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TOUCH ME

Acer's touch-screen
all-in-one PC

A GOOD WINDOWS PHONE?

HTC's HD2 actually is

WIN WIN WIN

Lexmark printers



Acer Aspire Z5600



Panasonic Toughbook CF-U1

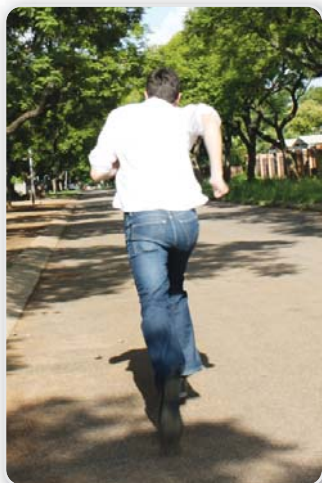


Edimax Wireless 3G router

GADGETS & GOODIES ISSUE

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Sharing is caring?

With over 350 million worldwide users – bigger in size than the population of the United States, Facebook is massive. So when Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg recently suggested that privacy is no longer a social norm, I get a bit queasy. It certainly looks that way if you look at the Lamebook website that posts all types of faux pas found on Facebook. If you browse around you quickly realise people are prepared to share everything online – sexual exploits, relationship fights, intimate experiences or even

news about a recently picked-up STD. I tend to believe that just because you can doesn't mean you should. But then again maybe my thinking is outdated and not "digitally native" enough?

Enjoy this issue.

Mike Joubert <michael@techsmart.co.za>
I'm running from the camera in homage to
<http://runningfromcamera.blogspot.com>

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Editor
Mike Joubert > 083-290-2889
michael@techsmart.co.za
Executive Editor
Suzanne Grobler > 083-742-6370
suzanne@smartpublishing.co.za
Business Manager
George Grobler > 083-460-0402
george@smartpublishing.co.za
Advertising
Suzanne Grobler > 083-742-6370
suzanne@smartpublishing.co.za
Anneke Kirchner > 083-301-9134
anneke@smartpublishing.co.za
Designer & Layout Brett Wilson
Contributors Mike Joubert [MJ], Thomas McKinnon [TM], Linda Pretorius [LP], Hanleigh Daniels [HD]
Accounts & Subscriptions
Ronel Keet > 012-362-2732
Online Editor
Thomas McKinnon
thomas@techsmart.co.za

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TECHSMART FEEDBACK

Here is this month's winning feedback. Win wins the Lexmark INTERACT 3-in-1.

RE: Intel Brain Chip

Dear TechSmart,
Of course it's going to happen. Why? Because WE WANT IT, full stop. There are two main attraction factors for brain chips. First of all for the convenience.

Secondly, we will be ever more in control, and in fact we'll be almost godlike. The "mark of the beast"-fear will obviously be a major consideration – but this has been a consideration ever since the telephone was invented. The educated and leading echelon of humanity is now far too clever to have any gadget, even if implanted, actually RULE them. Self-control is paramount. If that principle ever comes under threat, there will immediately be worldwide reactions to counteract, even dismantle such a novelty.
Win Küppers

Thanks for the feedback Win. You might want to check out what futurist Ray Kurzweil has to say about the Singularity: <http://singularity.com>. Mike

Write to us at info@techsmart.co.za



Hi TechSmart,
The only comment I can make concerns the lack of exposure in your magazine about software like The Grid, E-triloquist, Jaws and Proloquo2Go that are mostly used by people with disabilities, especially those who are unable to speak or are blind.

Simon Sikhosana

I agree Simon, we'll feature it in next month's mag. Mike

FEEDBACK FROM TECHSMART.CO.ZA

What about www.finalfantasy13game.com? This is an EPIC upcoming game, I think it should be on the list as well. Jason on Five furious games for 2010.

I think I'm getting one before end of this week. Lefaso on the Nokia N97.

TechSmart.co.za online poll results

Which upcoming 2010 tech release excites you most?



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GREEN Fast Fact

By using a multi-functional printer (print, copy, fax, scan), one can reduce energy consumption by 30% and up to 50% compared to using a single function printer.



Give us your feedback on any of the articles by emailing us on info@techsmart.co.za or leave comments on our website or Facebook page.

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Google starts selling phones

No longer content with only having the very cool Android operating system for phones, Google has now launched their very own smartphone. By all accounts the **Nexus One** is the best Android device yet, but no iPhone killer. Google surprised a lot of people by selling the phone directly to the public and not through one of the American cellular operators.



A brain for games

Your ability in gaming might be due to the size of certain key areas of your brain. Researchers in the US found that the size of sections in the centre of the brain, called the caudate and putamen, determines the eventual prowess of new gamers. The areas have been linked to the ability to adapt to new situations and learning new skills.

It's in the script

In what is being hailed as the biggest technical change to the Internet for 40 years, countries can now start creating domain names using their own alphabetic script without having to use Latin letters. More than half of the internet's 1.6 billion users use another type of script. Egypt, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates are the first four countries that qualified to do this.



In the News

- The number of South African internet users has finally passed the five million mark, breaking through the 10% mark of internet penetration for the country.
- Starting next year users of The New York Times website will be required to pay a flat fee rate to read more after having accessed a number of articles for free.
- Sales of **Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2**, one of the most highly anticipated games of last year, have surpassed the \$1 billion mark.
- Nokia's highly anticipated capacitive touch-screen phone, the **X6**, is now available in SA. Ditto for the feature rich BlackBerry Bold 9700, and HTC's big-screened HD2 (read our review on p10).



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Touchy feely

Science has just confirmed that women are better at touchy-feely stuff than men. But we're not talking about emotions. According to a recent report in the *Journal of Neuroscience*, women have a finer sense of touch than men because their fingers are generally smaller. Scientists measured the size of 100 students' index fingertips and then asked the students to touch panels containing parallel grooves. The smaller the person's finger, the smaller the distance between two grooves that could still be discerned. They then measured the distance between the receptors that respond to static touch. It turned out that the receptors are closer spaced on smaller fingers than on bigger ones, which means such skin is more responsive to finely detailed surfaces. Smooth.



Go-getters

Getting what you want may well be within your reach. According to a study, which recently appeared in the journal *Psychological Science*, our desire for an object influences our distance judgement. In one experiment, scientists asked a group of volunteers – half of which were really thirsty – to judge how far a water bottle was from them. The thirsty ones all reckoned the water was much closer than did their quenched counterparts. In another experiment volunteers had to throw a beanbag towards either a worthless or a valuable gift card, winning the card upon a hit. Consistently shorter throws were directed towards valuable cards than worthless ones. The researchers think that it's a mind trick to motivate us to really try to reach our goals. So how about those New Year's resolutions?



Itching for an answer

Scientists have long been scratching their heads to understand itching. And, according to a study recently published in the journal *Cell*, they may just have found the answer. Non-allergic itching is caused by activation of a family of proteins called Mrgprs. These proteins respond specifically to the itch-stimulant chloroquine, which is also found in antimalaria drugs. Researchers measured the scratch rate of mice lacking the gene for Mrgprs as well as a control group with the gene, when subjected to chloroquine. They found that mice with the gene scratched almost three times more often than those without the gene. Further studies showed that the Mrgprs proteins are found only in specific neural cells in the spine. These findings may help scientists to create a drug that blocks the proteins to relieve unrelenting itching. [LP]



Must visit Sci links:

- How is the internet changing the way you think? Experts responded here: <http://tinyurl.com/internetthink>
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- What happens when scientists ask: "What if?" <http://tinyurl.com/whatisif>

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CES MAGNIFIQUE: THE BEST OF CES 2010

The 33rd annual Consumer Electronics Show held in Las Vegas is done and dusted for another year, and in its wake a roadmap to where electronics is heading for the foreseeable future is plain for all to see. So where are we heading and who's driving?

3D TVs

The 42" full HD LCD TV you just invested in is so two thousand and late. 3D is the new kid on the block, with 3D TV sets on display at every major television manufacturer's stand. 3D does contain some inherent hurdles to mass adoption, not the least of which is the cost involved. Special 3D content is required, while you also need special 3D glasses to view content. But CES showed that problems are made for solving.

Toshiba grabbed a lot of headlines with its **ZX900 Series CELL TVs**. According to Toshiba the set can convert regular 2D television programming and movies into 3D. Onboard you'll find the CELL Engine for multimedia processing, which Toshiba claims is 143 times more powerful than what is currently found in TVs, while the TriVector 2D to 3D Technology handles the conversion in real time. The CELL TV range will be available in the US later in the year in 55" and 65" guises.



TLC displayed a 3D TV that doesn't require any unsightly headgear. Their set simply incorporates the frames that the glasses use into the actual TV set eliminating the need to look like a dork.

The trusty remote also received a rethink, with Samsung showcasing a remote control with a built-in TV screen and speaker. It's a novel

solution for those unfortunate "have to go to the bathroom now" moments in the middle of a Springbok game. Now wash your hands.

Toshiba also showed off a prototype TV which, like the Xbox 360 with Project Natal, can be operated without a remote control. You simply control it with gestures for example waving your hands in the air to bring up and make your way through the 3D menu system.

Slate PCs

One of the biggest trends for 2010 at CES doesn't involve notebooks or even netbooks, but rather the often berated tablet PC. Rumours of an Apple tablet device, said to be called the iSlate, loomed large over the exhibition, and although Apple didn't attend CES, the word "slate" seems to have stuck, with it being adopted to refer to this breed of tablet devices.

HP was first out the blocks to release such a device with an endorsement from none other than Microsoft CEO Steve Balmer, showcasing the HP Slate tablet in his keynote address. The Slate sports Windows 7 and seems to be an internet connected device lying somewhere between an ereader and a netbook. The least amount of information possible (or so it would seem) has been released about the Slate, with HP likely waiting to see what's coming from Apple before divulging details. But we do know that it will be touch driven and will be released later this year, although we could not get conformation from HP SA if the device will be made available in SA.



Qualcomm's Snapdragon processor

One of the big winners at CES 2010 was mobile chip maker Qualcomm (see our interview p9). Their speedy Snapdragon processors seem to have wormed their way into some of the hottest gadgets on display. Lenovo in particular seem infatuated with the processors, utilising Snapdragons on their new Android based LePhone smartphone, Skylight netbook and on the slate half of their ultra-hot IdeaPad U1 hybrid tablet. Snapdragons can also be found in Acer's first Android phone the A1 Liquid, one of HP's new netbooks, and, although not present at CES, in Google's newly announced Nexus One smartphone. Qualcomm's competition in the form of rival Intel's Moorestown processor, only featured in LG's GW990 phone. With Apple rumoured to



QUALCOMM



running at 1.3 GHz will feature on devices before the end of the year. The one we're looking forward to the most though is their dual-core 8X72, with each core running at 1.5 GHz. It will be able to process HD content, something that current smartphones or netbooks are far from capable of.

Top honours though goes to the sleek **IdeaPad U1** hybrid tablet presented by Lenovo. This two-in-one device is a netbook in essence, with the amazing ability to clip off the screen to use it as a slate device. If that's not cool enough, it actually sports two different operating systems and two processors. In its netbook form it runs on an Intel Core 2 Duo processor and Windows 7 Home Premium, when unclipped it is powered by Qualcomm's 1 GHz Snapdragon processor (see below) operating in a Linux environment. To make it switch and sync seamlessly between the different systems Lenovo employs what they call Hybrid Switch Technology.

The yummy U1 with its 11.6" multitouch LED screen weighs only 1.6 kg (1 kg unclipped) and sports 3G integrated broadband. It is said to have 128 GB of SSD storage space in netbook form and 16 GB SSD in slate form. You will pay a premium for such privileges though, with the U1 expected to go for \$999 in the US with its release scheduled for June this year.

1 GB. Free online storage now available on Google Docs.

James Munn, Qualcomm Inc.

QUALCOMM®



American company Qualcomm's Snapdragon chipset has taken the smartphone world by storm.

It was a big hit at this year's Consumer Electronics Fair, and is found in the Sony Ericsson Xperia X10, the HTC HD2 (see our review on p10), and now also on Google's Nexus One. We talk to James Munn, vice president of business development in Sub Sahara Africa for Qualcomm Incorporated, about what the future holds for smartphone users.

You had a good show at CES this year. Why are so many phone manufacturers moving towards Qualcomm's Snapdragon processor?

Mobile devices and mobile services have become part of people's everyday lives and they are changing the way people live, work and play. Consumers are progressively moving beyond just using their phones to call people. We see them increasingly using mobile devices to access email, browse the web, play games, and enjoy multimedia like music and video. The next generation of phones and mobile devices need greater processing power to support these capabilities.

Snapdragon delivers the unprecedented combination of 3G, processing performance, powerful multimedia capabilities and optimized power consumption all in a single chip to enable a new generation of smart mobile devices. Snapdragon has become the solution of choice for any device manufacturer designing a high-performance, next-generation mobile device.

Looking towards the future, what are smartphone manufacturers demanding from Qualcomm?

As mobile applications become more demanding, and networks become faster and more capable of handling heavy data loads, smartphones will continually push the limits of what is possible on a mobile device while still ensuring a good user experience. Mobile performance, power optimisation, connectivity options, and device size remain critical to the success of smartphones. Cost-efficiency will also dictate how accessible devices are in various markets.

The Snapdragon is now also being used in netbooks. Are there any changes that were made to the processor, and was this Qualcomm's plan all along that the processor be used in netbooks too?

In early January, Lenovo announced their Skylight product, which is the first Snapdragon notebook. Right now, there are 15 manufacturers developing more than 40 Snapdragon-based devices, including smartphones and smartbooks.

From the inception of Snapdragon several years ago, Qualcomm believed that mobile devices would continue to evolve to become more capable and more valuable to everyday life. This included not only groundbreaking new smartphones, but devices with larger displays. We therefore began work on the custom central processor that is at the heart of Snapdragon, which enables it to deliver performance exceeding 1 GHz and with low levels of power consumption.

For full interview visit www.techsmart.co.za.

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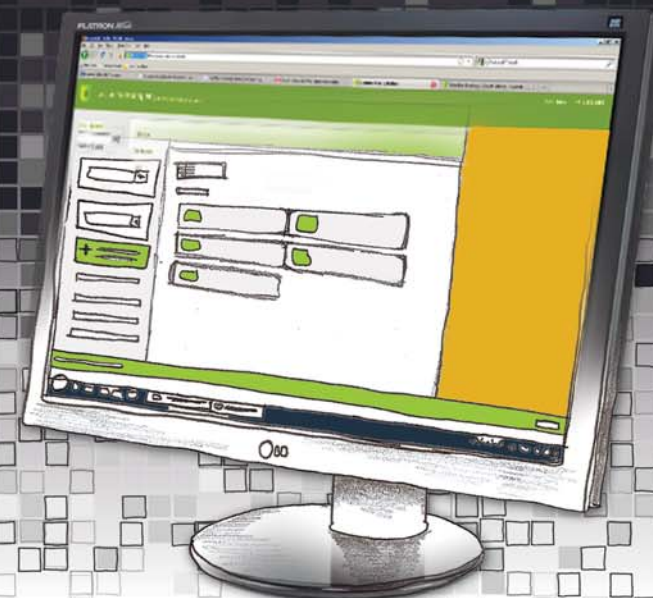
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HTC HD2

Best Windows Mobile Yet



HTC's HD2 is definitely a conversation starter. Pop this thing out and there's an immediate

buzz about its 4.3" screen.

The HD2's screen is massive, actually it's the largest commercially available smartphone screen out there. Luckily it's not let down by a horrible resistive touch-screen experience, since it's the first Windows Mobile phone (or WinMo as they now prefer to call the 6.5 version) to feature a more sensitive capacitive touch-screen.

HTC's Sense UI

In fact there is very little that does let this phone down. It feels good, looks great and HTC's Sense user interface (UI) does a superb job of masking the notoriously difficult and boring Windows back-end. Sense enables you to populate your home screen with quick links, whether it be an important program such as Google Maps; a contact, or internet bookmark. Furthermore, by scrolling left or right you have your home screen tabs that include, amongst others, your email, calendar, important contacts and photos and videos. All this, and



everything else, are handled very smoothly by Qualcomm's excellent 1 GHz Snapdragon chipset (see p9 for interview).

Tabbed browsing

With a 4.3" screen to browse on, surfing the web is, of course, great. Less so on Internet Explorer, but luckily Opera's tab-enabled Mobile browser is present. All you need to zoom into text is to pinch and expand. Twitter was well integrated, but HTC could have shown more love for Facebook, which is stuck on the Windows menu. As far as getting cool free apps from Windows Marketplace is concerned, forget about it, since the selection is paltry.

Tether modem and Wi-Fi router

Connectivity wise you can't ask for more since the HD2 contains all that you need, including GPS, HSDPA and Wi-Fi. Using BlackBerrys or the iPhone as a tethered modem to connect to the net is usually a complicated affair. Not so with the HD2, since we simply had to connect it to a PC, select the Tethered modem option on the HD2's screen and off we went. No mess no fuss – the simplest modem experience we've ever had.

That said, much to our amazement one can connect to the HD2 wirelessly since it can be used as a Wi-Fi Router to share internet connectivity, although both options didn't work as consistently well as we would have liked. As far as email is concerned we still prefer BlackBerry since setting up Gmail was a breeze but our regular Outlook mail was a headache.

Microsoft should thank heaven for HTC, since with their Sense interface, a very solid piece of hardware, and the best screen in the business, the HD2 is not only the best WinMo device out there, but also one of the top phones currently available. [MJ]

45%. TechSmart readers who own a Nokia. 15%. Own a Samsung. 3%. Own an iPhone.



Nokia N900

Maemo Mia!

It has been a while since Nokia served up a phone that truly blew us away; as far back as the N95 if we're honest. The more recent N97 is good, but it isn't wow, while the 5800 XpressMusic is really cool, but not revolutionary.

Now the Nokia N900 has the potential to break the mould. It's daring and fresh but most importantly it runs on the Maemo open source platform that's built for multi-tasking, browsing and touch – things Symbian S60 isn't particularly suited to.

Maemo

The fact that the N900 runs Maemo 5 (see below), an open source OS, is what makes it a noteworthy product.

Maemo 5 has been designed with a touch-screen UI in mind. So the menu structure is simple and shallow. It features a panoramic home-screen setup that is completely customisable. You can place widgets, shortcuts, contacts and bookmarks

where ever you like on any of the four home-screens.

The most impressive bit about the UI is the dashboard. The dashboard sits between the home-screens and the menu, displaying all your active applications and allowing you to close or move between them. This functionality in concert with a decent processor makes the device a multi-tasking powerhouse.

Maemo makes use of a Mozilla built browser and is capable of playing embedded flash video. Need we say more? There are apps available for download, but the platform is a little thin on content at the moment.

Hardware

The first thing you notice about the N900, besides its large girth at more than 18 mm thick, is the fact that all apps are displayed in landscape mode. This works well on the 3.5" resistive touch-screen which lends itself to a touch UI. You also get a hardware QWERTY keyboard, but it's a little cramped with the screen only sliding up ±2 cm.

On the media side you'll find a 5 megapixel camera, a 3.5 mm jack and dual speakers. There's 32 GB of internal storage for all your files, which is expandable up to 48 GB.

The N900's most notable hardware feature has to be its ARM Cortex-A8 600 MHz processor. While it's no Snapdragon, it gives the devices a fair bit of power. Wi-Fi and HSPA connectivity round off the hardware offering.

While all this is a rather impressive hardware offering, it must be said that the phone feels a little like it was pieced together rather than designed from the ground up.

Verdict

The N900 is impressive because it takes Nokia's smartphones in a new direction. With sublime browsing capabilities and PC like multi-tasking experience thanks to Maemo, it's on the leading edge. Now if Nokia can just refine the product a little, on the phone side of business in particular, then they'll be onto something big. [TM]



Maemo 5 OS

Mae who?

Yes, Nokia is still the biggest handset manufacturer in the world; the top three selling handsets of all time are Nokias after all. But it's smartphones that have been grabbing people's attention in recent years, and Nokia just hasn't set pulses racing in that department. Can their new Maemo OS bring them some smartphone love?

Background

Nokia's Maemo (aka Fremantle) was hatched in the Nokia labs a little over four years ago, the OS was designed as an internet tablet OS and is open to developers for customisation. Now in its fifth iteration, the platform is still an internet tablet OS rather than a smartphone OS. Maemo 5 just happens to have telephony capabilities strapped on, and a touch interface. This fact is no more obvious than in the primary orientation of the display – which is landscape for all applications, except for the dialing pad and photos.

Home-screens

Maemo offers four customisable home-screens, called a "panorama desktop", which you swipe through from side to side. You can place icons and widgets where ever you like, so that your most used apps are exactly where you want them. It really is one of the most flexible setups we've seen. The entire OS is built around single menus, which means there is no more drilling down into an overly complex menu structure. You simply tap the menu button (top left on all screens) and a straight forward grid of apps appears. Notifications on the device, like SMS and missed call notices, are less clever. They briefly appear on the home screen and are then moved to your dashboard. The dashboard is a screen that sits between the home-screen and the menu when you have active apps or unread notifications. While the dashboard screen is a touch of brilliance, allowing you to manage all your open apps and multitasking, notifications should really be left on the home screen.

Downloading applications

Maemo 5 is a little thin on apps at the moment. Nokia have modified the Ovi Store to make it compatible with the platform, but the volume just isn't there yet. It will be interesting to see how Nokia encourages development; another Calling all innovators competition maybe? For the best and most popular apps on the platform visit Maemo Select (on www.maemo.nokia.com).

Room to grow

Maemo really impressed us. While it has an open-source feel to it, it's more than usable for non-developers. It wouldn't be a stretch to say that it is at the leading edge of smartphone interfaces, even though it's still rough around the edges. Maemo 5 does look to have legs though, and we are interested to see more devices for it to run on and a little extra polish. [TM]

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12 PC HARDWARE Notebooks

Acer Aspire Z5600 all-in-one

Just add family

We love all-in-one (AIO) PCs, so when Acer sent us the Aspire Z5600 with its gorgeous 23" touch-screen, we could tell we were in for a treat.



To be honest, the Z5600 is pretty much how we envision the future of home PCs. In fact the term personal computer could do with a slight adjustment, since this touch-panel PC isn't so much about the personal experience, as it is about the shared one. What happened when we set the Z5600 up in our meeting room is a good example. Within a few minutes our crew started gathering round the Z5600 to experiment with the touch focused software in Acer's TouchPortal.

TouchPortal

Built almost as a skin to your regular desktop, TouchPortal is the life of the touch-

screen party. It's here that you want to call your friends together and say "hey, look at this".

Microsoft's Surface Globe, found there, is a case in point. It's like having the earth at your finger's disposal, turning the globe, searching for places and zooming in using the pinch and expand movement made famous by the iPhone.

On the gaming side, Blackboard a problem solving game close to that old time classic The Incredible Machine, was the root cause of many of the fingerprints left on screen. Unfortunately there is only one other full game on there, plus about six demo versions.

Although TouchPortal is where the primary action is, everything that you can click with a mouse can be controlled by touch as well. Since the screen can handle two touch points, when browsing the internet or working with documents you can pinch and expand to zoom.

Hardware

Being touch enabled it helps that the Z5600 makes use of Intel's Dual-Core E5300 running a very good 2.6 GHz, with a solid 4 GB of RAM at your disposal. 750 GB is a lot of hard disk space to do business on, while Acer provides a very decent wireless keyboard and mouse with the package.

With a resolution of 1920 x 1080 the touch-screen is absolutely stunning and that is why we found it strange that Acer didn't opt to include an HDMI port for HD content too. The monitor also didn't feature any on-panel adjustment buttons, so it's a struggle to adjust contrast or brightness easily. The keyboard includes a volume dial for easy adjustment of sound, speaking of which, there is no need to hook it up to external speakers since Acer's Dolby Home Theater speakers do the job remarkably well.

Conclusion

With 23" of touch-screen goodness at your disposal and a very decent hardware line-up, we can recommend the Acer Z5600 AIO wholeheartedly. It costs a reasonable **R10 999** from Incredible Connection. [MJ]

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Panasonic Toughbook CF-U1

Built to last

In this age of the metro man, where men have handbags, get manicures and are supposed to use face cream since we're worth it, it's good to have a real man like Bakkies Botha in our midst. Built like a brick wall, it's his unwillingness to give an inch on the rugby field that gives opponents nightmares.

He's tough and got all the skills necessary to get the job done without much fuss. We can say the same of Panasonic's Toughbook CF-U1.

Ultra Mobile

The Toughbook U1 falls into the ultra-mobile PC category, situated between a smartphone and a netbook PC. In essence it's more a netbook than a smartphone, running on the Intel Atom Z520 processor found in many of today's netbooks.

Fully rugged

Made for field-work, what distinguishes the U1 is its fully-ruggedness. This means it can roll with the punches, since if you drop it won't break, if you spill water all over it won't surrender, no dust will penetrate it and continuous vibration on the dash of a car won't make it cry for help. It has to be seeing that it has gone through tests that meet military standards (see block right). As such you'll find no movable parts inside only a 16 GB solid state disk and no fan.

Mobility

In size it's about the same as a netbook and at just over a kilo weighs less than most. The scratchproof touch-screen measures 5.6" with the QWERTY keyboard situated directly below it. Since the U1 is built to be held in your hand secured by a hand strap, the keyboard is meant to be operated with your thumbs, therefore we will not recommend the U1 for anyone that is required to do a lot of typing (the bigger CF-30 series is more suitable).

Usability

The U1 is mainly aimed people in the field doing utility work, as such it can be ordered with a whole list of optional extras to assist in getting the job done (see list on the side). What we liked about the U1 is the inclusion of shortcut buttons on the right hand side of the screen that gives instant access to often used programs. On the left you'll find the zoom and scroll buttons for when the screen gets a bit small. Speaking of which, while the LCD screen is visible in daylight, at 300 nits, it's not as bright as the other Toughbooks in the range at 1000 nits. We would have liked to have seen larger keyboard buttons to use with gloves on, but there is a stylus available to use with the onscreen keyboard.

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Conclusion

For what it is built for, the Panasonic Toughbook U1 beats the field hands down. Every inch of its design reeks of ruggedness and with the military grade testing behind it, the U1 puts its money where its mouth is. Although not highly speced it is more than most would require to get the job done. With the U1 you don't pay for the specs, you pay for its abilities.

For more info call Panasonic on 011-313-1618 or email Rohan at rvanheerden@pansolutions.co.za or Vanessa at vcoopasamy@pansolutions.co.za.

Basic Specs

OS: Windows XP, Vista or 7
CPU: Intel Atom Z520 (1.33 GHz)
RAM: 1 GB DDR2 SDRAM
HDD: 16 GB SSD
Screen: 5.6" LCD touch-screen
USB Ports: 1
Wi-Fi: Yes, 802.11 a/b/g/ draft-n
Expansion slot: SD card

Optional

- 3G connectivity
- Bar code or RFID reader
- GPS
- 2 Megapixel autofocus camera with LED lights
- Fingerprint reader

Military Specifications and Standards as set by the U.S. Department of Defense

Free fall test: PC falls onto plywood from 90 cm onto each face, edge and corner for a total of 26 drops.
Dust resistance test: Tiny particles continually sprayed onto PC when operating.
Water resistance test: Precipitation of the PC for 10 minutes at a rate of 10 mm of water per minute.
Vibration test: PC was subjected to vibration for 1 hour at each of its axes.
Typing Test: Each key was typed two to five million times.
Aging: Tested at -20 °C and 60 °C.

130. Average number of friends per Facebook user. 2.5 billion. Photos uploaded to Facebook every month.

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 Panasonic recommends Windows Vista™ Business

Panasonic is pleased to announce the arrival of the new Toughbook UMPC, the CF-U1, a new standard in rugged ultra portable PDA devices. Featuring a shock resistant 16GB solid state hard drive as well as QWERTY keyboard, 5.6 inch WSVGA and a 300NIT brightness LCD touchscreen which is resistant to rain, dust and spills.



Panasonic ideas for life

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The Edimax 3G-6210n wireless and portable 3G router allows you to set up a wireless network wherever you are to share a 3G connection



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This type of device is useful if you want to set up a mobile office when on a trip with colleagues. It also offers the security of a backup connection should your ADSL line go down at the office or home.

While we were very impressed by the Edimax's coverage, up to 10 m in line-of-sight, we were a little underwhelmed by its transfer speeds. We got an average downlink rate of 1.2 Mbps, measured on www.speedtest.net using the U9-T modem.

That said the Edimax is a better option than looking at an all-in-one portable 3G router and modem like the MiFi 2352 (go to www.techsmart.co.za for this review) if you already own a USB 3G modem. It comes at a manageable **R907** (excl VAT).

Phone Miro Distribution on 086-123-MIRO (6476) or email sales@miro.co.za for more info.

U9-T USB 3.75G HSUPA GSM Modem Connected in a flash

If you're looking for an easy to use modem to connect via SIM to your cellular network, the U9-T HSUPA GSM modem is vying for your attention.

It resembles a rather large USB flash drive and is dead easy to set-up.

Once connected usage is tracked per session via a handy application that is loaded during device set-up. The software also keeps tabs on your previous month's usage, which comes in handy to see if you had data left that carried over, plus you have the ability to set warning points to alert you if you start reaching your data cap.

A microSD card port on the side of the device means the U9-T can also be used as a flashdisk, but if you want to use it on another PC you will be bothered by the U9-T's auto run set-up wizard.

At **R895** the U9-T modem is a solid choice if you're looking to connect via 3G, and it's also a solution if you don't want to be bound to a data contract which includes a modem. The U9-T is available from Otto Marketing on 011-791-1033 or www.otto.co.za.



8. Number of friend requests the average Facebook user sends every month.

Genius G-Pen F610

The (G-)pen is mightier than the sword

Graphic designers looking for a well priced graphic tablet might want to cast their eyes on Genius' G-Pen F610. It's an A5 sized tablet on which you bring your visual creations to virtual life, making it much easier to draw and work in Photoshop.

We found the Genius a breeze to set-up and no problem to work on since the surface is very smooth and resistance free, allowing the pen to glide along nicely. Talking of which the cordless pen has a solid 1024 level

pressure sensitivity, and features two buttons which you can use to right and left click with. We also found the 29 programmable Hot Key buttons useful since it makes it easy to reach your most used Office, internet and Windows functions.



It's capable and easy to use and meant for the graphic designer who wants to move to a tablet and pen without breaking the bank to do so. **R1 400** from PC Pro Shop on 012-348-4000.

Toshiba eSTUDIO 2820c

Full control of your printing

As can be expected from Toshiba you can't really fault their eSTUDIO 2820c on specs. The printing speed of 28 pages per minute for full colour and black pages is zippy, and the 1 000 sheet paper capacity will avoid time consuming paper refills. Two of its other features grabbed our attention.

Firstly, the 2820c has 80 GB of internal storage, with users being able to set up a public or private mailbox over the network to store any docs and files on the printer to print, copy or fax later.

The other feature is Toshiba's TopAccess software, which allows you to manage the accessibility of users to the 2820c's functions, as well as to monitor jobs being done on the printer. You can for instance, limit the amount of pages that the sales department can print per week or only allow that department to print brochures. It makes for a good cost savings- and abuse monitoring measure.

The eStudio 2820c is available from Toshiba on rental from **R1495** per month. Contact Jayson Mac Gregor on 011-796-4889 for more info.



Antec P182 Mid Tower Case and Huntkey H001 Hercules Gaming Case The case for tower cases

The Antec P182 mid tower (R2300) is aimed at SMEs looking for a server tower, but can also suit gamers, although this 14 kg mid tower can become seriously heavy when dragging it to a LAN.

Supporting 11 drive bays, which include 4 external 5.25" drive bays, an external 3.5" bay and six internal 3.5" bays for all your hard-drives, the P182 is more than well equipped. It also features

tool-less design, which comes in handy when swapping components. It should handle most of the new CPUs and GPUs on offer.

Not to be outdone by the P182, the Huntkey H001 Hercules (R520) has seven 3.5" drive bays and four 5.25" bays. It also counts four USB 2.0 ports, HD Audio and a FireWire (IEEE1394) port at the front of the case. Fans are optional, so it's targeted mainly at casual gamers.

Both are available from Computer Corporation on 08616-08616.



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Iomega ScreenPlay Director HD media player

1 TB for your home entertainment

Media players just aren't that popular, which is quite odd because they're not as expensive or labour intensive to setup as home theatre PCs, and should appeal to a wider audience than consoles that are geared for home entertainment, like the PS3 and Xbox 360.

Setup

The Iomega ScreenPlay Director HD media player is one of the better media players we've looked at. As a dedicated device all you really need before you can start watching content on your TV, beyond plugging it in and putting batteries in its remote, is load up content to its built-in 1 TB hard drive. The codecs are taken care of and can be updated via the internet with a few button clicks on your remote.

The device also comes with a HDMI out port, so you can easily connect it to your HDTV. We were very pleased with the quality of playback we received, with the device capable of full HD playback. As a bonus, Iomega have even included a HDMI cable in the box.

Connectivity

Connecting to the internet is no problem on the Iomega ScreenPlay Director HD as it comes with a 10/100 Ethernet port and there is the option to purchase a Wi-Fi adapter, if you prefer going wireless. By signing up for an account on Iomega's website you can access YouTube via the device and even make use of a BitTorrent client.

Storage

The device features a 1 TB built-in hard drive and comes with three USB ports you can plug external hard drives into, so you'll never be short of space. When connected to your home network, the ScreenPlay Director HD is visible as a network drive, which allows you to transfer files directly to the device. You will also be able to access shared files on the network, but this can be a little slow.

Interface

The trouble with most media players is their interface: slow, annoying and generally inadequate interfaces are common. The Iomega ScreenPlay Director HD, while a little underwhelming, is none of these. Well it might be a little slow, but it is adequate.



That's the trouble though, it's really simple to use with the menu screen including just five options – Music, Video, Photos, Online Media and Settings. Beyond the main menu you browse simply by file name, which can feel a little one dimensional. You can't browse through your music by artist or even do a basic search.

Verdict

The Iomega ScreenPlay Director HD is a fantastic media player. Its interface, if a little too straightforward, is a step in the right direction for media players. A little more flexibility would have been appreciated though. Retailing at a recommended **R2499**, it's pricey but well worth the simplicity it brings to enhancing your home entertainment, plus keep in mind that it comes with a massive 1 TB worth of memory. Email info.sa@iomega for more info. [TM]

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7680 x 1600. The maximum resolution that the ATI Radeon HD 5970 can support.

Advertorial Tippmann TPX Pistol

Happiness is a warm gun

The only guns we run into here at the TechSmart office are those we reload in the first person shooter (FPS) we're currently playing. So it's nice to do a bit of shooting, albeit with paintballs, using the Tippmann TPX .68 Caliber Paintball Pistol.



It's big, rugged and looks aggressive, so pretty much like the FPS ones we've encountered. And as far as shooting power is concerned let's just say that we definitely don't want to be on the receiving end of the TPX balls.

The TPX's metal trigger punctures the CO₂ on the first pull, saving air so you don't run out in the heat of battle. It contains a self-locking eight ball magazine clip and a quick release magazine feed system. As far as accuracy is concerned the TPX is spot on.

It comes with a nice protection case as well as a cleaning kit. To turn the TPX into a self defence weapon you can buy Duel Pepper Balls that should not only hurt when shot, but also burn the living daylights out of your attacker.

The Tippmann TPX is available from www.capitalpaintball.co.za on 012-756-1278 for **R2249**.



Advertorial The Filling Station

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Their product line-up includes original and generic cartridges, printers from HP, Canon and Samsung, and key service items like ink and laser refills plus printer maintenance and repairs. They also offer business services such as printing, copying and faxing.

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6.8%. Africans with access to the web. 74.2%. Americans with access to the web.

Yealink VP-2009D Video Phone

Video and Voice over IP

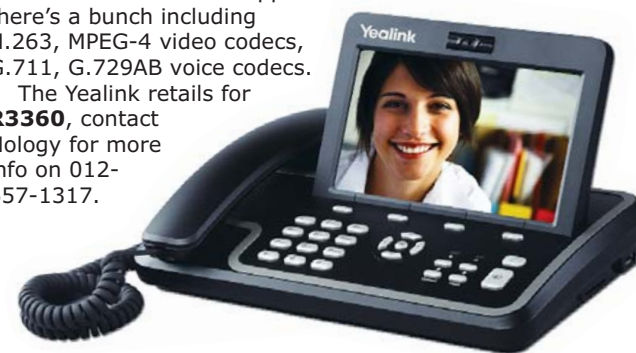
If you're in the market for a video phone to make free calls and video calls over IP with, then you may want to consider Yealink's latest offering.

The Yealink VP-2009D video phone sports the TI DaVinci chipset, a 7" TFT-LCD touch-screen with 800 x 480 pixels resolution and a 0.3 megapixel CMOS camera. It can deliver video calls at low bandwidth, because of its use of a highly developed H.264 codec and its adaptive bandwidth adjustment technology.

VP-2009D suits any office and home environment and can be used to view picture slide shows or as a digital photo frame when not in use.

The device supports a plethora of external interfaces including dual LAN ports, USB, SD cards while also including support for the wideband G.722 codec for HD audio. In terms of overall codec support there's a bunch including H.263, MPEG-4 video codecs, G.711, G.729AB voice codecs.

The Yealink retails for **R3360**, contact Nology for more info on 012-657-1317.



39 million. Xbox 360s sold. >500 million. Xbox and Xbox 360 games sold.

Logitech Z320 Speakers

All-around sound

The Logitech Z320 speaker system sure looks the part of a pair of high quality speakers.

They form part of Logitech's latest range of speakers with 360-degree sound, which they reckon will project audio evenly in all directions.



This is certainly the case as there isn't only the one central listening "sweet spot" in front of the Z320s. As we found, you can freely move about the room without the quality of the sound fluctuating in any way. The sound quality was good while watching movies and listening to music, but the volume, with 10 Watts of

power behind it, was even better.

We missed the extra bass since this isn't a 2.1 speaker system, for that you would have to look at the Logitech Z323 system. As always there is a premium on Logitech's products, and the Z320 speaker system is no exception. It retails at **R499**, for more info visit www.logitech.co.za.

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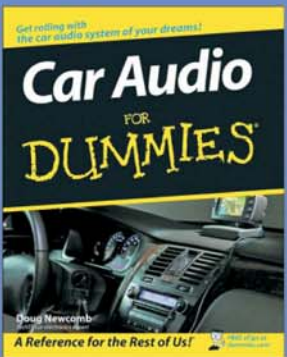
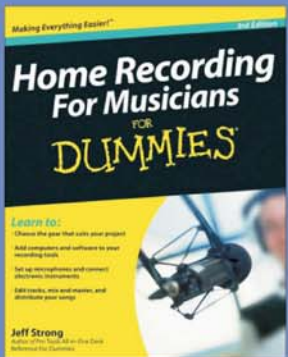
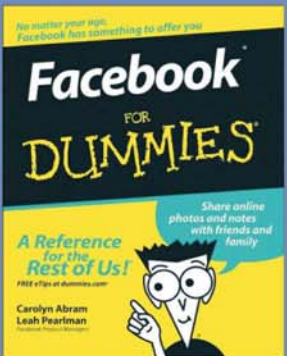
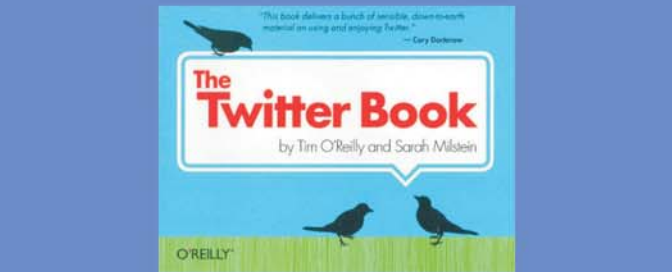
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Serif PagePlus X4 DTP package
Page layout made easy

Although page layout and design programs like PhotoShop and QuarkXpress still dominate the market, you don't have to learn or buy one of these expensive software packages to achieve good results with smaller projects.

Entry-level software, such as Serif's PagePlus X4 publishing package, is making it easier and cheaper to get into the design game.

As can be expected it is not as encompassing as the more established software, but PagePlus a surprisingly powerful desktop publishing package. It's not that difficult to get started with the online video tutorials at your disposal, and if you have a bit of designing experience behind you good results will be your destiny.

The X4 version of PagePlus contains better PDF handling abilities, improved photo editing and drawing functionality as well as an improved user interface featuring tabs for better workflow.

PagePlus X4 is available for **R1299** from Holton & Associates on 011-789-6181.



BOOKS

How to Do Everything: iPod, iPhone & iTunes
All about the i

If you're a digital immigrant, meaning a person who was born before the age where all that's tech reigns supreme, then *How to do Everything: iPod, iPhone & iTunes*, by Guy Hart-Davis, will quickly get you on par with your digital native kids. Well at least on the Apple front.



Hart-Davis teaches you everything you need to know about these gadgets – from the most basic and routine, to the most advanced techniques and tricks in the business. It comes in very handy since Apple isn't exactly forthcoming with detailed info on their offerings.

Some of the topics include how to configure video for your iPod, managing your audio and video library, how to use your iPod or iPhone with software other than iTunes and utilising your iPod or iPhone as an external storage device to save data on.

It is available for **R289** from Intersoft on 011-325-2643 or alternatively visit www.intersoft.co.za.

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3 billion. Apps downloaded from the Apple's App Store.

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Google in China

Google have said that they will radically change their China policy after a “highly sophisticated and targeted attack”, originated from the country in December 2009, resulting in intellectual property being stolen and human rights activists’ accounts being hacked.

Human rights

Although this attack led to intellectual property being stolen, Google claims the hackers had their sights set on the Gmail accounts of Chinese human rights activists. Two Gmail accounts were hacked, but without the content of their emails being accessed.

The final straw

David Drummond, Google’s corporate development and chief legal officer, said: “These attacks and the surveillance they have uncovered – combined with the attempts over the past year to further limit free speech on the web – have led us to conclude that we should review the feasibility of our business operations in China.” As a first step Google said that they will no longer censor search results in China, a move which they admit might result in the discontinuation of the Google.cn service and the closing down of their China offices.

More than humanitarian?

Despite Google’s humanitarian rhetoric, some analysts believe that Google’s reaction to the attacks involves more than just humanitarian concern. With about a 30% share of China’s \$1 billion search market (Chinese rival Baidu holds most of the rest), they feel Google would rather abandon China than risk

having extremely important intellectual property stolen.

Google’s “Don’t be evil” slogan has also been under the spotlight since entering the Chinese market four years ago. From the start they were required by the Chinese government to sensor info for example regarding the Tiananmen Square protests and the persecuted Falun Gong movement. The move to stop censorship of Chinese search results should help to restore public confidence and internal cohesion, since neither Baidu nor Microsoft is prepared to do the same.

Governments get involved

In the interim, Google’s public response to the attacks left the door open for the issue to be politicised. US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton asked Beijing to investigate the incident and release their findings, while also criticising them on their internet censorship policies.

Beijing hit back accusing the US of “groundless accusations against China” and said that it was harmful to China-US relations.

And now?

When going to print Beijing and Washington were still at it, while Google was still censoring search results in China, stating that it will cease to do so in “a reasonably short time”. They added that they wished to remain in China. Beijing will not be too pleased with Google’s behaviour, but having a massive company like Google withdrawing from the country can send all the wrong messages to both current and potential western business partners.

“Don’t do evil” Google on the other hand will face a lot of criticism if they don’t stick to their “no censorship” guns and try and appease Beijing.

How this row will conclude should tell us a lot, about both China’s approach to the next decade, and how big Google’s humanitarian concern really was. [MJ]

10 years. Life expectancy that Sony has for the PS3.



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Advertorial Superb Uniwell Systems

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Superb covers all types of applications, including solutions for large and small retailers, wholesalers, hospitality- and utility industries. They are renowned for their large stock holding, ensuring minimal lead-time from order to invoice, and a top-class "while-you-wait" service.

Workshop and Repairs

Another valuable asset is Superb's repair and maintenance team, a group of highly skilled technicians with the expertise to repair down to component level. Repairs can be done to all POS system with different elements covered such as cash registers, price marking equipment, PCs, scanners, keyboards and monitors.

Showroom and training facility

Because of Superb's large company grounds (2 400 m²), with modern showroom and training facility included, a large selection of products can be viewed on premises, while a dedicated team of professionals are on standby to assist with any enquiries. The

skill development training facility provides training devoted to cash register systems, advanced computer based POS applications and BackOffice control software. Courses are offered to resellers, end-users, waiters, cashiers, operators as well as hospitality- and retail managers.

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Superb Uniwell Systems seeks out the world's best practices in order to apply them with an international perspective. They consistently associate themselves with best of class partners. That is why they distribute Uniwell's electronic cash register (ECR) and POS products for South Africa and the Sub-Saharan African region. Uniwell is well known across the globe for providing class leading products of excellent quality and reliability.

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The aim of the company is to remain on the cutting edge in terms of design techniques and developments within the POS industry, coupled with a high level of services and support. This aim leads to Superb being an industry leader, consistently expanding and re-enforcing their world class business standards, while continuing to set the standard for innovation.

Superb Uniwell Systems can be visited at 555 Mitchell Street, Pretoria West. Give them a call today on 012-327-5855 or email them at sales@superb.co.za

10-15%. Xbox 360 processing power used by Project Natal.

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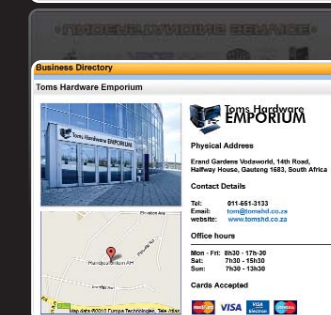
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Darksiders

On the War path

Yes, it's another post-apocalyptic game, but Darksiders makes the end of the world fun.

In Darksiders you are War – the legendary first Horseman of the Apocalypse, who is duped into prematurely starting the apocalypse. Disgraced and stripped of his power, War returns to earth a century later to search and destroy those responsible for deceiving him.

Paradox

The story isn't adapted directly from a comic, a movie or a book. Instead, it was written exclusively for the game by the guys at Vigil Games. Conversely, there is very little that's original about the gameplay, with Darksiders borrowing elements rather liberally from games like Zelda, Devil May Cry and God of War. This paradox actually works well though as the gameplay is tried and tested and the plot is fresh and absorbing.

Gameplay

In typical third person action-adventure style the game focuses on three activities, namely combat, puzzles and exploration. Combat can be a hack-and-slash affair that consists of using basic combo moves to stun enemies with War's colossal sword, Chouseater, and an end move to deal a gruesome fatal blow. You literally use every button on the controller at times – with some of the buttons serving multiple functions. This only serves to make the game more enjoyable though, as you have to improve with every level.

The game's puzzles are similarly simple to complete in the beginning, but ramp up in difficulty as you progress. While never impossible, you will need to use your brain a little to spot the

trick necessary to unlock the puzzles.

Furthermore, exploring the world, collecting souls and getting all the upgrades you can is as much fun as the combat in a lot of ways.

Attention to detail

The environments are insanely detailed, are all unique and set the tone for the game beautifully. The character models are as detailed and grab you from the first, while the voice acting is also impressive, pulling you into the story without over feeding you.

The only thing that lets the presentation down is the background music, which is entirely forgettable, doing no more than an adequate job of altering the mood of the game when necessary. That aside, the game simply oozes polish.

Verdict

The unique plot, stitched together from myth, legend and biblical dogma, and the less than unique gameplay combine to make this one of the most impressive action-adventures we've played. [TM]

We loved...

War's character model is insanely detailed.

We hated...

Background music is more irritating than Britney Spears on speakerphone.

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Location Locking	Available

Concurrent Connections	4
Dynamic IP	Automatically assigned
Local & International Access	Yes
Port Shaping	Yes
Uplink Provider	SAIX
ADSL line	Excludes line rental
POP3 Email Accounts	5
Virus Scanning	Yes
SPAM Filtering (SpamAssassin)	Yes
SMTP Relay	Yes (smtp.saix.net)
Webmail	Yes

For full details visit www.webonline.biz or call us on 0861-666-555