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DStv Mobile
Awesome mobile TV solutions



Acer Aspire S7
The greatest Acer yet?



The best of 2012

This year's hottest smartphones,
tablets and notebooks!



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The tech ways of 2012

With another year almost done and dusted, we once again had a good time compiling our annual Top 5 notebooks, smartphones and tablets, which starts on page 6. Unfortunately, we did not have the space to include the top 5 tech news stories, but we will feature this online at www.techsmart.co.za. Our top 5 news includes the local introduction of much faster LTE networks; the rise of Cell C under new CEO Alan Knott-Craig; Apple's mapping problems and the new found popularity of 7" tablets. Microsoft also features, since not only did they release Windows 8 (and Window Phone 8), but the company also ventured into hardware territory with their Surface tablets.

Personally, I'm perplexed by Windows 8 – more specifically, Microsoft's decision to drop the Start menu. It's a bit like designing a fridge but not including a handle, and it was only after the Start menu disappeared that I found out how often I actually use it. Still, it's early days for Windows 8, and quite a long way off till Service Pack 1, which personally I'll wait for before making the switch.

Have a peaceful festive period and here's to an awesome 2013, Mike (michael@techsmart.co.za)

6-10 2012's Top 5

We've been through a number of hot products this year. So which smartphones, tablets and notebooks made it into our annual top 5? The big reveal starts on p6.

22 DStv Mobile: The choice is yours

If you need a mobile television solution in time for the festive season, the selection offered by DStv Mobile is second to none. Check out their range of products on p22.

12 Acer Aspire S7: The best Acer yet?

Acer's touch-friendly Windows 8 ultrabook, the Aspire S7, did a lot to turn heads here in the TechSmart office. Is this the best notebook that the company has produced yet?

33 Call of Duty: Black Ops 2

Another Xmas, another Call of Duty. Will Black Ops 2 be the game you'll find yourself plonked on the couch for this holiday? Read our review on p33 to find the answer.

48%. Percentage of children between the age of six and 12 who ranked the iPad as their top most desired gift this Xmas in a Nielsen survey.

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Top Tech Titbits



Samsung flexes smartphone sales muscles

Samsung's Galaxy S3 flagship snagged the title of world's best-selling smartphone model for the first time during Q3 2012. According to analytics company, Strategy Analytics, Samsung shipped more than 18 million Galaxy S3 smartphones worldwide within Q3 2012, overtaking Apple's iPhone 4S and its estimated 16.2 million shipments tally. The triumph might be short-lived, with the new iPhone 5 expected to reclaim the top spot during Q4 2012.

African mobile subscriptions to pass 750 million in Q4 2012

According to forecasts by market research firm, Informa Telecoms & Media (IT&M), the number of mobile subscriptions on the African continent will exceed 750 million during Q4 2012 and increase to more than a billion before the end of 2015. The company stated that Africa's growth potential remains high, since the continent's mobile penetration rate was only 67.55% at the end of September 2012, marking the lowest rate among major world regions and significantly lower than the world average of 91%.



Windows division head leaves Microsoft

The quick departure of the 'face' of Windows, Steven Sinofsky, Microsoft's Windows and Windows Live president, just weeks after the launch of Windows 8, raised some eyebrows. Although rumours of a troubled relationship with other senior executives, including Microsoft big boss Steve Ballmer, abound, Sinofsky stated that the end of his 23 year Microsoft career was a personal and private choice.

BlackBerry 10 launching early 2013

BlackBerry fans can mark 30 January 2013 on their calendars. This is when RIM (Research In Motion) is launching its new BlackBerry 10 (BB10) operating system. RIM will not only reveal its new smartphone and tablet platform, but will also unveil the first two BB10 powered smartphones, with the specs and availability of these devices only being announced during the event.



Nokia now HERE

Not a fan of Nokia's phones, but in need of a class-leading mapping and location offering? Then you are in luck, as the Finnish phone giant has introduced its new mapping and location-based service for multiple mobile platforms, dubbed HERE. Under the HERE banner, Espoo is offering relief for Mapplegate sufferers, courtesy of its new map app for Apple's iOS-based devices, while an Android SDK (solutions development kit) will enable companies to bring Nokia's location services to Android in 2013. ❖

Hot New Products



2013 Lamborghini Aventador LP700-4 Roadster

Lamborghini's top of the line supercar goes topless just in time for summer, allowing drivers to soak up the sun and enjoy the orchestral notes of its high-revving 6.5 litre V12. This powerplant churns out 515 kW at 8 250 RPM and 690 Nm at 5 500 RPM, translating into the sublimely styled Italian stallion galloping to 100 km/h in just three seconds, on to a Metrocop eat-my-dust top end of 350 km/h. Stateside you can place an order for the drop-top Aventador for \$445 300.

Fender Squier USB Stratocaster Guitar

The prayers of tech-savvy musicians on the hunt for the perfect axe have been answered in the form of the Fender Squier from Stratocaster. This guitar sports a built-in mini-USB connector that enables users to plug it in directly into an iOS-running mobile device (iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch), PC or Mac, to record their riffs via Apple's GarageBand or other software. All the respective cables including the mini-USB to iPod connector are included. As with any other Stratocaster guitar, you can plug this instrument into any amp. RRP: \$200 at iStores Stateside.



LG's 84" class Ultra HD 3D TV

Sick of the new iPad putting the resolution of your HDTV to shame? Trade it in for a new 84" Ultra HD 3D TV which boasts a resolution of 3 840 x 2 160 that is four times the pixel resolution of full HD (1 080p). Available locally for a recommended R180 000.



Omega Seamaster Planet Ocean 600M

Omega's timepieces have been part of James Bond's gadget repertoire ever since Pierce Brosnan strapped on a Seamaster Quartz Professional 300M for *GoldenEye* in 1995. For Bond's 23rd silver screen feature, *SkyFall*, Daniel Craig dons a Seamaster Planet Ocean 600M, which features a solid steel bracelet that is stylishly contrasted by the black dial and bezel. This dial is protected by scratch-resistant sapphire crystal that has been treated with an anti-reflective coating for enhanced visibility in direct sunlight. The cost of strapping on Bond's watch? A cool \$7 000. ❖





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TOP 5

Vehicles on TechSmart's Xmas wishlist



Maybach Landauet

For the discerning driver turned off by the sight of that all too commonplace Mercedes-Benz S class, Maybach delivers its ultra-exclusive Landauet. This super limo is hurried on by a twin-turbocharged V12 engine, specially developed with the assistance of AMG's engine specialist. It produces 463 kW between 4 800 and 5 100 RPM, as well as 1 000 Nm of torque between 2 000 and 4 000 RPM. This sees the car reaching 100 km/h in five seconds onto a very stately limited top-end of 250 km/h. Smokers will appreciate the automatic four-zone aircon system that sports an activated charcoal filter with smog sensor to clean your air faster than a jailed politician can spontaneously develop a life-threatening illness in prison. Stateside it goes for the equivalent of R11.9 million.



Range Rover Vogue SE V8

CEOs and investment bankers in need of a vehicle that can match the on road prowess of an BMW 7 Series with the off-the-beaten-path fun factor of a Land Rover, do not have to look any further than the new Range Rover Vogue SE. Powered by a supercharged V8 engine, this off-roader accelerates to 100 km/h in just over five seconds on to a maximum speed of 250 km/h. These brisk performance figures will cost you at the petrol pump though, given the Rover's thirsty (13.8 litre per 100 km) combined fuel usage figure. Techies will love the 8" dual view enabled touch-screen, allowing the front passenger to watch a movie, whilst the driver uses the car's GPS on the same display. The new Range Rover only launches locally in 2013, but Stateside pricing starts at more than R725 800.



Gibbs Quadski amphibious quad bike

The adventurous at heart need to travel on land and sea, but why fork out cash for a boat and quad bike when you can get both in a Gibbs Quadski? This Amphiquad (amphibious quad bike) is powered by BMW's K1300 motorcycle engine, allowing it to reach speeds in excess of 70 km/h on land. On water, the Quadski's wheels fold up at the push of a button, transforming it from quadbike to jetski within four seconds. Its 1 300 cc four-cylinder 16 valve DOHC BMW engine will then operate in conjunction with Gibbs' water jet propulsion system to enable the vehicle to reach the same speed on a lake that it does on land. Available Stateside for around R346 000, launching worldwide in 2014.



Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Coupe Electric Drive

The best looking car in this comparison is Mercedes-Benz's SLS AMG Coupé Electric Drive, which happens to be the most powerful AMG production car yet. Four electric motors produce a grand total of 552 kW of power and enough torque (1 000 Nm) to tenderise an elephant. These motors drive all four wheels, delivering torque to the wheels with the most grip. Drivers will notice the absence of the glorious V8 exhaust note of the conventionally powered SLS 63 AMG, replaced by an eerie silence of this car's electric motors. This eco-powered Merc gallops to 100 km/h in less than four seconds, onto an electronically limited top-end of 250 km/h. The SLS AMG Coupé Electric Drive goes on sale in Germany next year for the equivalent of R4.4 million.

Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport



1 Stats are normally not the most exciting way to convey info, but for every rule there is an exception and the performance figures for the Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport are certainly exceptional. Powering the fastest production supercar on the planet is a King Kong-sized quad turbocharged 7 993 cc sixteen cylinder engine, producing an astonishing 880 kW and enough torque (1500 Nm) to turn Table Mountain into Table Molehill. This



supercar rockets from standstill to 100 km/h in just 2.5 seconds, reaches 200 km/h in under seven (6.7) seconds, and can go on to a terminal velocity of 431 km/h. To make its specially developed tires last a tad longer, Bugatti decided to limit the top speed to a mere 415 km/h.

The price you pay for this level of performance (other than the low-low R20.7 million RRP of course) is a terrible combined fuel economy figure of 23 liters per 100 km (nearly four times that of a BMW 320i). Additionally, this car produces an equally bad carbon emission figure (539 g per km) that will put you on both Santa and Greenpeace's naughty list [HD]. ❄️

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TOP 5

Certainly the biggest smartphone news of the year was Apple losing its grip on the title of top smartphone manufacturer. Instead we saw the power shifting to Korean tech-giant Samsung, with their Galaxy S3 receiving the amount of praise usually reserved for the latest iPhone. But the S3 wasn't the only trick up Samsung's sleeve...



5 Nokia Lumia 920

Since tying the knot with Microsoft last year, Nokia's Lumia range of Windows Phone devices has improved steadily, culminating in their flagship, the Windows Phone 8 running Lumia 920.

The 920's 4.5" PureMotion HD+ ClearBlack display is certainly one of the best in the business, accompanying an excellent 8.7 MP camera with PureView technology and wireless charging. But, it is Nokia's range of awesome extras, the likes of Mix Radio and Nokia Drive, that puts the Lumia 920 in a class of its own. Its bulky size prevented any higher placement.



4 HTC One X

HTC's One X can certainly claim 2012's title of most underrated smartphone. Out marketed by Samsung's top Galaxy S3, in many ways we feel it certainly wasn't out muscled, with the One X coming across faster than its Android counterpart.

Sporting a number of good camera features, a top class 4.7" display, Beats Audio and the beast that is the Nvidia Tegra 3 quad-core processor, HTC had a flagship to be proud of this year, it's just a shame that they didn't tell more people about it.



3 Apple iPhone 5

Maybe due to the runaway success of previous versions, the incremental increases Apple made on the iPhone 5 were seen as, well, a bit dull. Nonetheless, its easy-to-hold 4" (yes, only 4") Retina display remains superb, the A6 processor is zippy, while Apple managed to cram everything into a 7.6 mm body that is the current epitome of industrial design.

It does seem that the iPhone has reached maturity, and that other manufacturers, most notably Samsung, has managed to catch-up, and surpass, Apple's icon. Is it time for something completely different from Cupertino?



2 Samsung Galaxy S3

To say that the Galaxy S3 is the 2012 smartphone success story is a bit of an understatement. It commanded the type of respect usually reserved for the latest iPhone, and it did not become uncommon for us to hear of Apple fans switching over.

Apart from its 4.8" Super AMOLED screen, what we liked about the device is the fact that Samsung did not rest on only what the Android platform provides, incorporating a number of useful extras, the likes of Smart stay and Pop up play. Ultimately the S3 left us with the following question: What lies in store for the S4?

30 million. Samsung surpassed this global sales milestone last month with its Galaxy S3 after just 157 days.

1

Samsung Galaxy Note II

Go big or go home they say. In the case of Samsung's Galaxy Note II, no one turned away. In fact, the Note II improved on its 5.3" phablet predecessor by increasing screen size (5.5"), RAM (2 GB vs 1 GB) and processor speed (1.6 GHz quad-core vs 1.4 GHz dual-core) – all in a body that feels much easier to work on.

Granted, the Note II's 5.5" Super AMOLED display might be too big for some, but the screen is so deliciously inviting, almost begging one to read a Kindle ebook or watch movies. Add to this improved functionality on the S Pen stylus, a bigger battery and innovative multitasking features, and you have yourself TechSmart's top smartphone of 2012. [MJ]





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TOP 5

In 2012 we've seen tablets' screen resolution expand to stunning levels; smaller tablets prove that they too can offer sublime performance; and a particularly distinctive approach to edging out the competition with the 'write' stuff. Here is our pick for this year's top 5 tablets.

5 Asus Eee Pad Transformer Prime

While Asus' Transformer Prime tablet was launched in the first quarter of the year, it managed the admirable feat of leaving a lasting impression right through to the end. In part, this was due to the excellent performance offered by the Tegra 3 quad-core processor, plus the superlative build quality and stylish aesthetics that have become the norm for the company. No less compelling though was the fact that we could firmly clip it to its keyboard dock. Suddenly, it felt like we had a 10.1" ZenBook in our hands, capable of lasting an enviable 17 hours when so wedded.



4 Asus VivoTab RT

Leading the charge of Windows RT tablets is yet another excellent device from Asus, in the VivoTab RT. Decked in the attractive, semi-casual OS-wear that is Windows RT, the tablet brings Asus' best to the new operating system. An excellent build quality; bright, sharp and responsive 10.1" touchscreen, and very fluid and snappy performance thanks to a Tegra 3 quad core processor, made this tablet an endearing alternative to those tablets wearing Android or iOS. Moreover, it also boasts the best – and easiest to type on – mini keyboard dock that we have seen to date. When separated, the tablet on its own is a worthy contender, but joined together, the formidable battery life of 16 hours makes this a winning combo. See the full review on p14.



3 Google Nexus 7

Living up to the adage that dynamite comes in small packages, Google's Nexus 7 (manufactured by Asus) redefined what an affordable 7" tablet could look and perform like. It may be the least expensive, smallest and most portable tablet on our list, but the Nexus 7 still packs a performance punch. With a Nvidia Tegra 3 quad core processor (at 1.3 GHz), 1 GB of memory and the latest version of Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean), the Nexus 7's speed and responsiveness is simply a joy in practical use.



2 Samsung Galaxy Note 10.1

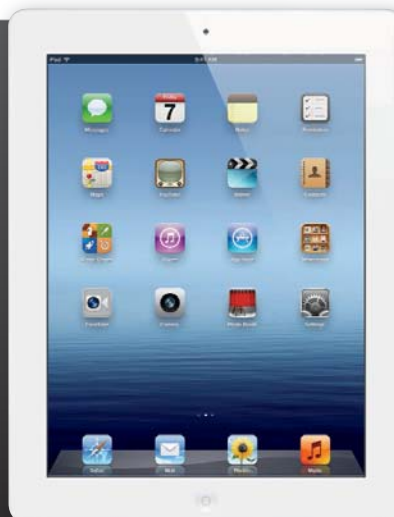
Samsung's Galaxy Note 10.1 tablet showed the company was moving in the 'write' direction, as its Galaxy Note 10.1 won us over by allowing the easiest and most accessible way to write and draw on a tablet that we've seen to date. Along with a respectable screen resolution of 1280 x 800 (149 ppi), the tablet made us swoon at its responsiveness, thanks to its Exynos Quad-core 1.4 GHz processor and a decent 2 GB of memory. No less heartening was the microSD expandable storage slot and the ability to open different apps side by side, affording a degree of multitasking that even the mighty iPad can't yet lay claim to.



5 million. Number of sales that the Nexus 7 tablet garnered in 2012.

1 Apple New iPad (iPad 3)

Apple's hold on the tablet space was only strengthened this year with its iPad 3 (more officially called the New iPad). This is in no small part due to the introduction of a jaw dropping Retina display that boasts a 2 048 x 1 536 resolution, supported by the A5X processor's quad-core graphics. While being slightly heavier and a little thicker than its predecessor, this doesn't detract from its appeal, particularly as its price has come down somewhat and it still boasts the same ten and a half hour battery life of the iPad 2. The iPad 3's biggest drawback and source of new owners' frustration? The more recent release of the even newer iPad 4. [RN]



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TOP 5

This year has been characterised by an influx of several great notebooks and ultrabooks, so much so that picking and choosing amongst them presented a considerable challenge. However, these are the five notebooks and ultrabooks that made an impact in the TechSmart office.



5 Mecer JW6 ultrabook

RRP: R7 000

Much like the Asus VivoBook, local brand Mecer's JW6 ultrabook recognises that in a tough economy, price is king, providing a very good – and affordable – offering for those watching their wallet. This 14" ultrabook impressed nonetheless, as it sported a very capable 3rd generation Core i5 3317U processor (1.7 GHz), 4 GB of memory and Intel Graphics HD 4000. While booting times are fast thanks to a 32 GB SSD cache, there is also plenty of space here for media files on the 1 TB hard disk drive.

To its credit, in our performance tests it held its own with ultrabooks that are double the price, even if the 3½ hour battery life and plasticky design didn't quite measure up.

4 Asus VivoBook X202E

RRP: Starts at R4 500

The first Windows 8 touchscreen notebook to touch down on our shores, the Asus VivoBook X202E is a beauty that blends great features and a quality build with an affordable pricetag.

The notebook proved that mainstream doesn't mean substandard, as the VivoBook boasted a lovely, responsive 11.6" touchscreen; a comfortable keyboard with keys that boasted some depth and springiness; very decent sound, along with a capacious 500 GB hard drive. Perhaps most impressive of all was the negligible startup times, as the VivoBook required only a moment's notice to be ready for action.



3 HP Folio 13 ultrabook

RRP: R13 000

HP's business orientated ultrabook, the Folio 13, was one of the most solidly built ultrabooks we have seen this year. While not the lightest at 1.5 kg, we hardly minded, particularly since its outstanding 8½ hour battery life meant we could leave the power brick at home and still get a full day's worth of work out of it.

Further complementing the Intel Core i5 2467M processor, clocked at 1.6 GHz, 4 GB of memory and 128 SSD hard drive, was an excellent backlit chiclet keyboard. Additionally, the Folio 13's display banished glare and reflectivity for good via opting for a matte finish.



2 Dell XPS 13 ultrabook

RP: R14000

Proving that they still know how to make striking and very attractive machines, Dell had us drooling over both the looks, and the ergonomics, of its XPS 13 ultrabook. Beneath its rounded corners, and slender 18 mm profile, beats an Intel Core i5 (2467M) heart and 4 GB of memory, while a stunning 13.3" screen was inexplicably packed into a 12" body that weighed in at a light 1.3 kg.

Additionally a 128 GB solid state drive delivered some of the fastest boot times we've seen: a mere five seconds from powered off and 2 seconds from sleep that would please even the most impatient.



1 Apple MacBook Pro 15" with Retina Display

RRP: Up to R30 000, depending on the specifications

The one notebook that set the world alight this year was the 15" MacBook Pro with Retina Display. It is the latter feature which truly is a sight to behold, thanks to its screen resolution of a superb 2 880 x 1 880 (220 ppi).

The Retina Display MacBook Pro apparently borrowed a few of the MacBook Air's diet secrets, as it boasts an 18 mm profile that is considerably slimmer than its predecessors. If you have the cash (or credit rating) to afford this beauty at its highest specifications, it can also be a beast in the performance department, as it is available with a quad-core Intel Core i7 processor, a GeForce GT 650 M graphics card, and up to a significant 16 GB of memory. [RN]



74%. Percentage of South African email that is spam, according to Symantec.



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Turn your iPad into a pleasant wake-up call. Come morning, it awakens you with music from your library. If you want to watch movies, play games or catch up on the news, just connect via Bluetooth.



ION PIANO

ION Piano Apprentice is the ultimate piano teaching tool for iPad, iPod and iPhone. Simply connect your iPad, iPod or iPhone, download the free Piano Apprentice app, and start playing piano instantly!



SENSATIONAL MAGIC POCKET TRICKS

Fascinate your friends with amazing feats of magic! Choose from 6 different "pocket trick" sets, including 25 tricks each. We also stock the 150 and 275 bigger sets.



PLEO RB DINOSAUR

PLEO the robotic pet dinosaur is back! PLEO is designed to mimic life. PLEO's sophisticated sensory system has devices that enable him to hear, see, sense touch, and detect objects.



ALCOSENSE ONE

Part of the responsible enjoyment of alcohol is to understand its effect on the body and to understand when you are safe to drive. AlcoSense™ helps people do exactly that.



PALADONE SHOCKING BALL

Pick up the Shock Ball and enter a brave new world of ball games. It's designed to be thrown and caught, meaning that the holder of the ball when the charge goes off is in for a shock.



LIFEROOF IPHONE CASE

Take your iPhone along, wherever life may take you. The LifeProof iPhone case delivers the highest level of water-proof, dirt-proof, snow-proof and shock-proof protection.



PALADONE SHOCKING ROULETTE RELOADED

Each player – or should we say victim – places his or her finger in one of the slots, and the machine randomly shocks one player. For thrill seekers young and old, Includes adjustable features. 2-4 players.



CARDSHARP 2 - CREDIT CARD SIZE UTILITY KNIFE

No bigger than a credit card, and with a stainless steel surgical blade, non-slip armor rubber coated body, unique safety lock, and ultra-lightweight body, this handy knife will easily slip into your wallet.

Acer Aspire S7

The best Acer yet?

Alongside the release of Windows 8, Acer has introduced a few new devices that have done much to turn heads. Their new Aspire S7 certainly made us do a double take.

As far as design, the S7 is, at least in our opinion, one of this year's hottest ultrabooks. The unit comes wrapped in white, very neatly lined with an aluminium grey border. We've seen a lot of sleek curves on recent notebooks, but the slightly more straight edge approach of the S7 is very appealing. This might not have worked on a larger machine, but the Acer's astonishingly thin 12.2 mm frame (1.3 kg) carries it off with aplomb.

Lovely screen and keyboard

Such an elegant body is complimented by a beautiful 13.3" full HD (1 920 x 1 080) LCD screen. This display provides well-saturated colours and excellent viewing angles, while it's also good to know that, seeing that it's a



'With a great screen, a very decent keyboard and elegant design, it's easy to recommend.'

touchscreen, it comes with a Gorilla Glass coating and is very resistant to smudges.

The chicklet styled keyboard similarly merits a mention. In the past, Acer keyboards and ourselves weren't the best of friends, but with the S7, we got along merrily. Surrounded by a sea of aluminium, the minimalistic approach works well, with no added shortcut buttons, nor for that matter F-function keys, provided. The keys are suitably large and a pleasure to type on, with the added benefit of being backlit. Unfortunately, while the multitouch touchpad is appropriately large and well-placed, it is very sensitive and finicky, especially when using two fingers to scroll down webpages.

Great performance, but the battery life...

While the S7 is stylish on the outside, inside it grows with an Intel Core i7-3517U running at 1.90 GHz and 4 GB of RAM, providing some of the hottest performance from an ultrabook this year. The chink in the Acer's armour is unfortunately its underperforming battery life. At about four hours it is quite unflattering next to HP's Folio 13's 8½ hours, at least beating the Mezer JW6's paltry 3½. This also means that you need to drag a quite unsightly and very long (almost 4 m) power cable along.

The Acer Aspire S7 ultrabook is without a doubt one of the best looking Acers we've reviewed yet. With a great screen, a very decent keyboard and elegant design, it's easy to recommend, it's just a shame about the battery life. It goes for an expensive R25 000. [MJ]

MEDICAL EMERGENCY DETAILS CARD



WAS : R2100.00 ea.
NOW : R1500.00 ea.

Can you afford to be without one?

www.medcardflash.com | medcard@medcardflash.com | [@MEDCard_Za](https://twitter.com/MEDCard_Za) | www.facebook.com/MEDCardFlash

Minimum System Requirements:
Windows VistaA
.NET Framework (distributed with the MEDCard)

*Discounted Rates available on batch orders of more than 20 units
*Limited Offer
*Whilst Stocks Last

3 million. Amount of iPad minis and 4th gen iPads sold in the first three days of their availability overseas.

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explore beyond limits™

Acer recommends Windows® 7.

Ultrabook™ Inspired by Intel



OPEN UP

WITH THE ACER ASPIRE S5 ULTRABOOK™

He is known for speed, determination, intensity and a fair number of explosions. But he has another side. A sweet fluffy cupcake side. Yes, it took us by surprise too. But once we'd recovered we decided to help him by designing the new Aspire S5 Ultrabook.™ It's not only 11mm thin and weighs just 1.2kg, but underneath its sleek exterior lies an Intel® Core™ i5 or Core™ i7 processor, Windows® 7 Home Premium, a solid state drive and a lightning fast thunderbolt connection. So, besides a good egg beater and reliable convection oven, it's all Kiefer needs to explore his baking passion.

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ASUS®

VivoTab RT

Windows RT, done right

Amongst the influx of Windows RT tablets now making their way to market, is Asus' VivoTab RT. The big question is whether tablets can successfully make the jump to Microsoft's newest operating system and still win users over.

On the surface, Asus' latest convertible tablet, the VivoTab RT, looks quite similar to the company's Transformer Prime and Infinity Pad tablets, consisting also of a tablet with a dockable keyboard. But whereas those esteemed devices boasted Android as their OS of choice, the VivoTab RT is based on Windows RT, which offers a wholly different experience to Android.

There are, however, a few similarities that users will appreciate. These include excellent build quality and a bright (600 nit), sharp 10.1" screen, as found on Asus' Android counterparts. Resolution on offer is 1366 x 768, and on this screen size, it looks fantastic.

Fine design

The 525 g tablet is not just light and solid, it's also attractively and ergonomically designed, as its rounded edges make it comfortable to hold. Additionally, Asus has seen fit to make the slot used to connect the tablet to its keyboard dock slightly more recessed, which addresses one of the few complaints we had with the Transformer Pad Infinity.

The screen further has a very roomy bezel, offering the perfect balance between providing enough space to comfortably hold the tablet without accidentally touching the screen, without feeling cheated of screen real estate.

On the specifications front, the blood and guts of the system is somewhat familiar, as Nvidia's Tegra 3 processor, clocked at 1.3 GHz, and 2 GB of memory, accounted for the device's quick and smooth performance. Our review model offered 32 GB of storage space, and this could be further expanded via the microSD card slot.

Is this Windows a winner?

While we have been somewhat confounded by Windows 8 on notebooks of late, Windows RT (the mobile version of Windows 8, designed specifically for tablets and mobile devices utilising the ARM processing platform) fares considerably better. The OS actually feels more intuitive on a tablet than Windows 8 does on a PC, perhaps because it is not weighed down by decades worth of familiarity as is the case on Windows 8 on notebooks, and thus didn't have us constantly bemoaning the absence of the Start menu.

On a tablet, Microsoft's tiles-orientated system is logical and a 'clean' way of accessing information. The bigger problem is that at the present, the Windows Store has too few apps, although hopefully this will be addressed as more developers come to the Windows 8 party. This is particularly

'The VivoTab RT's dockable keyboard is included in the price, and is, in a word, outstanding.'

Additionally, Windows Desktop mode is pretty much the Windows desktop that many have become accustomed to, albeit with no Start menu. Navigation here felt instantly familiar, which will likely be reassuring to long-time Windows users.

Hardware temptations

Further helping matters along is the VivoTab's dockable keyboard (included), which is, in a word, outstanding. While the chiclet keys might be small, as befitting a keyboard built for a 10.1" device, they also boasted some of the most satisfying depth we have seen on a portable device for quite some time. This made typing a pleasure; we seldom missed our mark even when typing at a decent speed. The trackpad, though small, is usable, and can be supplanted by plugging a mouse into the single USB 2.0 on the keyboard dock. This while the audio on offer was clear and faultless, accompanied by an 8 MP rear-facing camera and a 2 MP front-facing snapper.

In general use, the VivoTab RT was a pleasure. Browsing the web, watching YouTube videos, playing a games, catching up on the latest news on a newsreader (News360), downloading apps and writing a document in Word (Office 2013 Home & Student RT included) were accessible and presented no issues.

To the point

While the operating system is different, the VivoTab RT delivered on all the fronts that we have come to expect from our tablet, while, when docked, added a solid keyboard and mouse-based experience as well. While we may not be completely sold on Windows 8 just yet, Asus' offering has gone a long way towards making the transition that much easier and hassle-free.

As one of the first of the company's implementations of Microsoft's vision, Asus has excelled with flair, because the VivoTab RT is a fine tablet in its own right. RRP: R7 799 for the 32 GB Wi-Fi version, R8 999 for forthcoming 32 GB 3G version. [RN]

important for Windows RT, as you cannot install your legacy PC programs on the device.

However, we liked the fact that, unlike downloading apps on the iPad, downloading from the Windows store only requires you to enter your Windows Live account username and password once, and then you can download to your heart's content.

ASUS recommends Windows 8.

ASUS[®]
Inspiring Innovation • Persistent Perfection



ASUS VivoTab[™] Transform to Incredible



Ultra Productivity

Windows 8
Intel[®] Atom[™] Z2760 Dual-core CPU @ 1.8 GHz
Versatile Wacom[®] Digitizer Stylus

Exponential Entertainment

11.6" Super IPS+ panel with ASUS TruVivid Technology
Quad-speakers with SonicMaster Audio Technology
8MP camera with F/2.2 aperture and LED flash

True Expandability

Stylish keyboard dock with touchpad and USB ports
19 hours of battery life* when docked
Compatible with Windows[®] desktop applications



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Beautiful, fast, fluid  Windows 8

* Battery life is measured by playing 720p video playback, 100 nits brightness, default volume with headphones, Wi-Fi associated.

The mirrorless camera evolution. Are you ready for the next chapter in professional imaging?

The future of capturing those all important moments in life easily and professionally – whether you’re an experienced professional or someone just looking to trade-up from your ‘point and shoot’ – is now!

A paradigm shift?

Usually, having great photos is attributed to using the most expensive Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) camera with the biggest lens mounted to its front. However, with the introduction of mirrorless cameras you don’t need to carry heavy camera gear to take an impressive picture. Mirrorless technology is perfect for any photographer who is weary of the slow response of traditional bulky ‘point and shoot’ cameras, but does not want to compromise on picture quality. Through the latest mirrorless cameras you are now able to capture professional images, store and share them straight from your camera wherever you are in the world! Mirrorless technology is revolutionising the digital imaging space and allowing for a paradigm shift in photography today.

Trends indicate that while in 2010 there were only 1 million users of mirrorless technology worldwide, this is forecasted to grow to a staggering 9 million users by 2013. This is likely to be higher than the growth of the DSLR camera market for the same period.

So what is mirrorless technology?

The mirrorless (Compact System Camera or CSC) is a popular class of digital system cameras which unlike a compact digital camera, is equipped with an interchangeable lens mount. The mirrorless camera is different from the Digital Single Lens Reflex camera (DSLR) as it does not have a mirror-based optical viewfinder. However, some CSCs utilise the ever increasing, popular electronic viewfinder.

Dynamite imaging in a compact package

A great advantage is that the design of mirrorless cameras reduces the overall size and weight of the device by up to 50%. This allows comfortable, simple and convenient photography all of the time, without compromising on quality. In fact, mirrorless cameras are said to deliver better picture and video quality as a result of larger imaging sensors than almost all compact cameras.

“The design of mirrorless cameras reduces the overall size and weight.”

An example is the Samsung NX series of CSC cameras, which boasts 20.3MPs and an APS-C CMOS Sensor. This combination produces digitally processed images where components like exposure, colour and resolution are translated and combined to create ‘true to life’ images.

Customised connection

Mirrorless cameras are typically of higher quality than built-in lenses and allow you to attach the right lens to match your preferred photographic vision. Additionally, some models like the Samsung NX Series cameras,

“Samsung’s NX Series offers you built-in Wi-Fi technology”

offer speeds of up to 8 frames per second allowing you to capture your friends, family, pets or moving images in full action. Samsung’s NX Series range also offers built-in Wi-Fi technology - making it possible to download and save photos directly to a computer while you shoot. This connectivity also enables you to print wirelessly, or share images onto social media channels. Lost photos? Never again - the Wi-Fi capability means you can email photos and upload them to the Cloud - ensuring that your images are safe and sound.

While the market trend has been to provide smaller, more compact cameras, it should be realised that a camera should not be seen as just another fancy gadget to add to the pile. Your camera can create a dynamic imaging experience that is now accessible to all photographers.

Look to the Samsung NX Series range for a camera that offers the very best experience with mirrorless technology, functional design and superb features that give you the perfect shot every time!





The festive season comes around but once a year, why not make it extra special with a Samsung product fit for the whole family?

The perfect guest at the Xmas table

For capturing those special memories

Samsung NX1000 SMART Camera

RRP: R5 999



When you're taking pictures at Xmas dinner, lugging a big DSLR around can become a chore. The 20.3 megapixel NX1000 is much smaller than regular DSLRs, but still provides you with the ability to change lenses when you wish, and excellent image quality. It ships with a 20-50 mm OIS II i-Function lens, and forms part of Samsung's Smart camera range, which features built-in Wi-Fi. This allows for a range of capabilities, including direct photo sharing on Facebook, emailing of images and automatic downloading of photos on PC.

To keep the party going

Samsung Wireless Audio with Dock

RRP: R6 999



Xmas carols aren't to everyone's liking, so make sure the right tunes are playing at this year's celebrations. Samsung Wireless Audio with Dock is the ultimate in wireless connectivity, providing a multitude of ways to connect to smartphones via Bluetooth 3.0, or to TVs and MP3 players. The unit is also the world's first dual-docking system, with support for Samsung Galaxy devices (Android) and Apple iOS units. The unit further features Samsung's new vacuum tube amplifier technology, which provides a warmer, more natural sound than conventional audio systems that use transistors.

For planning, and play

Samsung Galaxy Note II

RRP: R8 000

Do you have a dad that has everything? One that you never know what to buy for Xmas? Well what about the Galaxy Note II? It offers a smartphone for truly personal, artistic and creative expression. Featuring a 5.5" (140.9 mm) HD Super AMOLED screen, the Galaxy Note II provides a phenomenal viewing experience with breathtaking visuals and crystal clear detail.

The Galaxy Note II also enables unique experiences in personalised and expressive content creation, making it the ultimate smartphone for on-the-go creativity. Powered by Android 4.1, Jelly Bean with a 1.6 GHz quad-core processor, the Galaxy Note II brings powerful performance in content creation, sharing and multitasking capabilities.



For doing the hard work

Series 9 New Generation Notebook

RRP: From R15 000

With a weight of only 1.59 kg, the second generation Samsung Series 9 ultra-portable notebook is one of the lightest in its class. It does this without sacrificing power, since it comes equipped with the latest Intel Core-i processors. One of the key features of the Series 9 is the excellent anti-reflective 400nit HD+ LED SuperBright display, also available in a 15" version – not very common amongst this small form factor. This makes watching movies after an eventful Xmas day as much a pleasure as doing spreadsheets on it.



The perfect gift for under the Xmas tree

To keep the food fresh

Samsung French Door Refrigerator

RRP: From R20 000

With family members staying over for the holidays, a well-stocked fridge is essential. With Twin Cooling technology, the Samsung French Door fridge keeps food fresher for longer, ensuring that each food item is kept at the optimal temperature, and decreases the chances of food going to waste. Samsung's Space Max Technology also creates an additional 101 litres of space inside the unit, while not changing the outer dimensions. Furthermore, the fridge comes with an 'A' energy rating, ensuring that, even with a full fridge, your electricity bill won't sky rocket.



For preparing the food

Samsung OmniPro Microwave

RRP: R3 500

Ceramic enamel is the next best thing to having someone to take care of your microwave for you.



To start with, the OmniPro is durable, the way any good kitchen appliance should be. This means that no matter how your family uses it, it won't scratch like stainless steel, or crack like plastic. It's also easy to clean, because the inner cavity has no corners, so all you need is a damp cloth to wipe away all kinds of splatters. In addition, the walls are coated with an advanced material that acts as an anti-bacterial agent and deodoriser.

To keep the family healthy

Samsung Virus Doctor

RRP: R1 400

The Samsung Virus Doctor improves indoor air quality and enhances the ability to protect your home from harmful bacteria and viruses. This unit works by leveraging Super Plasma-ion (SPi) technology to generate activated hydrogen and oxygen ions, which transform toxins from the air into harmless water vapour. SPi technology has been proven as the most effective purification technology, eliminating harmful substances like bacteria, viruses, and fungi from living rooms, offices, car interiors, and other closed environments. With the Virus Doctor, this holiday season need not be spent sick.



For communicating

Samsung Galaxy S III

RRP: R8 000

One of this year's hottest smartphones, there are a lot of people hoping to find the S III in their stockings come Xmas morning. And why not? Not only does it boast a 4.8" Super AMOLED display and 1.4 GHz quad-core processor to keep things running smoothly, but also a number of extras that make it stand out from the crowd. Pop-up Play, for example, allows you to resize the movie you're watching to allow you to quickly read a message or send a text, while the S III also tracks your eyes to see if you are using the screen, and refrains from turning it off accordingly. We're quite sure Santa will be using an S III this year. ❀



Canon: The top summer shooters

Canon had a very busy 2012, with a number of hot new cameras coming off the production line. So what are your choices for the upcoming holidays? Here are the top summer shooters.



Canon PowerShot D20

RRP: R3 800

Heading to the great outdoors and looking for a camera that can roll with the punches? Canon's 12.1 megapixel D20 ticks all the right boxes. It is waterproof up to 10 m, temperature resistant from -10°C and has the ability to absorb a drop from 1.5 m – now try that with a regular compact camera. Want to pin-point where you took that pic (and where you've been)? Thanks to the D20's onboard GPS tracker, it's no hassle at all. The D20 is the type of camera you simply don't need to worry about.



Canon PowerShot SX500 IS

RRP: R3 300

At first sight you would not believe that the PowerShot SX500 IS's small compact body hides a 30x zoom (equivalent to 24 – 720 mm), since it's pretty much the same size as regular compact cameras.

When zoomed in at such an extent, camera shake becomes a problem; luckily Canon includes an optical image stabiliser to keep the trembles away. This, while its enhanced Zoom Framing Assist button helps you track your subject and keeps it locked for that perfect picture.



Canon PowerShot SX50 HS

RRP: R5 500

Trips to the Kruger, prize-giving ceremonies, sporting events – your camera simply cannot capture the moment if you have don't have a bit of zoom to play with. In the case of Canon's SX50 HS, you have a LOT of it. In fact, it is the world's first compact camera with a 50x optical zoom (equivalent to 24 – 1 200 mm), ensuring that that leopard in the tree is not just yet another tree. This 12.1 megapixel camera also includes a fold-out and twistable 2.8" LCD display, and 1080p full HD video capturing.



Canon EOS M

RRP: R9 500 (Starter EF18-55mm)

The EOS M is Canon's first entry into the mirrorless camera market. These types of cameras have the distinction of delivering high quality images in a body much smaller than regular DSLRs can offer, since they do not contain the mirror that reflects light coming through the lens into an optical viewfinder. All this while still offering interchangeable lenses. The EOS M contains an 18 megapixel APS-C sensor similar to that found on the EOS 650 DSLR, hybrid autofocus and 1080p video recording. This is packed in a lightweight body that won't make photography a burden.



Canon PIXMA MG6340

RRP: R1 900

Canon's PIXMA MG6340 not only copies and scans, but, thanks to its FINE print head, delivers ink droplets in 1 pl size, which results in exceptional photo quality. The MG6340 features six individual ink tanks, including grey ink that enlarges the colour gamut and that is especially important when printing monochrome images.

A 3.5" (8.8 mm) touchscreen display, featuring Canon's Intelligent Touch System, further improves the PIXMA's usability, while the new Snap Edge design allows ink tanks to be replaced from the front cover. User can also connect the MG6340 to a wireless network, and make use of Apple AirPrint to ensure easy printing from iPads and iPhones.



Canon EOS 6D

RRP: R23 000 (Body only)

The step up to full-frame photography has always been quite an expensive one. Not anymore. Canon's EOS 6D features a 20.2 megapixel full-frame CMOS sensor and does so in the smallest and lightest body yet – a mere 680 g. The best part – the 6D is R10 000 cheaper than the EOS 5D Mark III. Two other features also strike a chord, since included is not only onboard GPS, but also built-in Wi-Fi for wireless transmission of captured images to PC or Mac. Think that is fancy? Try controlling the 6D with your Android or iOS device via the downloadable app.

Power to Generation M

The new breed of camera for the new breed of photographer. The new EOS M gives you EOS quality pictures from a compact, easy to handle camera. Start your EOS adventure.

New EOS M

For more information call
0800 004 937
or go to www.canon.co.za



Canon

you can

DStv
Mobile

The choice is yours



DStv Mobile has worked hard to provide a continuous stream of mobile television products, making it easy to enjoy TV-on-the-go wherever you might find yourself. Here are some of their solutions, just in time for the holidays.



R650

DStv Drifta mobile decoder

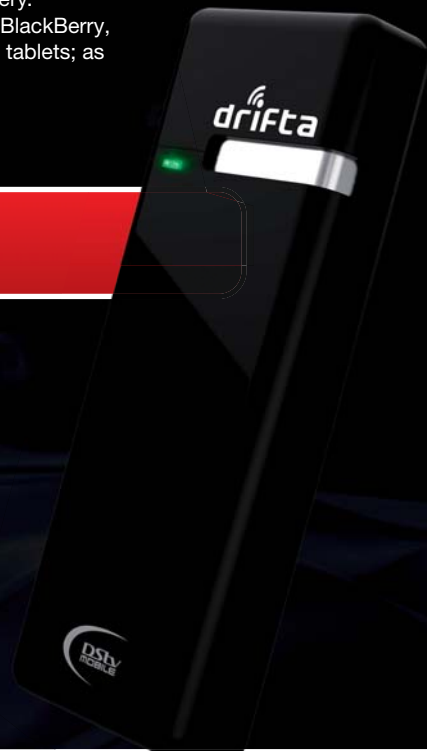
DStv Mobile's Drifta must have saved companies a number of sick days, since this unit enables one to wirelessly stream SuperSport to PCs, notebooks, certain tablets and smartphones. It means that watching the latest rugby, soccer and cricket from the comfort of your desk is well within your reach. The Drifta can connect via Wi-Fi or USB, and it provides up to three hours of viewing via its rechargeable battery.

The device is compatible with certain Android, BlackBerry, iOS, Windows Phone and Symbian smartphones; tablets; as well as Windows and Mac computers.

R450

DStv Drifta USB

For those who want to watch DStv's range of channels on PCs, notebooks and ultrabooks, and have an open USB port to spare, the Drifta USB is the unit to get. There are no worries about battery life, since this unit draws all its power from USB, while allowing one to remain connected to Wi-Fi. Small and light (it looks like a flash disk), the Drifta USB is the perfect companion for your PC. At R450 it is also less expensive than the regular Drifta.



A white mobile TV decoder with a 30-pin connector and a white cable. The brand name 'iDrifta' is visible on the device.

R500

DStv iDrifta for Apple iOS

Apple fans can be quite particular about their accessories, so why not use a mobile TV decoder that DStv made specifically for your favourite iDevice? The iDrifta mobile TV decoder connects to your iOS product via the 30-pin connector, with the unit only drawing power after its own battery is depleted (it lasts for about three hours).

Currently, the iDrifta is compatible with Apple's iPhone 4/4S, the iPad 1, 2 and 3rd generation and the 4th Generation iPod Touch.

A handheld TV device with a 3.5-inch screen displaying a grid of various TV shows and sports. The brand name 'walka' is visible at the bottom of the device.

R700

DStv Walka

For some, having a stand-alone device that does not need to connect to any decoders for a picture is the better solution. The Walka Handheld TV is DStv's TV-on-the-go unit that connects

automatically to the mobile TV signal. Its 3.5"

screen offers a no-mess, no-fuss solution. It is the perfect companion when going to the rugby, for example, seeing that it will show you all the replays right there in the stands. Proof of a valid existing TV licence will be required when purchasing the Walka.

R900

DStv Walka 7

The Walka 7 shows that bigger is indeed better, with this new device's 7" screen definitely worth the extra bucks. It comes with improved screen resolution, now standing at 800 x 400, and battery life in the region of six hours. At 442 g and more bulky, it's perhaps less portable than the regular Walka, but the included stand makes it the perfect companion at work, providing two viewing angles. If you have an Xmas stocking that needs filling, the Walka 7 should do nicely. You will need a valid TV licence to purchase this device. ❖



About DStv Mobile

Coverage

Before purchasing any of these devices, make sure that you fall in the mobile TV coverage area, which comprises the ten major cities of South Africa, including Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. If you are unsure if you will be covered, visit www.dstvmobile.com and look for the coverage map.

Channels included

- SuperSport 1-4
- SuperSport Blitz
- AfricaMagic
- Channel O
- CNNi
- Discovery Channel
- Disney XD
- eNews Channel
- Sony Max
- M-Net Series

Monthly subscription and availability

There is a monthly subscription fee of R49, but DStv Premium subscribers need not worry, since DStv Mobile for Premium (with access to M-Net Mobile) is provided for free. Also, look out for the DStv Combo Pack that includes both an HD PVR and Drifta combo, offered at the discount price of R1 700.

These DStv Mobile solutions are available from MultiChoice centres and select retailers. For more information visit www.dstvmobile.com.

Cideko Smart TV Box

Bringing smart functionality to your TV

The Smart TV box from Cideko is an Android-operated media player that allows users to transform a bland old TV into a modern Smart TV.

With the Cideko plug-and-play Smart TV Box, one can incorporate features such as web surfing, social networking and mobile games, straight onto any TV with an HDMI or RCA connection. Once plugged in, the Smart TV Box can be connected to your home network either via Ethernet cable or via Wi-Fi. Users that do not have an ADSL network, can connect to the web by using a compatible 3G USB modem.

'This Smart TV Box incorporates features such as web surfing, social networking and mobile games, straight onto any TV with an HDMI or RCA connection.'

The Smart TV box can then stream multimedia content via Wi-Fi from your notebook, smartphone or any other Wi-Fi-enabled device, to display this content on your TV screen. This digital media player further has three USB

ports plus an SD card reader, enabling users to connect their USB memory stick, portable hard-drive or SD card in order to view photos, play music or watch videos.

Cideko included a wireless keyboard that is used to navigate the device's menu system and for inputting text. This keyboard is powered by two AA batteries, with its dongle taking up one of the three available ports of the Smart TV Box. It also doubles as a mouse since it features a gyroscope that allows users to move the wireless keyboard in order to move the cursor on the screen.



Apps and educational experience

Since the Smart TV Box runs on Android 2.3 (Gingerbread), users are able to download applications and games from Android market places, including Angry Birds Space, Twitter, Mxit and Facebook for Android. The Smart TV Box also features the standard Android internet browser, allowing users to browse the web on their TV.

Furthermore, parents are able to provide their kids with an enhanced educational experience courtesy of the Smart TV Box's access to the Wise Experience. This offers a variety of local content such as an Education Centre, which delivers supplementary digital school content for kids.

To the point

The Cideko Smart TV box turns your TV into the family entertainment hub, enabling users to stream movies or connect a portable HDD to watch their favourite series on the TV. Thanks to Android, you can also download a number of games and other useful apps. It is available from Pick 'n Pay Hyper outlets for a RRP of R1 500 (incl. VAT).

For more information on where to buy call Nology on 0861 NOLOGY (665649) or visit them on www.nology.co.za.

cideko

R1499

- Wireless-N (up to 300Mbps)
- 3G via USB modem²
- Supports most TV's³
- Air Keyboard

Smart TV Box

Android Media Player with Air Keyboard (AB03B)

FEATURES:

- Browse the Internet on your TV
- Play Audio and Video files and view photos in Full HD
- Wireless Gyro Keyboard (move your mouse by moving the keyboard)
- Android 2.3
- Download Android applications for use on your TV
- Wireless-N and Ethernet connectivity
- Connect to the Internet via a 3G USB Modem
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NOTES:

¹ Actual throughput and performance depends on the environment. Normally the Wireless speed is faster if you are closer to your Wireless Access Point. The further the Smart TV Box is from your Wireless Access Point, the weaker the Wireless signal, resulting in slower speeds.

² 3G Modem not included. Only certain 3G USB modems are interoperable with the Smart TV Box. Please refer to www.nology.co.za/cideko for the complete list of the compatible 3G USB modems.

³ TV must support RCA (Red, White and Yellow) or HDMI input.

Available at Pick n Pay Hyper. For more information contact 0800 11 22 88. Valid from Saturday 01 December to Monday 31 December 2012. T&C's Apply: www.nology.co.za/terms



www.nology.co.za/cideko





mantality.co.za

Gadgets from Mantality

Oloclip 3-in-1 iPhone 4/4S fisheye lens

For iPhonographers wanting to take their images to the next level, the Oloclip might just be their next love affair. This 3-in-1 quick connect lens solution includes a fisheye, wide-angle and macro lens to turn pictures taken on your iPhone 4/4s into a "like" magnet on Instagram. R900.



iPhone Hard Drive cover

We've seen a number of awesome looking iPhone cases, with this one meant for all the techies out there. If you've ever replaced a hard drive, you'll know the familiar look of Mantality's Hard Drive Cover. It comes complete with all the familiar barcodes, screw slots and approval ratings, and fits snugly around your iPhone 4/4S – no assembly required. Yours for R175.



iCrayon stylus

We're not quite sure if the iCrayon puts the style back into stylus, but at least it confirms that working on the iPad is indeed kids' play. It looks like your old Crayola crayons, but we won't recommend melting this one down in order to make candles. While the Draw Something app might have lost its initial appeal, it does not mean that there is no reason to whip the iCrayon out at board meetings. R124.



All these gadgets and more are available from www.mantality.co.za



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75%. Smartphones shipped worldwide during Q3 2012 running on Android.

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Safer cyber shopping makes for happier holidays



Simple safety tips from ESET

The 2012 holiday shopping season is fast approaching and digital devices are sure to play a bigger role in the holiday shopping process than ever before. Here are a few tips for staying safe online, courtesy of ESET.



- 1 Tune your shopping machine:**
Like the tune-up your car gets before a long drive to deliver holiday gifts to relatives, your notebook may need attention before going online for some power shopping. Give it some love, and improved protection, by updating your browser, operating system, and anti-malware suite. You can run a free antivirus scan of your Windows PC at www.eset.com/online-scanner.
- 2 Stick with familiar faces:**
Buy from websites that have established a reputation for doing what they say, providing accurate descriptions of merchandise, and delivering it in good shape and on time.
- 3 Be wary of amazing deals:**
If a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is, particularly if it's an amazing offer on one of the hottest products of the season. Such deals can be very tempting, but it really is safer to avoid following links that offer goods, services, or gift cards at impossibly cheap prices, they are just too risky. Google the offer and/or vendor to see what others are saying.
- 4 Insist on secure transactions:**
When you are in the ordering process on a website, check to make sure it is using SSL, the standard in secure transactions that shows up in several ways. You should be able to see 'https' in front of the web address instead of 'http'. There may also be a lock or key symbol in the browser window as well. Using SSL encrypts the exchange of information, such as your credit card, so eavesdroppers cannot read it.
- 5 Think before you act:**
Watch out for 'Urgent' deals that arrive in unsolicited email or purport to be from friends on social networking sites. Exercise extra caution if the message uses broken English or if it doesn't seem quite right for some reason. If you think the deal is real, open a browser and type the name of the website directly into the address bar, instead of clicking on the email link.
- 6 Don't shop at a leaky hotspot:**
If you need to do any shopping over Wi-Fi, at home or at a hotspot, make sure it is secure (look for the lock symbol in the Wi-Fi connection dialog). The last thing you want is someone snatching your personal and financial details out of thin air as you transmit them from your notebook (or smartphone or tablet).
- 7 Use credit instead of debit:**
If you get scammed and try to get your money back you may have better luck with credit card transactions versus debit cards. Credit cards can put an extra layer of protection in between you and the bad guys.
- 8 Don't expect money for answering questions:**
There are many legitimate website satisfaction surveys, but when a window pops up promising you cash or gift cards just for answering a simple survey like "Do you use the internet?" close it and move on. And do not enter your cellphone number to claim the R1 000 gift card that a website is promising you, unless you are prepared to pay for premium services you never ordered.
- 9 Stay awake after the holidays:**
When New Year lull sets in, there's a tendency to avoid looking at the credit card statements arriving by mail (or email). But if you got scammed, that statement may be the first sign, so at least skim the statement to see if there are any transactions you don't recognise.
- 10 Lock up your devices:**
Password protect your notebook, tablet, and smartphone so that, if lost or stolen, your data will be harder for strangers to access. Choose a password or code that is easy for you to remember but hard for other people to guess. Set the timing so that the device locks after a short period of inactivity.
- 11 Backup your data:**
If you have to face a worst-case scenario this holiday season, like a notebook going missing or a smartphone being stolen, the situation will be a lot less upsetting if you have your device backed up, that is, copies of your files safely stored somewhere else.

Follow these tips and you should sleep a little better during the holiday shopping season. Remember, as in life, there are online deals that can seem too good to be true, and probably more of them during the holiday shopping season. A cautious and sceptical approach may sound boring, but it can pay off. After all, if you feel you don't have enough time to get your shopping done, you certainly don't have time to deal with fraudulent charges, flaky deals, or stolen data. For more information on ESET's range of internet security services, visit www.eset.co.za.

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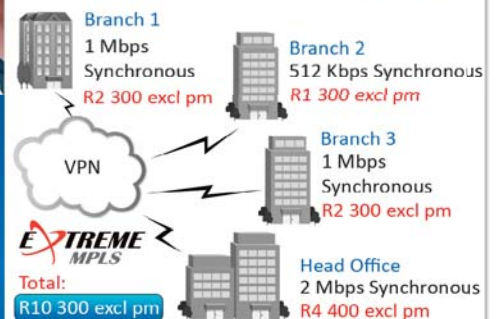
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Holiday Best Buys



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TAKEALOT.COM



Apple iPad mini 16 GB Black/Slate: Wi-Fi Only

■ bit.ly/takealot1

If you want it, iPad's newest 16 GB iPad mini is in fact already available from TAKEALOT. The 7.9" iPad caters to the full array of apps currently available, albeit in a slightly smaller, more portable, and thus easier to hold one handed, form. With a 1 024 x 768 resolution (163 ppi) the screen conveys the same level of sharpness as the iPad 2, with the similar ten hours worth of operating time. R4 600.



Garmin nüvi 40LM Bundle

■ bit.ly/takealot2

The easy-to-use Garmin nüvi 40 with free lifetime maps, boasts an extra wide 4.3" colour touchscreen display and text-to-speech, making finding your way a no-hassle endeavour. Merely looking up an address or service is enough to obtain voice-prompted, turn-by-turn directions that pronounce street names, while Lane Assist with Junction View ensures one stays on the right track. The unit also comes preloaded with Garmin City Navigator Southern Africa NT maps. R1 350.



Canon PowerShot D20

■ bit.ly/takealot3

Canon's rugged PowerShot D20 boasts a 12.1 megapixel sensor, the company's HS system for low light shooting, a 5x optical zoom and Intelligent image stabiliser. Also onboard is an integrated GPS to geotag one's images and the ability to take full HD movies. Along with the ability to withstand water, shock, freeze and dust, and underwater functionality, the D20 is an adventurer's dream come true. R3 300.



House of Marley Soul Rebel Rasta Headphones

■ bit.ly/takealot4

The Soul Rebel Rasta on-ear headset delivers a comfortable music listening experience via its soft ear cushions, which also isolate environmental noise so that you can focus on the music.

Environmentally conscious users will be happy to note that the House of Marley constructed these earphones from recycled aluminum, steel, and canvas. R469.



JBL Creature III Speakers

■ bit.ly/takealot5

Besides its striking design, the Creature III 2.1 speaker system from JBL also offers a powerful 25 watt sound oomph. These speakers can be connected to your PC, Mac, gaming console or smartphone via its 3.5 mm audio jack, to enhance your movie viewing or gaming experience. Thanks to its 15 watt subwoofer, music lovers won't be left wanting in the bass department either. R799.



Proline Q-Box i-1200 Media Player

■ bit.ly/takealot6


Proline's Q-box is basically a compact PC without a monitor. After connecting it to your TV and home network (via Ethernet cable or Wi-Fi), this media player enables users to display streamed multimedia content on their TV. It packs six USB ports (two USB 3.0, four USB 2.0) and a 5-in-1 memory card reader to access content such as photos, movies, and music from other sources, including a flash drive or portable hard-drive. R3 299.♣

Holiday Best Buys

Looking for that perfect Acer notebook to make your life just that much easier? WebAntics.co.za has a number of Acer units which will suit both your style and budget.




Acer Aspire E1

 The Acer Aspire E1 notebook sports a bright 15.6" LED backlight display while its performance is catered to by an Intel Core i3 (2328M) processor. Its 2 GB of memory is upgradeable to 8 GB, meaning that it gives users room to grow with it, while there are storage needs are met with capacious 500 GB hard drive. It has a budget-friendly price of R4 299. Windows 8 (64 bit).




Acer Aspire Ultrabook M3

 While it keeps eye strain at bay thanks to a large 15.6" display, the M3 ultrabook offers the fast boot up times of the category, thanks to its 20 GB SSD cache, while still catering for content with a large 500 GB hard drive as well. An Intel Core i3 (2377M) processor (@1.50 GHz) does duty here, along with 4 GB of memory, while two USB 2.0 and one USB 3.0 are also provided. It goes for a decent R6 799. Windows 7 Professional (64 bit).



Acer TravelMate TM5760

 The 15.6" TM5760 TravelMate i offers the capable and budget friendly Intel Core i3 (2350M) processor, at a decent speed of 2.3 GHz, along with a solid 4 GB of memory. This can be expanded to 8 GB though, while graphics performance is provided by the Intel HD Graphics 3000. A 500 GB hard drive, and a DVD writer are also at hand, along with three USB ports. Retailing for R5 799. Windows 7 Professional (32/64 bit) dual load. ❖

For more information, visit www.webantics.co.za, or call 011-839-0716.

R150 billion. Total IT spending amount predicted for South Africa by the year 2016.



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3D Systems Cube 3D printer

3D printers may be the way of the future, but they are already available for Xmas. For personal printing, 3D Systems' Cube is currently one of the hottest 3D printers available. Consumer print ready and compact, this colour 3D printer connects via Wi-Fi, and at less than 4.5 kg, is extremely portable. The EZ Load cartridge offers hours of 3D printing enjoyment in a rainbow of compelling colours, along with immediate access to 50 free printable creations. The Cube printer includes membership to Cubify.com, an excellent online 3D resource for consumers, artists and developers. It goes for R14 000 from CAD House on 012-654-0559 and www.3d-printer.co.za. ❖

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Web Time Wasters



Viddy

www.viddy.com

Viddy allows users to post their updates of happenings in their lives in the form of short video clips. Considering that many smartphones have video recording features that would make older camcorders weep (and faster internet connections), the video social network is an idea whose time has come. You can of course, just browse the site and watch videos on offer; follow particular people, including celebrities like Britney Spears; or join (for free) and start uploading your own videos to begin garnering your own audience.



Cowbird

www.cowbird.com

If the web has been lacking a certain poetic grace for you, then the oddly named Cowbird is a must visit.

The site, which is aimed at being a "library of human experiences," enables users to tell their stories using pictures and words. Common themes include Life, Dreams, Adventure, Love, Family, Nature and Relationships.

Much of what is on offer is poetic, beautiful, sad, inspiring and undoubtedly, the 21st version of poetry books.

Cowbird.com will keep you enraptured for many hours on end.



Honeyfund

www.honeyfund.com

Crowdfunding may not be a new concept, but Honeyfund is certainly an innovative application of it at work. The site, built by a newlywed couple who realised they couldn't afford to go on a honeymoon, was created to enable friends and family to chip in small amounts to cover the costs of their dream getaway. The site, which is free to join, enables couples to break down the costs of their dream honeymoon, and then receive donations. Wedding planning tips are also offered, and popular honeymoon destinations are showcased.



Coursera

www.coursera.org

Who says getting an education has to cost an arm and a leg? At Coursera, visitors can avail themselves of a variety of courses, offered online and via video instruction, from professors at the likes of prestigious universities such as Stanford, Princeton and John Hopkins, for free. Courses on offer run the gamut of topics, from biology and life sciences, computer science, economics and finance to music, film and audio engineering and the humanities. While you won't earn a degree here, nor will you be saddled with crushing debt. Some courses though, do offer a certificate or statement of accomplishment on completion. 🍀

Around the web

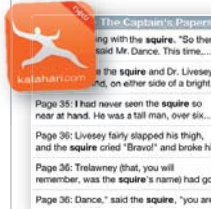
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 Afghan girl photographer Steve McCurry in action: bit.ly/girlafghan
 Best skateboarding tricks: bit.ly/skatedontfall

Apple iOS Apps of the month



Noteshelf

Noteshelf enables you to create various virtual notebooks, which can be given their own distinctive covers, easily dedicated to particular topics. Along with choosing from various paper types; you can choose from numerous pens, pencils and highlighters with which to write or draw, and a handy scissors feature lets you cut and move handwritten notes around. As well as supporting conventional typed text entry, via movable and resizable text boxes, you can also import photos and add emoticons to your notes. R48 for iOS 5 and above



kalahari.com eReader

kalahari.com's new app is a massive improvement over the previous version, enabling one to download and read Adobe DRM protected ebooks from Kalahari's store. Purchased books can be organised into collections, while the app offers users a myriad of ways to customise their reading experience, by selecting their own font and background covers and choosing between four page turn animations. Best of all is the brightness feature, which adjusts the book's brightness with a swipe up or down. Free.

BlackBerry Apps of the month



Sketch Me

If you are a fan of photo editing, then have a look at Sketch Me. This app allows you to sketch pictures stored on your BlackBerry device, whether you took a picture using your camera or use an existing picture in your gallery. Choose from six different sketch effects, including ballpoint pen, charcoal and even pencil. No wonder this R12 app is one of the best selling applications for BlackBerry phones.



Memooo

If your BlackBerry is the first thing you check every morning and the last thing you put down at night, then this R30 app may suit you. Memooo allows you to add a memo on your home screen, with features including eight different font styles, ten different templates and the ability to customise your own layout. However, note that complex wallpapers might not correctly display your memo. Memooo is a great way to jog your memory. [IF]

Android Apps of the month



Any.Do

Not getting to all your chores or always forgetting to buy that one item you actually went to the store for? Enter Any.Do, a stylish app that allows you to create to-do lists and reminders, and even update your agenda by pulling in tasks and friends birthdays from a Google or Facebook account. Additional features include adding tasks with your voice via the app's built-in voice to text functionality, while you can also add the Any.Do widget to your homescreen.

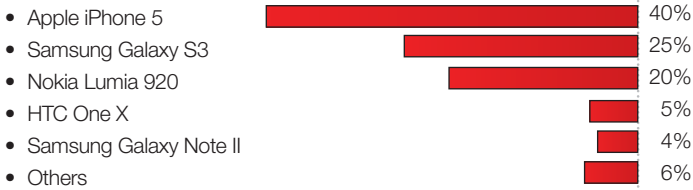


Probe the Humans

Tired of playing the hero saving the day against invading aliens? Within Probe the Humans the tables are turned, since players assume the role of an alien who uses its spaceship to beam up humans, an array of farm animals, as well as gold coins. At first this seems easy enough, but add in obstacles such as barns and police cars, and it quickly turns into a tough challenge. Lucky for us, no probing actually takes place. 🍀

TechSmart.co.za online poll results

Which device is the top smartphone of 2012?



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Top 3: Chrome (34.77%), IE (32.08%) and Firefox (22.32%) are the most used desktop browsers worldwide. IE (46.63%), Chrome (23.04%), and Firefox (19.19%) are the most used locally.



The Hobbit: An unexpected journey

14 December

While we are just as excited about visiting the Shire as the next guy, we can't help but wonder how *The Hobbit* might have turned out if Guillermo Del Toro was parked in the director's chair. Del Toro, responsible for *Pan's Labyrinth*, *Hellboy* and *Mimic*, was originally hired as director, and could have added a new, more sinister touch to Middle Earth, but unfortunately left the project due to ongoing delays. Nonetheless, you can bet your bottom dollar that Peter Jackson has again done a sterling job, even

though the relatively short book is spread out over three movies. We will be spending our cash on the 3D version, keeping our fingers crossed that *The Hobbit* will finally catapult Martin Freeman (*The Office/ Love Actually/ Sherlock*) as Bilbo Baggins into the big time.



Looper

14 December

Thanks to the wonders of time-travel, hitman for the mob Joe, played by Joseph Gordon-Levitt (*Inception*, *The Dark Knight Rises*), is handed the unfortunate task of killing his older self (Bruce Willis). As we know, trying to dispatch Bruce Willis can be a rather difficult affair, and soon both of them have the mob to contend with. Gordon-Levitt (using prosthetics to look a LOT like Willis) is quickly turning into one of our favourite actors, with *Looper* being a sci-fi/action romp just right for the holidays.



The Life of Pi

21 December

How do you turn a book like *The Life of Pi* into a movie? Ask director Ang Lee (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Hulk*), which, looking at the trailer at least, has succeeded in recreating the book's atmosphere. After a storm, a young boy (Suraj Sharma) finds himself stranded in a lifeboat with a zebra, hyena, orangutan and a Bengal tiger for company. No, *The Life of Pi* is not a comedy, and yes, it is the perfect date movie.



To Play: Wii U

It's not every day that a brand new console launches into the market, but as luck will have it, the Nintendo Wii U with its innovative GamePad controller, has finally arrived to keep us busy through the holidays. Games we plan



on spending time with on the new console include New Super Mario Bros U, Nintendo Land and of course, the horrorfest that is ZombiU. Prices start at R4 000. 🍄

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821 million. Number of mobile devices sold this year according to Gartner.



WWE '13

Golden age of the WWE revisited



The latest iteration within THQ's popular WWE series enters the virtual ring, boasting a major new drawcard in The Attitude Era mode that will have fans reminiscing about the golden age of the WWE. Is this enough to Rock your gaming world or will WWE '13 leave you Stone Cold?

Firstly, WWE '13 sports the biggest roster ever, boasting more than 70 WWE superstars, 41 of which are selectable from the start. All of the regular playing modes feature, including one-on-one, triple threat, and King of the Ring, along with the usual match types such as the steel cage or ladder match. But what sets '13 apart is the engaging Attitude Era mode.

Attitude Era

Within Attitude Era, gamers relive a golden period in the history of the WWE which kicked off in the mid-90s. The story is told from six different perspectives, with players filling the massive wrestling boots of some of the most legendary WWE superstars, including The Rock, Stone Cold Steve Austin and the dynamic group known as D-Generation X founded by Triple H and Shawn Michaels amongst others.

'It is the inclusion of the fantastic new Attitude Era that makes WWE '13 worth every penny.'

You are tasked with completing a series of significant matches that follow the exact storyline of these wrestlers during this time period. For instance, D-Generation X's timeline starts with Shawn Michaels' match against Mankind, which revealed his partnership with Triple H for the first time. The 12-chapter journey culminates in the battle between Dude Love and D-Generation X member Billy Gunn, marking the end of the group's dominance within the WWE as well as the end of the Attitude era.

The presentation style within Attitude is incredibly engrossing, with audio recordings of some key moments playing as you navigate the menu system and videos shown in between matches.

Graphics and gameplay

Graphically, WWE '13 does not really dominate its predecessor. Wrestler models and stadiums still look great and the crowd models used in this series are still better than other sport game franchises such as FIFA 13 and PES 2013. Beyond the inclusion of Attitude Era, WWE '13 also offers a more refined control system, with the reversal system being slightly more forgiving than in WWE '12. Onscreen indicators will inform you when you tap the reversal button too late or too early, assisting novices in getting their timing down.

To the point

It is the inclusion of the fantastic new Attitude Era that makes WWE '13 worth every penny of its R600 RRP. This mode helps blur the lines between the game and the popular TV show, and makes for a far more involving experience than the Road to Wrestlemania mode that it replaced. [HD] ❄️



CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS 2

A real blast



As one of the most anticipated titles of the year, Black Ops 2 has sky high expectations to live up to. The good news is that it does just that.

Black Ops 2 is intriguing in that, rather than offering one protagonist, Black Ops 2 offers two – Alex Mason, from the first title, and his son, David. Innovatively enough, the game's story accomplishes this by spanning two time periods, that of the Cold War era, where players experience Mason's missions, and the game's present day of 2025.

'Brutal fire-fights are punctuated with periods of daring escapades, vehicular sequences and the occasional bout of stealth.'

Of villains and victors

While Mason's journey begins with rescuing a prisoner of war, David's exploits revolve around pursuing a terrorist threat amid an erupting, second Cold War between the US and China. The hook is that father and son are linked through a common enemy, Raul Menendez, whose motivations for his enmity towards the West are based in a tragic loss that he suffered as a child.

The missions that form the core of the campaign swing between two eras, and thus enable players to use conventional weapons, as well as get to play with some more futuristic 'toys.' As always graphics are top notch, and the accompanying sound appropriately ramps up the tension and adrenaline-fueled sections.

Die another day

However, the campaign's real strength is its pacing. Brutal fire-fights are punctuated with periods of daring escapades, vehicular sequences and the occasional bout of stealth. What further makes the game so gripping is the fast paced variety of locales. One moment you will be sneaking your way through tall grass and in the next trying desperately to fight off enemies amid driving rain in the jungle.

In addition to the campaign, also on offer is a robust and exciting multiplayer. Making multiplayer imminently accessible is Combat Training, which caters to those new to the Call of Duty: Black Ops series, and League Play, where players are matched according to their skill level. Additionally, the co-op friendly and deliciously dark Zombies mode further extends the game's longevity and appeal.

To the point

For FPS fans, Black Ops 2 really should not be overlooked; it's a great deal of fun, a compelling play and has an enormous amount on offer for the R700 asking price. If you are sitting on the fence, our advice would be to give it a shot. [RN] ❄️



\$2.87 billion. Total spending on video games in the US for the third quarter of the year, down 1% as compared to the same time last year.

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