2015 and the Unity 5.4 gaming engine. For inspiration Microsoft offers a number of free holographic demos, such as the HoloStudio 3D modeling playground, a version of Skype and, most amusingly, a squirrel-in-your-house game called Young Conker.

Curious developers can apply for a Developer Edition now, with shipments to start by the end of March 2016.

Go [Announcing Microsoft HoloLens Development Edition]