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Asus ET2702 All-in-One PC

The host with the most



BlackBerry Q10

QWERTY saviour?



Samsung NX300

The need for speed at 8.6 fps





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August's Top 3

It's not often that one can brag about three new happenings, but this August we can do just that. If you head over to www.techsmart.co.za you'll find a completely redesigned website that in our opinion is a lot easier to read and navigate. Let's face it, it was long overdue, so please have a browse for daily news and reviews and let me know what you think.

On the new site you will also find a shop front where you will be able to buy new notebooks and smartphones. We've teamed up with LivDigital who will be powering the shop; supplying the products and taking care of delivery and customer service. In a way, this is putting our money where our mouth is, since we've always believed the magazine and the website to be effective advertising mediums. Once again, please point your browser over to www.techsmart.co.za/shop and have a look, you're sure to find something good (and at a decent price).

Lastly, TechSmart readers living in far away in corners of South Africa will be happy to learn about our new distribution deal with Matrix Warehouse Computers. The PC retailer is well known for its shops in some of SA's smaller towns, and TechSmart magazine will now be available in these stores each month, as always for free. Have a look at p28 to see where shops are located.

May the Force be with you,
Mike (michael@techsmart.co.za)



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MOOC, e-learning, tablets in schools and eboards - education has come a long way since the start of the internet. To find out how far, read here.

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With awesome retro styling and handling that will put certain DSLRs to shame, can Fujifilm's super compact - the X20 - make an impact locally?

22 Top 5 premium hatchbacks

With plenty of onboard tech, safety features, sublime styling and a dash of sportiness to boot, here are our top 5 premium hatchbacks.

32 Deadpool

Deadpool is not your regular superhero, so why think the video game would come close to being 'normal'? Read here what we think of the Merc with a Mouth.



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Editor print & online
Mike Joubert
michael@techsmart.co.za

Advertising
Agencies: Karien Steenkamp > 083-748-3413;
karien@smartpublishing.co.za
Directory: Predeshan Reddy > 079-515-8708;
predeshan@smartpublishing.co.za

Contributors
Mike Joubert [MJ], Hanleigh Daniels [HD],
Ryan Noik [RN], Linda Pretorius [LP],
Ismail Fadal [IF]
Designer: Brett Wilson
Accounts & subscriptions
Ronel Keet > 012-342-5141
accounts@techsmart.co.za
Distribution queries: liam@smartpublishing.co.za

Smart Publishing
General manager
Anneke Claassen
anneke@smartpublishing.co.za
Business manager
George Grobler > george@smartpublishing.co.za
Print media manager
Suzanne van Niekerk
suzanne@smartpublishing.co.za



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Top Tech Titbits



Apple found guilty of collusion

Apple has been found guilty of colluding to 'fix' ebook prices in an antitrust lawsuit that left it coming off second best. The company was first accused by the Department of Justice of conspiring with several notable publishers in the US early last year of trying to drive up ebook prices to the detriment of general users.



Microsoft wants to divulge NSA involvement

Also battling with government is Microsoft, which has appealed to the US Attorney General to enable it to divulge the full extent to which it cooperated with the NSA and specific reasons for doing so. Prompting Redmond is a not too flattering report in the *Guardian* which asserted that the company had allowed intelligence services to intercept communication, also circumventing the company's own encryption services.



Cell C puts more money where your mouth is

Cell C announced two significant cash injections into the company, which hopefully should result in lower communication costs in South Africa. The first of these is a substantial \$350 million (R3.5 billion) influx from its majority shareholder, Oger Telecom. Cell C also secured a R2.2 billion loan from Nedbank and DBSA.

OpenView HD competitor to DStv announced

Another broadcast service, OpenView HD is set to grace viewers' TV screens, apparently offering between 12 and 20 channels when it becomes available in October. The service will not carry any subscription charges and will rival TopTV and MultiChoice for viewers' attention.

Internet connectivity gains, but still much to be done

According to internet content delivery company Akamai, while South Africa's internet connectivity speed has improved 16% in the last year, the country still falls far behind, at 80th in global rankings. In its *State of the Internet Report*, the country's average peak connection speeds were ranked at an even more depressing 126th.

iPad Mini with Retina display slated for next year

While an iPad Mini with a Retina display seems like a strong likelihood, this apparently might not happen in time for December, but will be pushed into 2014. Some expectations are pointing to a tablet upgrade with a faster processor and iOS 7 instead being unveiled before the year is done. ♣

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SAMSUNG

Hot New Products

Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG

If you want a large luxury barge that makes no compromises in terms of opulence or performance, then the forthcoming S63 AMG is just the ticket. Besides being based on the brand new S-class, arguably the most technologically advanced large executive sedan available, this car is powered by a 5.5-litre twin-turbo V8 that churns out 430 kW and a staggering 900 Nm of torque. All this power means a 4 second 0 to 100 km/h acceleration time for the AWD model, and 4.4 seconds for the rear-wheel-drive version. Overseas buyers will be able to get into the driver's seat at the end of this year, but local buyers will have to wait for 2014. No price is available yet.



RJ-Romain Steampunk Chrono

What do you buy for the ultimate Titanic fan? RJ-Romain watch company has the answer in its Steampunk Chrono wristwatch, which was designed in remembrance of the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. This mechanical self-winding timepiece boasts a polished steel bezel that contains metal from the wreck of the Titanic plus steel supplied by the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast where the Titanic was constructed. Only 99 units of the watch has been made, each priced at a budget sinking \$19 950.



Lexus F Sport Carbon Fibre Road bicycle

Lexus has created a limited edition bicycle series for riders who want to bring the same level of style and performance as found on the sublime Lexus LFA supercar to their daily cycle. The F Sport Carbon Fibre Road bicycle is made from the same carbon fibre reinforced plastic material as the body of the supercar that inspired it. Only 100 of these bikes are being constructed with each going for around \$10 000.



Ubuntu Edge smartphone/PC

Okay, so it might not be in production yet, but with sufficient backing on crowd-funding site Indiegogo, the Ubuntu Edge might just be soon. The 4.5" Edge is a smartphone that dual-boots both the Ubuntu phone OS and Android. Yet another smartphone you say, but connect this phone to a monitor and it transforms into

a fully functioning Ubuntu PC with an integrated desktop OS. Sounds cool, but it will take a spectacular effort for the project to reach its \$32 000 000 funding goal before the end of August. Donate here: bit.ly/edgeubu



Lego Back to the Future Timemachine set

In certainly the best news coming from the San Diego Comic Con, plastic brick/dreams maker, Lego, has announced the Back to the Future Time Machine set. Based on the incredibly popular movies starring Michael J. Fox as the time-travelling Marty McFly, it features such details as the Flux Capacitor and OUTATIME number plate. The set was entered into the Lego Cuusoo project which sees fans submit their own ideas from which Lego selects the best for actual production. The creators of the project, Masashi Togami and Minifig Builder Sakuretsu, will be donating their one percent of the total net sales of the product to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research. \$35.



Reebok Checklight headgear

Concussion while taking part in sport is a serious problem, especially in high impact activities such as American football or rugby. Reebok's new Checklight headgear measures and logs the impacts athletes receive and alerts trainers and parents to the impacts' severity. Reebok is quick to point out that the Checklight is not a concussion diagnostic tool, but rather an objective measurement of impact force meant to lead to further assessment. It retails for \$150 Stateside, with no local availability or price known yet.



\$10 000. Asking price for a PS4 ahead of its official release in November, on global auctioneering site Ebay.

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The changing face of education

The internet and the pervasiveness of an online, connected world have already changed a number of industries and sectors; and not being left behind is education, which seems to be undergoing a Renaissance of sorts.

Education's evolution in the digital age has a number of interesting facets, with e-learning already coming to the fore and establishing itself as a viable means of securing the knowledge, and in some cases, credentials, one needs to succeed.

However, e-learning's reach extends far further than merely offering up a plethora of courses online from the likes of Codecademy, or enabling students to access instructional videos or a variety of other teaching sites. Instead, it is changing how the approach to educating the masses as a whole is being perceived.

All together, learn

An example of this practise is the rise of massive open online courses (MOOC), which boasts an open access education model, through which a large number of students can simultaneously access course material and interact with instructors. This approach bears its notable similarities to massive multiplayer online games, which garner a global user base and easily transcend national and international boundaries.

What it means is that the physical problem of cramming enough desks into a single classroom becomes a moot point. MOOCs also have a hybrid financial model, with some courses, more informal in nature, being free to access, while others, leading to a formal qualification, requiring users to pay (as they would if they were doing a correspondence course).

What's even more interesting is that apparently the exploration of MOOCs has found its way into high schools as well, at least in the US for now. This highlights how widespread the trend can become. Also worth noting, however, is that schools, universities, institutions, and organisations can each create their own MOOC, ostensibly and hopefully to compete with each other, which may well drive prices down according to the law of supply and demand in the foreseeable future.

This would address another pervasive problem with education at present – namely

that of its accessibility to the broad public at large. In South Africa at least, this is still a very real problem that the implementation of MOOCs with the technology to support it could address, as children in rural areas struggle to get an education, or end up having to walk long distances to get to the nearest school.

Changes in the curriculum

Another example of how technology is reforming education is called digital curriculum. This entails a school's syllabus being made available to students via an internet-based programme, thus doing away with the need for textbooks entirely. While a trial run of this is currently underway in the US; it would certainly be a boon for impoverished schools in particular in South Africa as well, given the textbooks fiasco which still haunts.

However, while both of these trends may seem a little idealistic and are not yet implemented in full force, South Africa's move towards digitising education is already well underway. It was less than a year ago that Samsung unveiled its smart school solution in conjunction with Crawford Preparatory school in Benmore, which saw tablets replacing textbooks, interactive eBoards (whiteboards) putting the old blackboard to shame, while providing a digital platform for a single teacher to interact with multiple students, seamlessly.

To the point

Additionally, it should be noted that both Apple and Samsung have strong focuses on the education sector as a whole, which certainly cannot hurt as education is gently pulled out of the 20th century and into the metaphorical and technological light.

Whether it is the proliferation of MOOCs, the rise of more smart schools, the old paper-based textbooks being replaced with a more elegant solution, or a combination of all of the above, one thing is for certain: this shift is an exciting and welcome one which will change the face of education as we know it. [RN] ❧

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University of Pennsylvania, Aug 2014

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MOOC List

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MOOC List

www.mooc-list.com

MOOC List congregates a number of Massive Open Online Courses from across the globe, aimed at large-scale participation. If you are looking for a MOOC course to get busy with, this is the place to find one.



Khan Academy

www.khanacademy.org

The world renowned Khan Academy is a not-for-profit organisation tasked with delivering world-class, free online education, aimed mostly at high school students. As such the site's materials and resources on topics the likes of math, economics, world history etc. are available to users completely free of charge. Khan, whose videos are featured on YouTube, is great at explaining difficult topics simply and easily.



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Asus VivoBook S550

Asus' own Zenbook has certainly raised the bar in terms of what to expect from the company when it comes to notebooks and ultrabooks.



The question on our mind with its VivoBook range (budget friendly notebooks) is whether the company can stray from the exemplary Zenbook offerings and still deliver a well built, attractive and appealing notebook. Happily, with the VivoBook S550 ultrabook, the answer to that question is an easy, uncomplicated and resounding yes.

Show me what you've got

To start with, it certainly looks like the kind of notebook you would want to own, with a smart black cover that reveals a brushed aluminium interior. This well implemented combination of black and silver lends the S550 a classy air. The ultrabook is also solid, betraying no creaking or flex on its base.

An all-rounder notebook that will likely find its appeal amongst the midmarket end user.

The touchscreen, while being a bit too reflective for our liking, was bright, sharp and offered plenty of contrast for making movies and images stand out. The screen sports a middling 1366 x 768 resolution, which is ok, although quite honestly we feel the S550 would have been better served with some HD treatment or at least a higher resolution.

The proof is in the performance

When it came to performance, the S550 certainly blurred the boundaries between ultrabook and notebook, and we actually felt it was more the latter than the former.

The VivoBook S550 sports an Intel Core i5 dual-core processor (3317U) clocked at 1.7 GHz, which unsurprisingly, resulted in all round, general very good performance. Helping things along is the onboard 6 GB of memory, while graphics are served by the integrated Intel HD 4000. Storage is taken care of by up to a 750 GB hard drive, with the OS being relegated to a 20 GB SSD in our review model. The latter accounted for quick startup times, while the former enables more media storage than you would receive from even a higher-capacity SSD.

Is this space taken?

Moving on though, that other 'key component' of a notebook, its keyboard was quite nice on the S550 and certainly felt inviting to work on. A lovely spacious palmrest area and a generously sized – and responsive – trackpad dominated the notebook's base. The chiclet keyboard though, exhibited a noticeably shallow press. That being said, we had no problems typing on the machine, nor did we find our fingers inadvertently and accidentally straying to neighbouring keys.

Minor details

Also onboard was an optical drive as well as the usual smattering of ports, which included a USB 3.0 port, two USB 2.0 ports, an HDMI and a VGA port. While it weighed in at 2.6 kg, not exactly feather-light, it was still not unbearably heavy either. The sound on offer here is actually very good – we had no problems playing movies or music at maximum volume and hearing each word distinctly, with no distortion.

To the point

In many ways the Asus VivoBook S550 balances positives with negatives, to deliver an all-rounder ultrabook that will likely find its appeal amongst the midmarket end user, who is similarly doing a balancing act of their own, taking into account cost as well as performance.

True, it is not as high-end as the excellent Zenbook, but nor does it carry the same price (R22 000 plus). And, while its battery life tops at around the three-and-half hour mark, it's likely intended to alternate between being on the road and sitting plugged in at a desk. While we may take issue with it calling itself an ultrabook, that is of little consequence; this is not the thinnest, lightest or smallest offering available, nor is it meant to be.

What it is though, is a worthy consideration for someone seeking a Windows 8 notebook that values build quality and general performance, while being able to overlook some minor niggles. It has a RRP of R9 000. [RN] •

ASUS recommends Windows 8.



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ET2702



ET2311



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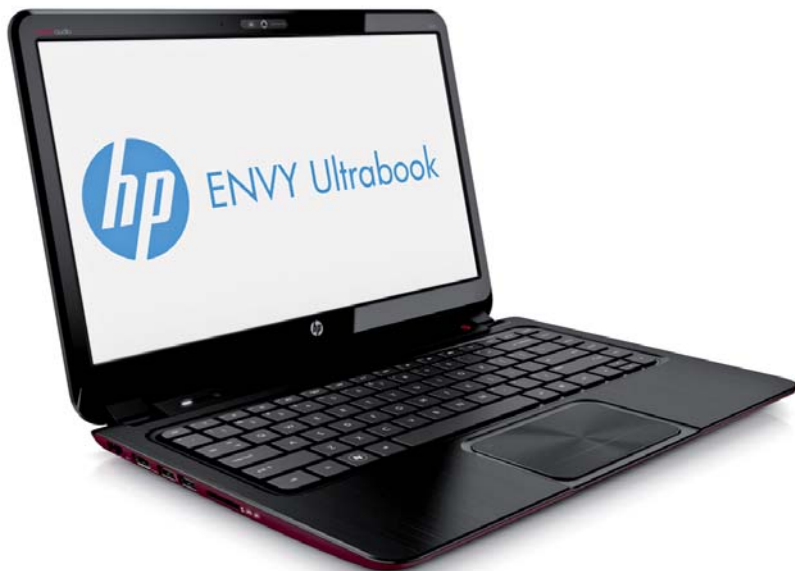
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HP Envy 4

While the Envy X2 sought to meld the tablet and PC worlds, the Envy 4 is a valuable reminder of what ultrabooks were prior to the push for notebook/tablet hybrids.

While the consensus might be that the latest is the greatest, this is not always the case. Indeed, the Envy 4 is a case in point of an ultrabook that opted for delivering a solid, rather than dramatically different, computing experience. The result is that the experience on offer here serves as a great reminder of what we loved about the pre-Windows 8 generation.

As we expected from HP, the build quality didn't disappoint.

As you may have gathered, the ultrabook does not boast Windows 8 or a touchscreen, instead serving up some familiar specifications. These include an Intel Core i5 (3317U) CPU clocked at 1.7 GHz, 4 GB of memory, a 500 GB hard drive and three USB ports, two of which are USB 3.0, along with an HDMI port and SD card reader.

Screen dreams

However, what made the biggest impression as compared with some of the latter touchscreen notebooks, is the colour saturation and sharpness on the Envy 4's screen. Despite the fact that it boasted a middling 1366 x 768 resolution, on this 14" screen, it was sufficient to receive a very good image, and the rich colour saturation (which we generally love) was outstanding. This, combined with the clear and loud sound, courtesy of Beats, made watching movies on the Envy X4 a treat.

Also, as we expected from HP, the build quality didn't disappoint. Adding to this was the overall slick design of the notebook, while its thin 20 mm profile also lent it a good degree of portability. Further winning our approval was the comfortable chiclet keyboard, with keys that offered just enough depth and full sized keys. The one element that we weren't a fan of though was the trackpad, which was overly smooth for our liking and felt a bit too small, and thus cramped.

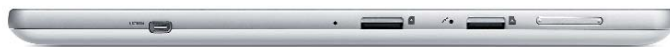
To the point

In essence though, the Envy 4 is a welcome ultrabook that complemented a solid frame with equally as strong all-round performance, and is a timely reminder of when computing was elegant rather than (sometimes) annoying. It has a RRP of R8 700 [RN] 🍀



Acer Iconia A1 – first impressions

After the recent introduction of the cost-price Iconia B1 tablet, Acer has launched another Android tablet in South Africa – the mid-range A1.



The Iconia A1 is a 7.9" device aimed at the mid-market and comes with Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean). At 11.1 mm it is not the thinnest tablet available (for that try the Sony Xperia Tablet Z at 6.9 mm) but also not the thickest. With an all plastic design the A1 doesn't quite have a premium feel to it, luckily not being flimsy either. Viewing angles on the screen is good thanks to IPS technology, but Acer keeps the pixel density at a rather low 163 due to its 768 x 1024 resolution. Still, it's the same as the popular iPad Mini.

What you find inside

Onboard is a quad-core processor running at 1.2 GHz per core, while making use of 1 GB of RAM. Users have a choice between 8 GB or 16 GB of onboard storage, with the added benefit of a microSD card slot to up the amount of storage by as much as 32 GB.

The 7.9" Acer Iconia A1 adds a reasonably priced device to the mini tablet space.

Joining the microSD card port on the sides are a micro USB port and a mini HDMI port. The Taiwanese company claims seven hours of battery life with the non-removable Li-Ion 4960 mAh battery. The A1 is rounded off by a 5 MP camera with 1080p video capabilities, a VGA front-facing camera, Bluetooth 4.0 and Wi-Fi 802.11 n.

Acer adds Touch WakeApp to the mix, an interesting way to access your favourite apps directly from sleep mode by pressing five fingers on the screen or two thumbs.

To the point

8" tablets are hot right now, and our opinion is that the more options the better. The 7.9" Acer Iconia A1 adds a reasonably priced device to the mini tablet space dominated by the iPad Mini, the Nexus 7 and the Galaxy Note 8.

The Acer Iconia A1 is set to retail for R3 500 for the 8 GB version, and R4 000 for the 16 GB unit. Both will be Wi-Fi and 3G enabled and are set to become available in mid-August. 🍀

Asus ET2702 All-in-One PC

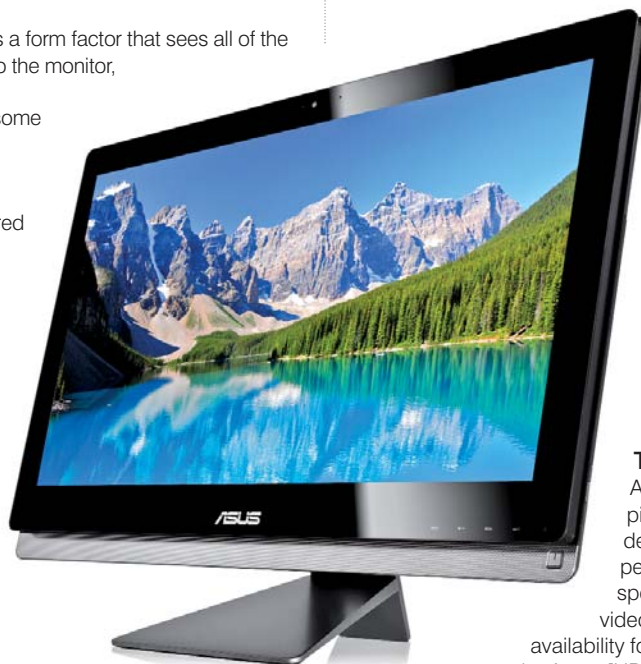
Ultrabooks and tablets are the kings of portable computing, but desktop PCs still have a role to play when it comes to office productivity, multimedia consumption and desktop publishing.

Asus' ET2702 All-in-One (AIO) PC boasts a form factor that sees all of the processing components built straight into the monitor, culminating in an eye-catching desktop workstation that allows users to reclaim some desk real estate.

Beautiful to behold

The centrepiece of the Windows 8 powered AIO's design is a stunning 27" touch-enabled display that boasts a delectable 2560 x 1440 screen resolution. We found this resolution to be a real treat when viewing full HD movies, sample UHD (4K) videos and high resolution pictures on this large touchscreen.

Seeing that it is an IPS display, the viewing angles are excellent (178° wide). The touchscreen is also highly responsive to multi touch input, making it easy to navigate the metro UI segment of Windows 8. Asus also includes a wireless keyboard and mouse with the PC, with the former delivering a pleasant typing experience thanks to well spaced keys.



Capable processing muscle

Under the bonnet of our ET2702 test unit resides an Intel Core i7 4770 (4th generation, Haswell) CPU that runs at 3.4 GHz, which is coupled with 16 GB of DDR3 RAM. This not only allows for a buttery smooth and snappy experience within Windows 8, but also delivered some of the best benchmarking scores of any PC we have recently tested. Within graphic intensive benchmarks like Heaven Benchmark 2.0 the ET2702 also excelled thanks to packing a dedicated GPU in the form of AMD's Radeon HD8880A which features 2 GB RAM.

The ET2702 provided the best benchmarking scores of any PC we have recently tested.

The ET2702 also sports a 1 TB 7200 RPM HDD, Blu-Ray combo drive, 2 MP front-facing snapper for video calls over Skype, plus a plethora of connectivity options including HDMI in and out, Wi-Fi 802.11 AC, Bluetooth 4.0, Gigabit LAN, four USB 3.0 ports, two USB 2.0 slots, and 3-in-1 card reader.

To the point

Asus' ET2702 AIO PC makes for a stunning piece of industrial design that sports a delectable touchscreen and impressive performance thanks to some class leading specs. It is ideal for graphic design and video production. Pricing, final specs and local availability for the ET2702 AIO is yet to be determined by Asus. [HD]



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Sony Xperia V

Sony has a good thing going with its latest devices. We've seen it with the Xperia Z and Tablet Z, now it's going mid-range via the V.

It's interesting to note how fast smartphones progress. When we benchmarked the Samsung Galaxy S3 in Smartbench 2012 last year, it managed a very impressive 4064 and 1606 in the Performance and Gaming index respectively. The new mid-range Sony Xperia V averaged a better score (3495 and 2936) than the S3, one of the leading flagships of last year.

The Sony Xperia V comes close to the mid-range bulls-eye.

This is testament to the fact that mid-range phones in many instances hit the sweet spot when weighing up functionality vs. price. In our opinion, the Sony Xperia V with its RRP of R5 500 comes close to the bulls-eye, also containing LTE connectivity for superfast downloads.

A lot onboard

Powering the phone is Qualcomm's Snapdragon S4 Plus processor running at 1.5 GHz on each of the two cores, teamed with 1 GB of RAM. Sony includes 8 GB of onboard storage, which we would recommend expanding via microSD card (up to 32 GB). Just like the Xperia Z and Tablet Z, the Xperia V is also water- and dustproof, with the company claiming it can be submerged in one metre of water for up to 30 minutes. We love this, seeing that we've succumbed to waterlogged smartphones in the past.

As far as size is concerned, the Xperia V is neither too big nor too small. The 4.3" (720 x 1280, 342 ppi) will do just fine in most cases, catering to those for whom 5" is simply too much or for whom the 4" on offer on the iPhone 5 is too little.

To the point

The specs and waterproofing of the Xperia V make it very difficult to fault this phone. We might mention that Sony includes the Android navigation buttons (Back, Home and Running apps) in the screen itself, effectively eating into the 4.3" screen real estate on offer; or that the 13 megapixel camera's lens is not as wide as we would have liked (it is fast at f2.4 though). But for now we think the Sony Xperia V is one of the best midrange phones on the market. [MJ] ❖



BlackBerry Q10

Unlike the full touch Z10, BlackBerry's Q10 aims to appeal to the company's traditional user base and QWERTY fans alike, offering a modern platform within a tried-and-tested design.

Like the old Bold range, the new BlackBerry 10.1 powered Q10 (119.6 x 66.8 x 10.4 mm; 139 g) offers a touch and type experience, courtesy of its 3.1" (720 x 720; 328 ppi) Super AMOLED capacitive touchscreen and physical QWERTY keyboard. This display's resolution is not up to par with the full HD display on newer phones and the limited screen size means that viewing videos and web browsing are not very pleasant.

The Q10 offers the classic form factor wrapped up in a more stylish package.

Powering the Q10 is a dual-core Qualcomm Snapdragon S4 processor running at 1.5 GHz, with the phone also sporting 2 GB RAM, an 8 megapixel autofocus rear-facing camera, and 2 MP fixed-focus front snapper. Users also get a decent 16 GB internal storage, which is expandable by up to 64 GB via the microSD card slot, plus LTE connectivity, NFC, Wi-Fi 802.11 n, and Bluetooth 4.0.

Touch and type on the go

The typing experience on the physical keyboard of the Q10 is top notch, proving fast and accurate. Since the Q10 has no onscreen keyboard option, you do not get the brilliant word suggestion feature, allowing you to flick complete words into the message like you do on the Z10. Luckily the Q10 has its own typing party trick in Type N Go. This feature enables you to type 'twitter', followed by a message. Simply press post to send the message to Twitter, all without ever opening the Twitter (or Facebook) app.

To the point

The BlackBerry Q10's tried and tested design had many loyal users patiently waiting for the release of the smartphone, in order to make the jump to BlackBerry 10. It offers the classic form factor (touch and type) they were used to employing on older Curve, Bold and even Torch devices, but wrapped up in a more stylish package running the company's newest software. BlackBerry traditionalists will love this phone. Those who desire the Q10 but not its R9 000 pricetag can check out the Q5 which delivers a similar experience for R5 000. [HD] ❖

Full Article bit.ly/q10review



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Fujifilm X20

Fujifilm has been undergoing a revitalisation of sorts, providing a number of strong options in the X-Pro1 and the X-E1. The X20 premium compact builds on this tradition.

The X20's predecessor, the X10, built a loyal following of photographers looking for a solid premium compact camera for travel or street photography. Fujifilm upped its game with the X20, providing faster handling, a better 12 megapixel X-Trans sensor, and a few tricks it learnt from the X-E1, including the Q-button.

Easy access

If easy access to key functionality is crucial, then the X20 will be very alluring. Apart from two custom settings on its top dial, it has an exposure dial and one programmable Function button. It also includes Fujifilm's Q button which provides easy access to certain settings, including ISO, LCD brightness, autofocus mode and film simulation (basically the vivid, normal, monochrome options on other cameras).

Although Fujifilm provides an optical viewfinder with LCD overlay to show you your aperture and shutter speed, we did not make use of it since it's not 100% accurate for composition (the same problem on the Canon G15). This brings us to our biggest gripe with the X20, which is using the 2.8" LCD screen. It is smaller than the 3" we've gotten used to, while its 460 000 dot resolution is also undercooked.

The X20 took a bit of time to grow on us.

With only a 4x zoom, the X20 might not get you as close to your subject as you would like, but the fact that you can manually operate the zoom on the lens (f2-f2.8), unlike the Canon G-series and Nikon P7xxx-series, is a joy. We also enjoyed the number of cool filter effects, specifically the Dynamic Tone that juices up an image in no time.

To the point

The X20 took a bit of time to grow on us. But, much like that special album you had to listen to a few times before you really 'got it', the reward comes the more you use it. It is a strong little machine and its retro-good looks will definitely appeal to the hipster side of the market. R7 000. [MJ] 🍷



Samsung NX300

The more we shoot with Samsung's mirrorless cameras, the more they impress us. If the NX20 wasn't enough of a reason to take Samsung seriously, the NX300 certainly is.

The big difference between Samsung's NX300 and the previous NX20 is the lack of an electronic viewfinder on the former. This means you are totally reliant on a big 3.3" AMOLED screen at the back for composing your shots. We liked the way the screen can tilt up and down and the touchscreen makes it very easy to select your focus point (and even activate the shutter) but this gets dirty quite easily. A few extra pixels here would not have gone to waste, since it's a so-so 768 000 (the Canon G15 boasts 922 000 in its 3" screen).

Connect it all

Due to its experience in bringing connectivity to its other devices, Samsung is quite a bit ahead with the connectivity options on their cameras. The NX300 has Near Field Connectivity (NFC) to easily connect it to other NFC enabled devices (not always effectively), while it also contains Wi-Fi. This makes it easy to share pictures on the trot, especially if you use your phone as a portable hotspot. Download the Samsung Remote Viewfinder app and you can even use your smartphone to see what the camera is viewing, and capture images from your phone.

The NX300 contains excellent functionality and impressive photo quality.

If action photography is your passion, then the NX300 is a good choice since it can capture 8.6 frames per second, with a very fast shutter speed of up to 1/6000. Samsung has also introduced a new hybrid autofocus (AF) system, which in most instances was on the ball.

To the point

That's not to say all is amazing, since there is no onboard flash (unit provided in box); there are no custom settings on the top dial as on the NX20; the battery life is horrible; plus the black control dial is really too small for comfort. Despite this Samsung's NX300 should be a serious consideration when you are on the prowl for an easy-to-use camera that contains excellent functionality and impressive photo quality. The NX300 retails for R9 000 with its 18-55mm kit lens. [MJ] 🍷



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Canon EOS 700D

While the pro level DSLRs garner the glory, the entry level models are really photography's unsung heroes, responsible for introducing new shooters to the craft. One such luminary is the EOS 700D.

The fairly new upper entry level 700D may fall under Canon's entry level x00D range, but underestimating its capabilities would be a big mistake. Instead, there is a great deal on offer, starting with a noticeably user-friendly and approachable layout of its controls.

As befitting its target market (new, casual or enthusiast photographers on a budget), the camera is light and compact in one's hand, and we believe it would certainly fit comfortably in smaller hands as well.

Chance to impress

Not surprisingly, the D700 boasts very good image quality and general responsiveness, thanks to its new 18 megapixel CMOS (APS-C) sensor and DIGIC-5 image processor respectively. Additionally, the camera has an impressive range of ISO speeds, from 100 to 12 800, useful for when dealing with low light. One thing to bear in mind is that there may not be enough of a difference between the soon to be discontinued 650D and the 700D to justify an upgrade, as the improvements are

Not surprisingly, the D700 boasts very good image quality and responsiveness.

largely more tweaks than considerable advances.

The 700D offers a 9 point autofocus system, and we were pleasantly surprised by how quickly this snapped to focus, while the camera further sported a very decent continuous 5 FPS.

Proof, please

One of our test subject of the camera's capabilities came in the form of a young, big and rambunctious border collie who has never met a camera he hasn't tried to lick when pointed in his direction. Suffice to say, we were impressed with how well the camera performed under pressure, in dim indoor light and shooting blind. Video (up to full HD or 1080p) receives its own dedicated release button, and can be captured as well as viewed on the vari-angle 3" LCD touchscreen (1040k dots).

To the point

In a nutshell though, it is hard not to like the 700D for what it is – a very capable and easy to use camera, that still feels streets ahead of many of the compacts on offer. RRP: R8 000 body only or R9 500 with standard EF-S 18-55mm 3.5-5.6 IS STM kit lens. [RN] 🌟



Canon unveils its EOS 70D

After months of expectation, rumour, and speculation about its specifications, Canon officially unveiled its newest addition to its APS-C EOS line and the successor to the 60D, with the EOS 70D.

To start with, the EOS 70D has a new 20.2 megapixel APS-C CMOS sensor, and offers an impressive ISO range of ISO 100-12 800, which can be boosted up to 25 600. Also worth noting is the camera's Dual Pixel CMOS AF technology, which Canon

asserts will deliver "smooth and accurate autofocus (AF) when shooting full HD movies and fast AF acquisition when shooting in Live View mode."



Now, focus!

The camera further features onboard wireless and a 19-point all cross-type AF System. This is customisable, enabling photographers to use AF points individually, in small groups or across a wider area to take into account fast moving subjects. Further arguing for its place in enthusiast photographers' camera bag, the 70D boasts Canon's DIGIC 5+ processor and is able to shoot at up to a healthy seven frames per second.

However, it is the video features of the new camera that seem particularly prominent. For example, the camera's vari-angle Clear View LCD II 1 040k dot resolution touchscreen enables one to shoot video from a variety of awkward angles, while following the video capture on screen in its Live view. Furthermore, full HD (1920 x 1080p) resolution video can be captured with a choice of selectable frame rates, including 30, 25 or 24 fps, and 60 and 50 fps at 720p, and a range of compression options for post-editing and sharing.

It is the video features of the new 70D that seem particularly prominent.

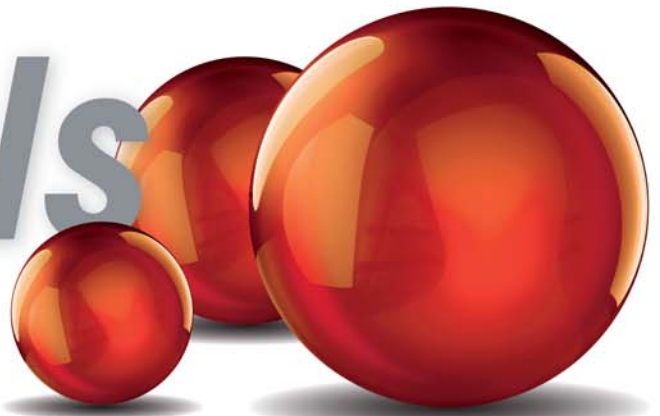
The 70D has a pop-up flash which also works as a wireless commander, only accommodates SD/SDHC and SDXC cards (but not CF) in a single slot and weighs in at a relatively light 755 g.

To the point

While local availability and pricing have not yet been announced, we expect this will be made known as we move closer to the camera's launch Stateside at the end of this month. There, the camera will apparently dip into enthusiast photographers' wallets and capture \$1 200 (R12 000) at up to 1/8000th of a second. 🌟

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combat this, everything Belgium Campus does is geared towards empowering students with invaluable IT skills. This makes Belgium Campus' qualifications unique as it is of the highest standard in SA and streamlined by industry needs. The courses - a Diploma in Information Technology and Bachelor's Degree in Computing - are globally accredited and consist of one year In-Service Training that's undertaken with a


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Since inception, Belgium Campus' future proof approach to education has proven to be spot on and is one of the reasons why 100% of graduates are employed. This has earned Belgium Campus praise for producing students who can participate in the economy and for the institution's cooperation with stakeholders in creating an integrative and responsive education system. To emphasise their dedication to offering truly world class qualifications, the university underwent an official benchmarking and audit by the Limburg Catholic University College. The auditing panel concluded that the Bachelor Degree of Computing complies with all parameters of a Professional Bachelor's Degree as is set and described in the accreditation framework of the NVAO and audit protocol of the VLIR-VLHORA. As for the business sector, the R8 Million in scholarships received from a range of South African businesses last year alone is a clear indication of the trust they place in graduates produced by Belgium Campus.


To the point




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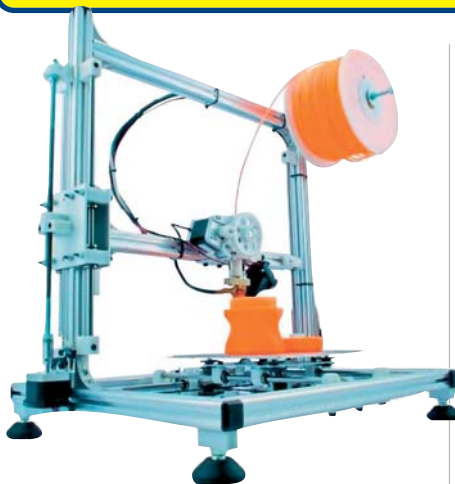
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Super mobile landline PABX Wi-Fi router

Small companies in the market for a reliable and cost-effective communication solution should look no further than the Super mobile landline (SML) PABX Wi-Fi router.

This is a long name for an easy-to-setup, convenient device that incorporates the function of a range of different office equipment into a single gadget. These include a Wi-Fi Router, cordless phones, and PABX system for six extensions.

The SML PABX Wi-Fi router provides users with a PABX mobile landline, allowing calls to the office number to be routed directly to smartphones. Up to six users can utilise their existing iOS- or Android-powered mobile devices as an extension by downloading the Tecom IP3051 application from their device's respective app store. Via this app, users will be able to answer calls on a smartphone that came to the office landline, forward calls to any of the other five mobile devices (extensions), and receive home- or office landline calls whilst overseas.

The only thing a user needs to have is their own ADSL line that is then connected to the

SML PABX Wi-Fi router. Like any other router, this will deliver web access to the office over Wi-Fi.

Cutting communication costs

Beyond a significant cost reduction in hardware by having one device fulfilling numerous office communication functions, users will also save on roaming charges, and calling costs.

Forwarding landline (an office or home number) calls to the designated smartphones or tablets is done for free. One of the particularly notable benefits of this device is the cost cutting it can afford international travellers, road warriors, and frequent flyers, enabling them to call home from outside the country at local rates, potentially

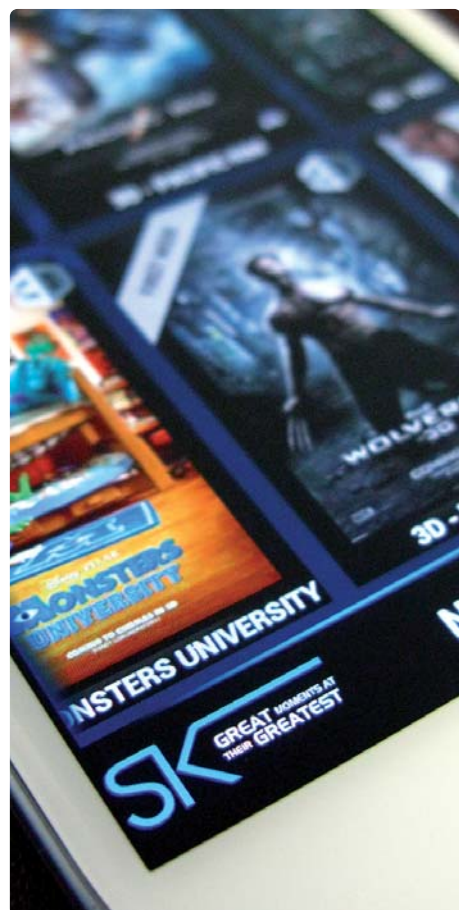
resulting in savings on crippling charges.

Calling to any of the six mobile extensions does not cost anything either. Phoning other mobile phone numbers is charged at R1.13 per min, and cellphone to landline calls are charged at 50c per min. Users can now dial Telkom toll free numbers, while you do not have to top up or even buy airtime since calls are charged to your Telkom account.

To the point

The Super mobile landline PABX Wi-Fi router serves as a jack of all voice and data trades within the router segments. It goes for an RRP of R3 800, which includes free installation in Gauteng, with petrol to be charged to JHB. •

For more information contact Thomas Yinn on 061-422-8952. Resellers welcome. Also available from Impact I.T. on 012-654-1896 or Jomar on 012-753-7571.



The work behind the Ster-Kinekor app

How much graft goes into developing a top-class app? Quite a bit if Lynette Hundermark, Apps business director of Prezence Digital, the developers of the popular Ster-Kinekor app, is to be believed.

TechSmart (TS): How long did it take to develop the Ster-Kinekor app for the different platforms?

Lynette Hundermark (LM): The first app was for the Symbian operating system (OS) for Nokia phones, which was developed in 2011 and took approximately six months to complete. The app for the iPhone and Android phones took approximately three months, while the app development for the previous BlackBerry (BB) phones took six months, as it is a more difficult platform to develop for. A brand new app for the recently launched BB 10 series was developed in seven to eight weeks.

TS: What was the most difficult part of the process?

LM: The most challenging aspect for us was to get the app right for the BB platform. While this has proved to be the most popular platform, it

was also the most complicated to develop for. Many apps offered to BB users are not as good as, or are watered down versions of, the iPhone or Android app. However, our challenge was to develop the app for BB that was as good as and able to offer all the same functionality that is available on the other platforms. As we approach the one million download target, BB is way ahead and without a doubt this is driven by the market share dominance of BB in the smartphone category.

TS: How much upkeep is needed on the back-end to make things run smoothly?

LM: An app of this nature requires constant redevelopment and evolution to ensure it keeps up to date with the release of new operating systems and handsets. Also, because of the constant change in the movie business (new movie titles released every week), the need to be nimble and consistently relevant is immense. Prezence has a monthly retainer with Ster-Kinekor Theatres for this very reason.

TS: Are you working on further developments?

LM: We have a number of new and exciting developments in the pipeline and these will be rolled out over the next few months. For one, we are currently looking to integrate different payment methods to include debit cards in addition to the credit card payment system, which we believe will attract a larger user base to book and pay for tickets via the app. •

5 million. Predicted number of smartphones to be shipped globally during 2014, which is ten times the forecasted figure (500 000) for this year.

Computer Component Distributors (CCD) puts customers' needs first

Hearing all about the latest and greatest technologies available is one thing, but actually having a go-to distributor to avail oneself of needed components is quite another.



To this end, Computer Component Distributors (CCD) aims to enable businesses to easily source the technologies they require. The company provides an array of products, including workstations, networking components, computing accessories, LCD monitors, as well as notebooks, all from leading brands. Brands represented across the board include Samsung, HP, Asus, LG, Gigabyte, Netgear, Acer, Philips and BenQ. Towards the end of last year CCD also became a distributor of Toshiba's notebook range as well.

The company, which has a 17-year strong legacy and is based in Bloemfontein, has endeavoured to be customer specific, rather than product specific, which means it can more easily offer a variety of technology solutions according to customers' needs and preferences. Additionally CCD, which serves resellers, can further source products and brands as required.

The company's website <http://www.ccdbloem.co.za> contains a full breakdown of the extensive products on offer, while its sales team can be reached on 051-447-4706.

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Struggling to find interesting birthday-, housewarming- or bachelor party gifts for your friends? Check out the following products from Mantality.co.za.

Cookoo Bluetooth 4.0 connected smartwatch

Smartwatches are forecasted to be the next big thing, and the Cookoo smartwatch will put you ahead of the wearable tech curb. The Cookoo pairs with an iPhone via Bluetooth to act as a second screen for your mobile, alerting users of calendar reminders, social networking notifications, and missed calls amongst others. In addition, this device lets one know when the smartphone's battery is running low and helps to locate a lost phone by causing the iPhone to sound an alert. RRP: R1 700 from Mantality.co.za.



Liquid Image Ego Wi-Fi equipped 1080P sports camera

Liquid Image's Ego is a mountable full HD (1080p) sports camera aimed at videographers, who need a versatile recording device to capture action footage. Users can view the live or recorded footage on their devices and change the camera's settings via a downloadable app. The Ego is highly adaptable as it can be mounted to a variety of accessories. Shooting video from interesting angles sets you back R2 300 via Mantality.co.za.



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TOP 5 Premium hatchbacks

Premium hatchbacks are very popular in South Africa due to them offering plenty of technology and safety features, sublime styling, comfortable ride quality, and a dash of sportiness to boot. Here are our top 5 choices for 2013.



5 VW Golf 1.4 TSI Comfortline DSG

VW's hallowed Golf is a heavyweight amongst the regular hatchback cars such as the Ford Focus, Renault's Megane and Toyota's Auris. Within the premium price category, however, it

lacks brand appeal against the likes of the BMW 1-Series, Audi A3 and Mercedes-Benz A-class. Propelling the Golf 1.4 TSI forward is a 1395 cc turbocharged four cylinder engine that efficiently churns out 90 kW at 5000 RPM and 200 Nm of torque between 1500 and 4000 RPM. This sees the gorgeous Golf bring up 100 km/h on the speedometer in 9.3 seconds from standstill, and reach an illegal top end of 203 km/h. The Golf boasts the best-in-class (along with the A3 that uses the same engine) fuel usage figure of 5 litres per 100 km on a combined-cycle (town and highway driving). Other standard features included with the R289 400 RRP are an 8 speaker audio system that boasts a 5" touchscreen; start/stop system; and an electronic park brake with auto-hold feature on inclines/declines.



3 BMW 116i

BMW's 1-Series certainly offers the sportiest ride out of all the cars in this comparison. Its 1598 cc TwinPower turbo four cylinder engine cranks out 100 kW at 4400 RPM, coupled with 220 Nm of torque at just 1350 RPM.

Drivers can launch the car to 100 km/h

in 8.7 second and reach a top-end of 210 km/h. Being more sparing with your right foot should see the average fuel consumption figure drop to a claimed 5.6 litres per 100 km.

Drivers can pick up a 116i with 8-speed auto Steptronic transmission for R300 500, but as with the Merc and Audi, the RRP can easily exceed your budget if you kit out your vehicle with some premium options. These include the M Sport suspension package (R3 800), professional navigation system (R18 100), as well as front- and rear park distance control (R2 900). Standard features include BMW's Professional RDS radio that sports six speakers, plus a 6.5" monitor for extended display of on-board computer data.



4 Volvo V40 T3 Elite

The V40 is one of the most eye-catching vehicles from the Swedish car maker's stable as well as within this comparison. It is rocketed forward by a 1596 cc four-cylinder turbo petrol engine that develops 110 kW at 5700 RPM and 240 Nm of

torque between 1600 and 4000 RPM. Volvo claims a combined-cycle fuel usage figure of 5.4 litres per 100 km, whilst the 0-100 km/h acceleration time is 8.8 seconds.

Besides head turning looks, the V40 also sports a plethora of innovative safety features including City Safety, which is a low-speed (up to 50 km/h) collision avoidance technology. This tech can sense slow moving cars ahead of you and in the event of an impending collision is able to pre-charge the brakes to activate faster. If the driver fails to brake in time, City Safety automatically brakes and switches off the throttle. RRP: R313 200



2 Audi A3 1.4 TFSI S

While the new Merc A-class would undoubtedly obtain envious stares from other motorists and pedestrians, the A3 sports the best-in-class interior. The 1.4 TFSI can reach 100 km/h from standstill in 9.3 seconds and is able to hit 203 km/h (hopefully only on the racetrack or

private road). This is thanks to its 1395 cc turbocharged petrol engine delivers 90 kW at 5000 RPM and 200 Nm of torque from a low 1400 RPM. As with the Golf, the combined-cycle fuel usage is an amazing 5 litres per 100 km.

For the recommended retail price of R300 000, buyers get Bluetooth connectivity, Daytime running lights (non-LED-based), an electrically retractable 5.8" display, and seven airbags. The RRP can quickly shoot up to dizzying heights if you opt for premium options the likes of Bang and Olufsen Sound System (R8 180), MMI (multimedia interface) Navigation Plus system with touchpad (R22 200), and Xenon Plus Headlights (R10 030).



1 Mercedes-Benz A180 BlueEfficiency

In April, Mercedes-Benz introduced its radically restyled A-class that immediately became the (aggressive) belle of the premium hatchback ball. The A180's sublime stylish bark is backed by some capable powerplant bite. Under the bonnet resides a 1595 cc four cylinder petrol engine that delivers 90 kW at 5000 RPM and 200 Nm of torque between 1250 and 4000 RPM. This is enough to send the Stuttgart stallion galloping to 100 km/h in 9.2 seconds, onto a terminal velocity of 202 km/h. More conservative drivers should obtain a fuel usage figure of 5.7 litres per 100 km. Also included in its RRP of R285 750 is an eco stop/start system, and Attention assist which intermittently checks whether the driver is awake and alert.

Overall though, the A180 offers the best exterior styling, a classy and sporty interior, and a comfortable ride that helps the car ascend to the top of our premium hatchback comparison. [HD] 🍷

Nissan Juke 1.6 DIG-T Tekna AWD CVT



Is the Juke a jack of all trades or an odd-looking master-of-none?

In terms of styling the Juke looks unlike any other SUV on the road, with its 'bullfrog' looks making it immediately recognisable in your rearview mirror. On the inside, the car feels more like a conventional SUV though, thanks to a high seating position, excellent visibility all round, and large cantaloupe-sized side mirrors that provide an eagle-eyed view of oncoming traffic. Propelling the Juke forward is a 1.6 DiG-T (direct injection, turbocharged) engine that produces 140 kW at 5600 RPM and 240 Nm of torque at 5000 RPM. The car employs Nissan's CVT transmission to send power to all four wheels via an 4x4i AWD system.

Impressions of the CVT auto star

During our brief review period, the Juke's CVT gearbox left us impressed, as it always delivered immediate acceleration whether we wanted to overtake or needed to maintain speed whilst ascending a steep hill. If you are craving a more involving drive, the driver simply slides the gear lever to the right, which enables you to flick the gear lever up or down to change gears manually. Drivers can also alter the

responsiveness of the engine to your throttle input via the drive mode selector on the centre console, which enables drivers to switch between Sport, Normal and Eco.

Whilst driving in normal mode, acceleration is snappy enough. When you opt for Sport mode however, the responsiveness of the engine simply kicks up a gear. The downside of this immediate shove is that our combined-cycle (town and highway driving) fuel usage shot up to 10.2 litres per 100 km. We did manage to lower the average fuel usage significantly to 8.5 litres per 100 km via the Eco mode. Within this mode, the Juke is noticeably slower to react to your throttle inputs, taking off and accelerating a great deal slower compared to the Sport and even the Normal driving modes.

To the point

The Nissan Juke 1.6 DIG-T AWD CVT offers one of the best automatic transmissions we have come across in the smooth-as-silk CVT, along with oodles of grip thanks to its all-wheel-drive system. You also get SUV practicality within a head turning package. This makes the Juke the jack of all trades that unfortunately carries a princely pricetag of R322 500. [HD] 🍷

VW Golf GTI hits SA roads



The day hot hatch and VW fans have been waiting for has arrived, as Volkswagen South Africa has finally unleashed its new seventh generation Golf GTI locally.

Styling wise, the attributes that help distinguish the GTI from the regular Golf includes red painted brake callipers, smoked LED rear lights, dual chrome tailpipes, and 18" 'Austin' alloy wheels with size 225/45 tyres. There are also GTI badges at the front and rear of the car, if all the design changes were not enough to convey to passersby that this is not a run-of-the-mill Golf.

On the inside of the car, the driver and front passenger benefit from the ergonomic support of the figure-hugging Golf GTI Vienna leather sport seats. Other GTI-specific interior styling cues are the GTI instrument cluster, pedals with brushed stainless steel, and leather sport steering wheel with shifting pedals in the DSG (direct-shift gearbox) version.

More power on tap

Under the bonnet of the new Golf GTI resides a 1984 cc TSI turbocharged engine that produces 162 kW and 350 Nm of torque. Volkswagen's engineers also put the GTI on a diet and exercise program resulting in the Golf GTI's weight loss of 42 kg (from 1393 kg to 1351 kg), adding to the car's cornering and acceleration prowess.

Drivers can rocket to 100 km/h from standstill in 6.5 seconds and race all the way up to a top speed of 246 km/h (244 km/h in the DSG model). More reserved drivers will be able to utilise tech such as the GTI's stop/start system, to help in bringing down the combined-cycle (town and highway driving) fuel consumption figure to a claimed 6 litres per 100 km (6.4 litres for the DSG version).

To the point

In South Africa the 2.0 TSI manual version of the GTI will set buyers back R368 300 (including VAT and emissions tax), whilst the 2.0 TSI DSG version ups the RRP to R382 800. Buyers can purchase the GTI in three colours, namely Red, Black and White. 🍷

Sci News



Cry babies

Understanding babies' moods is child's play. Cue gasps from strung-out parents. But according to an article in the journal *Infancy*, five-month-old babies seem to be able to read their friends' expressions

without trouble. In the study babies were sat in front of two screens. One showed a video of a happy, smiling baby and the other that of a frowning, sad baby. When the sound of a third baby – either happy or sad – was played, the viewer kept looking at the video showing the matching facial expression. The audio was not in sync with lip movements on the videos, which suggests that the match between facial expression and vocal sound was made without external cues.



Fatal attraction

Being positive is not always a good thing. Especially if you're an insect flying past a spider web. A study published in a recent issue of *Scientific Reports*, showed that spiders use static electricity to snatch

unsuspecting insects from mid-air. Fast, repetitive flapping lets positive charge build up on insect wings. Spider webs are generally neutral or negatively charged. To test the assumption that spider webs are drawn to the fly-bys, researchers electrostatically charged dead insects and dropped them into fixed webs collected from a stream nearby. Images from a high-speed camera showed how parts of the spider webs deform, touching the insects in mid-flight. In contrast, there was no attraction to neutral insects. Like a moth to a flame they say...



A stone's throw

Even if you throw like a girl, you're still pretty good at it. Scientists write in a recent issue of *Nature*, that we trump all our primate relatives when it comes to hurling things around. Looking at 3D

recordings of amateur baseball players' arm action, they found that the shoulder works almost like a slingshot during a throw. When you pull your arm backwards to prepare, the tendons and ligaments of the shoulder stretch. This action stores energy that, upon release, bolts the arm forward. Our remarkable throwing ability is thanks to anatomical features that first appeared in *Homo erectus* about two million years ago. It's likely that precise, powerful throwing helped our early ancestors to hunt better. Eating more meat meant better brain development, which likely boosted our evolutionary progress – and maybe also our ability to duck. [LP] 🍀

Green News



The power of PP

In the world of eco-friendly technology, researchers are constantly endeavouring to find alternate sources of energy to power electronic devices. Scientists at Bristol University and Bristol

Robotics Laboratory have created a fuel cell that utilises bacteria to break down chemicals in urine to generate electricity.

The resulting energy is stored on a capacitor, which is used to power a cellphone, delivering enough energy to send SMS messages, browse the web or even make a brief call. Fortunately, the technology is not aimed at creating a new line of peepee-powered phones, as the research team want to design a smart toilet that churns out electricity.



Honda and GM join forces on fuel cell cars

General Motors (GM) and Honda have entered into a long-term agreement to co-develop next-generation fuel cell system and

hydrogen storage technologies. The two companies will also collaborate with other industry stakeholders to develop the refueling infrastructure required for the long-term viability of fuel cell powered vehicles.

Fuel cell cars can operate on renewable hydrogen made from natural sources like biomass, and the only emission from these vehicles is water vapor. These vehicles have a typical driving range of up to 640 km, and can be refuelled in as little as three minutes. The fruits of the firms' labour will be released in 2020.



Samsung blows away aircon competition with Q9000

Samsung Electronics South Africa has announced the local launch of the new Q9000 jet engine air-

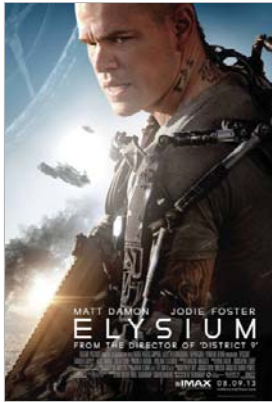
conditioner. The Q9000 employs inverter technology to deliver the desired temperature faster and then keeps that temperature constant, resulting in an electricity saving of around 76% compared to conventional aircon systems.

This aircon system uses three vents to create a whirlwind effect and deliver up to 50% more cool or warm air than conventional air-conditioners. According to Samsung, the compressor of a conventional air-conditioner turns off when a room has reached the desired temperature, and then start up again as and when needed. 🍀



To watch

With a number of blockbuster movies heading to local shores this month, there is no shortage of good movies to watch.



Elysium

30 August 2013

After the awesomeness that was *District 9*, South African director and writer Neill Blomkamp returns with *Elysium*. It's all-star sci-fi action with the title attracting massive names the likes of Matt Damon (our hero – Max De Costa) and Jodie Foster (the baddie – Secretary Rhodes). In 2154 the rich live in the beautiful space station called Elysium, while the rest suffer back on Earth. Max needs to get to Elysium in order to receive life-saving treatment, but Rhodes stands in his way, unleashing the powerful Kruger (our own Sharlto Copley, better known as Wikus) to stop him. Will a bigger budget empower Blomkamp's talents? We can only hope.



Pacific Rim

2 August 2013

While director Guillermo Del Toro might have been lost to the world of the *The Hobbit*, it did leave him with time on his hands to sculpt *Pacific Rim*. And what can be better than watching massive robots fighting mighty monsters from the sea? It's a tried and tested formula in Mecha anime such as *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and personally we can't wait to see Del Toro bring this to life on the big screen. In bad news for *Hellboy* fans, Del Toro recently stated that *Hellboy 3* might be too expensive to produce.



Now you see me

9 August 2013

In 2008 dark magicians known as Bankers pulled off the world's most terrifying magic trick – the vanishing of millions of dollars, the disappearance of thousands of jobs and the subsequent sinking of the world's economy. Now a group of illusionists known as the Four Horsemen is returning the favour, making money disappear out of bank vaults and into their audience's laps. How do they do it? Well


Interpol wants to find out, but this sleight of hand won't reveal itself easily. Watch out for Jesse Eisenberg who played Mark Zuckerberg in *The Social Network*.



The East

16 August 2013

If your company is destroying the environment, you should suffer too. That's the idea behind anarchist group The East, who is bringing pain to a number of large corporations. A private intelligence firm tasks Sarah (Brit Marling, *Another Earth*) to infiltrate the group in order to bring it down with the usual undercover suspense to follow. The kid-faced Allen Page, who we've seen in

Inception and *Juno*, plus Michael Caine also stars. 

TechSmart's top tweets



Here are the tweets that struck our fancy last month.



Nelson Mandela @NelsonMandela

"To overthrow oppression has been sanctioned by humanity & is the highest aspiration of every free man" #NelsonMandela



Deep Fried Man @DeepFriedMan

Open Letter to Twitter regarding the limitations of its 140 character limit: Dear Twitter, it has come to my attention recently that the lim



Thabiso Moloi @Thabiz_14

Liking the new look and feel of @TechSmartMag Online and Print #LooksFresh Gets my stamp of approval!



Trevor Noah @Trevornoah

Mandla Mandela - Game of Bones



Pharrell Williams @Pharrell

How people treat you is their karma; how you react is yours. – Wayne W. Dyer



Grumpy Cat @__GrumpyCat

I don't call it laying down anymore, I call it landscape mode.



Hon Cde Zama Ndlovu @JoziGoddess

If it wasn't for twitter, we wouldn't know that the thousands of Americans chose to take a firm stand in the last few hours.



Stacey Vee @MissStaceyVee

My typos in extremely re-tweetable tweets is also an accurate reflection of me as a person. *bangs head on desk*



Awkward Jim @AwkwardJim

My phone screen is brighter than my future



Kim Dotcom @KimDotcom

NASA robots have 14 years of battery life... Hey NASA, please make smartphones :-)



Michael @cypherpunks_

There are important differences between Nazis' Gestapo, East Germany's Stasi and the US Government's NSA. Last one is still operative.



olivia wilde @oliviawilde

I get why Skee-Lo wanted to be a little bit taller (who doesn't?!) but why wish for a rabbit in a hat AND a bat?

TechSmart.co.za online poll results

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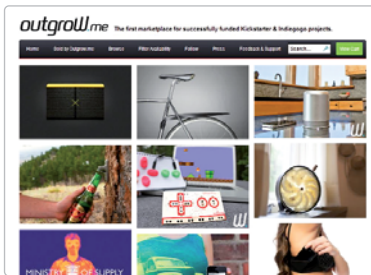
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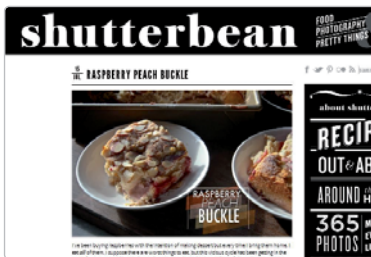


Outgrow.me

<http://outgrow.me>

We'll admit, there's a certain thrill about hearing about an ambitious new Kickstarter or Indiegogo project, that evokes the pioneer spirit of the olden day prospectors hoping to strike it big. The reality is, not all campaigns

come to fruition, producing actual inventions that are available to the market. That is where Outgrow.me comes in, as it keeps track only of successful campaigns that resulted in an available product. These include the likes of Android gaming console OUYA and the Brydge, an aluminium iPad keyboard with built-in speakers which offers a near 180 degree positioning.



Shutterbean

www.shutterbean.com

What do you get when you mix a passion for cooking with a love of photography, throw in a dash of personality and add some striking design to the mix?

Shutterbean is the end result. The site dishes up a number

of tantalising recipes, beautifully photographed food and lists. Don't write these off too quickly though, as these aren't of the anal retentive variety, but rather can lead in some very interesting diversionary directions in their own right.



Pinstagram/ Pictacular

www.pinstagram.co

If you ever wondered what you would have should Pinterest and Instagram produced offspring, Pinstagram, (now Pictacular), may put those wonderings to

rest. This free service enables you to view Instagram from your browser, as well as keep an eye on your feed and popular photos. Then, your photos can be shared to your Pinterest account, as well as the ever-present Facebook and Twitter as well. The site further curates some of "the best" Instagram users, enabling users to stay in the photo loop without having to follow scores of people who take not so artful images of what they are eating.



Forvo

www.forvo.com

Forvo enables you to look up a word in another language and then hear how it is pronounced. At present, it boasts an impressive almost two million words and pronunciations in more than 300 languages. Not

surprisingly, the most featured languages are the more common ones, such as English, German, Russian and Portuguese. However, more obscure ones can also be found, such as Scottish Gaelic, Telugu, Sanskrit, and, wait for it, even Klingon. 🌱

Gear in the office

We never have enough space to feature all the products that made an appearance in our office. Here are some quick thoughts on a few of them.



Jabra Revo Wireless headset

If audio quality is a paramount concern and price an afterthought, Jabra's Revo Wireless headphones will be music to your ears. Luckily you get amazingly clear sound that has been enhanced with the help of Dolby Digital Plus technology, plus NFC and Bluetooth. At an RRP of R4 000, these earphones compete against premium brands such as Bose and Beats.

WD My Passport Enterprise 500 GB HDD

Western Digital's My Passport Enterprise is much more than a 500 GB USB 3.0-capable portable hard-drive. This drive has been specifically designed to support Windows To Go, allowing IT technicians to install a Windows 8 workspace on it for temporary staff who are using their own personal notebooks (BYOD). Computers utilising this drive will then boot into Windows 8 from it, with all work being saved to the drive. The notebook's own HDD remains invisible. RRP: R1 600.



Epson EH-TW550 projector

Epson's EH-TW550 is portable enough (325 x 243 x 77 mm; 2.6 kg) to carry to a friend's house for a big screen gaming or movie viewing experience in HD-Ready (720p) fidelity. We like the high image quality you get courtesy of the projector and deep blacks due to the 5000:1 contrast ratio. RRP: R10 247 (including VAT)

Triggertrap MD-N3 mobile dongle

This simple but useful device enables photographers to use their smartphone or tablet as a means of triggering their camera without pressing the camera shutter and incurring camera vibration. This is particularly useful when you are capturing tripod mounted long exposures (such as star trails at night). The dongle is accompanied by a free app, available for Android and iOS devices, which extends the Triggertrap beyond just cable release functionality. RRP R432. 🌱



14 million. Total estimated population of the internet in South Africa, representing 39% of the adults nationally.

Apple iOS Apps of the month



How to Cook Everything

While there are a plethora of cooking apps on the App Store, How to Cook Everything is well worth adding to your repertoire. Rather than just dish up a variety of recipes and leave you to your own devices, the apps cover a broad array of foodstuffs and methods for cooking them. With each recipe, it also shows required cooking skills, such as using a chef's knife safely, and offers an illustrated step by step tutorial to this end. In short, it's a newbie and even more advanced cook's goldmine. It costs R80.



Over

If you fancy the thought of adding a variety of textual and artistic elements to your photos, then Over is worth a look. The app enables you to further change the colour, opacity and placement of your text, as well as its tint, and spacing. The resulting images can then be shared across a broad array of social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest or via email. The app is as easy as possible to use, while additional in-app purchases of more fonts and art packs are also available, on top of a R16 fee for the app itself.



Limbo

While this platforming-puzzler has had a home on the Xbox 360 and PS3 as well as PC for a while, it has only recently made a monochromatic leap to iOS devices. Suffice to say, it is still an atmospheric game that is hauntingly beautiful in its way, with simple controls and an immersive score. In short, this is still a compelling title that begs to be played, particularly if you haven't experienced it before. It costs R60. ❖

Android Apps of the month



CarsApp

On the hunt for a new-, used-, demo car or dealer special? CarsApp will enable you to cut down on the search time, and slip into the driving seat of your dream car quicker. Users simply choose a few details such as make, model, mileage, and price range and the app will do the rest by delivering a list of cars on sale. You can view all the info and photos of the cars, get directions to the dealer's location or click on the enquiry button to send an email to the seller.



Feedly

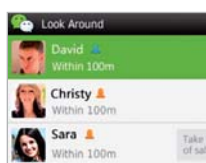
With the demise of Google Reader, many smartphone users are searching for alternative news aggregator services to help them stay informed and aware of the latest news headlines. Feedly is one such a service that sports an intuitive, easy-on-the-eyes user interface that has been specifically developed for 4" smartphones, as well as 7" and 10" tablets. It provides users with all the latest news content from their favourite websites, rss feeds, Tumblr blogs and YouTube channels.



The Silent Age

This point-and-tap adventure title transports players back to 1972, an age when Cassius Clay danced circles around opponents in the ring and flip-flops were all the rage. The game's protagonist, Joe, is inadvertently put on a mission to save humanity from extinction, which sees him transported from the early 70's to the modern era. If you liked the point-and-click adventure games of old such as the Monkey Island series, then this modern mobile interpretation should provide hours of entertainment. ❖

BlackBerry Apps of the month



WeChat

If you are on the prowl for a fresh new cross platform messenger, then have a look at WeChat. This free application allows you to exchange text messages and multimedia files between contacts like any other messenger application. Although one of the highlights of WeChat is the ability to find new contacts through location-based services. Other features include making and receiving video calls. However keep in mind that lower-end BlackBerry devices may not have access to all of the features.



Battery Watch Free Power Monitor

This free application by S4BB allows you to monitor and track the current status of your battery over time. Battery Watch comes with features such as information about battery level and temperature which can be used for diagnostics. You can also gain access to your device's name and pin. This application should also be noted for its user-friendly interface which makes it a breeze to use.



Gangstar City

Fans of Gameloft's Little Big City (LBC) will find much to enjoy in Gangstar City. This free game takes a more serious tone (think GTA) compared to LBC but also provides a deeper narrative as well. Features include a lengthy story along with new gameplay mechanics, such as the ability to throw parties and collect an arsenal of weapons which you may use for the defence of your empire. Tired of the current city building games? Then Gangstar City should be on your phone. [IF] ❖

Smartphone top tips

Struggling to master your new smartphone? TechSmart is on hand to provide some helpful tips.

Apple iOS tip

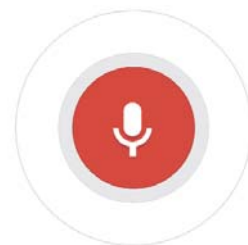
If, like us, you tend to send many emails from your iOS 6 running devices, or better yet, start typing emails only to save them for later attention (or a more convenient network connection) then here is an easy way to see and send those drafts that have been saved. In your Mail app, simply press and hold the New Message button. Doing so will conjure a handy list of your most recent drafts, from which you can pick and choose which to send.

BlackBerry tip

To save memory and make webpages load faster you can turn off the JavaScript. Simply go to Options, then go to Browser Configuration. Lastly select the option Support JavaScript to turn it off. Do note by turning off this feature some websites may load incorrectly.

Android tip

Users that like to utilise Google's excellent speech to text functionality, but do not want to go online every time you wish to do so, can setup offline speech. This is done by going to settings > language and keyboard > Google voice typing, and finally > download offline speech recognition. The download is in the range of 22 MB in size. ❖



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Carnival Mall
Centurion/ Clubview

Cresta
Edenvale
Festival Mall
Florida North/Constantia
Fourways Mall
Fourways Crossing
Germiston (Lambton)
Goldman - Florida
Hatfield
Highlands North
JHB City
Kempston Park
Kensington
Killarney Mall (Illovo)
Lenasia
Krugersdorp
Honey Crest
Morning Glen
Monument Park

Soweto - Maponya
Stone Ridge
Sunnypark PTA
Sunward Park
Three Rivers
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Springs
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Randfontein
Sasolburg
Southgate

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TechSmart 2013 Reader Survey

Thanks to everyone that took part in the TechSmart survey! The results will be published next month.

Here are the prize winners:

1st prize



Toshiba Excite 10 Tablet,
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Other prizes courtesy of Mantality.co.za



3x Build your own robot Arm:

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3x Mini DV Cameras:
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5x 80's Retro iPhone cases:

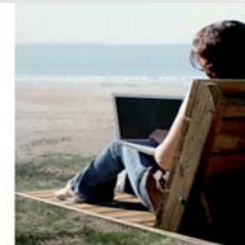
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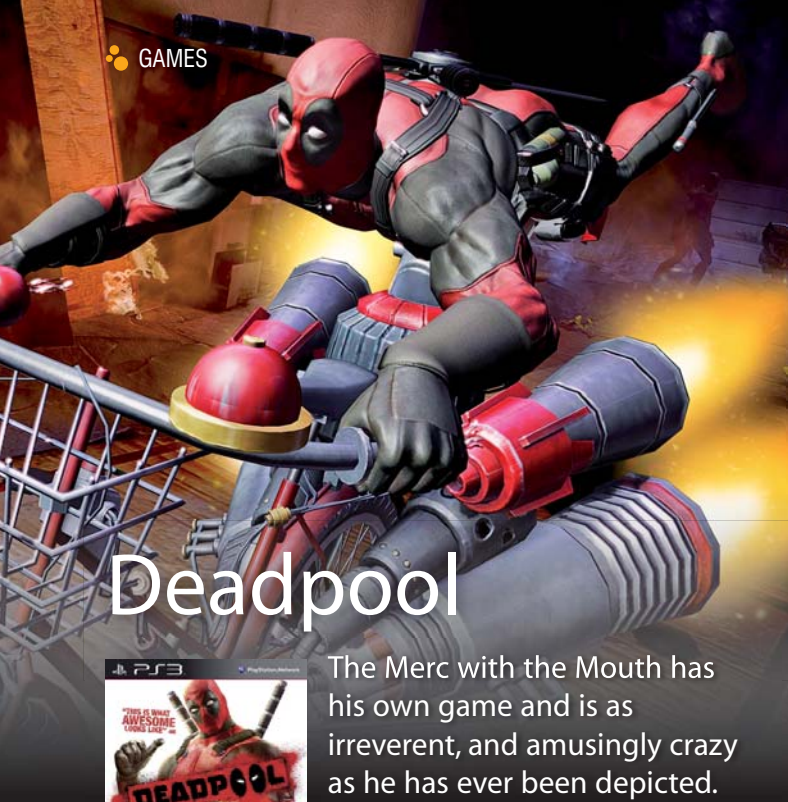
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Deadpool



The Merc with the Mouth has his own game and is as irreverent, and amusingly crazy as he has ever been depicted.

We've seen our fair share of superhero inspired games, with Spiderman, Batman and a cluster of familiar and not so familiar favourites all having

their chance to shine on the console, with the most recent being Injustice: Gods Among Us. The newest though to make a bid for videogame infamy is Deadpool, the one antihero who is just as likely to talk your ear off as he is to dismember it with his dual swords.

To start with, Deadpool has conflicting personalities which are inclined to bicker amongst themselves, often to sophomoric effect. What they can agree on though is that Deadpool needed his own game – and that is the foundation of story.

Mouthing off

You should be warned, if you are looking for deep, philosophical storytelling, you won't find that here, as evidenced by the fact that in the game, Deadpool receives the script for his masterpiece and proceeds to tear it apart.

Deadpool is just as likely to talk your ear off as he is to dismember it with his dual swords.

The game takes aim at just about anything, with video game memes and conventions often receiving more than its fair share of ridicule. Not even Deadpool's actual voice actor (Nolan North), the game's developers' High Moon Studio, or the cinematically sacred 'Fourth Wall' are safe from Deadpool's certifiably insane lack of boundaries.

Dissecting details

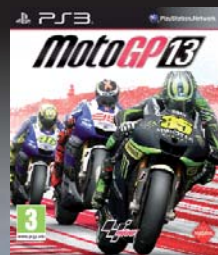
Helping Deadpool wreak mayhem – apparently his sole reason for being – are his dual swords, which boast light and heavy attacks. Complementing these are hammers, dual pistols, a shotgun, pulse rifle and grenades. Also in place is a not too complex system for upgrading your gear and another for increasing your abilities and health.

Admittedly, Deadpool is not the best looking game we have seen, but it is certainly not the worst, and it has a fresh coat of style. While its risks becoming repetitive after a while, the game is easy to play and just as easy to enjoy.

To the point

If a zany, interactive outing is up your alley, then Deadpool is an entertaining romp that makes for some light but good fun. RRP: R600. [RN] 🍌

MotoGP 13



When it comes to games soccer and car racing fans are spoiled for choice, but Superbike fans have only a singular option in the MotoGP franchise. Is 13 good enough to land a podium place in your racing collection?



Unlike big budget racing titles such as Forza Horizon, MotoGP 13 will most definitely not entice players with amazing graphical eye-candy. The game does not only lack the graphical punch of most recent racing games, is also not a match for older titles such as 2010's Gran Turismo 5. This is down to outdated shadow and lighting effects, and semi-realistic backdrops on race tracks that boasts many low resolution elements.

Like supercars, superbikes can be identified by their exhaust notes. Don't expect the same almost palpable sense of auditory stimulation via MotoGP 13, as the bikes all sound very similar and totally underwhelming.

Setting the stage for racing

Despite the underwhelming graphical and auditory prowess of the game, MotoGP 13 actually sports an engaging presentation. The latter involves videos of the tracks and surrounding city area being shown before each race. Gamers are also able to view a weather report, check the prevailing track conditions, and get track info including the number of right- and left-turn corners, while the race is loading.

MotoGP 13 actually manages to be a lot more entertaining than its outdated graphics and lacklustre audio would suggest.

When you start MotoGP 13 the driver aids are turned on by default, and these assists players with their acceleration, steering, braking, gear changes and riding position on the bike. You will, however, need to put in plenty of racing hours before being able to race with the aforementioned aids deactivated. Doing so, is not only more realistic (more simulation than the arcade-like experience you get with these turned on), but also incredibly important since ditching the riding aids really is the only way that you are going to land a spot on the podium.

To the point

MotoGP 13 actually manages to be a lot more entertaining than its outdated graphics and lacklustre audio would suggest. This is down to the gameplay being challenging and, more importantly, the sense of competitiveness gamers feel when they are challenged to master the handling of the bike. R600. [HD] 🍌



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