

The New Dell XPS 16

Built for the Way a 16-Inch Laptop Is Used

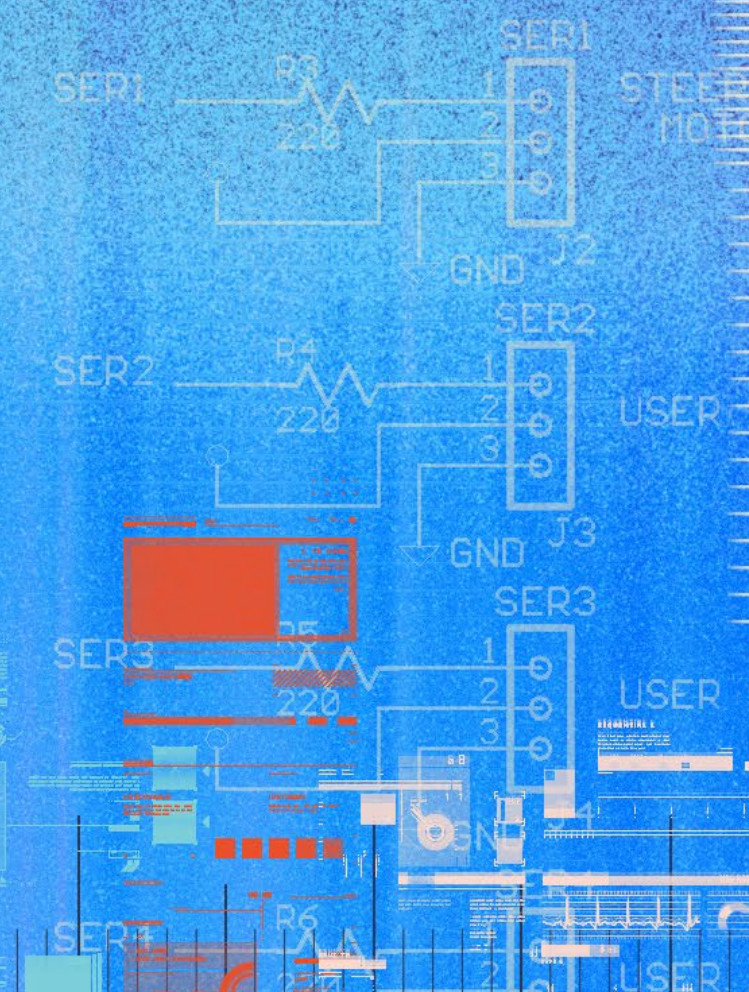
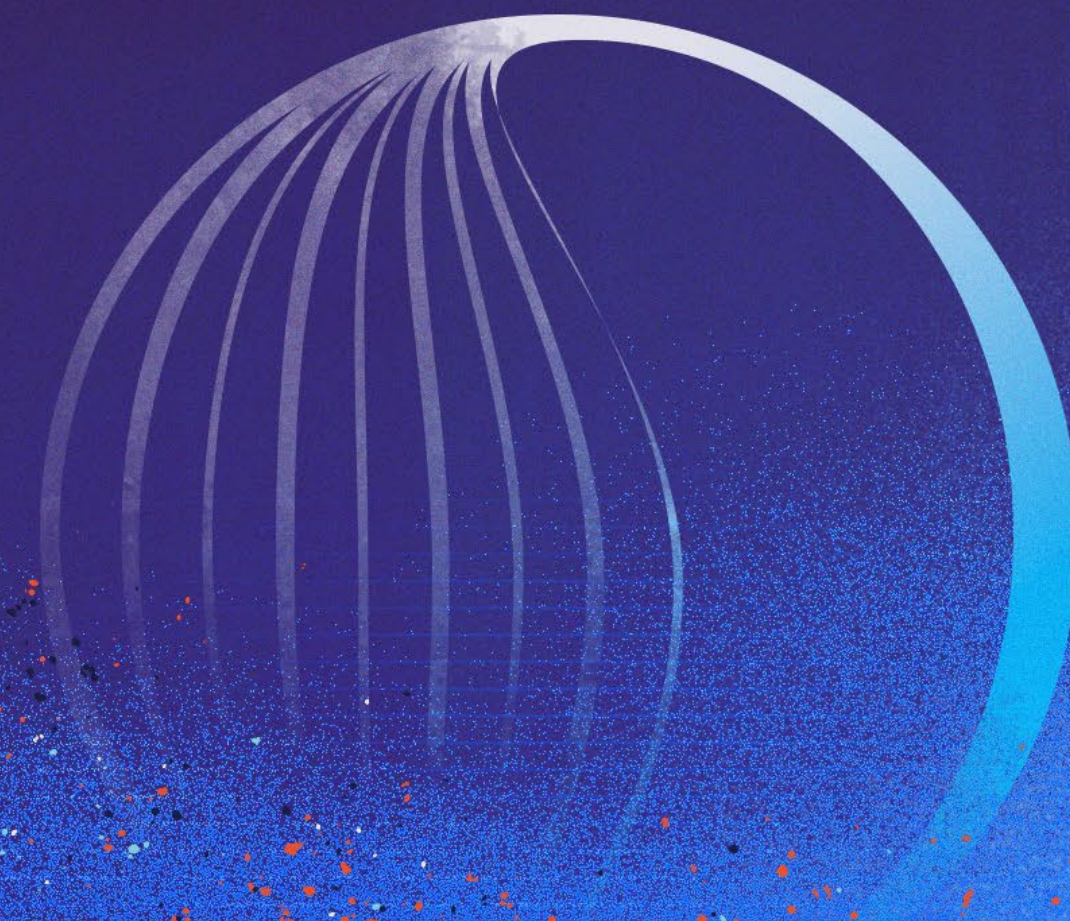
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Commissioned by:

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The Dell XPS 16

After a brief absence in 2025, Dell relaunched the XPS brand at CES 2026 to a very positive reception. The return of Dell's high-end laptop line coincided with the release of Intel's Core Ultra Series 3 processors, built on the Panther Lake architecture.

The XPS 16 we are evaluating in this Signal65 Lab Insights report is a premium 16-inch consumer laptop built around a 3.2K OLED touch display, a thin and light chassis, Thunderbolt 4 connectivity, and the Intel Core Ultra X7 358H with 16 cores, Arc B390 graphics, and an integrated NPU. Dell selected the most capable components that fit in a 16-inch thin-and-light design. The system we tested has 32 GB of memory and a 1 TB SSD, weighs 3.65 lb (1.65 kg), and measures 14.62 mm (0.58 in) at its thickest point, which makes it a very portable 16-inch machine.

Dell engineered the XPS 16 to run its processor at a lower power budget than the silicon allows, and it did so in exchange for battery life, efficiency, and a cooler, quieter chassis, which are the qualities people notice every day in a laptop they carry, making it even more premium. Peak processor wattage is one number on a specification sheet; the user experience is what this report attempts to measure. Signal65 tested the XPS 16 against a leading 16-inch competitor with the same processor, the same memory, and the same graphics, so differences in the results come from OEM and platform engineering rather than from the chip.



Key Findings:

- The XPS 16 ran **13 hours 56 minutes** in the Procyon Office productivity battery rundown, **47% longer** than a leading 16-inch competitor built on the same Intel Core Ultra X7 358H, despite a **13% smaller battery**.
- The XPS 16 delivered more runtime from every watt-hour in all three battery scenarios we ran, **69% more** in Office productivity, **25% more** in video playback, and **4% more** in web browsing.
- Unplugged and in the default Balanced mode, the XPS 16 lost less of its performance than the competitor in every productivity and web test, and was **10% faster** in Procyon Office as a result.
- Single-threaded and short-burst multi-core performance were identical between the two systems, so the battery life and efficiency were not bought with responsiveness.
- In the Balanced mode the XPS 16 was the quieter laptop at idle, **18.7 dBA** against 22.5 dBA, and under a sustained all-core load, **40.4 dBA** against 45.4 dBA, while its keyboard deck ran **3.4 degrees Celsius cooler** at the hottest point.
- The competitor led in sustained all-core rendering and 3D graphics, where its higher power budget applies. Dell chose battery life, efficiency, and a cooler, quieter chassis over peak sustained throughput, and for a premium consumer laptop that is the right side of the trade.

Systems and Methodology

We tested two retail 16-inch laptops. The Dell XPS 16 (model DA16260) is configured with the Intel Core Ultra X7 358H, 32 GB of LPDDR5X-9600 memory, a 1 TB SSD, a 3.2K (3200 x 2000) OLED touch display, and a 68.6 Wh battery. The competitor is the Samsung Galaxy Book6 Ultra, configured with the same Core Ultra X7 358H, 32 GB of LPDDR5X-9600 memory, Arc B390 graphics, and a 78.6 Wh battery, which gives it 15% more battery capacity than the XPS 16. Both systems ran Windows 11 25H2 (build 26200.9168) with the same benchmark versions, and both were updated through the Windows Update channel before testing.

Each benchmark was run three times in each of six power configurations, the Windows Balanced, Best Performance, and Best Power Efficiency power modes, each on AC power and on battery. Results are the average of the

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three runs. Battery rundowns were run in the Best Power Efficiency mode on battery with the display set to a fixed brightness, in three scenarios, the UL Procyon Office Productivity battery test, a Signal65-designed Chrome web browsing rundown, and local 1080p video playback. Every chart in this report names the power mode and power source it was captured in, because the two systems behave differently depending on both.

The workloads cover productivity (UL Procyon Office Productivity and Essentials), web (JetStream 3, Speedometer 3.1, and WebXPRT 5 in Chrome), CPU rendering (Cinebench 2026), general CPU performance (Geekbench 7), graphics (3DMark Steel Nomad Light), AI (Geekbench AI on the NPU), and creative applications (PugetBench for Photoshop and Premiere Pro). Acoustic measurements were taken at the seated user position in the

Balanced mode, and surface temperatures were captured with a thermal camera at idle and under sustained load in the same mode.

	Dell XPS 16	Competitor
Processor	Intel Core Ultra X7 358H (16 cores)	Intel Core Ultra X7 358H (16 cores)
Graphics	Intel Arc B390 (integrated)	Intel Arc B390 (integrated)
Memory	32 GB LPDDR5X-9600	32 GB LPDDR5X-9600
Display	16-inch 3.2K (3200 x 2000) OLED touch, 20 to 120 Hz variable refresh	16-inch 2.8K (2880 x 1800) OLED, up to 120 Hz
Battery (design capacity)	68.6 Wh	78.6 Wh
Operating system	Windows 11 25H2 (26200.9168)	Windows 11 25H2 (26200.9168)

Table 1: Summary of the two systems as tested. Full configurations, firmware, and application versions are listed in the appendix.

All-Day Battery Life

A 16-inch laptop moves from the desk to the couch to the kitchen table to the airplane tray, and every one of those is a place without the charger. Battery life is the first question a buyer asks about a laptop this size, and the first thing that disappoints them when a big screen or hungry CPU drains a big battery.

Dell wrung considerably more runtime out of the Core Ultra X7 358H than the competitor did. In the Best Power Efficiency mode, the XPS 16 ran 13 hours 56 minutes in the Procyon Office productivity rundown against 9 hours 27 minutes for the competitor, a 47% advantage and about four and a half more hours of Office work, on a battery that is 15% smaller than the one it was up against. In local 1080p video playback the XPS 16 ran 10 hours 39 minutes against 9 hours 48 minutes, close to an hour longer. Only in the Chrome web browsing rundown did the XPS 16 fall behind, at 7 hours 06 minutes against 7 hours 50 minutes.

All-day battery life

Runtime in three everyday scenarios, Best Power Efficiency mode on battery. Longer is better.

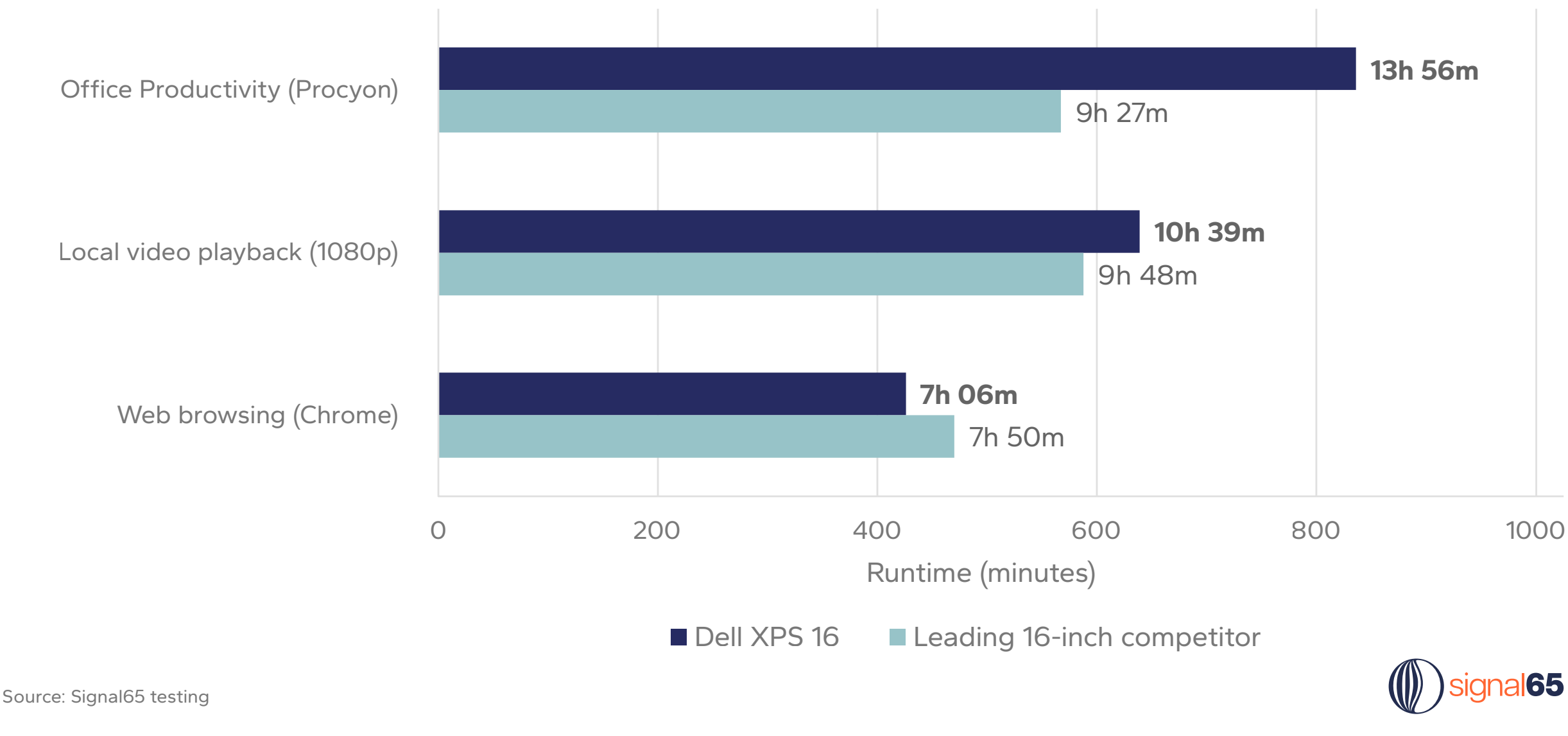


Figure 1: Battery life in three rundown scenarios, Best Power Efficiency mode on battery. Longer is better.



Efficiency Engineering, More From Every Watt-Hour

A laptop that needs a bigger battery to reach the same runtime is a heavier, thicker laptop. Efficiency is what lets Dell fit a 68.6 Wh battery into a thin 16-inch chassis and still lead on battery life against a system carrying 78.6 Wh. Dividing each rundown by the battery capacity behind it removes the competitor’s capacity advantage and shows the platform efficiency underneath, and in that view the XPS 16 led in all three scenarios. It delivered **12.2 minutes per watt-hour** in Office productivity against 7.2 for the competitor, 69% more, **9.3 against 7.5** in video playback, 25% more, and **6.2 against 6.0** in web browsing, 4% more. The browsing rundown the XPS 16 lost in absolute minutes is one it won on efficiency; the competitor needed 10 extra watt-hours of battery to finish 43 minutes ahead.

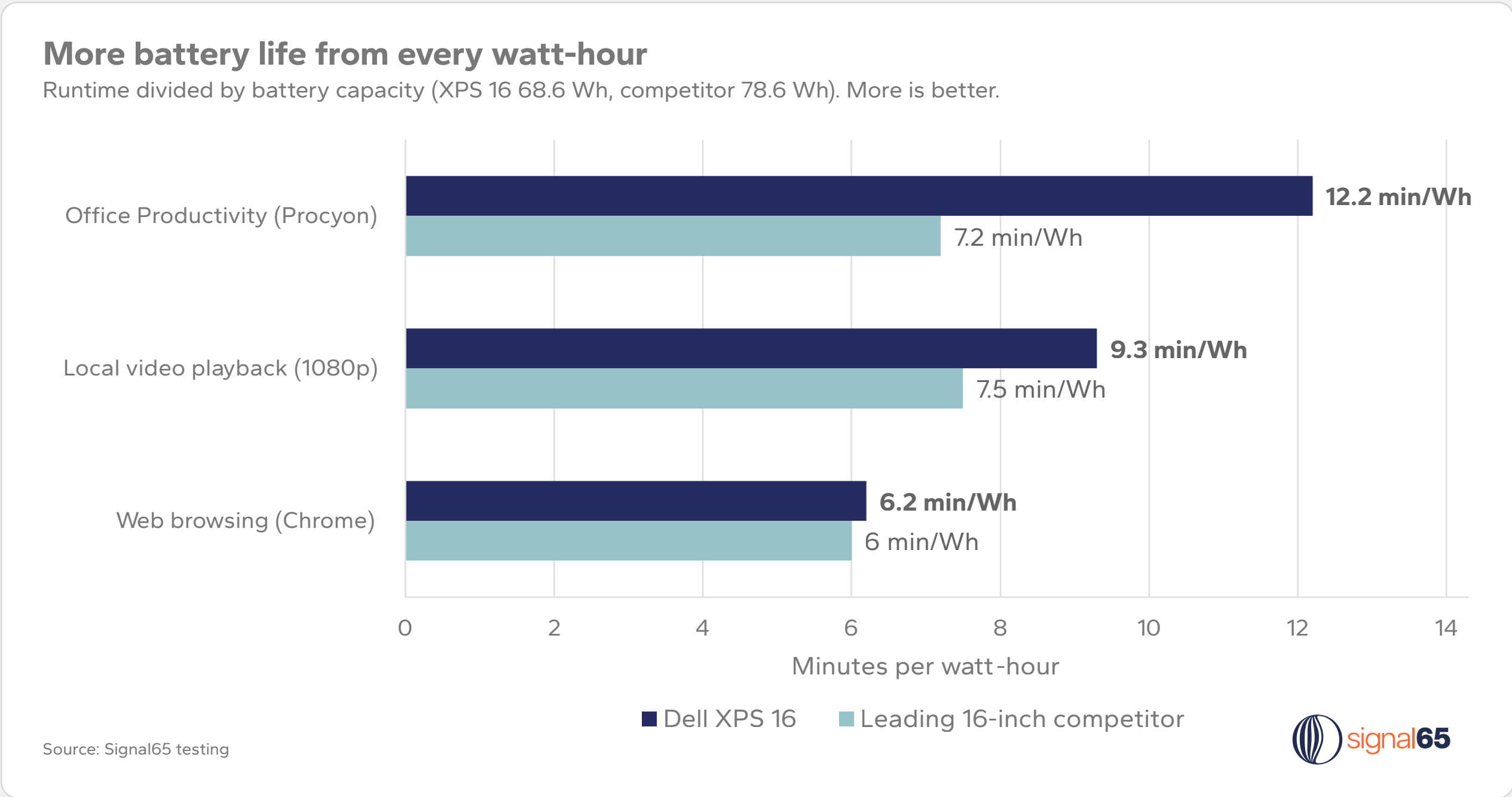


Figure 2: Battery life per watt-hour of design capacity, Best Power Efficiency mode on battery. Higher is better.

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Efficiency Engineering, More From Every Watt-Hour

Lower power draw matters beyond runtime, because the energy a laptop does not consume is heat it does not have to remove, which shows up later in our testing as lower fan noise and cooler surfaces. Over the Office rundown the XPS 16 averaged roughly **4.9 W** of total system draw against roughly **8.3 W** for the competitor, derived from battery capacity and runtime. In the same power mode the XPS 16 produced 90% of the competitor’s Procyon Office score, so it did about **1.5x the Office work per watt**. For someone working away from an outlet that is a plain trade, since the laptop that draws less power is the one still running at the end of the day.

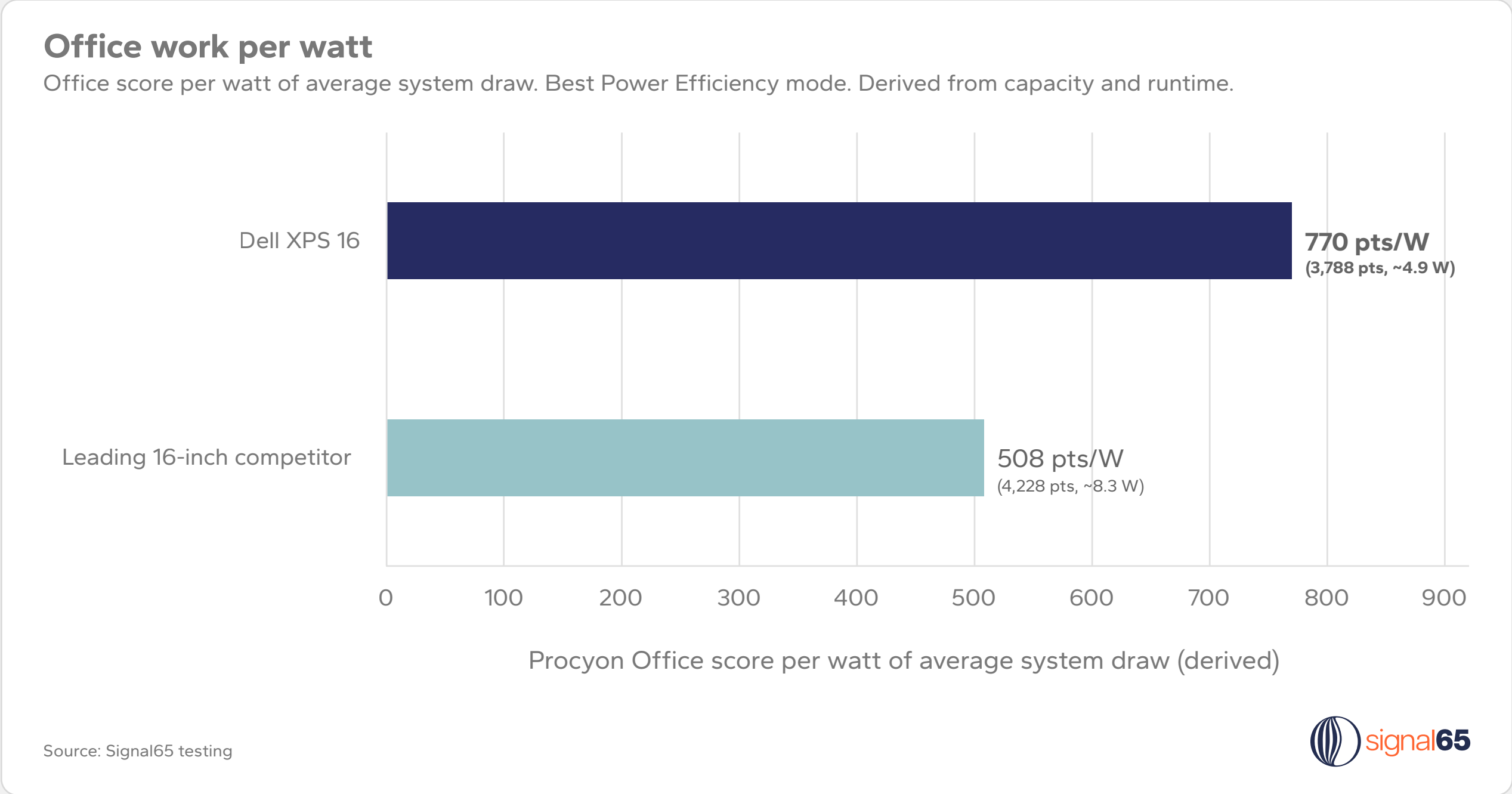


Figure 3: Procyon Office score per watt of average system draw over the Office rundown, Best Power Efficiency mode on battery. Higher is better. Draw figures are derived from battery capacity and runtime.

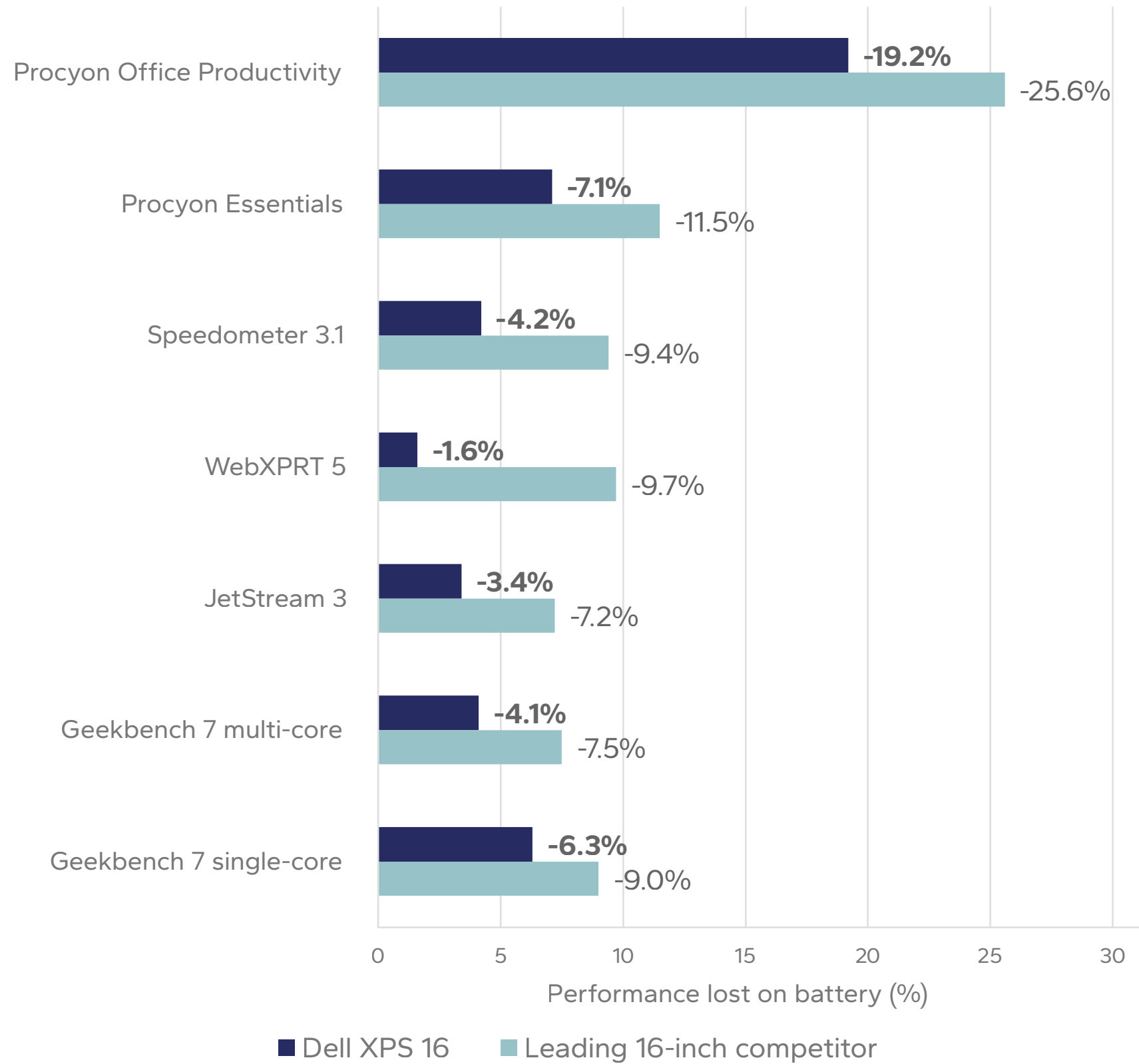
Performance That Holds Up on Battery

Most laptops are used unplugged and in the power mode they shipped in, and a laptop that slows down noticeably when the cord comes out feels like a different, cheaper machine than the one in the store. The measure that matters to a buyer is not only the plugged-in benchmark but how much of that performance is still there on the couch.

Unplugging in the Balanced mode cost the XPS 16 less than it cost the competitor in every productivity and web test we ran. The competitor gave up 7% to 26% of its plugged-in performance on battery, with Procyon Office down 26%, Essentials down 12%, Speedometer down 9%, WebXPRT 5 down 10%, and JetStream down 7%. The XPS 16 gave up 19% in Office and 7% in Essentials, and in the three browser tests it lost between 1.6% and 4.3%. Because the Balanced mode is the default on both machines and the mode most buyers never change, the XPS 16 is the faster laptop on battery for the way most people use it.

Performance that holds up unplugged

Percent of performance lost from AC to battery in Balanced mode. Smaller is better.



Source: Signal65 testing

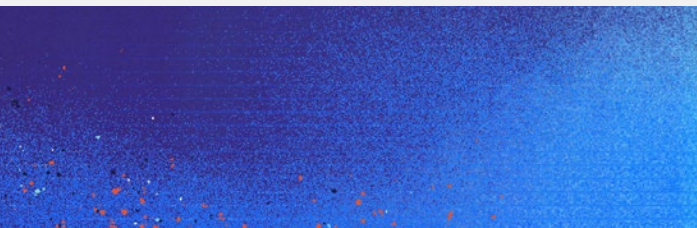


Figure 4: Performance lost from AC to battery in the Balanced mode. Shorter is better.

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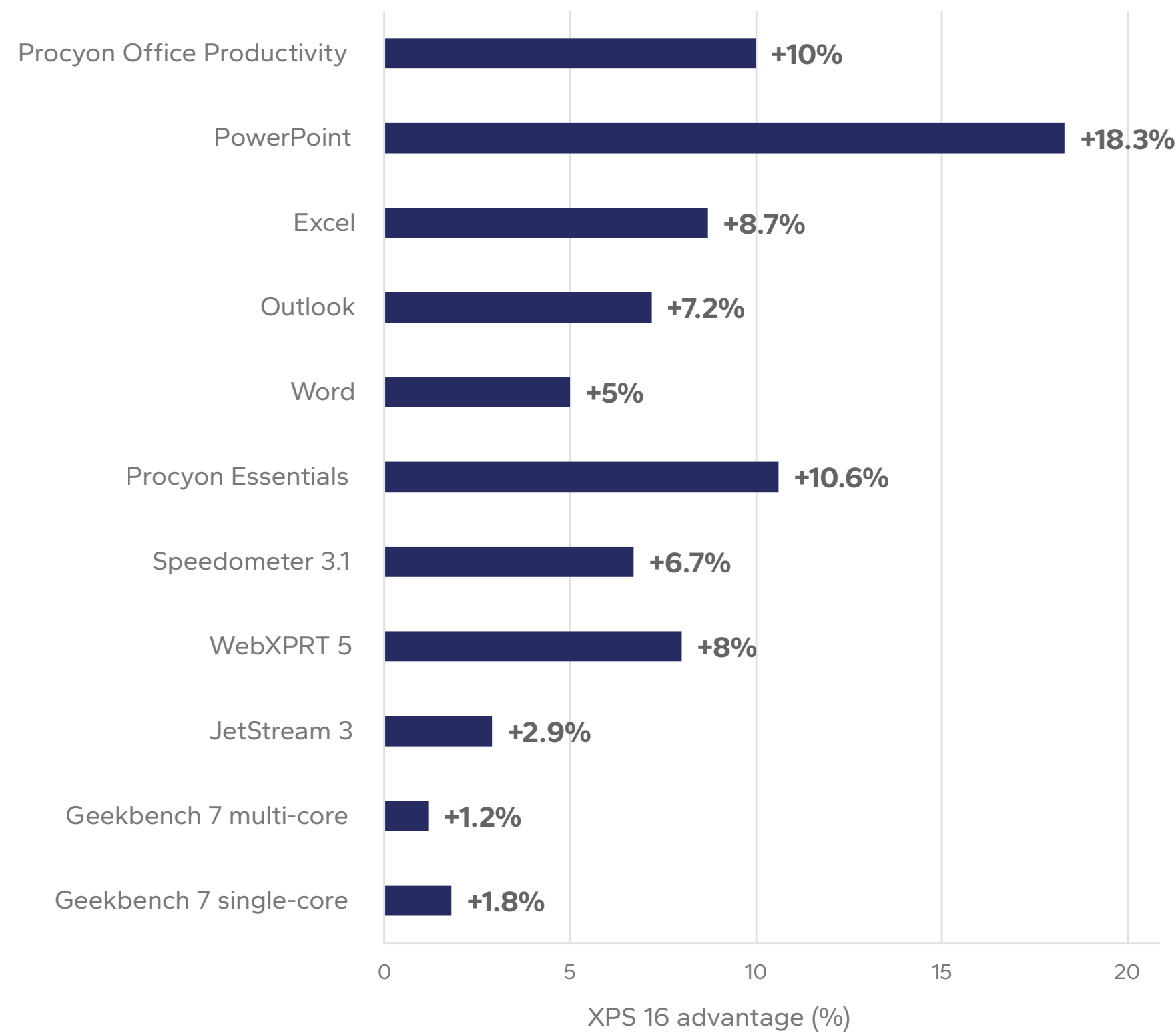
Performance That Holds Up on Battery

On battery in the Balanced mode the XPS 16 led the competitor by **10% in Procyon Office**, with PowerPoint up 18%, Excel up 9%, Outlook up 7%, and Word up 5%, by **11% in Procyon Essentials**, and by 7% in Speedometer, 8% in WebXPRT 5, and 3% in JetStream. Plugged in and set to Best Performance, the two systems tied in Procyon Office at 8,340 points each, so the competitor catches the XPS 16 only when both are on the charger and the user has changed the power mode.



Faster on battery in the default mode

XPS 16 advantage over the competitor, Balanced mode on battery.



Source: Signal65 testing



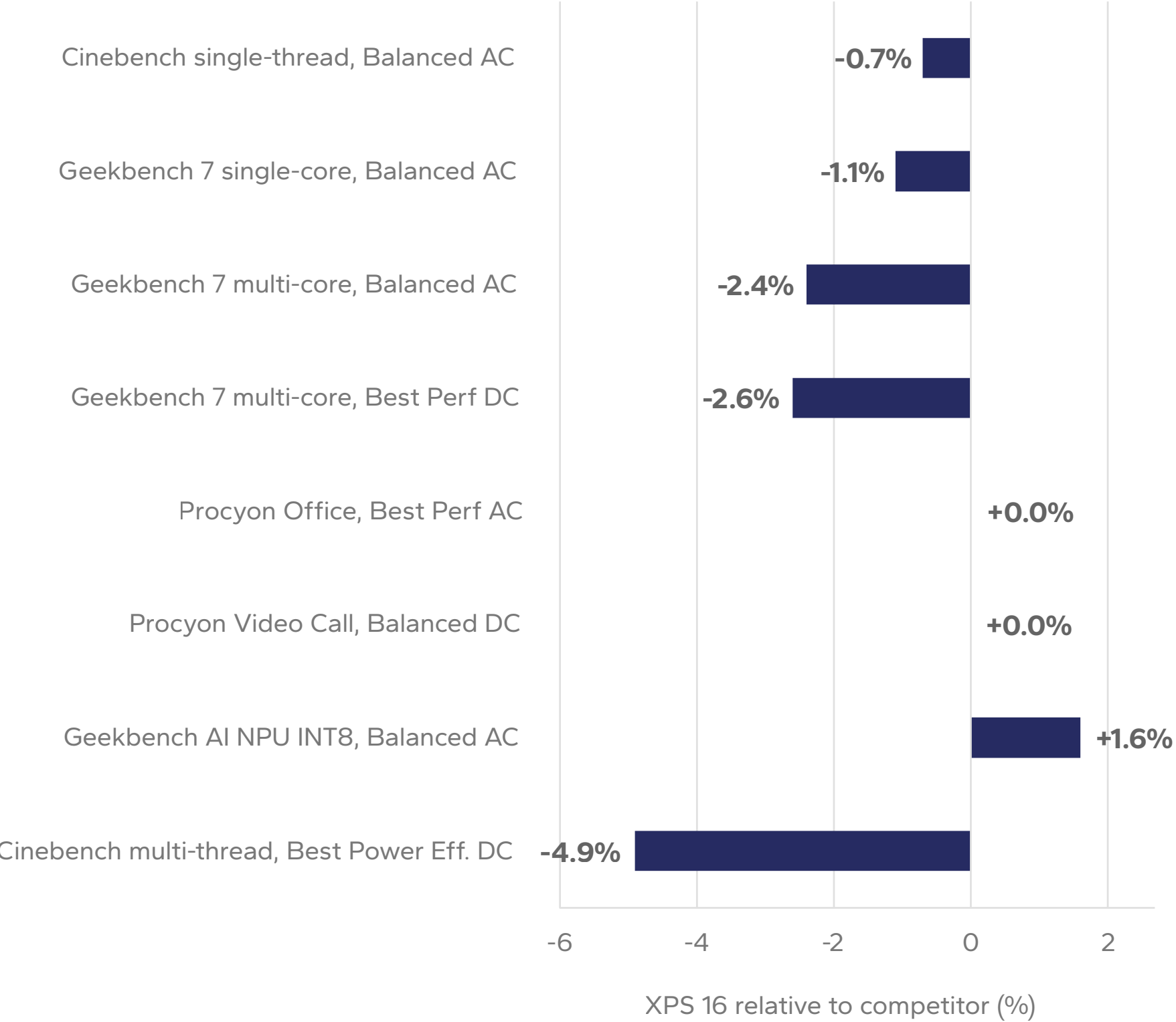
Figure 5: XPS 16 performance relative to the competitor, Balanced mode on battery. Higher is better.

No Compromise on Responsiveness

Battery life and efficiency results this one-sided invite the question of what was given up to get them. What a person feels in daily use is single-threaded speed, application launches, typing, tab switching, and short bursts of multi-core work, and on those measures Dell did not have to compromise. Single-core performance in Cinebench 2026 and Geekbench 7 was within 1% of the competitor, plugged in and on battery. The XPS 16 trailed by 2.6% in the short-burst multi-core Geekbench 7 test, which shows the processor has the same headroom on both machines and that the difference between them is only how long each vendor lets it stay there. Procyon Office in the Best Performance mode on AC was an exact tie, Procyon Video Call was identical in every mode on both systems, and the XPS 16 held a 1.6% lead on the NPU in Geekbench AI. For most users this is functionally identical performance with better battery life.

No compromise on responsiveness

XPS 16 relative to the competitor on the same processor. Results within a few percent in either direction.



Source: Signal65 testing



Figure 6: XPS 16 performance relative to the competitor on the same processor, selected tests and modes. Results within a few percent in either direction.

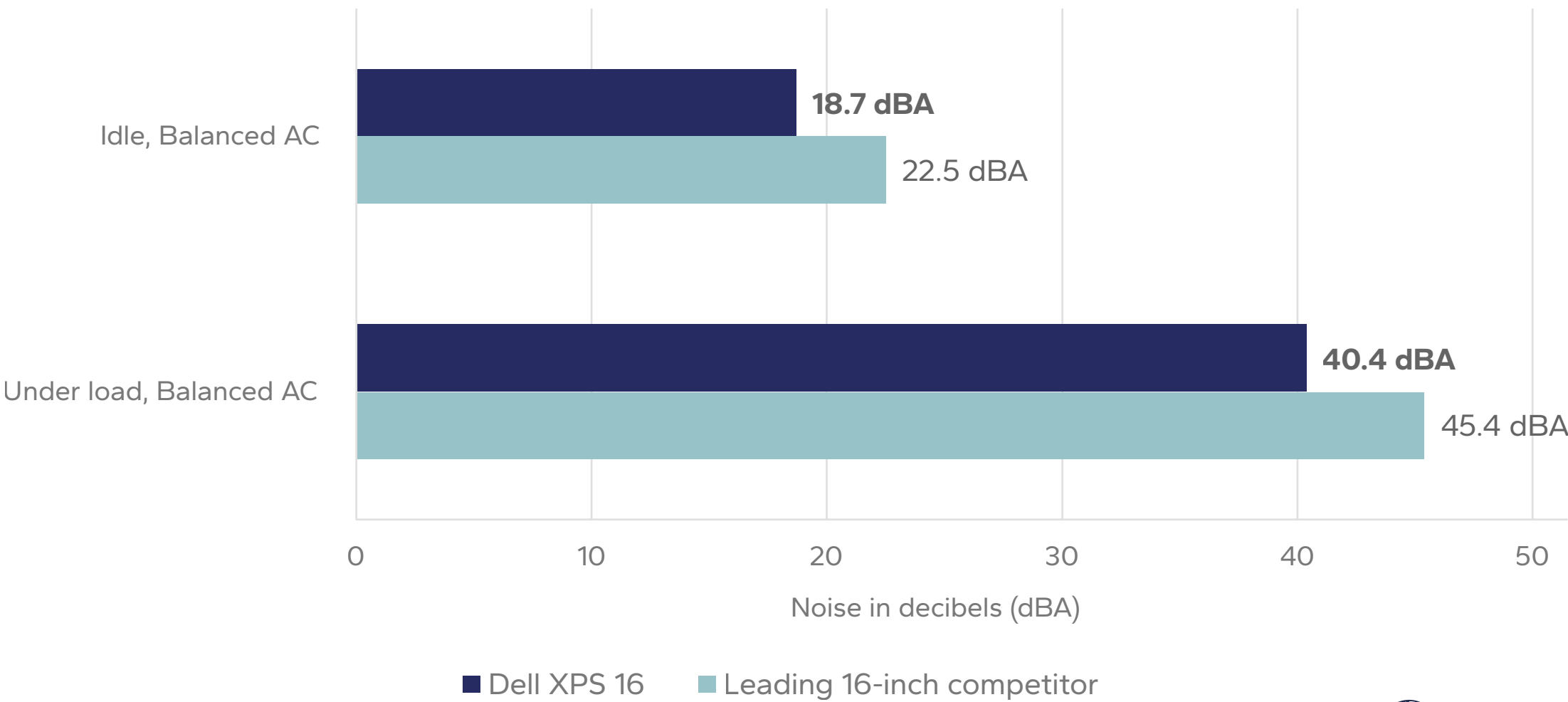
Cool and Quiet

Thin-and-light laptops have a hard time with thermals and noise. Cooling a high-performance processor takes either a large, heavy heatsink or fast, loud fans, and since there is less room for the former, these systems tend to raise fan speed to stay cool. We set both machines to the Balanced mode, the mode they ship in, and measured sound levels at the seated user position at idle and again after running the Cinebench 2026 multi-thread loop until the noise level stabilized.

The XPS 16 was the quieter laptop in both states. At idle it measured 18.7 dBA against 22.5 dBA for the competitor, low enough that the fan is inaudible in a normal room. Under the sustained Cinebench load it rose to 40.4 dBA against 45.4 dBA for the competitor, a 5 dBA margin that is plainly audible across a desk. A laptop that draws less power has less heat to move, and the fan noise is where that shows up first.

Quieter at idle and under load

Acoustic performance measured in decibels (dBA). Lower is better.



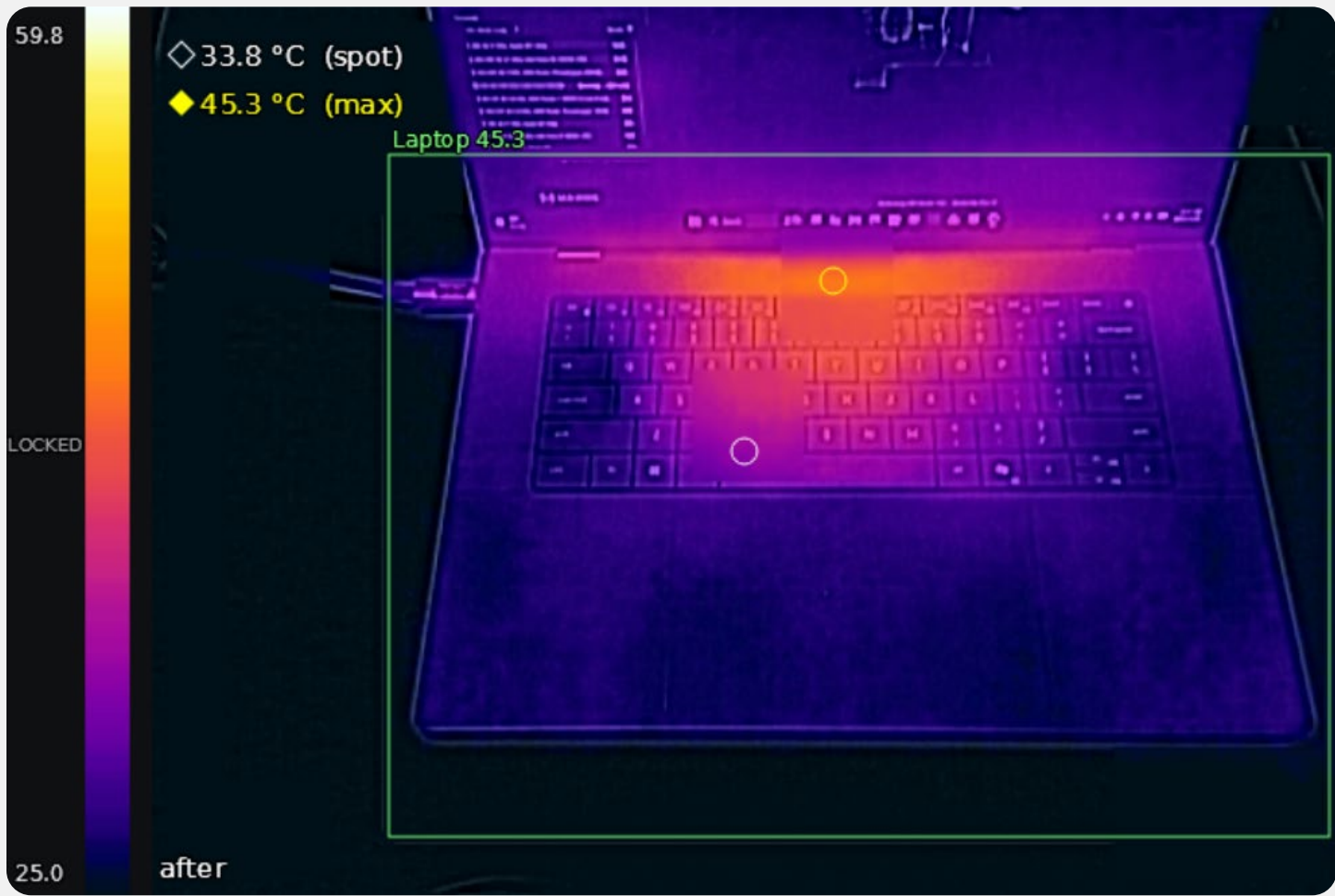
Source: Signal65 testing



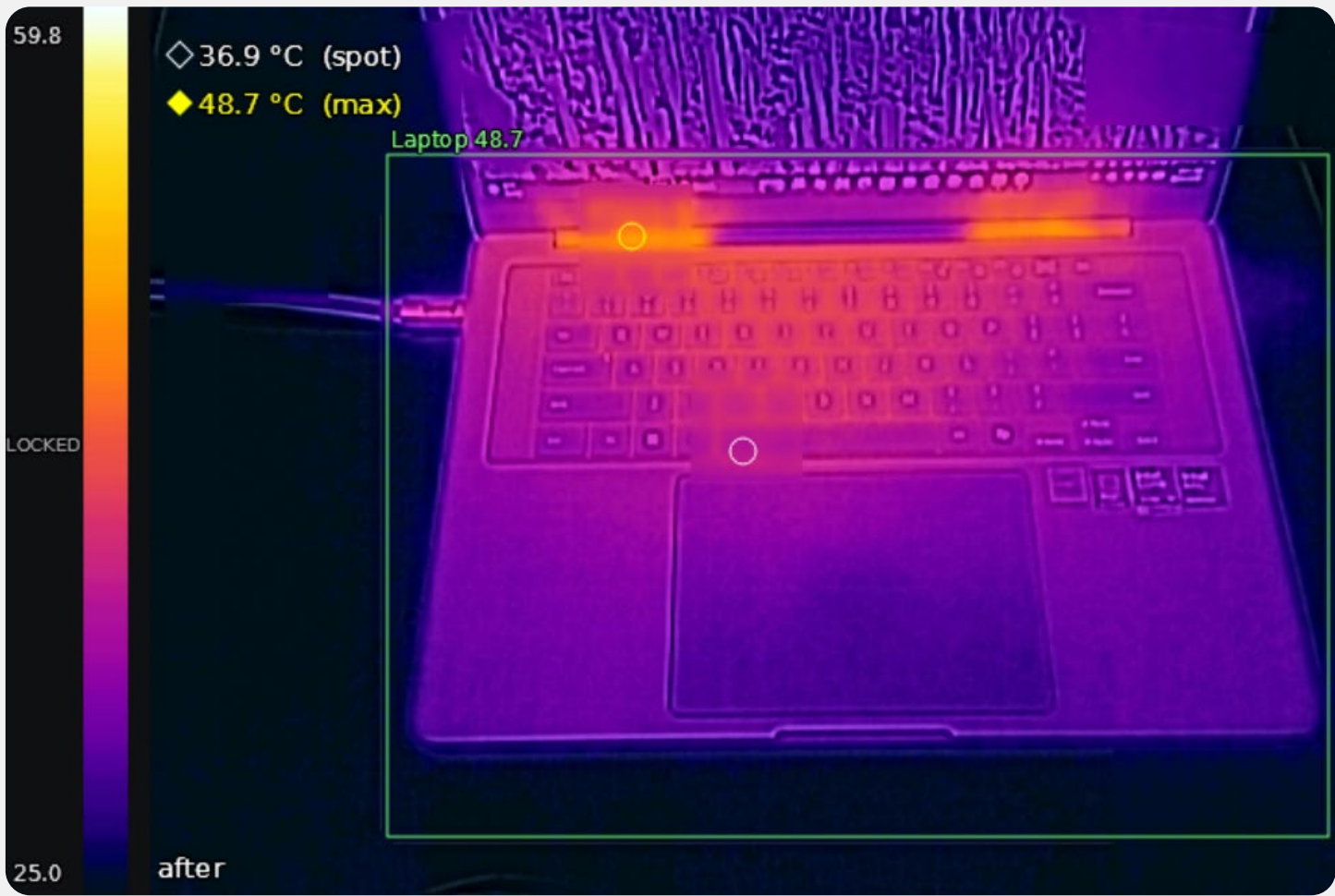
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Cool and Quiet

Thermal performance is the other half of the same result. After the Cinebench loop in the Balanced mode, the hottest point on the XPS 16 measured **45.3 degrees Celsius against 48.7 degrees** on the competitor, 3.4 degrees cooler, and the spot reading at the center of the keyboard was **33.8 degrees against 36.9**, 3.1 degrees cooler. The average matters more than the peak here, and the images show why. The XPS 16 confines its warmest area to the strip above the keyboard, with the keys themselves warming only in the center, while the competitor spreads heat across the whole deck and into the palm rest. Using the chassis as a heatsink keeps processor temperatures down, but the person typing pays for it in comfort. The XPS 16 is both the quieter and the cooler laptop under the same load, and that combination is the direct return on the lower power budget.



Dell XPS 16



Competitor

Figure 8: Thermal camera captures of the keyboard deck after a sustained Cinebench 2026 multi-thread loop, Balanced mode on AC. The diamond marks the spot reading at the center of the keyboard and the square marks the hottest point in the frame.

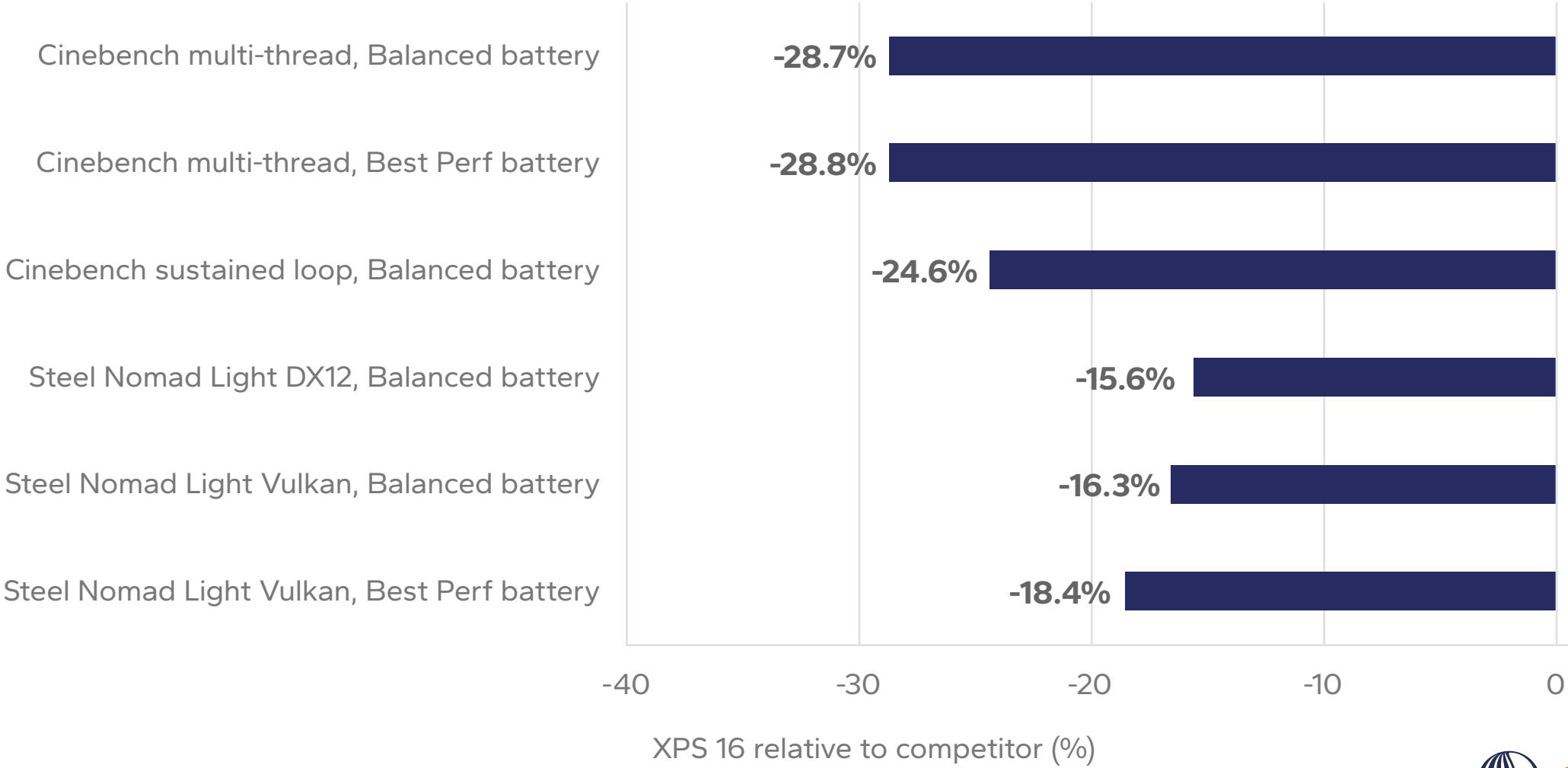
The Engineering Tradeoff

The competitor runs the same processor at full power whether it is plugged in or not, and it wins the benchmarks that reward that. When tested on battery, in sustained all-core rendering, Cinebench 2026 multi-thread and its sustained loop, the XPS 16 trailed the competitor by 25% to 29%, and in 3DMark Steel Nomad Light it trailed by 16% to 18% on the same Arc B390 graphics. These are the workloads that keep every core or the GPU pinned for minutes at a time, and they are the only tests in this report where the competitor pulled ahead by a meaningful margin. None of the Procyon Office, web, video call, or single-thread results shows a similar gap.

The numbers deserve a step back before they are read as a verdict. The XPS 16 scored 3,504 in Cinebench 2026 multi-thread in the Balanced mode on battery, and a score above 3,500 is strong performance for the large majority of users. The same is true of its 3D results, which are shown with the raw scores in Figure 9. Dell chose battery life, efficiency, and a cooler, quieter 16-inch chassis over peak sustained throughput. For a premium consumer laptop, that is the right side of the trade, and the thermal and acoustic results in the previous section are what the buyer gets in return.

The tradeoff, sustained all-core and 3D workloads

XPS 16 relative to the competitor where the competitor runs a higher power budget.



Source: Signal65 testing



Figure 9: XPS 16 performance relative to the competitor in sustained all-core and 3D graphics workloads on battery, with the raw scores for each test. Negative values favor the competitor.

Creative Work

Although the competitor is tuned for higher sustained performance, the XPS 16 matched it almost exactly in Adobe Photoshop and Premiere Pro, across the Balanced and Best Performance modes and on battery as well as on the charger. Photo and timeline editing use the processor and the GPU in bursts rather than holding every core at full load for minutes, which is the pattern where the XPS 16’s power budget costs it nothing. In the Balanced mode the XPS 16 trailed by 2.1% in PugetBench for Photoshop on AC and led by 7.3% on battery, and it trailed by 4.6% in PugetBench for Premiere Pro on AC and by 3.6% on battery, differences small enough that a user would not notice them in either application.

Competitive creation performance

XPS 16 relative to the competitor in Adobe Photoshop and Premiere as tested in PugetBench.

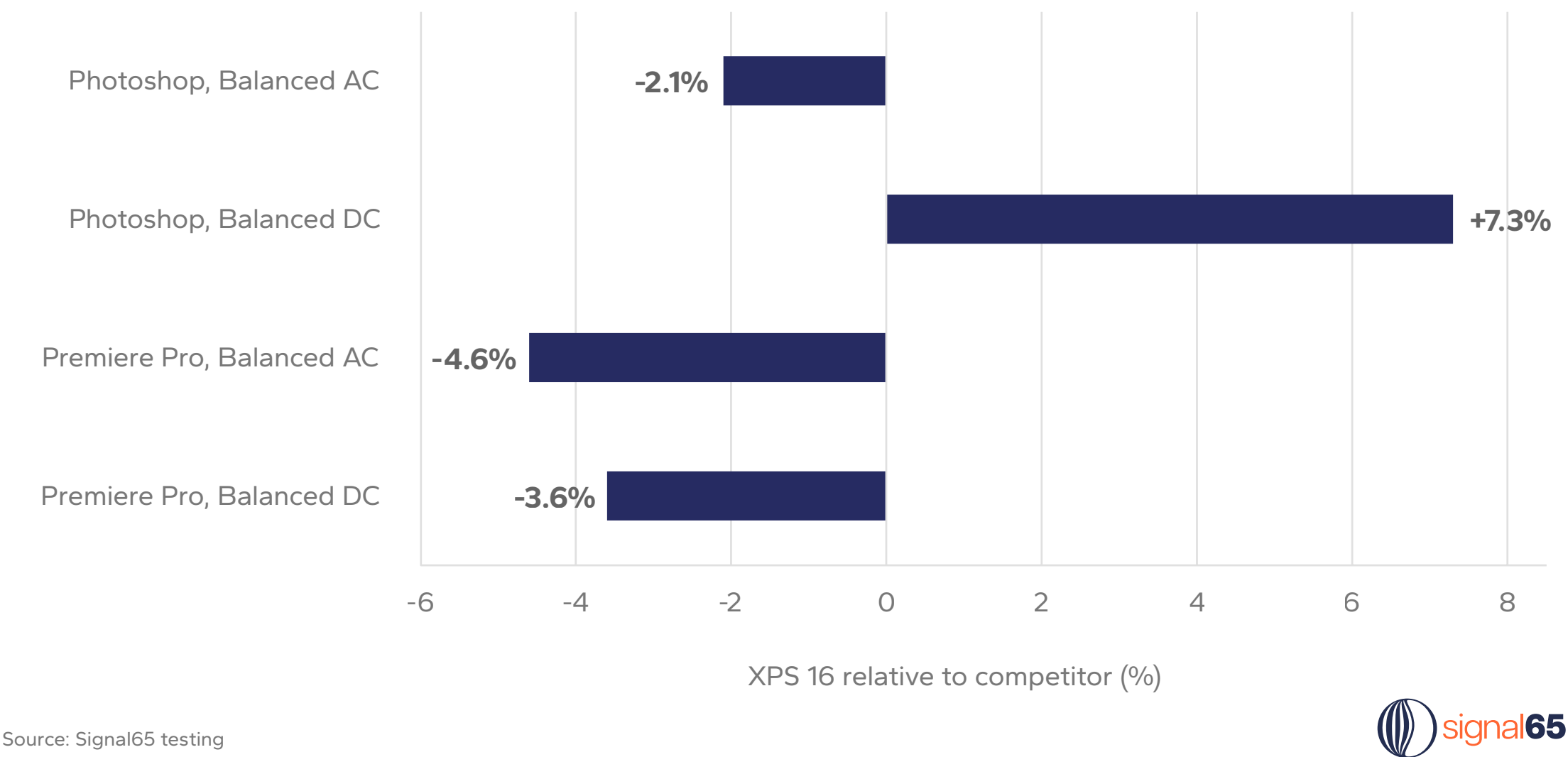


Figure 10: XPugetBench for Photoshop and Premiere Pro, XPS 16 relative to the competitor, Balanced mode on AC and on battery.

Design, Display, and Connectivity

The efficiency story arrives in a chassis with an amazing display. The XPS 16 and its 3.2K (3200 x 2000) OLED touch panel drives about 23% more pixels than the competitor's 2.8K panel, and it does so while winning on battery life. Part of the reason is the panel itself, which is a variable refresh rate display that runs anywhere from 20 to 120 Hz and drops its refresh rate when the content on screen is static. Among the first laptops to ship with variable refresh rate panels, the XPS 16 spends much of an Office or video workload at a refresh rate far below 120 Hz, which is where some of the battery results in this report come from.

Connectivity runs through three Thunderbolt 4 ports, each with DisplayPort 2.1 and power delivery, so the laptop charges, drives external displays, and connects storage through any of them, and a universal audio jack remains for wired headsets. At 3.65 lb and 14.62 mm, the XPS 16 is among the lightest and thinnest 16-inch laptops with a 3.2K OLED panel, and the battery results in this report were achieved without the larger cell a heavier chassis would allow.



Conclusions

In our testing of two retail 16-inch laptops built on the same Intel Core Ultra X7 358H, the Dell XPS 16 was the laptop built for the way a 16-inch modern machine is used. It ran 47% longer in Office productivity on a battery 15% smaller than the competitor's, it delivered more runtime from every watt-hour in all three battery scenarios, and it lost less of its performance when unplugged in every productivity and web test, which made it the faster laptop on battery in the mode most buyers leave it in. Single-threaded and short-burst performance were the same on both machines, so none of that was bought with responsiveness, and the XPS 16 was both the quieter and the cooler laptop at idle and under sustained load in its default mode.

The efficiency behind those results is the thread that runs through the whole report. The XPS 16 averaged about 4.9 W of system draw over a full Office rundown against about 8.3 W for the competitor, and it turned that into roughly 1.5x the Office work per watt, which is what allows a 68.6 Wh battery in a 3.65 lb chassis to outlast a 78.6 Wh battery in a heavier one. The same restraint shows up as a fan that stays 4 to 5 dBA below the competitor's and a keyboard deck that runs 3 degrees cooler, and it costs nothing in the applications most buyers run. Photoshop and Premiere Pro performance was within a few percent of the competitor in both directions, video-call performance was identical, NPU performance was identical, and the 3.2K variable refresh rate OLED panel is both the better display of the two and part of the reason the battery results look the way they do.

The competitor led in sustained rendering and 3D graphics, where its higher power budget applies, and the XPS 16 scores in those tests still represent strong performance for the large majority of users. Dell chose battery life, efficiency, and a cooler, quieter chassis over peak sustained throughput. For a premium consumer laptop that spends most of its life away from an outlet, that is the right choice, and the XPS 16 is an outstanding 16-inch laptop for consumers that demand a premium design system.

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System Configurations

	DELL XPS 16	SAMSUNG GALAXY BOOK6 ULTRA
Model	XPS 16 DA16260	Galaxy Book6 Ultra
Processor	Intel Core Ultra X7 358H, 16 cores / 16 threads	Intel Core Ultra X7 358H, 16 cores / 16 threads
Graphics	Intel Arc B390, driver 32.0.101.8622	Intel Arc B390, driver 32.0.101.8356
Memory	32 GB LPDDR5X @ 9600 MT/s	32 GB LPDDR5X @ 9600 MT/s
Storage	1 TB PCIe NVMe SSD	1 TB PCIe NVMe SSD
Display	16-inch 3200 x 2000 OLED touch, 20 to 120 Hz variable refresh	16-inch 2880 x 1800 OLED, up to 120 Hz
Battery (design)	68,607 mWh	78,640 mWh
Dimensions and weight	352.58 x 237.47 x 14.62 mm, 3.65 lb (1.65 kg), manufacturer specification	Manufacturer specification
BIOS	Dell 1.9.0 (June 1st, 2026)	AMI PVAL.1.4.38.0 (April 2nd, 2026)
Operating system	Windows 11 25H2, 10.0.26200.9168	Windows 11 25H2, 10.0.26200.9168

Applications Used

APPLICATION	VERSION	NOTES
UL Procyon	2.12.2842.0	Office Productivity, Essentials, Office Productivity battery test
Cinebench 2026	2026.1.0	Single-thread, multi-thread, sustained loop
Geekbench 7	7.0.0	Single-core and multi-core
Geekbench AI	1.7.0	NPU results reported
3DMark	2.32.8897.0	Steel Nomad Light, DX12 and Vulkan
Google Chrome	Stable channel	JetStream 3, Speedometer 3.1, WebXPRT 5, browsing battery rundown
PugetBench	1.4.30	Photoshop and Premiere Pro
Local video playback		Tears of Steel, 1080p



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