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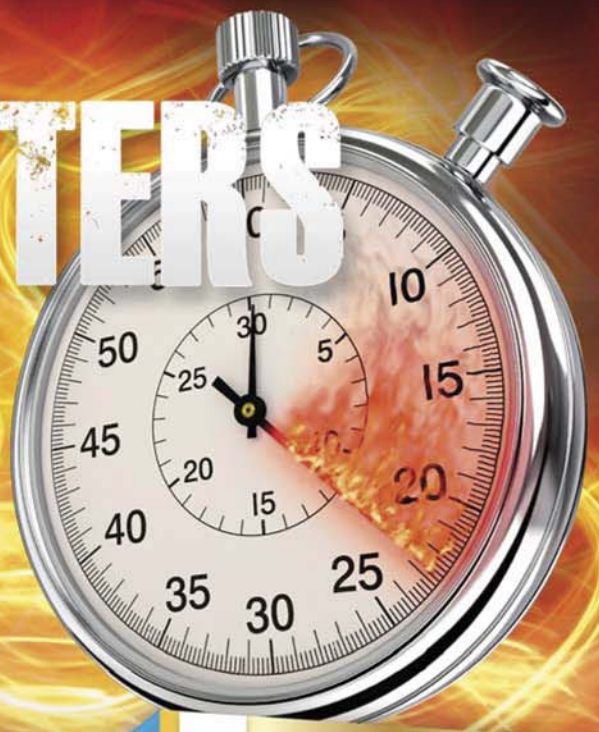

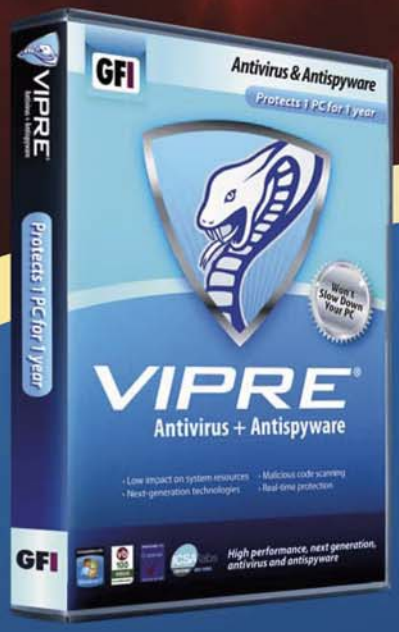

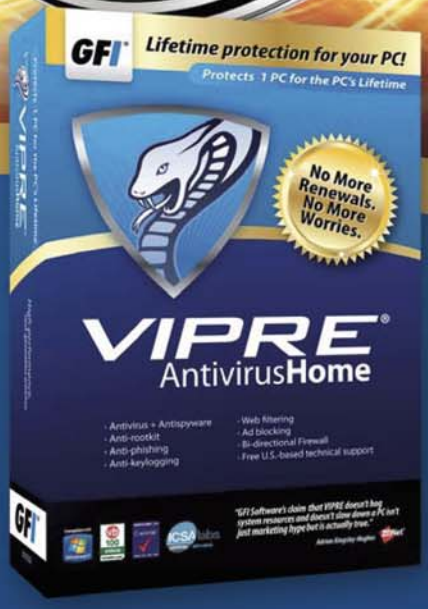

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The Internet issue ›› November 2011

Please, sir, can I have some more apps?

It's mainly thanks to my Android smartphone that I've come to the conclusion that PCs are just too cumbersome. Due to the vast amounts of apps available these days, doing almost anything on your phone is as easy as searching for the appropriate app in the marketplace and then downloading it. Try for example finding a data usage tracking program for your PC and you're lead down many alleyways, leaving you uncertain that the software you're about to download is safe and effective.

That's why I'm really excited about the upcoming Windows 8. It seems as if Microsoft took a leaf out of their Windows Mobile (their operating system for smartphones, competing against Apple's iOS and Google's Android) book, to provide desktops with a more smartphone-centric look and feel. The quick availability and usage of apps are supposed to be part and parcel of the set-up, with this having the potential to drastically alter the way we compute on notebooks and desktops. If Windows 8 is as effective as Microsoft recently pitched it, then we are in for a very interesting 2012.

Enjoy the issue,
Mike (michael@techsmart.co.za)

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» Regular

The Big Issue: BlackBerry Blackout
So what exactly happened during last month's BlackBerry outage and what is the fallout? 9

» Hardware

Toshiba Satellite L755-17u
This new notebook from Toshiba may be mid-range, but it still boasts some impressive features, performance and add-ons. 11

» Smartphones

Nokia N9
The N9 will most probably be Nokia's only MeeGo running smartphone. Which is a shame because we really liked it. 15

iPhone 4S: What you need to know
So it's not the iPhone 5, but the 4S still contains a number of good improvements. 17

» Interviews

The Canon Expo
We talk to Michelle Janse Van Vuuren to find out more about the upcoming Canon Expo. 29

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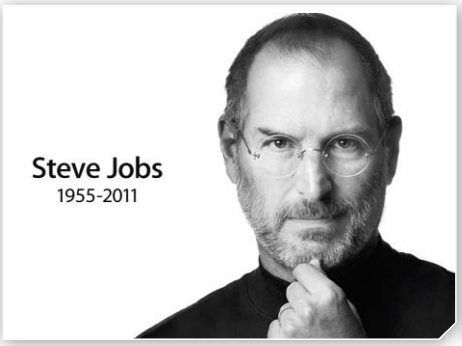

The technology world was shaken as one of its icons, and the leader of the highly successful Apple, Steve Jobs, passed away after a long battle with pancreatic cancer at the age of 56. Jobs was universally hailed as a visionary who was responsible for revolutionising technology with a number of innovations, including the MacBook, iPod, iPhone and iPad. Jobs was paid tribute to by technology luminaries, the US president and fans alike. His death came barely a month after he had resigned as the company's CEO, citing that he could no longer perform his duties, and asked the Apple Board to appoint Tim Cook in his place.

BlackBerry Blackout

BlackBerry users suddenly found themselves without access to email, the internet or messaging as Research in Motion had a core switch failure in its infrastructure in October. The service outages, which lasted for three days before being fully restored, affected Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, before spreading to Canada and North America as well. Making matters worse, RIM provided no feedback until the second day. After the issue had been resolved, RIM implemented damage control measures to try win back the confidence of its global network of users. For the full story, and all that it entailed, read our Big Issue on p11.

Google Ice Cream Sandwich

Google unveiled its latest and eagerly awaited Android 4.0 operating system, named Ice Cream Sandwich. The new OS is designed to run on both tablets and smartphones, and hosts a number of noteworthy features. Android users can look forward to keyboard improvements, resizable widgets, revamped Gmail integration and a significantly faster browser which enables them to sync their bookmarks with Google Chrome. The new OS also boasts Android Beam, which enables users to instantly share webpages, YouTube videos, maps, directions and apps by tapping two phones together, providing the devices support near field communication.

Hot New Products ››

1. Canon EOS 1D X

Canon's latest professional top of the range camera has enough features to make any photographer drool. With a new 18.1 megapixel full-frame sensor, dual Digic 5 processors, an ISO range from 100-51 200 (expandable up to an unheard of ISO 204 800), 14 frames per second shooting speed and of course full HD (1920 x 1080p) video, the EOS 1D X is the Ferrari of DSLRs. Now to find the change for its $6800 (R54 970) asking price.

2. Vodafone Webbook

Sometimes the hottest products aren't those that are the most expensive, but rather, the most accessible. The Vodafone Webbook weighs less than 1 kg, sports a 10" LCD screen, 512 MB RAM and 4 GB of storage space. It is further powered by an 800 MHz Mx515 ARM Cortex A8 CPU. Most notably, the netbook costs an affordable R1499, and is also available from Vodacom with a prepaid Starter Pack for R1899, which includes a modem, SIM card and 100 MB of data per month for 12 months.

3. Google Galaxy Nexus

The new Google Galaxy Nexus, manufactured by Samsung, is the first smartphone to operate on Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich (see news above).

Powered by a 1.2 GHz dual-core processor, this 4G-enabled device sports a massive 4.65" Contour Display within a slim 8.84 mm profile. Using Near Field Communication you also can share webpages, YouTube videos, maps, directions and apps by simply tapping two phones together. Eat your heart out iPhone 4S.

4. Motorola Droid Razr

Remember the ultra-cool flip-out Motorola

Razr from the mid-2000s? Fresh from the Googorola factory is the new revised Motorola Razr. The updated one though does not flip-out, but comes with an ultra-thin frame. According to Motorola its 7.1 mm profile makes it the slimmest smartphone to date. The Razr is powered by a dual-core 1.2 GHz TI processor, has 1 GB of RAM, operates on Android 2.3.5 (Gingerbread) and brags with a 4.3" Super AMOLED Advanced display with a qHD (540 x 960) resolution.

22 February 2012. Date on which South Africans will be able to buy Sony's PlayStation Vita handheld.

Toshiba recommends Windows® 7.

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Sci News ››

Happy tweet

A little birdie tells us that mornings are happy hours. Researchers write in a recent report in the journal *Science*, that they tracked Twitter messages to study how people's mood changes during the course of a day. The team analysed tweets of almost 2.5 million people across 84 countries over two years, recording expressions of emotions such as enthusiasm, delight, alertness, distress, fear and anger. Positive emotions tend to peak early in the morning, but gradually dip during the day. Another positive peak was seen close to midnight. Positive tweets were also more often sent over weekends, although the early morning peaks occurred about two hours later than on weekdays. The results suggest that work stress puts a damper on positive attitudes. You don't say.

A breath of fresh air

When it comes to that stuffy feeling, your nose knows. According to a report in a recent issue of the open access journal *PLoS ONE*, the physical nasal obstruction experienced during a cold or allergy isn't the only thing that makes you feel congested. Scientists asked 44 volunteers to breathe air of normal humidity at room temperature, dry air at room temperature and cold air and then rate the feeling of congestion. Breathing cold, dry air was associated with the least discomfort. The researchers think that sensors inside the nasal passages monitor the temperature and humidity of air passing through and that the combination of cold and dry air signals unobstructed flow. The findings may be used to develop new treatments for stuffy sinuses.

Paint shop pros

It seems our early ancestors had mixing paint down to a tee. A team of scientists write in a recent issue of the journal *Science*, that they have discovered the remains of paint mixing tools in Blombos Cave near Mossel Bay. The small toolkits consist of ochre-rich rock powder, grindstones, bones and charcoal in two abalone shells. The paint was possibly used for both wall and body decoration. Using a dating technique called optically stimulated luminescence, the researchers were able to date the find to about 100 000 years ago. Since common use of ochre pigments was previously thought to have developed only later in the Stone Age, the new finding is an important benchmark for the evolution of mental processes in humans. And you thought living 100 000 years in the past was dull.

» More amazing science

Challenges in developing a car that can travel 1610 km/h. bbc.in/fastestinworld

Six-legged robotic bug sheds light on the evolution of flight. bit.ly/buggingfly

An amazing video of quantum levitation in action. bit.ly/ibelieveicanfly

Eco News ››

Nissan details its 2011 Fuel Cell Stack

Nissan has released its next generation Fuel Cell Stack (FCS, 2011 Model) for its Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (EVs), which boasts significant power density improvements up to 2.5 times better than its 2005 model. This allows it to achieve a world's best of 2.5 kW per liter according to the car manufacturer, with the company also reducing the overall size of the FCS by over half compared to conventional models. All these improvements have luckily not resulted in an increase in the price of the unit though, as Nissan reduced the usage of both platinum as well as parts variation to one quarter, bringing down the cost of it to one-sixth of the previous model.

Plugging into the power of social networking

Social networking behemoth Facebook has announced that it has formed a new partnership with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and software service company Opower. This partnership will exploit the power of social media in order to raise consumer awareness about issues of energy efficiency. These companies are developing a new social energy application for Facebook that will enable users to compare their home's energy usage against the national US average of similar sized homes, as well as with that of their friend's homes. Users will also be able to enter energy-saving competitions and share tips on how to become more energy efficient.

BrightSource planning its 3rd mega solar plant

Solar energy firm BrightSource Energy has filed an application for certification with the California Energy Commission, to develop three 250 megawatt solar power plants (750 megawatts nominal combined), in California's Riverside County. If approved, the Rio Mesa Solar Electric Generating Facility will use BrightSource's next generation 250 megawatt solar plant design, which reduces land use by 33% compared to similar solar plants. The electricity generated by the proposed plants is enough to serve over 300 000 Californian homes during daily peak hours and the complex will reduce CO^2 emissions by almost 20 million tons over its 25 year life cycle. If approved the Rio Mesa plant is expected to be complete by 2016.

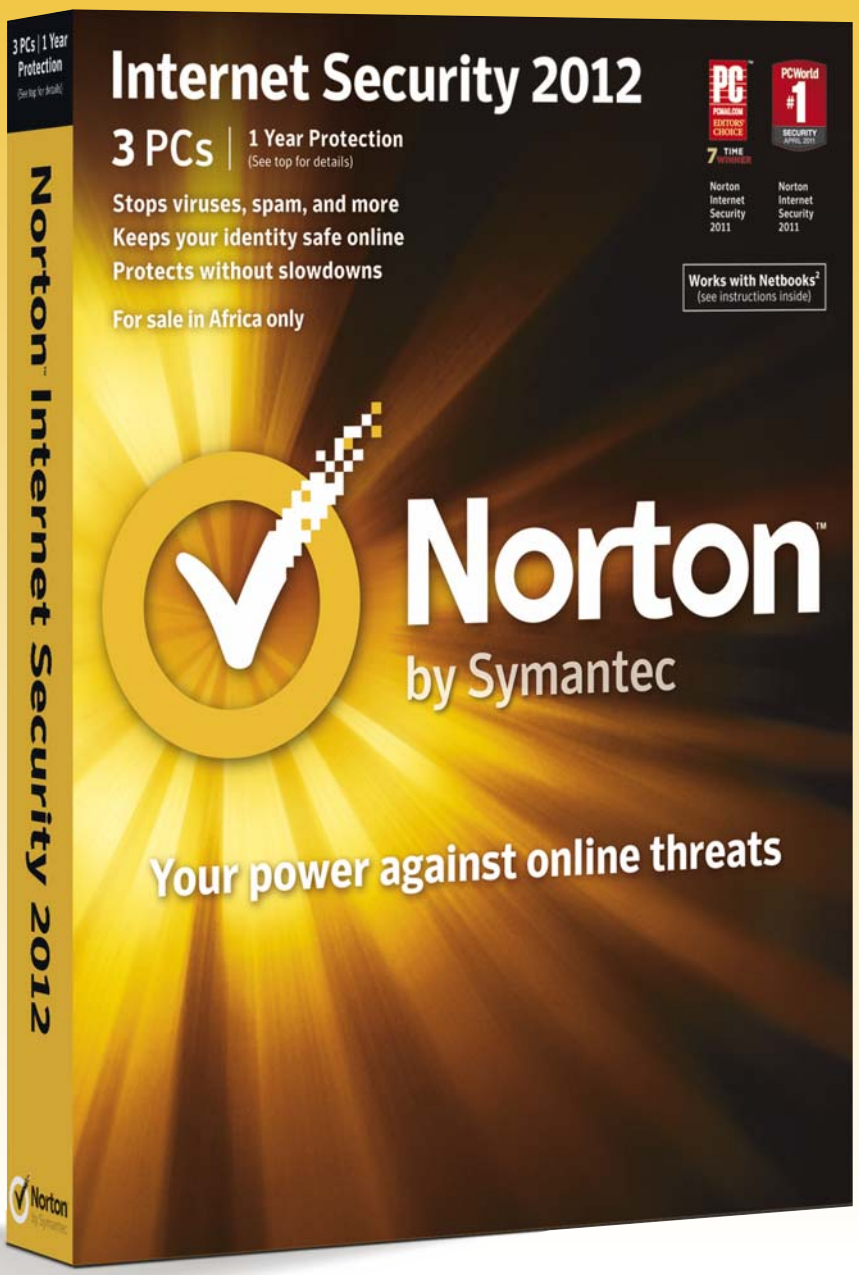
» Other interesting eco news

Winner of new generation electricity pylon announced. bit.ly/pylonstyle

How Apple and Greenpeace buried the eco hatchet. cnet.co/greenerApple

The US state of Texas sets new record for wind-power output. reut.rs/Texaswind

6 Stars. Green Star SA rating awarded to Vodacom for its Vodafone Innovation Centre building in Midrand, to be launched early 2012.



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Interview: Domenico Gargarella, Regional General Manager for Toshiba Southern Africa

Toshiba talks technology

In an informative interview with Domenico Gargarella, regional general manager for Toshiba Southern Africa, TechSmart uncovers Toshiba's view of the PC industry, and reveals the most important question users need to answer before buying a new PC.

The IT industry has seen its fair share of turmoil of late, and in many ways has been undergoing a significant shift in its business models over the years. Gargarella explained that while the market for technology products has remained the same, in the past ten years the number of IT vendors has exploded, to include Toshiba, Lenovo, HP, Asus, Acer, Samsung, Mecer and Sahara.

Another change in the IT space has been the reduction in profit margins, which has compelled PC vendors to aim for greater volumes. Gargarella elaborated that notebook prices cater to particular income groups, with more expensive PCs catering to a smaller market segment of people in a higher income group. But, making a device more affordable opens vendors up to a larger market of lower income earners. This, he continued, has made selling lower priced devices more profitable than higher priced ones, and accounted for the recent trend of seeing higher-end features, such as a Blu-ray player, in mid-range notebooks at more affordable prices.

The challenge to users

Gargarella lamented that many consumers go into a shop and use their hard earned money to buy old technology, because people don't know what the technology on offer can deliver or what value it can bring to their lives. This is exacerbated by the fact that technology is changing so quickly, with almost every month bringing new developments, as well as the fact that people are constantly bombarded with new technology to come to terms with.

He pointed out that, while many people think that any computer will allow them to do whatever they want, there existed a big difference between computers that are suitable for office and internet browsing and those geared for photography, multimedia work and video editing. "My advice to users before they go buy a new computer is to take a moment and ask themselves why they want a computer and what they want to use it for. If buyers wait one more month before making their purchase, they could save money and buy a better model," he added.

To the point

According to Gargarella, the good news is that amid the changes technology is undergoing and bringing, it is ultimately becoming more human-centric, enabling people to do more with less time and expanding their freedom. [RN]

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THE BIG ISSUE

The BlackBerry BLACKOUT

BlackBerry holding company Research in Motion (RIM) experienced a crises of epic proportions last month as the BlackBerry Internet Service went down, leaving millions of their customers facing a communication blackout.

BlackBerry

One day of service outages stretched into two and then three, leaving them unable to send and receive emails, disconnected from BlackBerry Messenger, and cut off from the internet on their device. Users fumed, taking to Twitter, Facebook and the internet to beg and plead with an inauspiciously quiet RIM to fix the problem.

BlackBerry Blackout

While the outages initially affected Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, users were left in the dark as to why they couldn't access the services they were paying for. Somewhat fittingly, RIM received scathing criticism for its failure to communicate with its affected global customers until the second day, when the pressure mounted to find out the cause of the problem and fix it. Despite belatedly reassuring that the company was working to restore services as fast as possible, outages continued for a third day, spreading to Canada and the US and affecting even more BlackBerry users.

While the company eventually identified the problem (a core switch failure within RIM's infrastructure), a former RIM employee revealed to the *Guardian* that the Canadian company had been ignoring problems with its server architecture for years, asserting that the company had neglected to consider scalability until 2007, when there were already eight million active devices.

The Aftermath

After three days of service outages, the problem was resolved, with RIM making consecutive announcements to update customers on their progress. Nonetheless, the damage has been done, and in the aftermath, the company scrambled to try win back the trust that had been lost. Apologies were issued, and a programme was hastily put in place offering users free apps and technical service contracts, while locally cellular provides stepped up to offer their BlackBerry customers remuneration.

Beyond the debacle, and the cost of rebuilding its customers' confidence, the three day BlackBerry blackout begs several as yet unanswered questions: Can BlackBerry users confidently rely on RIM for consistent service, or was this the first of many service failures that smartphone users will be plagued with? Can RIM cope with its current client base, even as they pursue greater market share? Time will tell; for now, the company has its work cut out for them proving that they can be trusted. [RN]

R787. Value of premium apps that BlackBerry users can download in compensation for the BlackBerry service outages.

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Toshiba AT100-100 ›› The boy with a full USB port in his side

Toshiba's AT100 tablet might be bigger and heavier than the competition, but it includes some good full sized ports in its arsenal.

If Toshiba's AT100 was a rugby player, it would be strictly forbidden to play anywhere else but tighthead – seeing that although it might be hefty, it also seems very rugged. The AT100 pulls the scales at a stout 765 g and makes its presence felt with a thickness of 15.8 mm. Compared to the thin and sleek Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1's 565g and 8.6 mm, it's almost double the thickness.

Granted the Samsung is on the opposite end of the scale, being the thinnest tablet currently available. But that said, the only tablet beating the Toshiba on thickness is the Asus Slider, which in its defence contains a slide-out keyboard.

But all the ports

The AT100 does not do things in half measures, seeing that you'll find a full sized USB and HDMI port, while an SD card slot is also present. The full USB port makes it possible to quickly transfer data from a colleague's PC to your tablet via flash disk, although it is not that good at providing quick access to the content on your flash disk since it does not allow quick access to a file explorer option.

"The AT100 does not do things in half measures, seeing that you'll find a full sized USB and HDMI port, while an SD card slot is also present."

Next to the USB port is a full sized HDMI port, handy if you want to view content on your HDTV, with the chances very good that you'll already have an HDMI cable lying around somewhere to do this.

The full SD card slot on top of the AT100 makes the AT100 useful for photographers who want to quickly and easily view enlarged shots of pictures just taken, while also backing up their camera's SD card to the 16 GB of space found on the AT100.

Pretty straightforward

Toshiba provides the straightforward Android Honeycomb 3.1 interface with not much offered in terms of skinning or pre-installed apps.

We're not always too stressed about pre-loaded apps, since it's so easy to download from Android Market, but we do like gratis document and spreadsheet editing apps, which you unfortunately don't receive with the AT100.

Currently there is no 3G enabled version available, so your AT100 will connect via Wi-Fi. The Toshiba AT100-100 is currently available in a 16 GB version only, which retails for R4999. [MJ]

Full review: bit.ly/at100tosh

Toshiba Satellite L755-17u ›› Classy meets cost-effective

The Toshiba Satellite L755 may be mid-range, but it still boasts some impressive features, performance and add-ons.

The first and easily most distinctive quality that struck us when opening up the Toshiba Satellite L755 was its appearance. The 15.6" notebook is graced with a weave-like hexagonal pattern across its silver lid and palm rest, which attractively complements its black and silver colour scheme, lending the notebook an undeniably classy appearance. Adding to this, we also appreciated its reassuringly solid build.

Specifications

Bearing in mind that the Satellite L755 is a mid-range notebook, with a recommended retail price of R6999, it still impressed performance wise. A brilliant 15.6" display, offering a 1366 x 768 resolution is joined by the capable Intel Core i5-2410M processor clocked at 2.3 GHz, and a 640 GB hard drive.

"For the specifications and performance on offer, not to mention the included Blu-ray drive, the L755 is very aggressively priced."

The included 4 GB of DDR3 memory can be further expanded to 8 GB, while the capable Nvidia GeForce GT 525M graphics card has 2 GB of video memory. In general usage we found the notebook to perform flawlessly.

The notebook's battery life was adequate, offering up to four and a half hours on a charge, depending, as usual, on usage patterns. Sound was above average, and although not the loudest when cranked up to full volume, remained free of distortion when music was played through the notebook's speakers.

Added extras

The next notable and appreciated surprise on the notebook is the inclusion of a Blu-ray drive, complemented by an onboard HDMI port for outputting Blu-ray movies to one's TV. It is joined by two USB 2.0 ports and one USB 3.0 port, which supported Sleep and Charge. This enables users to use the notebook to charge their devices while the notebook is hibernating, in sleep mode or even off. Additionally, a multi-card reader can be found on the front of the notebook, just beneath the trackpad.

To the point

For the specifications and performance on offer, not to mention the included Blu-ray drive, the L755 is very aggressively priced. While the notebook may be let down slightly by a keyboard and trackpad that would benefit from some tweaking, the L755 is still a beauty of a mid-range offering. It has a RRP of R6999. [RN]

Full review: bit.ly/sattoshiba

$35 (R277). Price of the world's cheapest tablet, the Android 2.2-operating Aakash, launched in India last month.

HP recommends Windows® 7.

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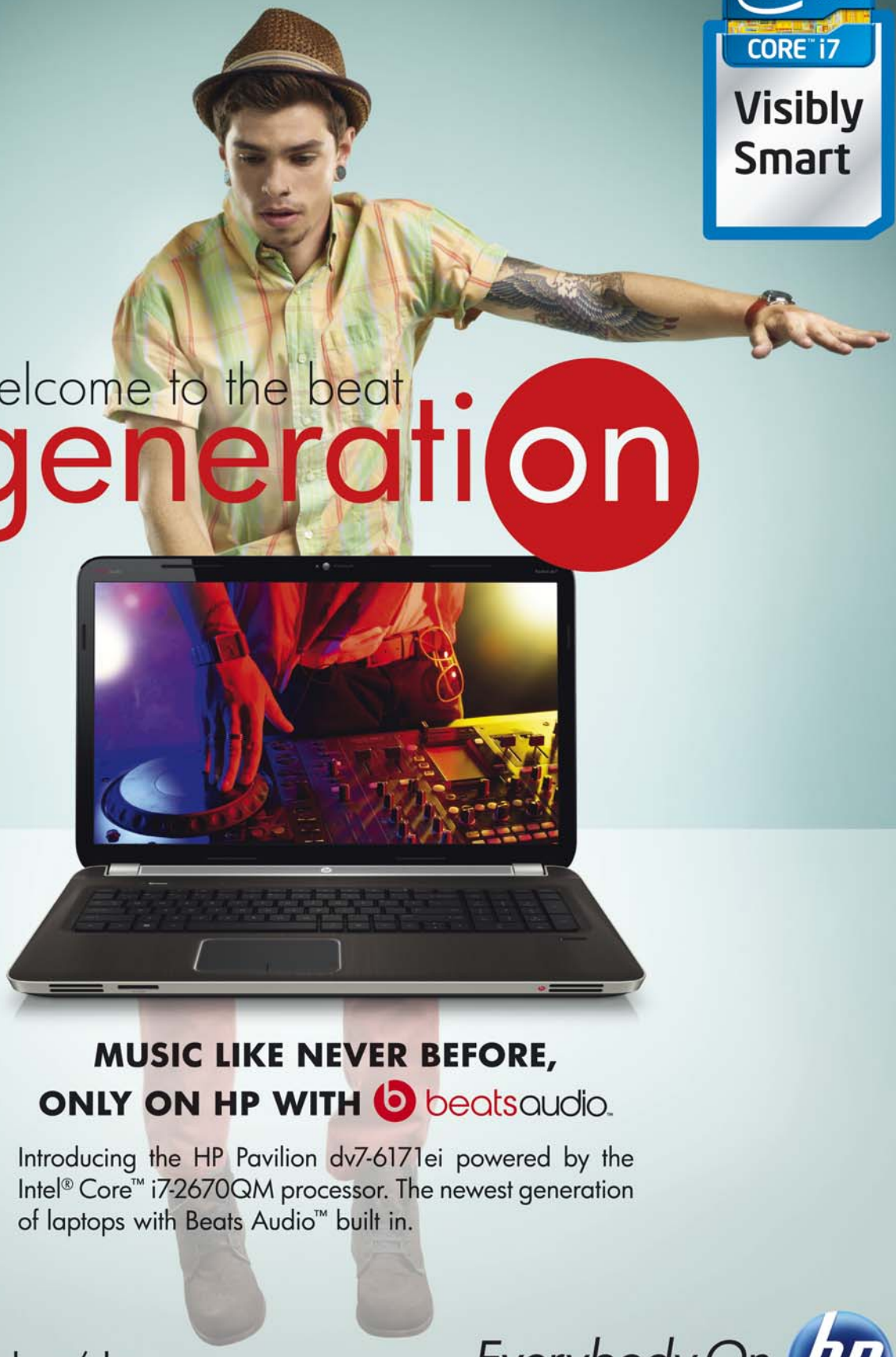

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HP Pavilion dv7: What you need to know

Multimedia Powerhouse

A number of the desktop replacement notebooks that entered our office recently were aimed squarely at the gaming market. This usually means unusual designs, with the units looking more like UFOs that landed instead of a regular notebook. HP's extremely stylish Pavilion dv7 notebook offers a more traditional approach to design, while not skimping on performance.

The dv7 unit that arrived at our office (6b51ei) features an aluminium brushed-metal chassis with an almost dark-brown tint. Opening up the notebook you'll find the full sized Chiclet-styled keyboard with number pad, surrounded by the same brushed-metal, stylishly outlined with a silver-finish. It's a classy look for a very high speced notebook, with the dv7 strong on both performance and entertainment.

All out performance

As far as performance is concerned, the dv7 sports a very powerful 2nd generation Intel Core i7 processor. The i7 range of processors is at the current top of the Intel consumer processor stable when it comes to performance, with the Core i7 2670QM, running at 2.20 GHz, definitely no slow poke. Combined with 8 GB of RAM it makes for a flawless computing experience, but the clincher is the AMD Radeon HD 6770M (2 GB DDR5) graphics card that's also onboard. In combination, the CPU and GPU will make short work of video or 3D graphics work, while also providing excellent gaming performance. Equally as notable is the fact that if you unplug the notebook, the dv7 switches to the less power hungry Intel graphics, helping to extend battery life.

You'll also find 2 x USB 2.0 ports and 2 x USB 3.0 ports, ensuring that data transfer is future proof and blazingly fast. A full HDMI port is also present, plus a multi-card reader.

More than enough for media

Talking of future proofing, one thing you need not worry about with the dv7 is storage space, seeing that you have not 1 Terabyte (TB) of storage, but rather 2 x 1 TB (5400 rpm) just to make sure. This leaves more than enough space for an extensive library of digital music and movies.

These can be viewed on the 17.3" LED backlit screen, offering a resolution of 1600 x 900, which is HD ready but unfortunately not full HD. If you do get tired of your digital movie collection, the dv7 comes standard with a Blu-ray player too. This makes the Pavilion a powerful entertainment hub, rounded off by a very important feature found on some of HP's new notebooks, namely its integrated Beats Audio. Beats by Dr. Dre is currently responsible for some of the best headphones on the market. On the dv7 you'll find three regular speakers arranged just underneath the screen and below the palm rests, while a subwoofer is located underneath the machine. This configuration, along with Beats Audio, means that you don't have to worry about tinny or underwhelming sound at all if you are looking to play movies or listen to music via your notebook.

Conclusion

With two Terabytes worth of storage, a blazingly fast processor working hand in hand with a powerful graphics card, and Beats Audio providing better than the rest audio, the HP Pavilion dv7 is a massive multimedia powerhouse wrapped up in a very stylish package. It retails for R16 999 and is available from Incredible Connection, Dion Wired and the HP Experience store in Sandton City.

"This makes the dv7 a powerful entertainment hub, rounded off by a very important feature, namely its integrated Beats Audio."

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Nokia N9 ›› Hello MeeGo, Goodbye MeeGo

The die is cast as Nokia will be employing Microsoft's Windows Phone 7.5 Mango operating system (OS) as its primary smartphone OS soon. Regardless, the Finnish phone giant managed to produce its first (and probably only) MeeGo-operating smartphone in the N9.

Measuring 116.5 x 61.2 x 12.1 mm, the stylish N9 polycarbonate body flows seamlessly into its curved 3.9" AMOLED (480 x 854, 251 ppi pixel density) ClearBlack display. There are no buttons present on the front of this smartphone, leaving you are completely dependent on the touchscreen to navigate the mobile OS.

MeeGo takes a swipe at UI convention

Luckily the MeeGo OS makes it easy to do so, since you can swipe your way through three home-screens. The first will be familiar to all Nokia users as it is dedicated to applications. The second screen features social networking feeds including Facebook and Twitter, as well as notifications for calls, messages (SMS and MMS) and the like. The final home-screen is for open applications and allows users to easily switch in between all live apps that they have opened. MeeGo does an excellent job of bringing

> "Nokia's N9 is the most exciting and coolest smartphone that the company has produced for a while."

Nokia in-line with Android and iOS, and it's actually far more intuitive to use than both its OS rivals. Its only drawback is that the Nokia Store only contains a few MeeGo supported apps.

Features

Powering the N9 is an ARM Cortex-A8 OMAP3630 running at 1 GHz, with graphics being handled by a PowerVR SGX530 GPU. Although this might not be on par with the dual-core chips in the Galaxy SII and iPhone 4S, it still allows for a smooth and speedy user experience. The N9's 8 MP Carl Zeiss auto-focus camera enables you to capture some beautiful photos, whilst also enabling the recording of HD-Ready videos (720p @ 30 fps). Nokia's Maps, their free turn-by-turn drive and walk navigation with voice guidance, also makes an appearance, and so too some handy pre-loaded apps including Facebook and Twitter.

Conclusion

Nokia's N9 is the most exciting and coolest smartphone that the company has produced for a while, sporting a beautiful design, a very intuitive UI and excellent features. Will users have access to firmware updates and a multitude of apps in the future? Of that we are not so sure. For this reason it's hard to recommend the N9 even though we feel owners will love the device itself. It goes for an RRP of R5999. [HD]

Sony Ericsson Live with Walkman ›› Marching to the Walkman beat

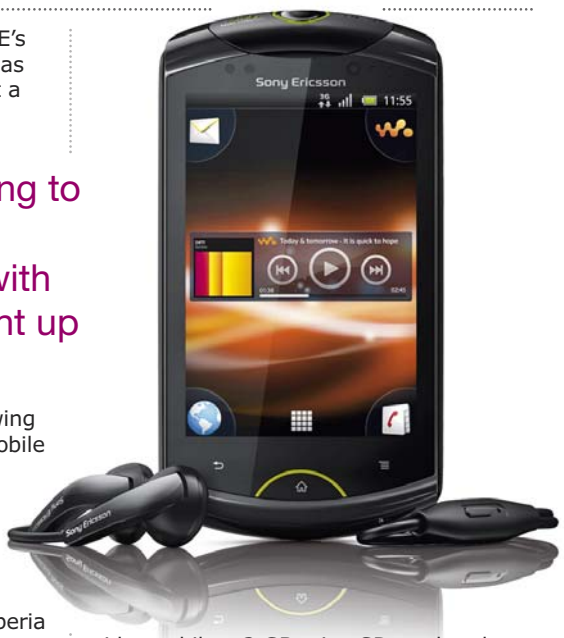
Sony Ericsson (SE) aims to deliver a unique social music experience via its Live with Walkman smartphone, which boasts a dedicated Walkman hardware button that provides you with instant access to the music player.

Push the dedicated Walkman button on top of the device next to the 3.5 mm jack and you are immediately transported to your music player. Here you'll also find the on-screen Infinite button, cleverly linking the current artist playing to new content the likes of music videos on YouTube, artist info pages on Wikipedia and song lyrics searches on Google. If you're one for listening to music via the onboard speakers, the SE Live with Walkman should be right up your alley, seeing that it features Sony's xLOUD Experience. This enhances audio output on the phone's loudspeakers, especially on the higher levels, for much louder and clearer audio compared to what other phones can offer.

The grip-friendly (106 x 56.5 x 14.2 mm) Live with Walkman sports an attractive curved design, similar to SE's Xperia mini but not as stylish or thin as the Xperia arc. This device is not just a glorified entry-level device, since it is powered by a very capable 1 GHz

> "If you're one for listening to music via the onboard speakers, the SE Live with Walkman should be right up your alley"

processor (make not specified), allowing for speedy navigation through the mobile operating system (OS). In this case, the OS is the up-to-date Android 2.3.4 (Gingerbread), but heavily customised with SE's Timescape skin. The latter adds some handy functionality to the standard Android interface, such as Facebook Inside Xperia 2.0, that enables deeper social networking integration.



Features

You navigate the OS by employing the phone's 3.2" (320 x 480) scratch-resistant capacitive touchscreen, which features good viewing angles and nicely saturated colours. It is however more susceptible to displaying glare in direct sunlight when compared to, for instance, Apple's Retina display. The phone's five megapixel camera is also capable of 720p video, while a 2 GB microSD card makes it into the box.

Conclusion

SE's Live with Walkman boast some decent specs, most notably its XLOUD sound enhancements, as well as a truly functional Android skin and Walkman functionality. It would have been even better if it sported media control buttons (like the BlackBerry Curve 3G) directly on the device. It can be yours for an RRP of R3699. [HD]

110 x 50.7 x 9.7 mm. Dimensions for the Nokia 700, which the company claims is smallest smartphone in the world.

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* Specifications depend on model & availability.

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Four million. Following its 14 October launch Apple surpassed this sales figure with its iPhone 4S in just three days.

Apple iPhone 4S: What you need to know

No iPhone 5, but some good improvements

After much hype Apple finally announced its follow-up to the iPhone 4 last month. It is not the iPhone 5 as many (including us) expected, but rather the iPhone 4S.

It can be argued that if only Apple gave it a different form and dubbed it the iPhone 5, many critics' harsh words would have been silenced, but for an expectant Apple fan base, news of "only" a 4S came as a disappointment. Nevertheless, the 4S is significantly faster than its predecessor, powered by a dual-core A5 chip (most probably 1 GHz), which also handles processing on the iPad 2. Despite its increase in speed, Apple stated that it will still be able to maintain a battery life of up to eight hours of 3G talk time.

> "If only Apple gave it a different form and dubbed it the iPhone 5, many critics' harsh words would have been silenced."

Siri, iOS 5 & iCloud

With the launch of iPhone 4S also comes the launch of iOS 5, which sports more than 200 new features, the likes of Twitter integration and Apple's BBM-esque iMessage IM (instant messaging) application. Also launched with the new iPhone was Cupertino's iCloud service, which is a set of free cloud services that work with a user's iPhone, iPad, iPod touch, or Mac to automatically and wirelessly store their content in iCloud and push it to all their devices.

Cupertino also introduced Siri, an intelligent digital assistant for the iPhone 4S. Siri will assist users to make calls, send text messages or email, schedule meetings and reminders, make notes, search the web, find local businesses and get directions. According to Apple, Siri understands context, allowing users to speak naturally when you ask it questions. A user can ask questions like: "Will I need an umbrella this weekend?" and it understands that you are looking for a weather forecast.

Better camera and video

iPhonographers will be happy about the 4S's new eight megapixel rear-facing camera. The iPhone 4S also sports a new custom lens, a larger f/2.4 aperture and an advanced hybrid IR filter that produces sharper, brighter and more accurate images. Besides greatly enhanced stills, this new snapper allows for the recording of full HD (1080p) videos (much like the Samsung Galaxy SII).

Despite the disappointment of no iPhone 5, the 4S is selling extremely well, having notched up four million sold in just three days after release. If all goes well, South Africans can expect the 4S to land here in December. [HD]

Huawei Gaga (U8180 IDEOS X1): What you need to know

Huawei's IDEOS X1 smartphone, otherwise known as the Gaga (apparently no relation to the oddball singing sensation of the same name), is an Android device that looks set to bring the barrier to entry for smartphones below the important R1000 level.

This does not mean, however, that users have necessarily been given the short end of the feature-rich stick. Weighing in at a miniscule 100 g, the Gaga runs off the older Android 2.2 (Froyo) and packs a 528 MHz processor on the Qualcomm MSM7225 chipset – pretty much in-line with other entry-level models. Joining it is 256 MB internal memory, although this can be extended up to 32 GB using the microSD slot. The Gaga also supports both 2G and 3G networks.

One of the more noticeable places to pick up if a phone is entry-level is the screen. In the Gaga's case you'll find a smallish 2.8" capacitive touchscreen, at a so-so resolution of 240 x 320 pixels. It might not be the best in the business, but it's a reasonable sacrifice for full smartphone capabilities under R1000.

Feature set

While the three megapixel camera is what we would expect on a budget offering, some high end features are also included on the phone. These include geotagging of pictures, Wi-Fi 802.11n and the ability to use the phone as a Wi-Fi hotspot. Assisted GPS also makes an appearance, as does an FM radio, which is still a handy and appreciated addition to any phone.

Most importantly, Huawei's offering can further accommodate a variety of apps, including Twitter and Facebook, which can be downloaded from the Android Market. This adds a whole heap of extra functionality to the phone which regular feature phones cannot provide.

Battery Life

Particularly important on any phone is its battery life. On the Gaga, the Lithium-Ion battery is rated as offering up to 336 hours standby time and up to four hours talk time. An HTML web browser caters for internet surfing, while an included document viewer and H264 video player should meet productivity and video watching needs respectively.

The Huawei Gaga comes with recommended retail price of R999.

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Cellular data prices

Connecting for less

Web surfers who aren't lucky enough to have a fixed ADSL line installed at home, can make use of the cellular networks' mobile connectivity options. Check out this table for a contract and prepaid data pricing comparison between the major network operators.

Cell C's postpaid offers	Cost per MB	Prepaid data prices	Cost per MB
500 MB @ R129/pm	±26c		
1 GB @ R199/pm	±19c		
2 GB @ R299/pm	±15c	3 GB @ R749	±25c
5 GB @ R599/pm	±12c	12 GB (1 GB/pm) @ R1499	±12c

Vodacom's contract data pricing	Cost per MB	Prepaid & Top-up	Cost per MB
500 MB** @ R149	±30c		
1 GB** @ R249	±24c		
2 GB** @ R349	±17c	MyGig 2 @ R369	±18c
5 GB** @ R789	±15c	MyGig 2.5 @ R429	±17c

8ta's postpaid data + promotion	Cost per MB	Prepaid data promotion	Cost per MB
650 MB @ R195	30c		
1.5 GB @ R280	±19c		
3.2 GB @ R500	±16c	3 GB @ R149 ***	±5c
5 GB @ R800	16c		

MTN's contract data pricing	Cost per MB	Prepaid data prices	Cost per MB
500 MB @ R189	±38c		
1 GB @ R289	±29c		
2 GB @ R149	±7c	2 GB @ R389	±19c
Uncapped Lite* – 3 GB @ R289	±14c		

* Fair usage policy kicks in after limit is reached ** Night Owl – Additional data amount (equal to your initial data amount) to be used between 00:00 & 05:00 AM *** 2 GB anytime data & 1 GB Midnight Surfer

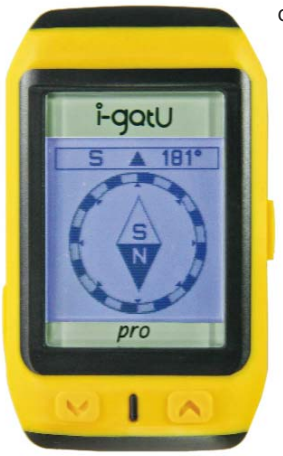
i-gotU GT-800 GPS and sports computer ›› Track and record

The i-gotU GT-800 GPS caters for numerous outdoor and sporting activities.

Particularly aimed at photographers, travellers and sportspeople, the 51 g device includes GPS functionality, a pedometer, stopwatch as well as a compass. Importantly it also logs your route, which can be particularly helpful when going on holiday, both locally and internationally.

The device, which can either be worn like a watch or strapped onto one's bike, can display current speed, average speed, distance, altitude, pace, laps and current time. The sports computer further boasts 64 MB of built-in memory, and can store up to 200 000 waypoints.

Thanks to the i-gotU GT-800's waterproof design, it can endure up to one metre underwater for 30 minutes, while an operating temperature range of -10°C to 50°C makes it further suitable for a variety of weather conditions. Also in the package is Sports Analyzer software to organise one's workouts and the @trip PC software, which enables users to share their adventures online.



The i-gotU GT-800 GPS goes for R1099 from The G.A.D.G.E.T. Shop on 012-346-2726, or visit www.thegadgetshop.co.za.

Evetech AMD FX (Bulldozer) Gaming PCs ›› Extreme performance made affordable

In mid-October, AMD launched its latest salvo in its bid for unrivalled performance, announcing its new AMD FX family of desktop CPUs, which included its range of eight core processors, appropriately nicknamed Bulldozer.

The biggest surprise however, was the price, proving to be surprisingly affordable. Evetech highlights this with a range of eight gaming PCs equipped with the new processors, starting with the FX 8150 GTX 550 Ti Gamer at a reasonable R8299, and then increasing in between R500 and R1500 increments to the top end FX 8150 Extreme Gamer.

However, even the entry level Ti Gamer is an impressive high performance PC, as all of the PCs boast AMD's high-end FX-8150, which sports eight cores, clocked at 3.6 GHz, along with 8 GB Corsair memory.

The biggest difference across the range is the graphics card. The range starts with the highly capable GTX 550 Ti 1 GB overclocked, and then moves to include a NVIDIA GTX 590 or AMD HD 6990 on the FX 8150 Extreme Gamer. Visit www.evetech.co.za for more information.

17.07 million, 11.12 million & 4.89 million. The respective number of iPhones, iPads and Mac computers Apple sold during its fiscal Q4, achieving a net profit of $6.62 billion

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vtech DDA200BT DECT phone ›› Landline and cellular connectivity in one

While most cordless phones free you from wires, they are still restricted to landline use. The vtech DDA200BT DECT phone does not suffer this limitation, offering users the ability to make and receive both landline and cellular calls from a single phone.

The vtech DDA200BT DECT phone plays to the strengths of both cellular and landline based communication, while niftily integrating both forms of connectivity.

Bluetooth on board

For example, the device's built-in Bluetooth enables one to download cellular phone contacts to the phone, as well as pair it with a Bluetooth headset or smartphone. A Bluetooth headset, paired with the vtech DDA200BT DECT phone, can then also be used for landline conversations. Additionally, both Bluetooth and landline calls can be put on hold, and the device will automatically reconnect if the Bluetooth connection is lost.

Double duty

One of the phone's distinguishing features is the ability to simultaneously use one handset for a cellular call while another is used for a landline call. Users can further transfer calls between handsets, or use multiple handsets for conference calls. The vtech DDA200BT DECT phone also does double duty as a digital answering system with up to 15 minutes of recording time, also incorporating caller ID and call waiting, as well as functioning as an intercom system.

"The device's built-in Bluetooth enables one to download cellular phone contacts to the phone, as well as pair it with a Bluetooth headset or smartphone"

Landline not required

However, one doesn't need to have a land-line to take advantage of the vtech DDA200BT DECT's features on offer, as cellular calls made or received with the device use standard cellular minutes. The phone features a slim and ergonomic handset with a high resolution 98 x 67 pixels LCD display, and can accommodate up to one hundred phonebook entries. Additionally, up to twenty outgoing calls and thirty incoming calls can be logged. The vtech DDA200BT DECT phone will be available at Telkom Direct Stores from middle November with an RRP of R899 and the option of easy payment terms.

Quick specs:

- Duo Handsets
- Blue backlit display
- Integrated Bluetooth
- 100 Name & Number phonebook
- Digital Answering Machine
- Gap Compliant
- Caller ID

26%. Growth of the smartphone market annually up until 2015, according to the IDC.

Uninterrupted Power Supply: an essential company tool

An Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) can mean the difference between a good day at the office, or one spent offline and/or trying to recover data off a crashed server. Netshield's UPS range is here to help.

A UPS unit's main function is to supply power to the server and other selected equipment when there is a power failure, allowing enough time to:

- shut down the server in order for it not to become corrupt, or
- start the generator to supply power.

In other words, a UPS provides battery back-up when the electrical power fails or drops to an unacceptable voltage level. A UPS system typically also provides surge suppression and may provide voltage regulation. Netshield's NRK and NRK–J 6KVA and 10KVA UPS units now offer a software component (UPS2000) that enables you to automate back-up and shut down procedures in case there is a power failure when you are away from your computer.

A UPS can either be offline, online or interactive:

- Offline: Will supply power only when power fails
- Online: It supplies power the same way mains provide power
- Interactive: Supply power from bypass through transformer

Netshield NRK series (Online)

The Netshield NRK1000 – 6000 and NRK1110S series provide 2-20 minutes to perform one of the above mentioned actions, depending on the percentage load that needs to be backed up. These have built-in batteries, where the Netshield UPS NRK1000L to NRK1110L series, consisting of a higher quality charger and inverter, can provide an unlimited amount of time needed to perform these actions.

The 1KVA, 2KVA and 3KVA ranges come standard with an LCD display that indicates how full the battery is, how long it will run and what the voltage is, for example. Also onboard is an RS232 communication interface which allows you to connect to an optional SNMP (Simple Network Management Protocol) external module. This module enables you to connect to the Netshield Monitoring software or monitoring software of your choice.

The 6KVA and 10KVA ranges come standard with an LED and an LCD display, providing a visual indication that the UPS is running, as well as added information. UPS 2000 software is included to enable the UPS to automatically start shut down procedures, as well as a manual bypass switch, EPO terminal and USB cable. An Emergency Power Off (EPO) system serves as a safety mechanism and is intended to power down a single piece of electronic equipment or an entire installation from a single point by activating a push button, for example in case of fire or electrical shock.

Netshield NKU series (Online)

The difference between the Netshield NRK series and the Netshield NKU series is that the NKU series includes an output transformer or inverter. An internal isolation transformer offers 100% isolation from the input AC line. It is ideal for the protection of sensitive electronic equipment such as patient-care, computers and laboratory instruments. It is available in 1KVA-15KVA tower / table top versions which include internal batteries. The 10KVA and 15KVA includes a maintenance bypass switch. It is also available in 10KVA-400KVA rack mount versions, with external batteries.

Netshield NIK series (Line-interactive)

This range consists of high reliability, high efficiency and good voltage conditioning UPSs. It is a line-interactive UPS that is ideal for rack or distributed servers and/or harsh power environments. It is the most common UPS to be found and in this type of unit, the separate battery charger, inverter and source selection switch have all been replaced by a combination inverter / converter. The main advantage of this is that it is always connected to the output, powering the equipment. The design allows for faster response to a power failure than a standby UPS, although it does not provide protection as well as the online UPS does. The range is available in 1KVA, 2KVA and 3KVA and offers the option of internal batteries or external batteries.

For enquiries on any of these products, contact Netshield on 086-111-4428 or 012-841-0320, or visit www.netshieldsa.com.

7.1 mm. Width of the Motorola Droid Razr, making it, according to the company, the thinnest smartphone available. 8.84 mm.

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hp.co.za/streamline

HP's move towards the cloud

The Personalisation of Information Technology

invent

Online data storage is a technology which allows people to store their data on the internet. With broadband speeds becoming faster and bandwidth pricing dropping every year, more and more people are interested in purchasing online data storage from internet service providers (ISPs) or data service providers.

A company would request a certain amount of storage that the service provider offers online. This means the ISP will be saving the organisation's important files on its server, giving customers an agreed size of storage for capacity. This doesn't only provide an additional flexible source for companies to store their data but also acts as a backup mechanism and provides an effective method of sharing data with others.

It's getting better

In South Africa the cost of bandwidth has shown a significant drop in price whilst the Quality of Service has been increasing – which means customers can adopt different strategies for their online storage sapabilities which can include public, private or a combination of both public and private cloud – hybrid cloud.

One advantage of online data storage is that it is easy to expand. Whenever you reach the maximum capacity limit, you can simply purchase additional space for storage. There is no need for you to purchase and install additional storage hardware – and we know how long the process takes for customers to procure additional capacity for their storage environments. Another beautiful feature about online storage is that the user can access data from any location with a computer and internet connection. This is convenient for businesses and home computer users alike.

Hard to do right

Online storage is vitally important but hard to do right. It's mostly a backup function, and not enough people do it. But it doesn't have to be that way anymore. With technological advancements, HP have multi tenancy of data, data provisioning and the ability to manage customers' data through its lifecycle. Companies can quickly and confidently implement online strategies to encompass both private, public and hybrid cloud strategies depending on their need.

What is also becoming important for companies is their ability to effectively and efficiently back up their data and meet regularity requirements. Computers are susceptible to hard drive crashes or virus attacks, so the need to do data backups frequently is the safest way to protect data from getting lost. So when companies want to move to a next generation type of datacentre strategy, they should consider how they want to implement their strategies.

But what about business critical data?

If companies are looking for storage space for some non-sensitive data, then there are basic solutions available. Business critical data, which is a lot more sensitive, requires a different type of strategy whereby a customer can host that data in their own datacentre using hybrid cloud models, or by maintaining an online data storage strategy that requires additional security, which include data encryption and authentication for data to travel across the network.

Today, vendors offer online data facilities. At HP we have built such solutions, one that comes to mind is the one we built for Sir Paul McCartney where he has over 300 TB of personal photos, music recordings and memoirs stored in his own datacentre in the UK as well as hosted data in our US datacentre. This way he always has access to his information.

HP is also able to help customers by transforming their applications and making them more adaptable to next generation technology in converged infrastructures like we have. Added in our IP, we have been able to implement our enterprise security plans into customer solutions as well as have the ability to achieve a hybrid delivery model.

In these types of cases, users typically pay fees based on the amount of space they need. Service Providers can provide you with a fully managed and secure solution with 24 x 7 technical support and monitoring.

For more information – please contact Tumi Pooe on 011-785-1000 or Boitumelo.pooe@hp.com.

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76% and 73%. Percentage of male and female users of MXit respectively who are older than 18.

Norton calculates the cost of global cybercrime: $114 billion annually

Cybercrime cost South Africa US $573 million last year

Cybercrime is big business online, also costing South Africans millions of rands each year.

Kara Rawden, Senior Marketing Manager Consumer – Middle East and Africa Symantec Corporation

For the first time Norton calculates the cost of global cybercrime: $114 billion annually. Based on the value victims surveyed placed on time lost due to their cybercrime experiences, an additional $274 billion was lost. In South Africa, more than 4646 online adults fell victim to cybercrime every day in the last year, suffering a staggering $573 million in direct financial losses and an additional $995.4 million in time spent resolving the crime. With 431 million adult victims globally in the past year and at an annual price of $388 billion, based on financial losses and time lost, cybercrime costs the world significantly more than the global black market in marijuana, cocaine and heroin combined ($288 billion).

According to the Norton Cybercrime Report 2011, over 8 in 10 adults (84%) in South Africa have been a victim of cybercrime in their lifetime. Among these, 74% have fallen prey in the last 12 months alone.

Disconnected from the problem

"There is a serious disconnect in how people view the threat of cybercrime," said Kara Rawden, senior marketing manager, Consumer – Middle East and Africa Symantec Corporation. "Cybercrime is much more prevalent than people realise. Over the past 12 months, over 6 in 10 adults surveyed (62%) in South Africa have suffered from online crime, while 35% have experienced offline crime, yet just 20% think they are more likely to become a victim of cybercrime than physical world crime in the next year. And while 94% of respondents agree that more needs to be done to bring cybercriminals to justice, only 22% said that they reported cybercrime to the authorities. Fighting cybercrime is a shared responsibility. It requires us all to be more alert and to invest in our online smarts and safety."

The disconnect between awareness and action is further illustrated by the fact that while 74% of respondents globally say they are always aware of cybercrime, many are not taking the necessary precautions. 41% of adults indicated they don't have an up-to-date security software suite to protect their personal information online, less than half review credit card statements regularly for fraud (47%), and 60% don't use complex passwords or change them regularly.

For more findings from the Norton Cybercrime Report globally, please visit: http://norton.com/cybercrimereport.

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i-GotU GPS Logger

i-GotU GT-800 is a sophisticated GPS & Sports Computer that's handy for various outdoor and sports activities. It has a built-in pedometer, Stopwatch, Current Speed, Average Speed, Distance, Altitude, Pace, Laps, Moving Time, Current time, GPS Compass and Programmable GPS logging.

Anglers Edge Plus

A great tool for anyone who likes to fish! The Angler's Edge is the handheld weather instrument that is specially designed with the fisherman in mind. The Angler's Edge predicts fish activity and feeding behaviour based on environmental conditions including barometric pressure trend, moon phase, and sun/moon position.

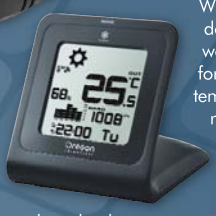
Fenix LED Torch – TK35

Fenix TK35 is a convenient extremely high intensity multi-functional flashlight. Featuring in max 820 lumens output, offering four brightness levels, two different flashing functions and a signalling mode, it definitely can satisfy various lighting needs in different environments.

LED Lenser Automotive LED Light

The Automotive LED Light by LED Lenser will be there and ready wherever you go. Plug this small flashlight into a car's cigarette lighter, and it will charge as you drive. This "moon" light casts light only where you want it, keeping unwanted light from distracting the driver.

Weather Forecaster – SL102



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Weather Forecaster Wall Clock – JW102

This Jumbo Weather Clock with Weather Forecaster, is extra-large and is ideal for the home or office, with a large LCD display for easy & clear viewing at distance. The time is displayed in large digits over 8cm in height along with the date, day and moon phase.

Projection Clock – EW103

Start your day with your favourite FM radio station or 3 soothing nature sounds and look at the time go by on your ceiling with its built in projection clock (night time only).

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16.8 million, 17.07 million & <20 million. Number of smartphones Nokia, Apple and Samsung sold during in their latest quarters, meaning Samsung is now the top smartphone maker.

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Go to **www.techsmart.co.za** and click on the competition box on the right hand side to enter. The competition runs from 1 to 30 November 2011. Terms and conditions apply.

pctools

You asked for it, we've got it – 3 x copies of FIFA 12 are up for grabs, worth R599 each!

What we said: "FIFA 12 takes up the benchmark mantle of its predecessors and sets a new standard in terms of gameplay and realism, while also adding authenticity within the manager mode." Review on p40.

Go to **www.techsmart.co.za** and click on the FIFA 12 competition on the right hand side to enter. Competition runs from 1 to 30 November 2011. Terms and conditions apply.

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10. Amount of countries the epic patent war between Apple and Samsung is currently being waged in.

Interview: Michelle Janse van Vuuren, Marketing Manager, Canon South Africa

All you need to know about the Canon Expo

The Canon Expo is coming to the Sandton Convention Centre from 9 – 11 December 2011. TechSmart talked to Michelle Janse van Vuuren, marketing manager at Canon South Africa, to find out more about this big event.

TechSmart (TS): The Canon Expo will be the first time that all your consumer and select product lines of your business solutions will be on display. Why the long wait?
Michelle Janse van Vuuren (MV): At only 12 years old, Canon SA is a relatively new company in the bigger Canon family. We wanted to observe how our counterparts in other territories, such as Turkey and Dubai, have done it before taking on the task. We've now visited these and this year we decided that we are ready to bring it to South Africa.

TS: The Canon Expo must have contributed to your move to not exhibit at the Film and Photo Expo in October?
MV: Yes, that is correct. It was an internal business decision we took, since one cannot be at every show and exhibition unfortunately. The Canon Expo also allows us to exhibit more of our products, such as our large format and document solutions scanners.

TS: How many Canon products will be on display?
MV: This has not been confirmed yet, but in every one of our categories there will be at least one of the products. Every single category in the consumer imaging range for example will be represented.

TS: How much is the entrance fee?
MV: It is completely free. This is a once-a-year opportunity for people to interact with Canon directly, and the Expo builds on our free Road Show that is very successfully hosted annually.

TS: Will visitors be able to purchase when there?
MV: Yes, the consumer imaging products will be available for sale, and we will have an actual Canon warehouse storage/ sales facility there. For enquiries on the business products, leads will be taken and followed-up by the dealers.

TS: Will there be specials?
MV: There will be lots of show specials, with pricing being available on the website at the end of November.

TS: And of course all the Canon experts are there to give a hand?
MV: All our local people are onboard, and there's even a few European product managers who will also be assisting.

TS: You have also decided to incorporate the popular Canon EOS Roadshow into the Expo. Tell us more.
MV: The Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth legs of the Roadshow will happen prior to the Expo in November. The Johannesburg Roadshow will be incorporated on the Saturday morning.

TS: Have any of the speakers been confirmed?
MV: For the Roadshow (Cape Town, Durban, PE) they are Lee Slabber and Trevor Hardaker. For the Expo we have a number of worshop speakers on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday who's names will be listed on the Canon SA Expo website closer to the time.

TS: You are also running the massive SA photographic competition '11 with R150 000 worth of prizes. Can anyone enter?
MV: Yes, but pictures need to have been taken on Canon hardware. Terms and conditions for the competition are online at: www.csaexpo.co.za.

TS: Why can one only enter one photo per category?
MV: It comes down to managing the volumes of photos that needs to be judged, but also to make those who enter really think about their best shots. We want people to discuss their pictures with others and really get a conversation started before sending their entries.

TS: Lastly, what is your opinion regarding Canon's latest product announcements?
MV: I've been working at Canon now for 12 years, and when new products appear it never ceases to amaze me. For example, when the S95 compact came out, we all thought heaven came. Now the S100 is here and it's just so much better than the previous version.

204 800. Maximum ISO rating offered by Canon's new flagship DSLR, the EOS 1D X.

Canon

For more information on the Canon South Africa Expo 2011 go to www.csaexpo.co.za.

CompTIA

Announces the launch of our latest industry developed and recognized certification

CompTIA Cloud Essentials (CL0-001)

Relevant to: IT Specialists; IT Technical Services Specialists; IT Relationship Managers; IT Architects; Consultants; Business and IT Management; Business Process Owners and Analysts.

The Outcomes: The successful candidate will have the knowledge and understanding of the main cloud computing principles and concepts. Understand what cloud computing means from a business and technical perspective, as well as what is involved in moving to and governing the cloud.

Pre-requisites: CompTIA recommends that a candidate has a general working knowledge of how an internal IT Organization operates, with 1-2 years of IT working experience.

Exam objectives:

	Domain	% weight
1.0	Characteristics of Cloud Services from a business perspective	15%
2.0	Cloud Computing and Business Value	20%
3.0	Technical Perspective/Cloud Types	20%
4.0	Steps to successful adoption of Cloud Computing	15%
5.0	Impact and changes of Cloud Computing on IT Service Management	15%
6.0	Risks and consequences of Cloud Computing	15%

Available worldwide from January 2012.

The skills assessment for this certification will be available to CompTIA Members in January 2012 through our free resource, the CompTIA Skills Assessment (CSA) program. Training will be available through select CompTIA Training Partners from January 2012.

For more information and the full version of the official exam objectives,

contact CompTIA on (011) 787-4846 or e-mail Gareth Morris at gareth@comptia.co.za.

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The cloud beckons

By Todd Thibodeaux, president and chief executive officer of CompTIA

Cloud computing is one of the most hyped IT strategies in recent years, with technology vendors scrambling to provide cloud-enabled technologies and businesses trying to figure out if this new model can deliver on its promises of cost savings and business efficiencies.

Beyond the hype, cloud is indeed a strategy that proves beneficial to end-users and profitable for technology solution providers. Cloud-based, business-class solutions are accessible, affordable and available today for businesses of all shapes and sizes.

One thing is certain: the cloud computing market is still on pace for rapid growth. Consider the following recent statistics:

- Research firms IDC predicts the public cloud market to grow from $16 billion in 2009 to $27.4 billion in 2014. This represents growth at over five times the rate for traditional IT products.
- While global IT services spending totaled $793 billion in 2010, representing 3.1% growth year on year, Gartner expects 6.6% growth in 2011 to $846 billion, partly driven by the growing adoption of cloud services.
- More than half (56%) of the organisations surveyed for CompTIA's Second Annual Trends in Cloud Computing study, published earlier this year, said their investment in cloud computing will increase by 10% or more over the next 12 months.

With cloud computing, a small company can look like a big company because they have easy and affordable access to a broad expanse of applications and services that not long ago were available only to deep-pocketed large enterprises.

Another big advantage of the cloud is that an SMB can access the computing capacity it needs when it's needed, and not have expensive excess capacity sitting idle during non-peak times. With cloud computing an SMB can dial up a 20-lane highway of network capacity for its two busiest hours of the day, and scale back to two lanes of capacity for the other 22 hours. The pay-as-you-go cloud model eliminates the start-up costs associated with purchasing, maintaining and upgrading new IT hardware and software.

Cloud resources available from CompTIA

As the leading trade association for the global IT industry, CompTIA has invested significant resources in the last few years on cloud computing initiatives – on market research; on education training and tools for IT solution provider companies. Most recently also on a new cloud skills certification for IT professionals.

Among the cloud education and training programs available through CompTIA are the Cloud Channel Training Workshop, a one-day fast-track course intended to help solution providers take advantage of the substantial business opportunities in delivering cloud solutions to customers, and to help them recognise the differences between selling traditional software licenses and offering cloud services. Workshop attendees learn how to develop a successful services practice in support of cloud solutions by leveraging best practices on how to market and sell cloud solutions and manage ongoing customer relationships.

About the Author

Todd Thibodeaux is the president and chief executive officer of CompTIA, a non-profit trade association dedicated to advancing growth of the information technology industry through educational programs, market research, networking events, professional certifications and public advocacy.

The CompTIA Quick Start Sessions (bit.ly/compses) are 45-60 minute presentations that offer solution providers a simple "how to" approach to start a new business model or practice. The presentation on cloud provides a basic education on cloud computing and offers actionable steps for IT channel leaders attracted to this emerging technology delivery model. Session attendees also receive the CompTIA Cloud/SaaS Quick Start Guide (bit.ly/compqsguide).

A broad selection of printed and downloadable guides for the IT channel is available from CompTIA's library of resources (bit.ly/compresource). These guides include fast-fact information sheets, advanced self-guided workbooks that help solution providers enter into a new business market within 10 weeks; and whitepapers.

For individual IT workers, CompTIA, in partnership with ITpreneurs, the leading provider of competence development solutions for IT best practices, will this year introduce a new cloud computing skills credential. Scheduled for availability this December, the CompTIA Cloud Essentials certification exam will validate knowledge and understanding of cloud computing principles and concepts, including what cloud computing means from a business and technical perspective and what's involved in moving to and governing the cloud.

Given that the majority of cloud deployments today and into the foreseeable future are a mix of public clouds, private clouds and on-premise equipment from different vendors, a vendor-neutral certification such as CompTIA Cloud Essentials will prepare IT professionals to work with confidence in any cloud environment. Exam content was development in consultation with subject matter experts from leading organisations in the cloud computing market, including Amazon, Citrix, Google, Microsoft, Rackspace and VMware.

The certification is intended for IT professionals who work in companies utilising cloud computing solutions today, or contemplating doing so; and individuals involved in the selling of cloud services. Though not required, it's recommended that candidates for the CompTIA Cloud Essentials exam have a general working knowledge of how an internal or external IT organisation operates and has one to two years of IT experience.

For more information on CompTIA or any of their certifications, visit their website on www.comptia.co.za or call 011-787-4841/3.

1.1 million. Number of Twitter followers in SA, of which only 40% are actively tweeting.

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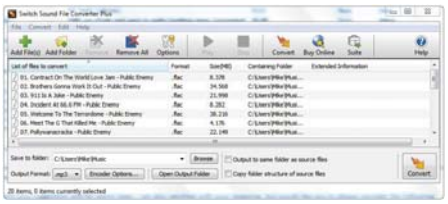
30 million. Samsung managed to surpass this combined global sales mark with its Galaxy S and SII smartphones.

PC Medic ›› November 2011

Some say Bill Gates is his personal butler, while others believe that RIM kept so quiet after the BlackBerry service outage because he told them to. We call him the PC Medic and he's here to answer your PC related queries.

Q Hi PC Medic. I need a program that helps you change wma and flac audio files to mp3. Please help. | M. Zafar.



A Hi M. You can download the easy-to-use free version of Switch sound file converter from http://cnet.co/getSwitch (½ MB, skip the added extras). Using this you can drag and drop the files you want converted, choose the file type you want converted to, and watch this program quickly do its business.

Q Hi there PC Medic. Do you perhaps know of an easy to use conversion program that will help me to convert the movies and series I have on my PC into a format that will play on my iPhone and iPad? Thanks, Angelo.

A Ola Angelo. Download the YouTube Downloader (around 5 MB) at cnet.co/YTD2go, which enables you to easily convert your videos into high quality output formats for various mobile devices, including Apple's iOS-running devices and Sony's PS3 and PSP. Be careful to check what options are selected before downloading.

» Tips for Windows 7: Adding "copy to" and "move to" to right-click menu

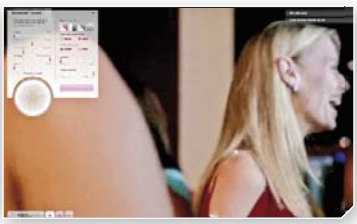
If, like us, you frequently copy and paste (or cut and paste) files in Windows 7 in order to move and organise your data, then you'll find that adding the "copy to" and "move to" functionality to your right-click mouse menu, cuts down on the amount of clicks and time you spend doing this. First, download the registry tweak zip folder from bit.ly/pastecopy. Then install both of the registry files housed within the folder, by simply double-clicking on them. Now you'll be able to cut and paste or copy and paste info to a folder with a singular right-click of your mouse.

Web Time Wasters ›› Selected sites to spend some quality time with

www.wechoosethemoon.org

We Choose the Moon

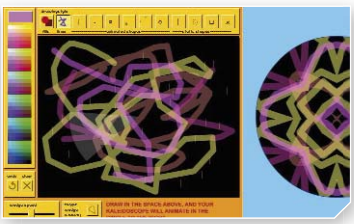
If you always wanted to relive the Apollo 11 lunar landing, We Choose the Moon should be top of your agenda. The site offers an interactive recreation of the first mission to the moon and is divided into eleven stages that includes photos, video, audio, animation and commentary by the astronauts involved. Additionally, you can use the Mission Tracker to navigate through the mission at your own pace, starting from launch right through to the landing. The flash-based site can take a while to load, depending on your connection speed, but it brilliantly captures the drama and excitement of this momentous occasion.



moodstream.gettyimages.com/

Moodstream

Getty Image's Moodstream is, if nothing else, an excellent way to mix together a variety of images, music and video clips to evoke a particular mood. The site is primarily aimed at encouraging creativity and fostering brainstorming sessions. Streams are determined by how you tweak a series of sliders ranging from happy to sad, calm to lively, humorous to serious, nostalgic to contemporary and warm to cool. Additionally, you can choose from several presets such as Inspire, Excite, Refresh and Intensify. If you just want to gape at some top notch imagery, it fills that role too.



bit.ly/zefkal

Zefrank's kaleidoscope

This is a slightly bizarre but nonetheless fun pattern maker to mess about with. The idea behind it is that you draw with a variety of drawing tools and colours in one section, and the site produces a hypnotic, animated kaleidoscope in an adjacent window. You can customise the line thickness, transparency and the overall quality, and add animated and static shapes to the pattern you create. Add to this an extensive colour palette and you have an endless assortment of mesmerising kaleidoscopes that can be produced to keep you entertained for hours.

www.lumosity.com

Lumosity

Lumosity offers a customised brain training regime that focuses on developing memory, attention, flexibility, speed and problem solving abilities, through more than 35 games and exercises. The site also has some serious noteworthy support from researchers at Stanford, UCSF, Berkeley and Harvard in the US. Besides from signing up for a brain training regime, the site additionally boasts some very enlightening information on brain training and neuroscience in general. This purports that one's intelligence and cognitive abilities are never fixed at a certain age, and fosters appreciation of the brain.

15. The number of the latest iteration of Google's Chrome browser, which incorporates a redesigned tab page.

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Android Apps of the month

With over 100 000 apps available for Android smartphones at the Android Market, TechSmart would like to help you get to the good ones first. Here are our top Android Apps of the month.

The Invisible Universe

The Invisible Universe is one of the most interesting apps we've come across. It uses the GPS in one's Android (2.2 and up) device to show the night sky as the naked eye cannot see it, namely in a variety of wavelengths that include X-ray, ultraviolet, infrared wavelengths, and as ionized gas. The views then shown are reminiscent of looking through a portal into another world. At 20 MB, the app is endlessly intriguing, and the next best thing to having a multi-million rand telescope.

SketchBook Pro

For drawing or painting on Android, we still haven't found an app for Honeycomb tablets that beats SketchBook – whether the paid Pro version (R400) which offers more brushes, or the free Xpress version. The app enables artistic types to draw and paint on their tablet with realistic airbrushes, pens, pencils, markers and brushes, all of which can be fine-tuned and customised to create distinctive effects. Multiple layers and the ability to draw straight lines and shapes, makes it an artist's dream.

Extensive Notes

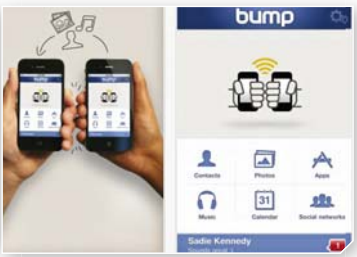
Extensive Notes offers a host of features that make it well worth a look. The ability to organise notes into folders is complemented by the flexibility to create an audio note, video note, to-do lists and password protected private notes. Additionally, one can create a paint note, either drawing with one's finger or stylus on a canvas or importing an image via the gallery. The app works on Android 1.6 and up, and has both free and paid premium versions (a cheap R15) available.

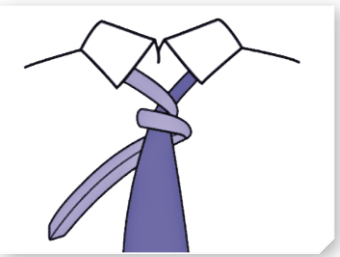
Wisp

Wisp is one of the more enchanting games you'll find in the Android Market. It uses the gyroscope of one's Android device (2.0 and up) to guide a forest sprite through up to 30 levels, while gathering elemental abilities to solve and progress through a series of puzzles. Sublime artwork and even better music make this a game that is as relaxing as it is enticing to play. Well worth the download, with an extended paid version also available. [RN]

Apple iOS Apps of the month

Apple's App Store houses the largest selection of applications (over 500 000) available in the world. TechSmart brings some of the best free ones to your attention.





Stick Cricket

If the current series between South Africa and Australia has got you in the mood to hit some virtual balls out of the park, then Stick Cricket is the app to do so. Here you pick your favourite national team and after a turn in the practice nets, you can take on the world's best in World Domination mode, or try to beat your best scores (and some of the best bowlers in the world) in All Star Slog, whereby you aim to make the highest total within five overs.

Bump

Using Bump you will be able to easily become friends on Facebook, follow someone on Twitter or share your contact info, location info, calendar events and more by simply bumping your two smartphones, or smartphone and iPad or iPod touch together. You choose what you want to share with the other person, then hold your mobile devices next to each other and gently bump them together. You can send a message (IM) to contacts who you have added as friends inside of the Bump app.

Cartoonatic

Cartoon and animation lovers will adore Cartoonatic as it will enable them to shoot actual cartoon-style video in real time. There are ten different artistic effects to choose from including Pencil Jetty, which makes it appear like everything in the video was drawn with colouring pencils. In-app purchases are also available including adding more effects, advertisement removal as well as the ability to capture cartoon still images instead of just video.

How to tie a tie

Stuck with an asymmetrical knot in your good-looking tie? The ability to tie a good-looking tie ranks quite prominently in the list of things a man needs to be able to do. Luckily this app schools the ignorant in easy how-to steps, whilst it will also educate those already gifted in the art to broaden their tie tying horizons. There are 12 different ways for tying a tie, such as posh windsor method. Both the illustrations and directions are very clear and makes the job of learning to tie a tie worry – but not knot-free. [HD]

$81.5 billion. Amount Apple has for short and long term investments, which is $7.7 billion more than the operating balance of the US government.

TechSmart.co.za online poll results

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Go to www.techsmart.co.za and click on the WRC 2 competition on the right hand side to enter. The competition runs from 1 to 30 November 2011. Terms and conditions apply.

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90%. Percentage of organisations that Gartner research predicts will support corporate applications on devices owned by end users by 2014.

FIFA 12 ›› The benchmark raises the bar once more

After spending a year of honing its skills on the practice pitch, FIFA 12 enters the virtual gaming arena, sporting new gameplay features and slightly improved graphics

Those looking for a major upgrade in the beautiful game's graphics will be disappointed, seeing that the majority of FIFA 12's improvements aren't cosmetic in nature. There are only minor graphical upgrades including more detailed player models and stadiums, as well as an enhanced menu system that is easy on the eye.

Gameplay gets steroid treatment

The big focus is rather on gameplay enhancement, with FIFA 12 sporting a new player impact engine that delivers real-world physicality in every interaction on the pitch. You'll notice players jostling for the ball in a more realistic manner, making the experience feel even more genuine. Tackles also benefit from this new physics engine since you have to both time and position them better, whilst the new precision dribbling feature adds greater on-the-ball control in player movement. On defence, a new tactical defending feature ensures for a more enhanced experience whilst you keep the opposition from finding the back of your goalie's net. This new system places the same degree of importance on positioning, intercepting passes and tackling.

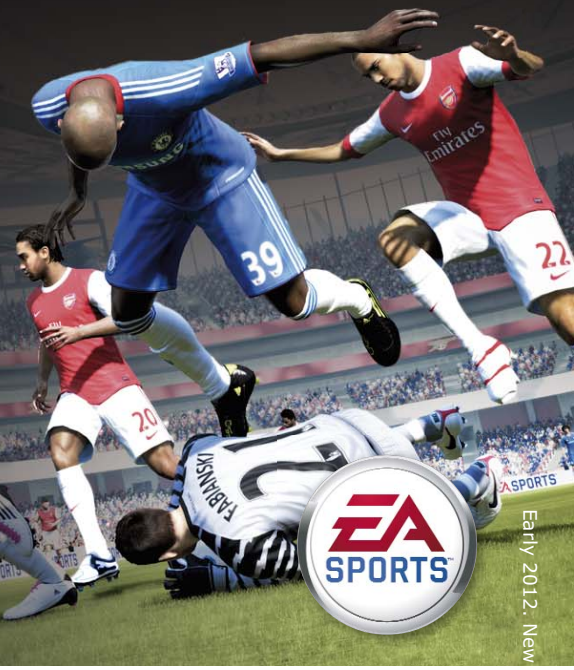
Choose your role

Within the manager mode, you get to run the club, taking part in such day-to-day activities as buying and selling players, recruiting football scouts, as well as setting up and managing the youth squad. New to this mode is the fact that star players, the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo and Wayne Rooney, require a more hands on approach. Play them too much and they'll ask for rest, bench them too often and they won't be in a hurry to renew their contract come transfer season. To skip dealing with the diva-esque demands of star players, opt for player mode, which will see you taking charge of the football action happening on the pitch, whilst player manager offers the perfect mix of both these modes.

Conclusion

FIFA 12 takes up the benchmark mantle of its predecessors and sets a new standard in terms of gameplay and realism, while also adding authenticity within the manager mode. FIFA 11 owners will be happy that they made the upgrade due to the major gameplay strides that EA has taken with its latest title. A ticket to the ultimate virtual football experience on the PlayStation 3 will set you back R599. [HD]

Full review: bit.ly/12fifa12



Early 2012. New launch window for the highly anticipated Diablo 3.

Spiderman: Edge of Time ›› Tangled web of entertainment

Launching in the same time-frame as the highly anticipated Batman: Arkham City, another superhero game, Spiderman: Edge of Time swung its way onto our radar.

Spiderman: Edge of Time (EoT) starts off promisingly enough, with attractive graphics and some excellent voice acting. In EoT, you play as two Spidermans – the first is Peter Parker, in present day New York (the Amazing Spiderman) and the second is a sleeker, more futuristic Spiderman, Miguel O'Hara, from 2099.

Spin me a story

The game's premise is refreshingly not such a simple one, involving a power-mad scientist in the future named Walker Sloan, who goes back in time to launch the sinister corporation Alchemax before it was originally founded, in a bid to become an even more domineering force. This transforms the world into a bleak, dystopian version of itself and leads to present day Spiderman's death at the hands of Anti-Venom, so O'Hara intervenes, enlisting Parker's help to stop Walker and undo the damage Walker has done to the future.

Quantum causality

The game's main hook is that what one Spiderman does in his time affects the other in theirs. As the two Spiderman's both make their way through the massive labyrinthine complex that is Alchemax, they need to work together and the clash of characters is part of what makes the game entertaining. One notable part of this is you see, via screen in screen displays, how each Spiderman's actions effect each other's world.

Flies in the ointment

The areas which let down the game though lie in its environments – both Spidermans are frequently cooped-up in crawling through bland corridors or the unremarkable bowels of Alchemax, and we felt neither were given free reign to use their web-slinging abilities to the maximum. Additionally, the enemies are often unremarkable and 'samey'. This is a pity, because the variety of unlockable and upgradeable abilities that are available to both Spidermans during the course of the game are actually fun to discover and use.

To the point

Edge of Time is not in our opinion a bad game at all, in fact, it's often entertaining and even quite a good one at times. Admittedly it doesn't rise to the heights of greatness we hope for from superhero games nowadays, but its seven hour campaign still merits a play through, particularly for those who can't get enough of Spidey. [RN]

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