



XPS 13 ON STEROID

# Dell's XPS Bar-like

And a likely larger price tag.

SCHARON HARDING - 1/4/2022, 6:00 PM

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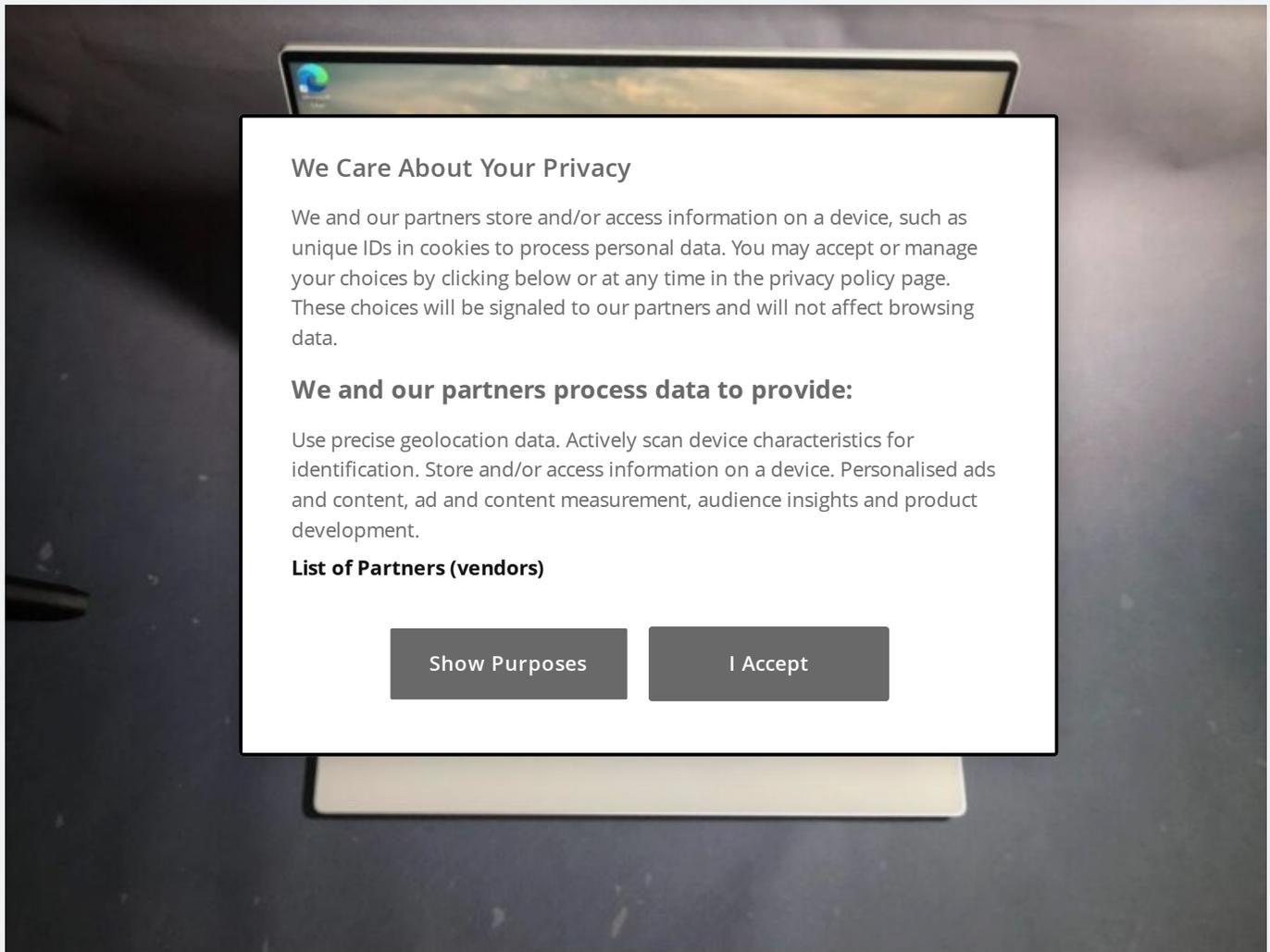
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# Touch



[Enlarge](#) / Dell XPS 13 Plus in its platinum color.

Dell today unveiled the latest in its long line of XPS laptops. Previous updates have ranged from minor CPU refreshes to moderate redesigns with larger screen-to-body ratios, smaller dimensions, and critical changes, like the removal of the [up-the-nose webcam](#). But the latest XPS 13 is one of the most unusual-looking in years. And with a design built to host a more power-hungry CPU, Dell is calling it the XPS 13 Plus.

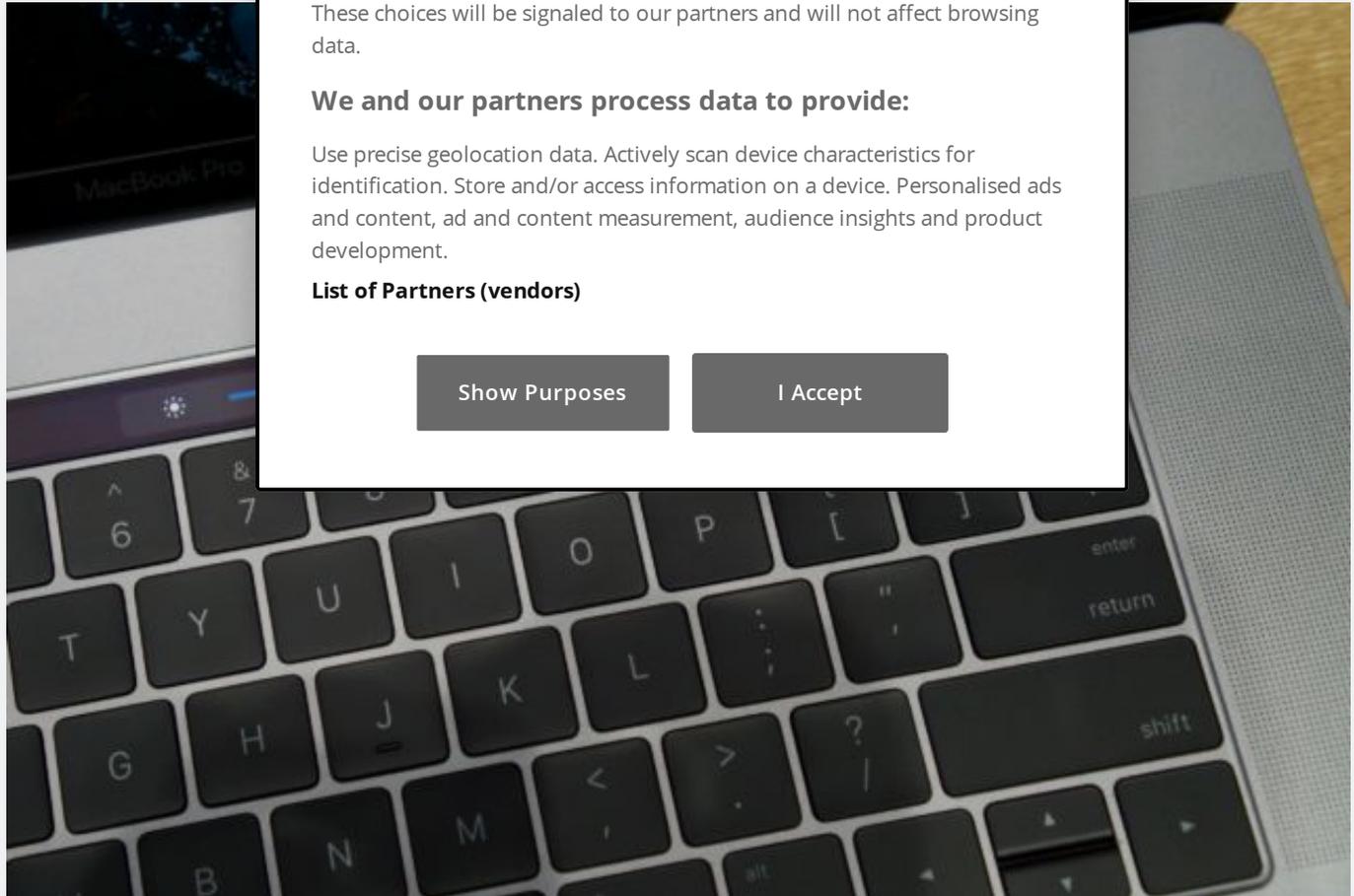
Announced to coincide with CES 2022 this week, the XPS 13 Plus (9320) will be available globally this spring with [Windows 11](#) or Ubuntu 20.04 (XPS 13 Plus Developer Edition). Dell hasn't settled on a starting price yet but told the press it's "targeting" \$1,199.99 in the US. That's a notable bump from the current non-Plus XPS, which starts at [\\$850](#) (that configuration was out of stock on Dell's website as of writing. The next cheapest available SKU starts at [\\$950](#)). Dell said it will confirm the XPS 13 Plus' price closer to the shipping date.

One look at the XPS 13 Plus and you can tell that it offers a different experience than the prior XPS 13. The machine's keyboard stretches across the entire deck with no space between individual keys. The touchpad isn't outlined with a border or completed with left- and right-click keys, and it responds with haptic feedback. And rather than topping the keyboard with a row of function keys, the XPS 13 Plus

has an Apple Touch Bar-like capacitive touch strip that you can toggle to show function-row inputs or media functions.

## Capacitive touch function row

The Touch Bar was the top row of physical inputs, including app



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[Enlarge](#) / Apple Touch Bar.

The **2021 MacBook Pro** did away with the Touch Bar, but the XPS 13 Plus brings back the concept with a more stripped-down approach. Like prior-gen MacBooks, the XPS 13 Plus has a capacitive touch strip in place of a function row with physical keys. It doesn't change based on app, and, unfortunately, it isn't programmable (you also can't turn it off). Instead, by pressing Fn and Esc, you can make it display one of two sets of menus:

- Esc, F1-F12, a
- Esc, volume r  
display bright  
End, Insert, a

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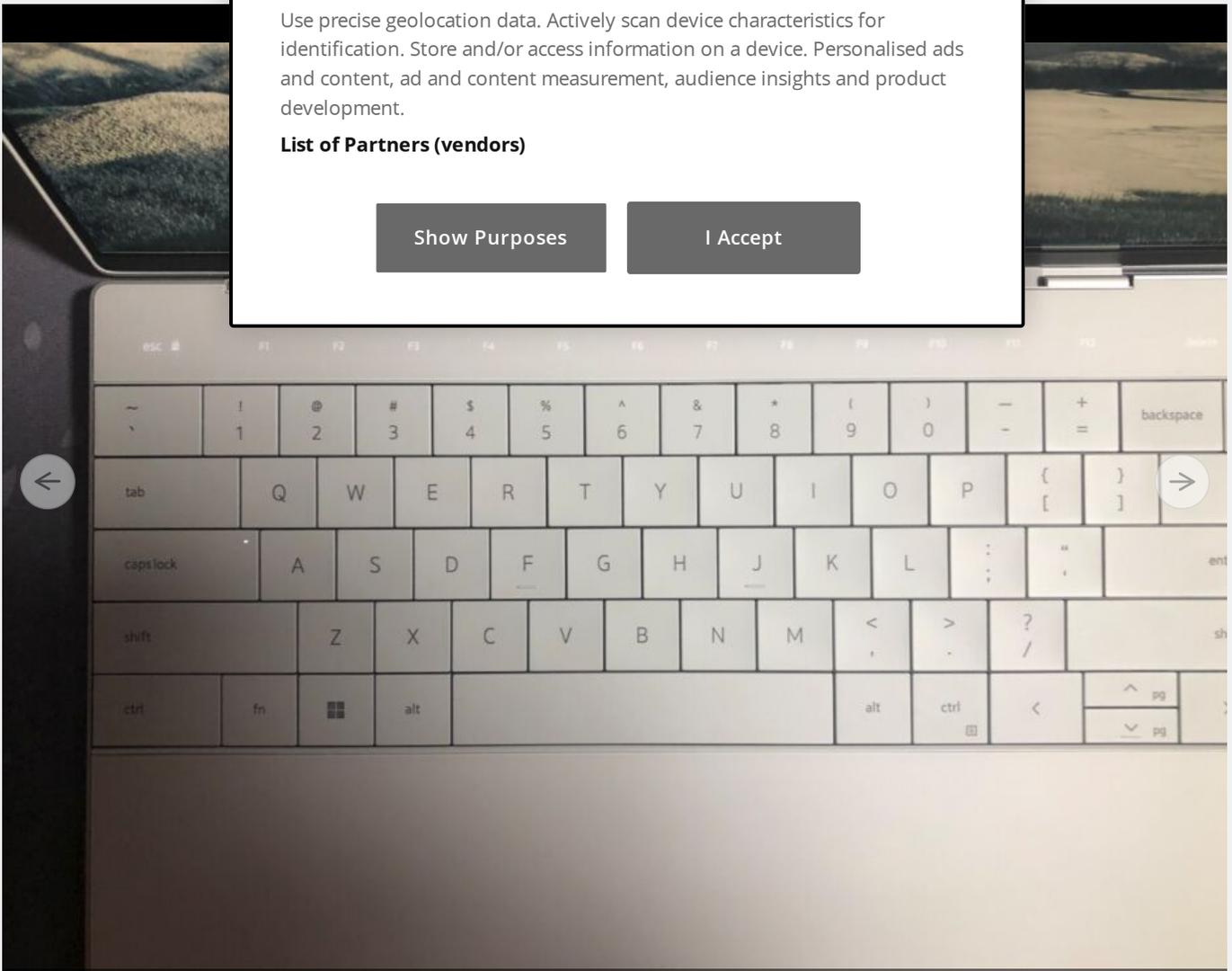
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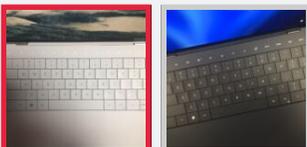
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rightness,  
Screen, Home,



Function row.

Scharon Hardi



Locking my menu of choice in place was easy, but having to hold down two keys in order to see one of two lists of inputs didn't feel intuitive in my short time with the XPS 13 Plus. Maybe I would get accustomed to it over time, but I don't typically need an adjustment period to use my laptop's function or media keys, especially on a mainstream-level system like an XPS laptop. The fact that the keys use touch to work rather than pressing a button made the experience even more unnatural.

That said, I'm sure that the unique tech has a way of becoming a

Besides the touch-sensitive deck, thanks to its 11 years and told me that

In addition to numerous scissor mechanism and a dish of 0.3 mm, the

The current XPS 13 Plus still be usable for functions make the keyboard pressed the keys, I

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This wacky new keyboard with its touch function row may feel like a gimmick, but it also serves a functional purpose. Removing the physical function row was one step in the path to the XPS holding a 28 W CPU rather than a 15 W one.

## Power

Skipping a physical function row gives the XPS 13 Plus more thermal headroom to work with than the standard XPS 13, allowing Dell to use a 28 W CPU rather

### SPECS AT A GLANCE: DELL XPS 13 PLUS

	Worst	Best
<b>Screen</b>	13.4-inch 1920×1200 non-touch	13.4-inch 3840×2400 touchscreen
<b>OS</b>	Windows 11 Home, Windows 11 Pro, or Ubuntu 20.04 (XPS 13 Plus Developer Edition)	

than 15 W while maintaining a similarly sized build. The XPS 13 Plus is 0.60 inch (15.28 mm) thick and has a starting weight of 2.73 lbs (1.24 kg). The current XPS 13 starts at 0.62 inches (15.8 mm) and 2.6 lbs (1.16 kg).

Additionally, Dell re and thicker, protr today's XPS 13 in o space for heat to di the glass cover on t which includes a 34 option, to keep the "improve clarity," a

<b>CPU</b>	Intel Core i5-1240P	Intel Core i7-1280P
<b>RAM</b>	8GB LPDDR5-5200	32GB LPDDR5-5200
<b>Storage</b>	256GB PCIe 3.0 x4 SSD	2TB PCIe 4.0 x4 SSD
<b>GPU</b>	Intel Iris Xe (integrated)	

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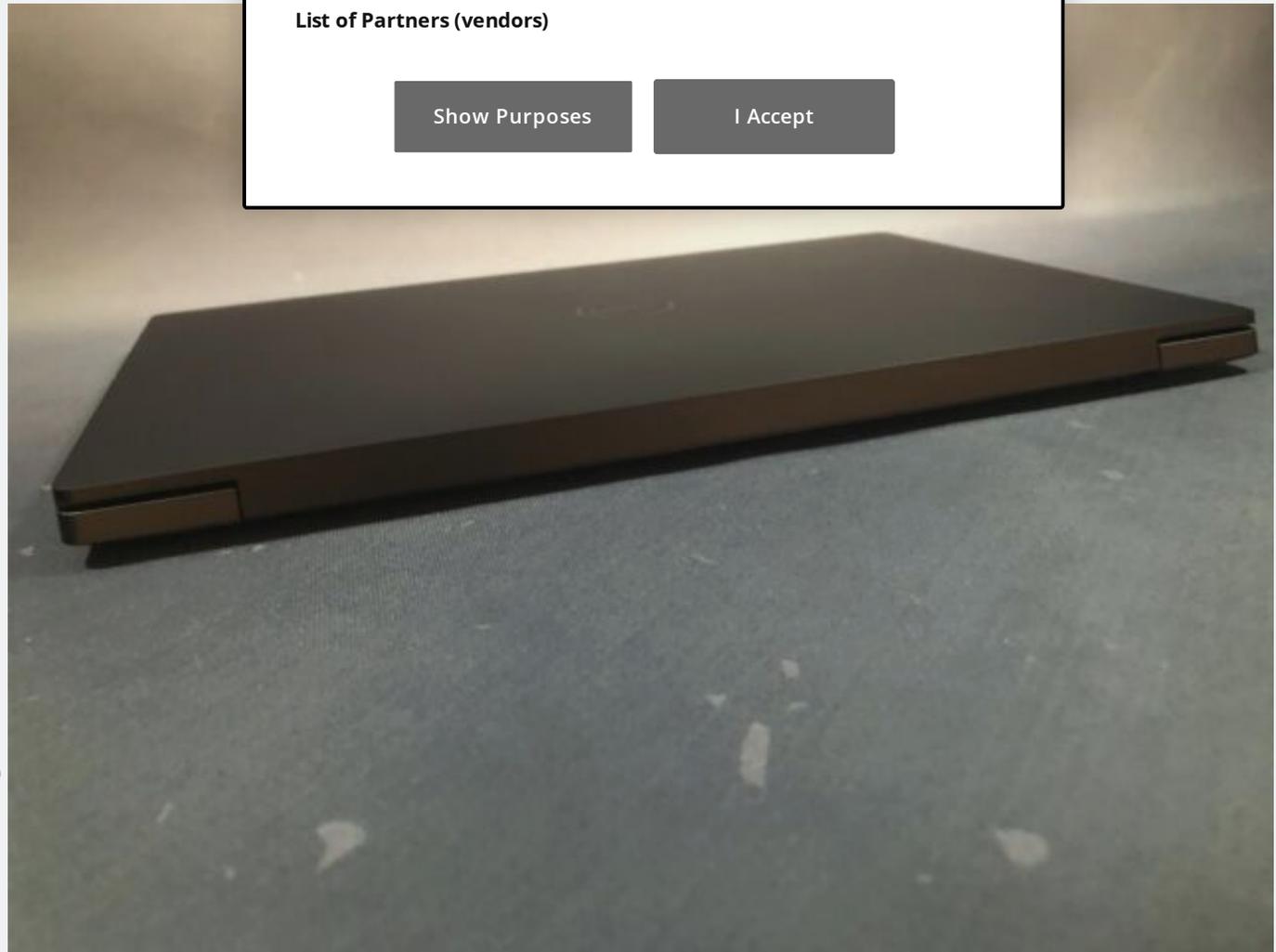
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**Enlarge** / Despite claiming more power, the XPS 13 Plus (pictured) is about as thick as the non-Plus XPS 13.

According to Dell, the machine has a larger pair of fans than its predecessor. They stretch out to the deck's outer edges, and with a heat spreader in the back, Dell claims the XPS 13 Plus provides up to 55 percent more airflow than the XPS 13 "without increasing noise."

The XPS 13 Plus starts with a 12-core Intel Core i5-1240P, up to a 4.4 GHz turbo speed, and 12MB of cache. Its highest-end configuration has an i7-1280P with 12 cores, a 4.8 GHz turbo, and 24MB of cache. It can also support up to 32GB of LPDDR5-5200 RAM and 2TB of PCIe 4.0 x4 SSD storage.

For comparison, the current XPS 13 goes up to an i7-1195G7 with four cores (albeit different cores than what's used with the Plus). You can configure it with up to 32GB of RAM and 2TB of storage.

I didn't get a chance to see the thin-and-light configuration out of relatively better

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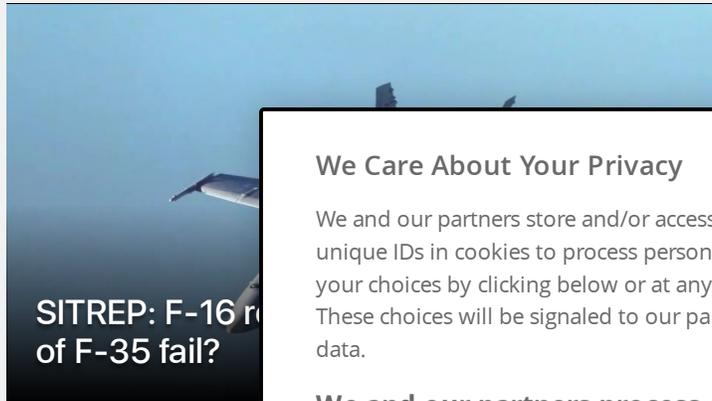


### SCHARON HARDING

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