Dell XPS 18 Upgrade to mSATA SSD
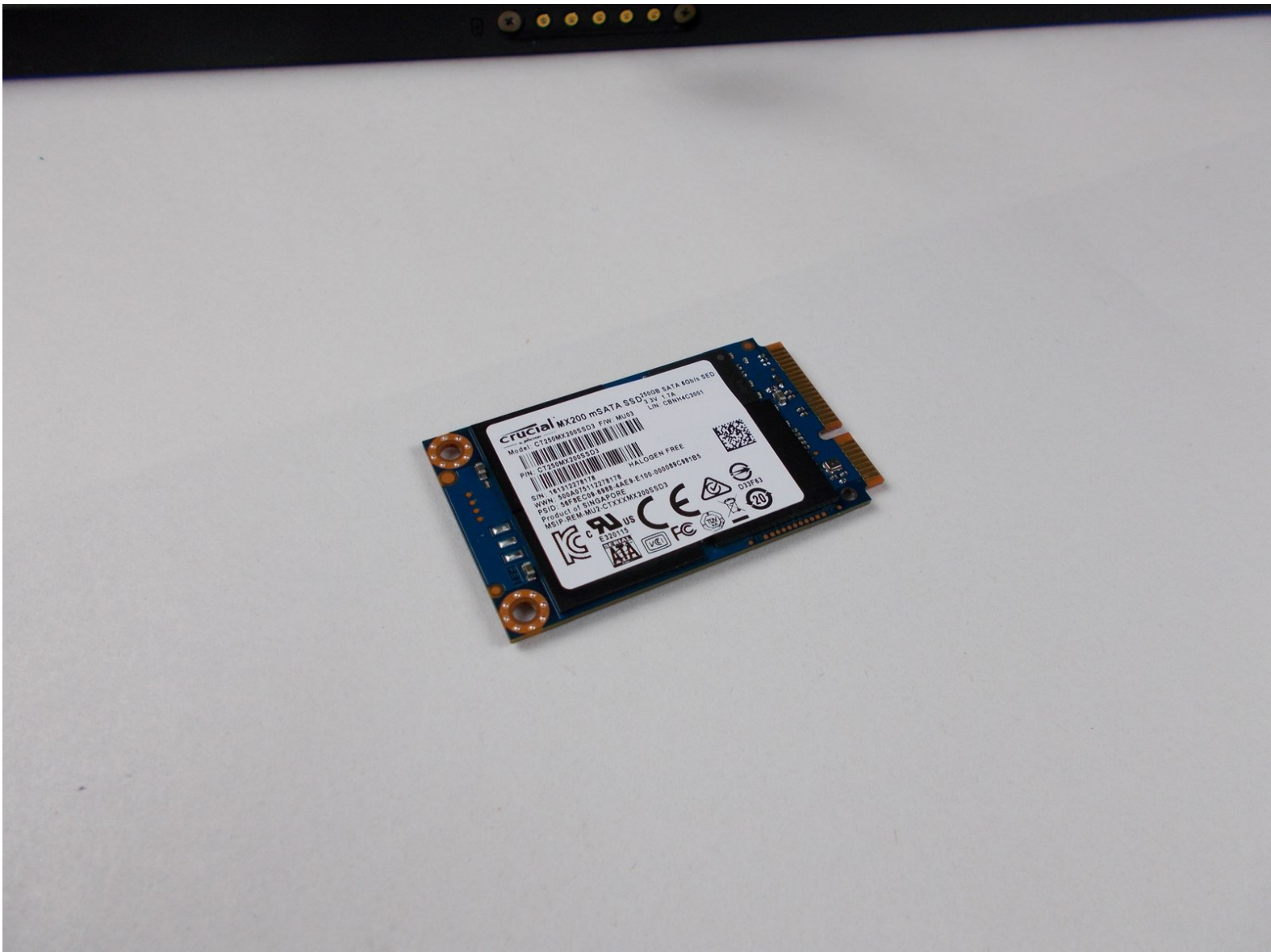
Install an mSATA to improve your XPS 18's performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Pull the slow HDD from the Dell XPS 18 and install an mSATA SSD to really speed it up!

TOOLS:

- T8 Torx Screwdriver (1)
- Phillips #0 Screwdriver (1)

PARTS:

- m.2 SSD (1)
- Spudger (1)
- M2x3 phillips head screws (2)

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Step 1 — HDD/SSD

- There are ten screws around the perimeter, circled in red in the second photo. Use a **T8 Torx bit** to remove these, and set them aside, we'll need them when we're done!

- Place your XPS 18 face down on a flat surface. You may want to put a protective surface down such as a towel, microfiber cloth, etc., to make sure your screen doesn't get scratched. I'm using blank newsprint paper which also works great to give us a nice light background for the photos!

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Step 2 — Remove back panel
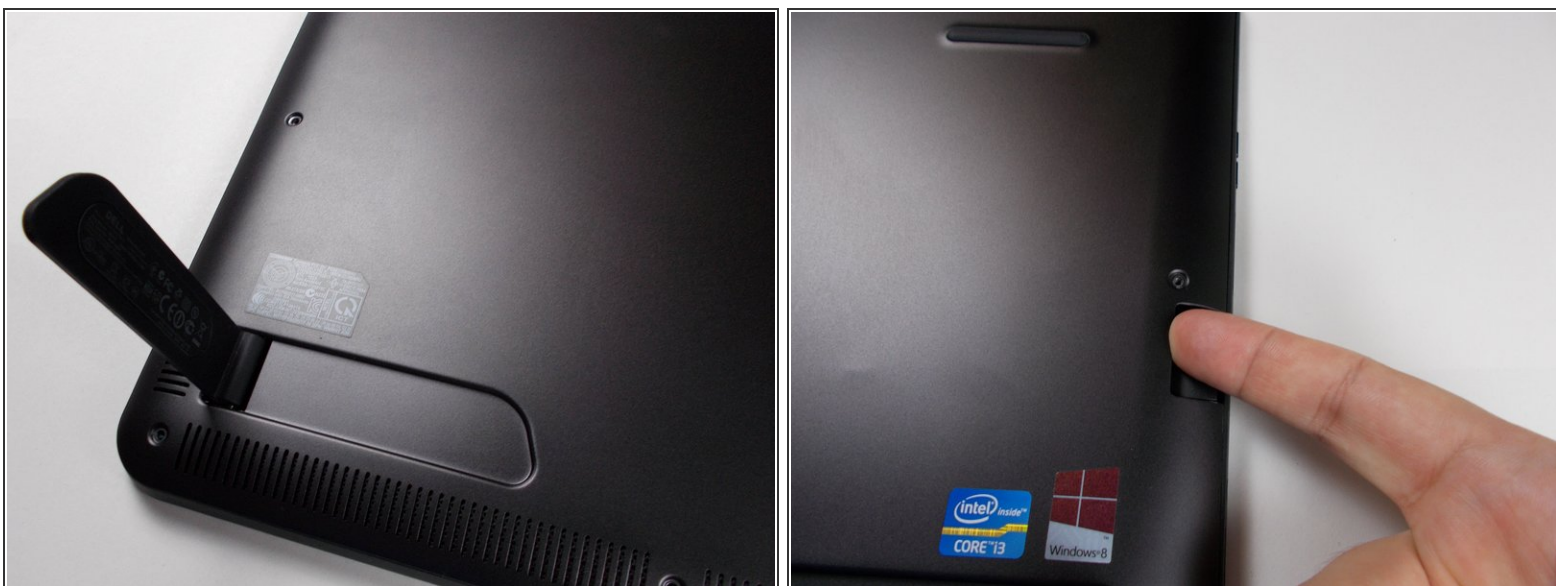
- There are two feet/legs that fold out from the back. These are attached inside the unit, so fold them out before proceeding. You won't be able to remove the back panel if they're folded in.

- There is a door on the right side that pushes in to allow access to the SD card port. This is a perfect place to insert your finger to get a good hold on the back panel. Use a finger to pull straight away from the unit to lift off the rear panel. It may stick a little but it will pull right off easily.

Step 3 — Unscrew the HDD caddy
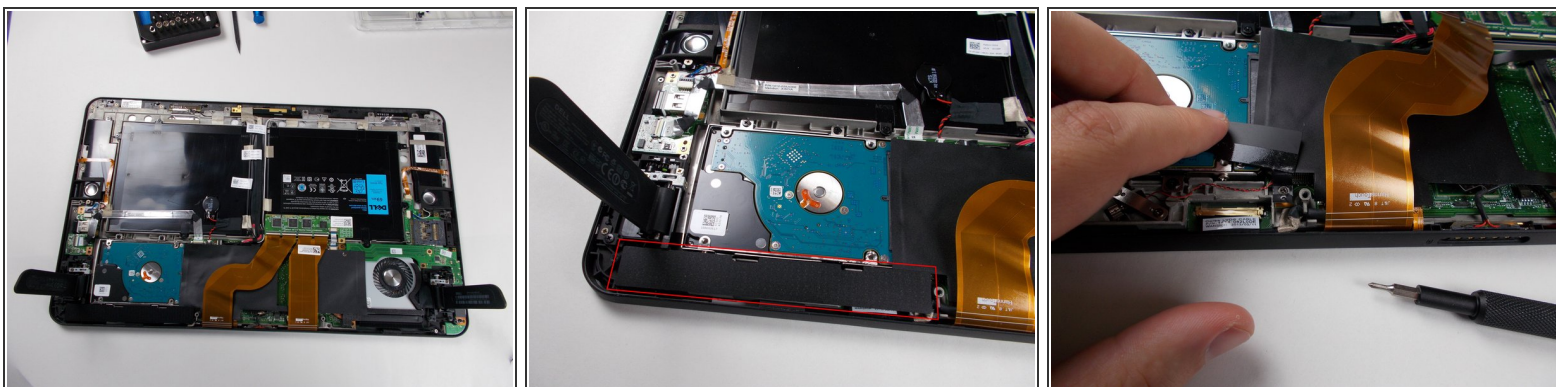
- The internals are revealed!

- There is a narrow plastic strip that covers the haptic motor, some connectors, etc. Carefully peel it up and set it aside until you're ready to close up the unit.

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Step 4 — Remove the HDD caddy
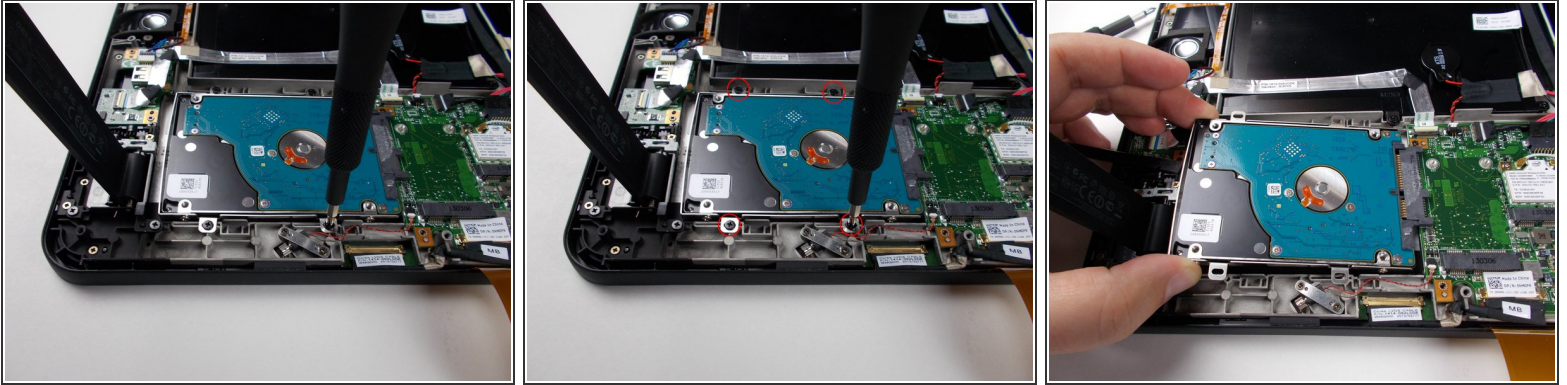
- There are four Phillips screws here. Use the #0 phillips screwdriver to remove these.

- Lift up the end of the drive opposite the connector slightly and pull the drive away from the connector. It will slide right out!

## Step 5 — Remove the HDD from the caddy and install the SATA SSD
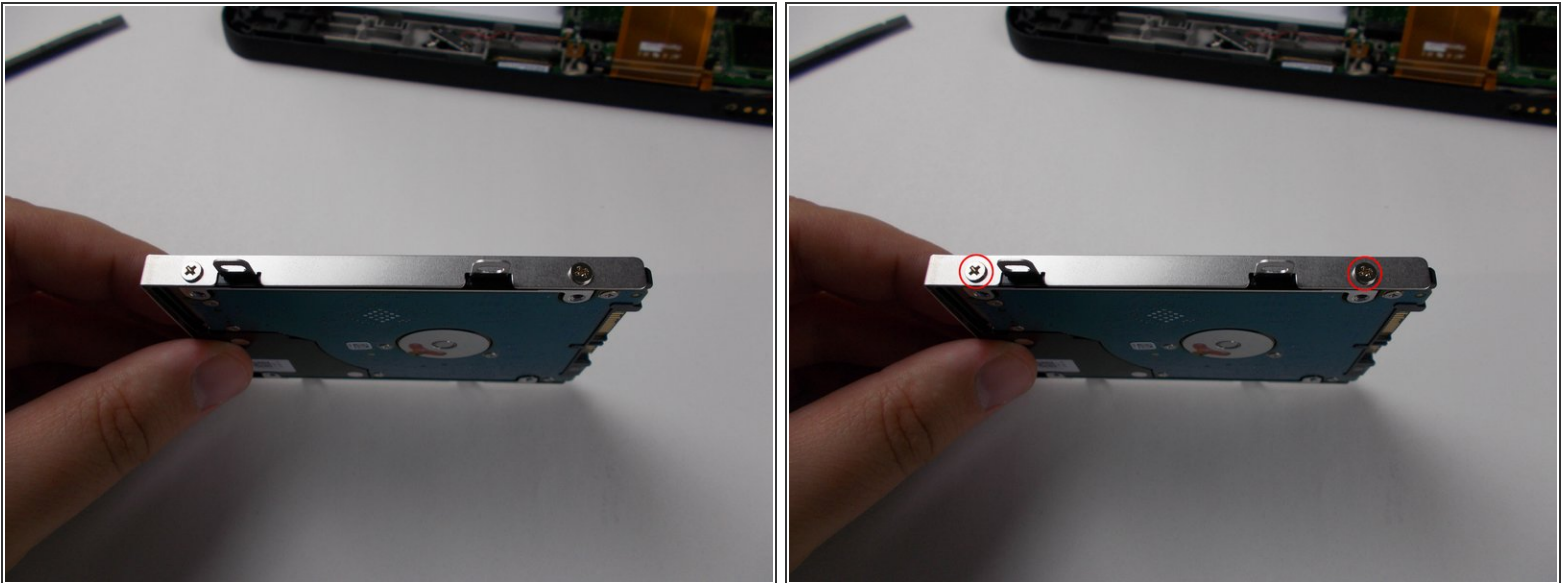
- There are four phillips head screws, two on each side. Use the #0 driver to remove these and set them aside.

- At this point if you're installing a SATA SSD, slip it in the caddy, screw it in, and go backwards through the steps to button everything back up.

Step 6 — Secure the HDD screws
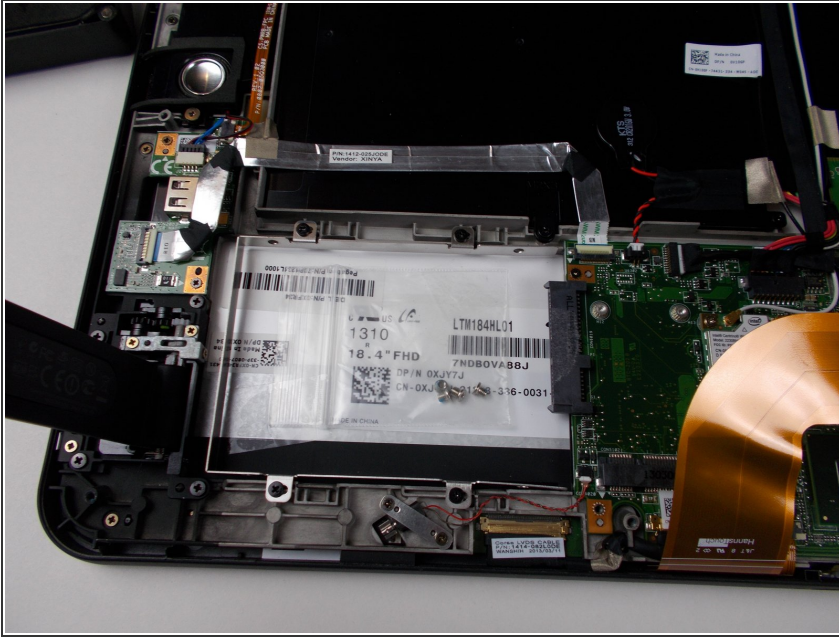
- I'm installing an mSATA SSD in mine, so I put these screws in a small plastic bag, taped them in the empty space the HDD occupied, and screwed the caddy back into place.

Step 7 — Unclip the touch display cables
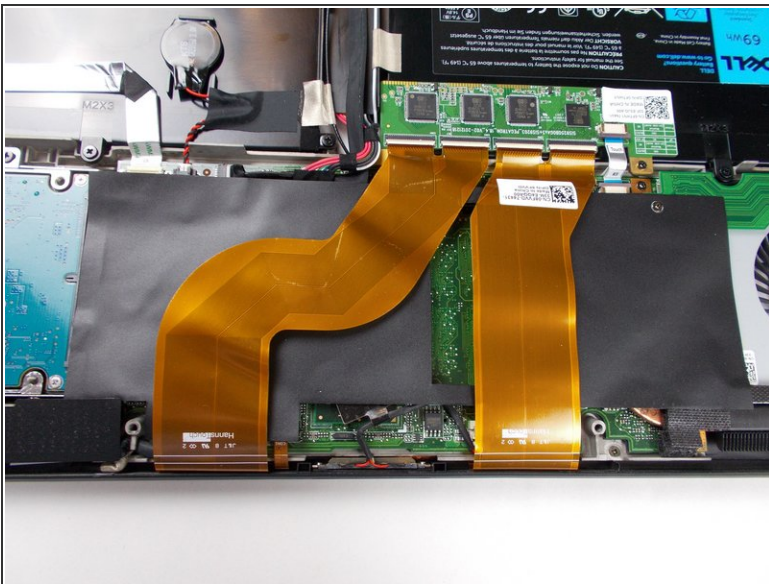
- To access the mSATA and RAM slots we have to unclip the touch display cables and remove a plastic insulating sheet. It's easier than it sounds!

- Use the pointy end of the spudger to flip the compression clips up to release the cables.

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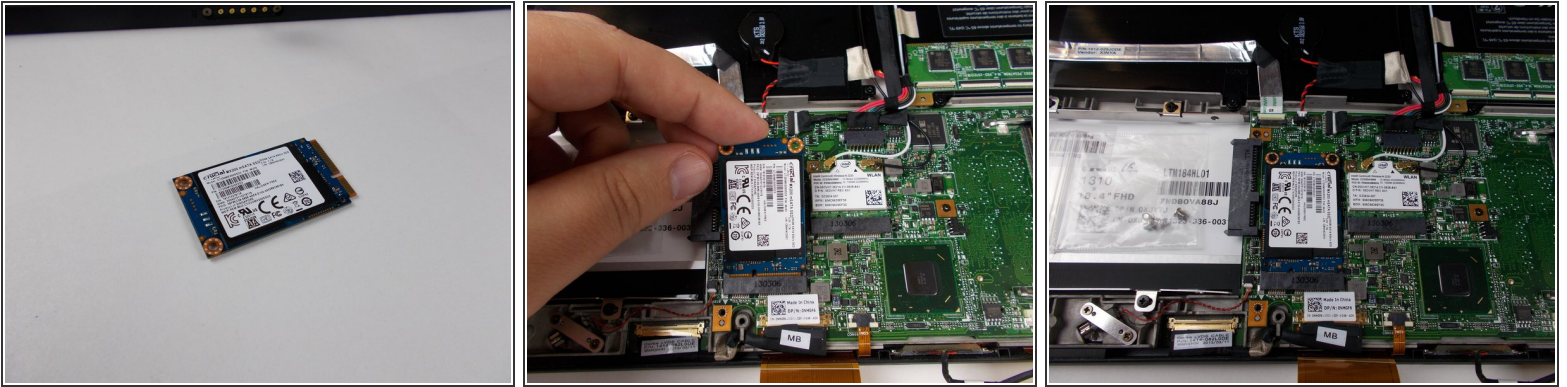
Step 8 — Don't be nervous!

- It's really easy to undo these clips.

## Step 9 — Unscrew the grounded plastic shield
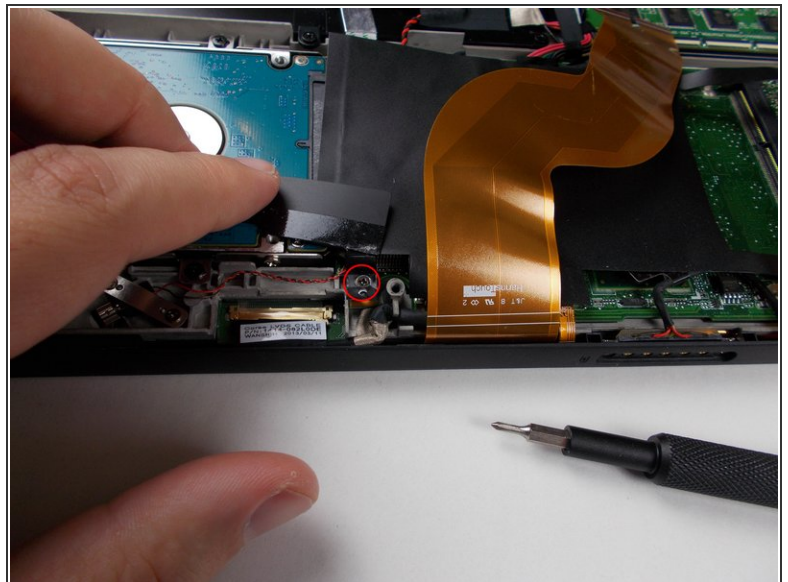
- There are two screws that hold this plastic sheet down because it's also a grounded shield. Use the #0 screwdriver to unscrew the screws shown in these photos.

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Step 10 — Install the M.2 SSD

- I had a 256GB mSATA SSD from a laptop upgrade a few months ago. It's perfect for this XPS 18!

- Insert the mSATA SSD into the slot. It's keyed so you can only insert it one way.

- Secure it with two M2x3mm phillips head screws.

Step 11 — Secure the plastic shield and the touch screen cables
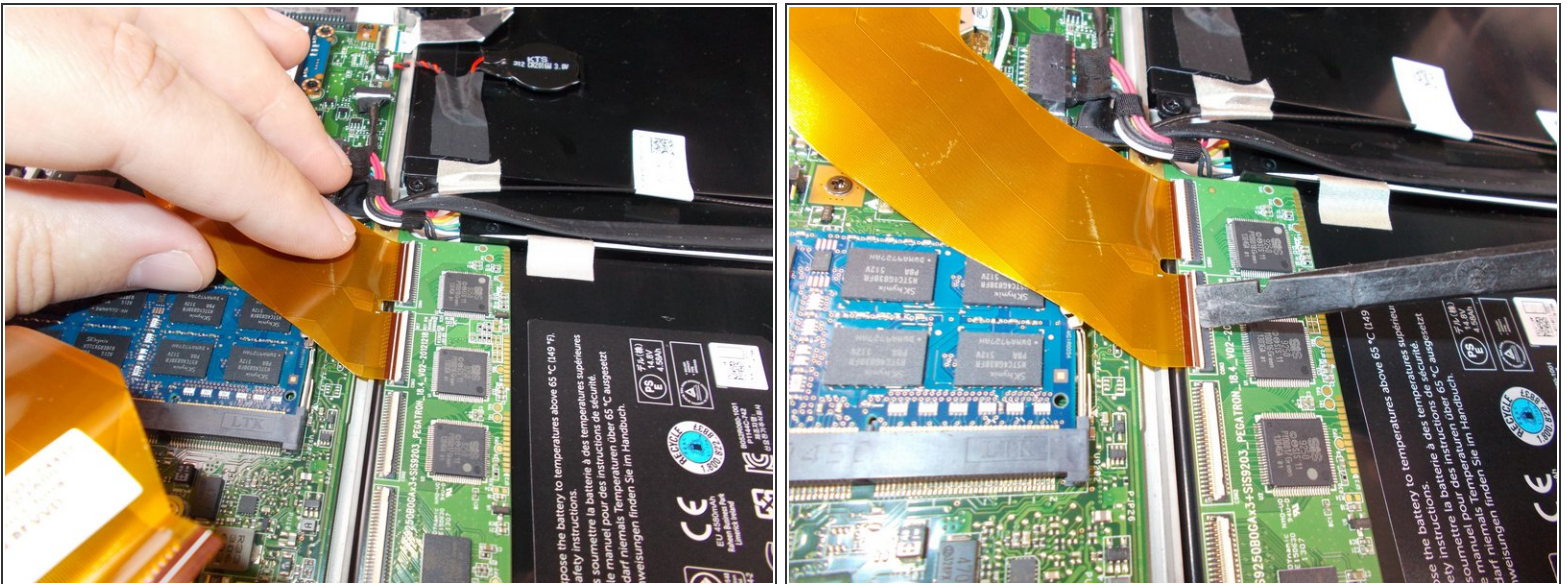
- Screw the plastic shield back down.

- Slip the connector ends of the flat cables back into their slots and use the flat end of the spudger to flip the clips back down.

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To reassemble your device, follow these instructions in reverse order.

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