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BlackBerry Z10

The best yet, but is it enough?



Ford Fiesta Ecoboost

The little engine that could



MWC 2013

What's next for mobile





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The problem with GAS

As the first of the new superphones started making an appearance in the office, it made me wonder about these sparkling technological wonders. For some, it is a have-to-have accessory, and we've all heard about tech fans enduring a long, cold night to be the first to buy the latest iPhone. Whether it can make that much of a difference in our lives is questionable, but it does seem that a key component for any new gadget is a solid sprinkling of lust.

I have fallen victim to this many times in the past, since when it comes to photography I'm an unfortunate sufferer of Gear Accusation Syndrome (GAS). GAS can hit at any time, with no regard for your financial situation. "If only I have that feature my photos would be so much better," I would argue. With hindsight, I can now comfortably say that gear does not make the least bit of difference if the brain behind the lens isn't switched on. And that trick can't be bought.

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



4-6 Mobile World Congress 2013

Held each year in Barcelona, the Mobile World Congress gives a good idea of where the mobile industry is heading. We checked out some of the trends.

14 BlackBerry Z10 review

The BlackBerry Z10 is the best we've seen from BlackBerry yet. But is it enough to keep the next-gen smartphones at bay?

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The long wait is over – Samsung has announced the new Galaxy S4. Here is all you need to know about Samsung's flagship smartphone.

22 Ford Fiesta 1.0 Ecoboost Trend

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7 250 000 tons. Plastic that an innovative new ocean array could clean the ocean of, according to young entrepreneur Boyan Slat.

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Top Tech Titbits



BlackBerry CEO slams iOS

Not exactly one to shy away from controversy, BlackBerry's CEO, Thorsten Heins, threw down the gauntlet by calling Apple's iOS "outdated". Heins went on to question Apple's relevance, commenting that "the rate of innovation is so high in our industry that if you don't innovate at that speed you can be replaced pretty quickly," and pointed out that the iPhone's user interface is now five years old. Cheeky, perhaps, but not entirely without merit either. A recent report revealed that 45% of Z10 buyers (read our review on p14) switched from Android and Apple.

Telkom ups its offering ante

Telkom made two noteworthy announcements of late. The first entailed a welcome launch of higher speed broadband offerings, with select areas being able to take advantage of VDSL (Very high bit rate Digital Subscriber Line) broadband, which offers speeds up to 40 Mbps. Initial rollout areas for the technology include Benmore Gardens, Fourways and Waterkloof in Gauteng. This was followed by the launch of Telkom Mobile, a rebranding of sorts for the company's mobile division, of which 8ta will now forms a subdivision. When going to print no new products were offered as part of the service yet.



Office 365 receives significant update



After releasing Office 365 Premium for home users, Microsoft has been busy with important updates for their offerings for business users. The updates bring new collaboration features to the mix, such as updated email, video-conferencing, instant messaging (IM) and calendaring services. Office 365 also offers enhanced enterprise social capabilities with SharePoint and Yammer, with Lync-Skype connectivity slated for June. Prices for Office 365 Small Business Premium start at R117 per month, or R1 164 for an annual subscription.

Twitter reaches another milestone

Ubiquitous and most loved microblogging platform, Twitter, reached yet another milestone, racking up and surpassing 200 million active daily users to date. This marks a substantial increase of 60 million users over the past year, since the company reported it had 140 million users in March 2012, adding an average of five million new users a month. This doesn't come close to rivalling Facebook's dominance in social media, which accounts for a user base of more than one billion and some 584 million daily users. 📈



Hot New Products



McLaren P1

If 400 kW and 600 Nm from the R3.2 million McLaren MP4-12C is a bit on the light side, then McLaren's new hybrid P1 is just what the supercar doctor ordered. The P1 is powered by an IPAS petrol-electric powertrain that marries a substantially enhanced version of the 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8 petrol engine from the MP4-12C with a single electric motor, to deliver a combined power output of around 673 kW. Top speed you ask? It's electronically limited to 350 km/h while the 0-100 km/h sprint takes less than three seconds.

BMC Lamborghini 50th Anniversary Impec Bike

BMC Lamborghini 50th Anniversary Impec Bike is not exactly there to quickly take you to the cafe and back. Only 50 of these bikes were made to celebrate the Italian supercar maker's 50th anniversary, which in combination with its €25 000 pricetag means that you won't be ogling one in a bike rack soon.



Monster DNA on-ear headphones

Fresh after the company's divorce from Beats Audio, Monster is going it alone with the DNA on-ear headphones. Monster states that these are tuned for a "live music experience", also offering an extra jack to link their MusicShare headphones together. It should hit local Musica stores in the second week of April for R2 500.



Depeche Mode Hublot Big Bang Watch

One of our favourite 80s bands teams up with Swiss watchmaker Hublot to create the limited edition Big Bang Depeche Mode timepiece. Now before cries of "sell-outs" start, the collaboration was established to benefit Charity: Water, a non-profit that efforts to bring safe drinking water to the developing world. Only 250 were created and although no pricing has been announced yet, it's expected to be a sell out, since for Depeche Mode fans it's always a Question of Time. 🕒



Mobile World Congress 2013

Burgeoning new tech from Barcelona



From a crop of new mobile platforms readying to challenge established operating systems, through to a few desirable device reveals, the annual Mobile World Congress held in Barcelona, Spain, dazzled visitors with some amazing products. Hanleigh Daniels investigates.

Beyond Android: New mobile platforms make their case



Mobile device users fed up with iOS's dated user interface and those on the hunt for something a little less common than Android, will be heartened by the diverse operating systems on display at this year's show.

Ubuntu coming to a smartphone and tablet near you soon



Mark Shuttleworth showed off the Ubuntu Touch developer preview, with this open-source, swipe and gesture-based platform managing to receive more media attention than any of its up and coming OS rivals.

Thanks to its eye-catching design and features that help distinguish it from rivals, Ubuntu Touch can possibly be the biggest threat to the Android-iOS-duopoly, if it can gain more traction with original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

Its features include built-in voice control functionality; full disk encryption for data protection, running apps side-by-side on a single screen via Ubuntu side stage and the ability to utilise the full desktop version of Ubuntu Linux when you connect your mobile device to a docking station. Ubuntu Touch is slated for release during October 2013.

Mozilla to outfox OS rivals



The company behind the popular Firefox web browser has also been developing its own mobile OS, built entirely using HTML5 and other open web standards. Rather than trying to make a top-of-the-line platform, to do battle against flagship devices from Apple and Android, the firm is building an OS that will power budget smartphones for the mass market.

Mozilla is working with handset manufacturers Alcatel, Huawei, LG and ZTE, to build the first Firefox OS operating mobile devices based on Qualcomm Snapdragon chipsets. These mobiles will be available in many markets including Brazil, Mexico, and Spain later this year, with additional markets to be revealed "soon". No local release info is available yet.

At MWC 2013, Japanese tech giant Sony also revealed that it will be breaking its Android mobile platform strategy in 2014, as the company plans on releasing its first Firefox OS handset next year. In addition, Sony also made an experimental version of the Firefox OS software available for developers.

Bada is dead, long-live Tizen

Samsung finally pulled the plug on Bada's life support machine, opting instead to integrate Bada OS into the open-source, Linux-based Tizen OS project it is working on with Intel.

Unfortunately, this integration will not result in users with Bada OS operating handsets being able to upgrade their smartphones to Tizen, when it is released. However, Tizen running smartphones will be backwards compatible with Bada applications, which should play a role in boosting Tizen's app tally at launch.



Hear the Chinese dragon roar!



Since China has overtaken the US as the world's biggest smartphone market, various market research companies and analysts expect Chinese OEMs to lay claim to a bigger stake of the global mobile shipment pie, much like on the PC front.

At MWC 2013, Huawei and ZTE flew the Chinese flag high with some interesting announcements. For its part, the world's third biggest smartphone maker, Huawei, finally unveiled its Ascend P2 smartphone. The company refers to it as the world's fastest LTE smartphone, as it offers download speeds of up to 150 Mbps on a 4G network. This slim (8.4 mm) smartphone is powered by a 1.5 GHz quad-core CPU and packs a 4.7" IPS HD-Ready (312 ppi) in-cell touch display protected by second-generation Corning

Gorilla Glass.

Android 4.1 (Jelly Bean) runs the OS show along with Huawei's Emotion UI version 1.5, while the Ascend P2 also features a 2420 mAh battery, 13 MP BSI rear-facing camera with HDR functionality, and a 1.3 MP front-facing camera for capturing self-portraits and making video calls. Huawei's Ascend P2 is slated to be released globally around Q2 2013.

ZTE also showcased its Open mobile phone, which is powered by Firefox OS and boasts a 3.5" (320 x 480; 165 ppi) display. This device is powered by a Qualcomm chipset that features a Cortex-A5 1 GHz CPU and sports just 256 MB of RAM and a mere half a GB of internal storage. To boost the mobile's storage capacity, ZTE provides a free 2 GB microSD card in the retail box and additional features

include 3G HSDPA connectivity along with Wi-Fi 802.11n, Bluetooth 2.1, and FM Radio.



Article continues on page 6.

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And even more smartphones

LG



Korean tech company, LG, had plenty of smartphones on offer, including its new Optimus L Series II, but the star of the company's MWC 2013 show was the Optimus G Pro. This LTE (4G) equipped flagship crams a mouthwatering 5.5" 1080p IPS display (400 ppi) into a more compact chassis (150.2 x 76.1 x 9.4 mm) than the Galaxy Note II (151.1 x 80.5 x 9.4 mm).

Powered by Qualcomm's new 1.7 GHz quad-core Snapdragon 600 processor, it sports 2 GB worth of RAM, operates on Android 4.1.2 (Jelly Bean) and according to LG, also features the largest battery capacity in its class at 3140 mAh. In terms of optics, users have access to an enhanced 13 MP rear-facing camera and 2.1 MP front-facing snapper.

Nokia

Nokia sought to expand the midrange smartphone footprint of its Lumia Windows Phone 8 powered offerings, with the announcement of the Lumia 720 and 520.

Espoo's Lumia 720 operates on Windows Phone 8 and is powered by a 1 GHz dual-core Qualcomm Snapdragon MSM8227 CPU. It sports a 4.3" ClearBlack (800 x 480; 217 ppi) Super Sensitive LCD screen, Skype HD wide angle 1.3 MP front-facing camera and 6.7 megapixel BSI (back-side illuminated) rear-facing autofocus snapper that features Carl Zeiss optics and LED flash. Another feature setting the rear shooter apart is its bigger f1.9 aperture, which has been designed to let in more light for enhanced low-light shots.

Nokia's Lumia 520 is also powered by a 1 GHz dual-core Snapdragon processor, and features 3G HSPA+ connectivity offering download speeds up to 21 Mbps, 512 MB RAM, Wi-Fi 802.11 n, and Bluetooth 3.0. Taking care of the photo capturing duty is a 5 MP autofocus rear-facing camera, with users being able to review their shots on this smartphone's 4" WVGA (800 x 480 pixels; 235 ppi) IPS LCD. The Lumia 520 offers 8 GB worth of internal storage that is expandable via microSD card slot which supports cards up to 64 GB in size.

Rollout of both these smartphones are planned for Q2 2013, but no local pricing or release info is available yet.



On the tablet front

Samsung Galaxy Note 8



One of the standout tablets this year so far has come in the form of the 8" Galaxy Note 8. The device aims to meld general tablet functionality with a stylus, with particular attention being paid to its capability as an eReader and digital diary.


Along with now familiar S-pen stylus functionality, borrowed from the Galaxy Notes and Note 10.1, the Android Jelly Bean (4.1.2) tablet sports a faster 1.6 GHz A9 quad-core processor, 2 GB of memory and a bright screen with a resolution of 1280 x 800 (189 ppi). New features include Reading Mode, which invokes side lighting for a gentler reading experience, while Awesome Notes has been integrated into the device to handle note-taking and journaling. Much of the S-Pen functionality that was included in the Galaxy Note 2 is similarly onboard, such as Air View, while a customised version of Flipboard was specifically developed for the device.

Space wise, the tablet will be available with either 32 GB or 64 GB of onboard storage, although in either case, this can be expanded by up to an additional 64 GB via the microSD card slot. It should be here soon. [RN]

Sony Xperia Tablet Z



Sony showcased its new waterproof and dustproof Xperia Tablet Z, which measures in at a wafer thin 6.9 mm and weighs just 495 g. This tablet is powered by a 1.5 GHz quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon processor, and features 2 GB RAM while Android 4.1 (Jelly Bean) handles the operating.

Users will be able to read an eBook in the bath thanks to the 10.1" Reality Display (1920 x 1200) of the Tablet Z featuring wet finger tracking technology. Also onboard is 32 GB worth of internal storage that can be expanded upon via microSD memory card slot, as well as Sony's S-Force virtual surround sound technology for an enhanced audio performance. In terms of optics, the Xperia Tablet Z packs an 8.1 MP rear-facing camera that boasts an Exmor R sensor. NFC (near field communication) and LTE (4G) network support also makes it onto this tablet's connectivity list. [HD] 

190.9 million. Forecasted worldwide tablet shipments for 2013. 350 million. Predicted tally for 2017.

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SMBs move in the right direction with cloud-based technologies

Small and mid-sized businesses are the backbone of South Africa's economy — studies indicate that the SMB sector contributes around 60% of the national gross domestic product and employs up to nine million people. However, getting a business off the ground is no easy task.

"Small businesses have to do more with less. It's about staying close to your customers, focusing on your business differentiators, and being more agile than competitors. For us, Office 365 allows us to work from virtually anywhere, be productive on the go, collaborate better, and work together and smarter," says Anderson.

Securing capital or seed funding, and finding the time and support to kick-start your business is a tricky combination for young aspiring business owners. Having said that, new businesses are being launched every day, and as the marketplace becomes more competitive, SMBs must focus on smarter ways to spend their money to ensure they maximise growth potential.

The move to a smarter way
Technologies such as cloud computing help SMB owners to focus more on business opportunities and less on IT infrastructure. By hosting their IT solutions in the cloud, with offerings such as Office 365, SMB owners can manage their IT processes in a more streamlined, cheaper and less time-consuming way. There are other cloud products similarly based on saving time and

Penquin picked too
Johannesburg-based creative agency Penquin is another company to become an early poster child for the power of cloud computing to transform small businesses. The company has not only saved tens of thousands of rands in IT costs, but says it has "fundamentally changed the way it works" since moving its technology backbone into the cloud.

Technologies such as cloud computing help SMB owners to focus more on business opportunities and less on IT infrastructure.

SMB owners are recognising that technology is a critical pathway to expanding their business, as it brings so many opportunities to extend their reach to new customers and incomes. However, young businesses rarely have the money or resources to spend on IT infrastructure – few can afford to hire a dedicated IT manager to manage tech solutions. The business owner often assumes that role on top of their daily job, adding extra pressure on the business. But what if technology could do that job for you, and free up time for the business owner to pursue growth opportunities?

Penquin decided to move from an on-premise Microsoft infrastructure to a cloud-based infrastructure using Microsoft Office 365 when it became clear that the costs of upgrading hardware and software would be prohibitive – and it's never looked back, says Group Executive: Business Development Greg Kockott.

"Email alone is a critical factor in our business," said Kockott. "It is incredibly important for us to be able to stay in touch with our customers and suppliers all the time. Like many small businesses, we used to battle with a small, temperamental connection to stay connected – but now, our people are able to work from anywhere, on any device."

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By Tracey Newman, SME lead at Microsoft SA

money. With Windows Intune, SMBs don't need to build and maintain a server infrastructure. This means there's no need to worry about purchasing server hardware, having the right OS licenses, installing and configuring each server, and on top of all that, designing a secure infrastructure. All you need is a browser.

The National Small Business Chamber (NSBC) has been one of the first organisations in South Africa to adopt Office 365, and NSBC founder, Mike Anderson, says they are already seeing benefits in areas like greater mobility, cost-effectiveness and time-saving.

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By Tracey Newman, SME lead at Microsoft SA



iLearn offers new chapter in country's e-journey

iLearn, a national specialist provider of onsite instructor led and online e-learning training methodologies, offers a range of flexible training solutions that cover business skills, IT desktop applications, IT technical, design, media and language courses.

The company, which has offices in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, is focused on increasing productivity and profitability for its clients.

The personal approach

Rather than following the conventional route and imposing the offering on the client, the company's founder has moulded its service offering to suit client requirements. "Flexibility lies at the heart of what the company stands for and what it proposes," explains Richard Rayne, managing director of iLearn.

"Traditionally a client would send a number of individuals to an off-site venue for a full day

of training, whereas we prefer to send a trainer to the client's premises arranged on dates and times that they require. Training is specifically designed to meet the needs of each individual, based on their current skills and pace of learning. Delegates receive training in more manageable sessions arranged over a spread of a few days," elaborated Rayne. "This allows for greater absorption of knowledge and an opportunity to practise and verify the new skills after each session prior to commencing on to the next one," he continued.

At the same time, clients can also choose to stimulate their training experience with a combined blend of online self-paced and onsite instructor led training solutions.

Modern online learning


iLearn's online e-learning service is the company's latest flagship product to the market, with the company believing it offers the greatest learning flexibility and scalability available.

Also on offer are technical training prospects and the opportunity for learners to

acquire competency in a range of technical qualifications, including Microsoft, Cisco and CompTIA international certifications. The company has further ensured that its training content is unrivalled through partnerships with global leaders such as Skillsoft, Eurotalk and Ontuitive.

"We don't like to use the phrase 'one-stop-shop', but this really describes our operation accurately. We have the skills, resources and market knowledge to add value to corporate clients and individuals – our mission is the same as those wanting education: we desire to empower people to be able to work and progress within competitive working environments," says Rayne.

To the point

Delegates who utilise the services of the company can benefit from both local and internationally recognised accreditations, including BEE Level 2, MICT SETA Accredited (ACC 2012/01/831), Microsoft Certified Learning Solutions Partner and IBTA Certified Business Professional authorised training provider. 




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ASUS Zenbook UX51VZ Ultrabook, but ultra powerful

The Asus Zenbook has impressed us time and again, first with the Zenbook ultrabook, and then with the Windows 8 version, the Zenbook Prime. Little did we know that waiting in the wings was an even larger and more powerful UX51VZ ready to vye for our affections.

The design and overall build of the Zenbook range is familiar across the board, namely strikingly modern and stylish, and first rate, respectively. The all aluminium body, with a subtle circular zen garden motif, once again graces the notebook's cover, along with an all silver interior, amidst which rests a black, backlit chiclet keyboard. Indeed, the ultrabook actually looks bigger, or more correctly, more expansive than its true size suggests, due to the fact that the notebook is so cleanly designed. At 2.1 kg, it may not be the lightest ultrabook out there, but nor is it burdensome to carry.

Putting on a performance

Suffice to say, this Windows 8 Zenbook looks and feels like a premium machine, and it performs like one too. This is thanks to some high end specs, including an Intel Core i7 (3632QM) processor clocked at 2.1 GHz, a generous 8 GB of DDR3 memory and an Nvidia GT650 graphics card, with 2 GB of dedicated memory handling graphic tasks.

What this means is that we would have no hesitation throwing some more demanding tasks at it than just web browsing, basic productivity tasks and the like. Instead, the machine seems well capable of handling some serious image crunching as well and a good round of PC gaming when the mood strikes.

Screen dreams

Only enforcing this is the 15.6" screen, which looks, in a word, fantastic. More specifically, it offers some very good brightness, sharpness and saturation across the board, not so much of a surprise considering it boasts a resolution of 1920 x 1080. We also

really liked seeing some commendable viewing angles, which should make sharing a movie with a significant other on the machine a feasible prospect.

This was only further augmented by the superb – and very loud – sound that is on offer here. Indeed, part of the reason for this is the excellent Bang and Olufsen speakers, that had some satisfying reverberation pounding through the frame. Also in the box is the compact SonicMaster external woofer, for even more oomph. This made playing games and movies on the ultrabook a treat; with the machine seeming to fill in nicely as a portable entertainment centre when you are on the move or temporarily calling a hotel room your abode.

Key imperative

Much like on previous Zenbooks, we enjoyed using this one's

keyboard. The keys offered a little extra depth (always welcome) but no less springiness and responsiveness than we are used to. Backlighting was bright and spreads an even glow across the keyboard, while the nicely sized trackpad was responsive from one end to another.


Suffice to say, this Windows 8 Zenbook looks and feels like a premium machine.

While it was set quite closely to the surface of the palmrests, we were glad to notice that the trackpad does have a bit of a subtly different texture, making it easier to find with one's fingers in a dark room. Also onboard is a full numpad, while screen and keyboard brightness, along with wireless connectivity, are accessed with the aid of function keys.

Important bits and pieces

Storage wise, onboard is a 128 GB SSD, while on the port side, there is a neatly compacted Ethernet port as well as a HDMI one, an SD card reader and three USB 3.0 ports distributed across the left and right hand side of the machine. It appears that the old USB 2.0 option has finally been given its pink slip and encouraged to slowly shuffle off the production line.

To the point

Much like we have come to appreciate previous Zenbooks, this one is no exception in that regard. Indeed, it gave us a hard time finding anything to complain about features-wise, although, enjoying it permanently comes with the steep price tag of R22 400. [RN] 

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Windows 8
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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.



Acer Aspire M Touch

Admittedly, we have somewhat of a fondness for the Acer Aspire line (indeed, this review, was hashed out on a Timeline X), and thus when the Acer Aspire M Touch landed on our desk for review, we were interested to see what Acer would do with Windows 8.

The best way to describe the notebook would be to call it unobtrusive. It's not necessarily the best looking notebook we have ever seen, but, with an all black exterior and a grey sink in which the keyboard rests, we have actually come to like the understated styling.

One design choice that we didn't like was the decision to place the power button on the front of the computer, just below the trackpad. We could quite easily envision scenarios in which users might inadvertently hit that power switch, which is quite pronounced, by accident. To its credit, sturdy hinges hold the 15.6" touchscreen firmly in place, and we could coax no flex or creaking from the screen or keyboard respectively.

Now for the good news

Screen resolution is a middling 1366 x 768, and while not quite as bright as on the Timeline X, was still considerably brighter than some other Windows 8 machines we've seen.

Handling the processing is the budget friendly but very capable Core i5 CPU with a very welcome dollop of 6 GB DDR3 RAM.

The good news is that screen saturation and contrast are first-rate, while we were further impressed by the very good. For those who favour constantly touching their screen and using it as a form of navigation, more good news is that on this front, the screen excels, proving to be particularly responsive to the lightest touch.

Handling the processing is the budget friendly but very capable Core i5 (3317U) CPU, clocked at 1.7 GHz, with a very welcome dollop of 6 GB DDR3 RAM, accounting for swift and no-complaints general performance. Storage, and indeed excellent start up times, is afforded by a 128 GB SSD drive while Nvidia's GeForce GT 640 M took care of graphics.

To the point

All in all, we actually quite liked working on the Aspire M, as its integration of Windows 8 was amongst the better that we've seen. It has a RRP of R8 500. [RN] 🍀



Everki Versa Premium backpack

If you travel a lot, the Everki EKP127 Versa Premium notebook backpack is about to become as valuable as your frequent flyer miles.

Although protection of your device might be a notebook's bag primary concern, there are a few secondary objectives that distinguish a great bag from a good one. In the Everki Versa Premium's case, two things come to mind – ease of use and durability.

First things first though, as far as safeguarding your notebook is concerned, the Everki EKP127 does a sterling job. The padded felt-lined interior of the notebook compartment offered very good protection, further helped along by special corner-guard protection that absorbs shocks to the corner of the bag.

Ease of use

There are a few impressive extras that endeared the Everki and makes it a solid travelling companion, especially when flying.

Firstly, this backpack is airport checkpoint friendly, in the sense that you don't need to completely remove your notebook from the bag at airport security. The notebook compartment unzips and folds out 180° to allow for the pc to pass through the X-ray machine still protected. Secondly, when safely in the air, those with spectacles will be aware of the hassle of finding a safe place to store them when going to sleep. On top of the Everki Versa Premium there's a hard-shell case that is perfect for this, or for keeping your smartphone, gadgets or wallet.

The quality on offer is easy to see, while it provides solid protection and a number of useful extras.

Once off the plane, a magnetic front pocket allows quick access to, for example, your passport or travel documents. It seems so simple but it's actually one of the features that we used most often.

To the point

There is very little that can be faulted on Everki's EKP127 Versa Premium notebook backpack. The quality on offer is easy to see, while it provides solid protection and a number of useful extras. It makes it easy to recommend this backpack for business travellers, especially frequent flyers.

Quality does not come cheap, and in the Everki's case it will set you back R1 474. Call Karen Lomas at Rectron Midrand for more information on 011-203-1000. [MJ] 🍀

🍀 [Full Article bit.ly/everkibag](http://bit.ly/everkibag)



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Building profitable partnerships

BlackBerry Z10

Up until very recently, being a BlackBerry smartphone owner could be compared to having a relative in prison – you still love your device, but when a debate is raging around which smartphone is best, you weren't going to chip in.

For fans of the BlackBerry platform, the good news is that in the BlackBerry Z10 they now have a smartphone that can compete against some of the top devices currently available. No more worrying about coming to grips with a new operating system (OS), or losing BBM contacts – the BlackBerry Z10 is a modern phone in all regards.

Look and feel

Like most modern smartphones, the Z10 is candybar shaped, and with its all-black or white design, it does not look out of place on the dancefloor nor on the boardroom table. It is clear that BlackBerry put a lot of effort into the Z10's 4.2" display. It might not be as big as the Samsung Galaxy S3's 4.8" but it's larger than the new iPhone 5's 4" screen, while topping both when it comes to pixels per inch (365 ppi).

The BlackBerry Z10 is without a doubt the best smartphone the Canadian firm has ever produced.

Doing the gruntwork inside the Z10 is Qualcomm's MSM8960 dual-core 1.5 GHz Snapdragon processor, and with BlackBerry 10 running the show, we had no complaints regarding the speed of the Z10. It is helped along by a generous 2 GB of RAM, while BlackBerry provides 16 GB of storage space as standard. Seeing that you can expand this by up to 64 GB via microSD, this is quite sufficient.

General navigation

On the Z10 there's no home button. Here you exit apps by swiping up from the bottom bezel of the phone, which takes you to the homescreen and shows up to eight currently running apps. Want to close an app completely? Do it here, or simply swipe left to continue browsing your list of apps. It's a very intuitive way of navigating the new operating system, and when we started to test other phones again, the swipe up gesture was the one most missed.

BlackBerry Hub

For many, when it comes to BlackBerry 10, the star of the show will be BlackBerry Hub. It's a central location to manage all your conversations, whether these are SMSes, email, BBM messages, or notifications from



Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter. The fact that you can check your messages without having to close applications is a treat, since the Hub is accessible from anywhere in the OS. In the past RIM were renowned for their physical keyboards, and we can now say that the Z10 contains the best virtual keyboard in the business. Yes, even better than the renowned SwiftKey for Android. It's an intuitive way of typing allows you to say more and type less.

To the point

The BlackBerry Z10 is without a doubt the best smartphone the Canadian firm has ever produced. This news will be best received by existing users of the BlackBerry platform, since life can continue within a familiar environment. Unlike the Curve range, the Z10 competes against the likes of the Samsung Galaxy S3 and iPhone 5, retailing for about R390 per month on contract, with these users mostly coughing up for data too. If the lack of BIS will be a problem in the higher-end of the market remains to be seen.

Another problem is also right round the corner. The next generation smartphones, most with full HD screens and even faster processors (HTC One, Sony Xperia Z, Samsung Galaxy S4), are ready to pounce.

In the end we were impressed with BlackBerry 10. It makes for a solid smartphone experience, in certain cases even improving on iOS and Android. There are bugs to be sorted out, but it's a young platform so this can be expected. BlackBerry must now task itself with seriously improving on its app offerings, since we can't really recommend switching from the fruit company or little green robot with so many key apps lacking. [MJ+HD]

Full Article bit.ly/blackz10

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\$119.3 billion+. Mobile content revenue obtained via direct carrier billing is expected to rise from \$18.3 billion last year to this figure by 2017.

Samsung Galaxy S4: What you need to know

Bigger, faster and high def. A good description of Samsung's Galaxy S4, launched last month in New York.

After the success of the S3 (50 million sold and counting), Samsung had to come up with a solid follow-up, and it does seem that the Korean company's flagship checks all the right boxes.

If the gap between Samsung's S3 and the iPhone 5 was not all that noticeable, the S4 seems to leave Apple's best trailing in its dust.

Hardware

In line with what we've seen from Sony with the Xperia Z, and HTC with its One, the S4

has gone full HD (1920 x 1080). This on a Super AMOLED display that adds to the S3's 4.8" and brings the screen size to a significant 5" with pixels per inch (ppi) standing at 441.

As hoped, it runs on Android 4.2.2 Jelly Bean, while being powered by the Exynos 5 Octa 5410 chipset with its eight cores. All this HD goodness and processing power are kept going by a bigger Li-Ion 2600 mAh battery. It might not be as big as the Note II's 3100 mAh, but it does beat the S3's 2100 mAh. A decent 2 GB RAM helps push smooth operation, while 16/32/64 GB storage space options are available, with an extra slot for expansion via microSD.

As far as design goes, Samsung did not stray far from what they know, with the S4 bearing a close resemblance to the S3, unfortunately also down to the plastic non-metal design.



Software

Samsung's distinguishing factor is pretty much the proprietary features on offer in its devices. One of the new ones is Air Gesture, which enables you to interact with the device based on the movement of your hands. This includes waving your hand back and forth in front of the S4 to move to different tabs while browsing, change music or to accept calls.

To the point

In all, the Galaxy S4 is pretty much the phone we expected from Samsung. The fact that the worldwide launch took place in New York, part of Apple's home turf, is also significant, with Samsung clearly indicating that it is ready

for anything that Cupertino might throw at it. Indeed, if the gap between Samsung's S3 and the iPhone 5 was not all that noticeable, the S4 seems to leave Apple's best trailing in its dust. Expect it here in May.

Top 3. Gingerbread (44.2%), Ice Cream Sandwich (28.6%), and Jelly Bean (16.5%) are the most used version of Android.

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Going full frame: 6D vs. 5D Mark III

If you are considering buying a full frame Canon camera, two in particular may be coming to mind, namely, the 6D and the 5D Mark III. Both cameras have much counting in their favour, however, and each brings their own pros and cons to the table.

1 Price

As the entry-level full frame offering, the 6D commands an RRP of R20 000, while the 5D Mark III's pricetag is closer to the R30 000 mark. On this front, the 6D clearly caters more readily to photographers on a budget who still want to enter into the full frame arena, in order to reap the benefits of higher image quality and greater ISO sensitivity.

2 Functionality

On the build front, both cameras are a joy to hold in one's hand. Admittedly, the 6D is noticeably lighter (770 g) and smaller, both in the hand and when riding against one's hip. However, the 5D Mark III's extra size and weight (960 g) are hardly without reason – they account for more image reviewing and rating options, as well as accommodating dual slots for an SD Card and CF flash card. Where the 5D Mark III has one up on the 6D is in its general navigation, with the larger thumb wheel and an additional navigation stick making selecting focusing points easier and quicker.

3 Focusing

Here, the 5D Mark III wins hands down. Its advanced 61 point focusing system, borrowed from the aforementioned 1D X, far outstrips the 6D's 11 focusing points. Whereas the 6D has only one cross-type focusing point for focusing in difficult situations, the 5D Mark III boasts 45. Additionally, the 5D Mark III offers 6 fps versus the 6D's 4.5 fps, as well as a faster maximum shutter speed (1/8000th versus 1/4000th). Thus, if fast moving action, sports or wildlife is your forte, then this may need to be a strong consideration when buying time comes around.

4 Features

What the 6D lacks on some fronts, it makes up for in others. For example, two features not found on its bigger full frame brother include integrated Wi-Fi and aGPS. In the final analysis though, both of these cameras are superb in their own right. [RN]



Canon unveils new EOS entry-level duo

After a great deal of anticipation, and a fair amount of rumour mongering, Canon has indeed unveiled two new EOS DSLRs for the entry-level photographer.

The first has the distinction of being the smallest and lightest DSLR to date in the form of the EOS 100D, also called the SL1 in some regions. The camera's dimensions are a portable 116 x 88 x 68 mm, while its weight is a light 370 g (the Canon 700D below weighs 580 g). Canon's latest further boasts a newly developed 18 megapixel CMOS (APS-C) sensor alongside a DIGIC-5 image processor.

The EOS 100D appears to be no slouch in the ISO department either, offering a range that spans from 100 to 12 800 (expandable to 25 000), a 9-point all cross type AF system and 4 fps continuous shooting.

Top end of the entry-level

Also piquing interest is the newly announced 700D, which replaces the 650D as the top of the line entry-level model. This, not to be confused with the anticipated 70D, is still a formidable EOS in its own right. Its sensor, processor, 9 point focusing system and ISO sensitivity are identical to that found on the 100D, as is the full HD 1080p video with continuous autofocus, and a built-in stereo microphone with manual audio level adjustment. The 700D also offers continuous shooting although it bumps continuous shooting up to 5 fps.

The camera further offers advanced shooting modes including HDR backlight control, handheld night scene and multi-shot noise reduction, which combines multiple images to generate a composite best quality result. Both cameras have a 3" LCD touchscreen, although only the 700D's is a Vari-Angle version.

To the point

Canon's latest EOS additions bode well for other APS-C cameras during the course of this year, with news of the 70D largely anticipated to arrive during the course of this month, and possibly even a successor to the EOS 7D to rival Nikon's D7100 coming later this year if rumours are to be believed.

The RRP of the EOS 100D with 18-55 IS STM lens is R8 500, with the EOS 700D with 18-55 IS STM lens is R10 000. With the announcements only being made recently, local availability has not yet been confirmed at the time of going to print.

Power to explore

Explore the full-frame world with the compact and lightweight EOS 6D. Featuring integrated Wi-Fi and GPS the EOS 6D is ideal for travel photography from stunning landscapes to pin sharp portraits.



Latitude | 63,57,443N
Longitude | 19,22,8429W
Lens | EF 70-300mm f/4-5.6 IS USM
Shooting Mode | Aperture Priority AE
Aperture | f/11.0
Shutter Speed | 1/1600
ISO | 400

you can



Canon



Nikon D7100 – a new DX flagship at last

Nikon has at long last a new flagship for their DX-format SLR range – the robust D7100.

The D7100 dethrones the D300S as king of Nikon's DX-line (APS-C sized sensors), bringing along a number of interesting improvements for prosumer photographers. Certainly the most noteworthy is the newly designed 24.1 megapixel CMOS sensor.

Certainly the most noteworthy improvement is the newly designed 24.1 megapixel CMOS sensor.

As Nikon did with the D800E, they omitted the optical low pass filter. This filter is usually incorporated to reduce artifacts such as moiré (bit.ly/nomoiré), with Nikon claiming this new sensor produces sharper images across the board. Compared to the D7000, there are two further improvements that are noteworthy. The LCD display increases to 3.2" while also upping the dot count from 920k to 1 229k – a boon for videographers who will also love the 1080p recording at 30, 25 and 24 frames per second.

Now focus

Nikon further paid a lot attention to the focusing system, with the D7100 sporting 51 focus points, including 15 of the more sensitive cross-type sensors. This is a considerable jump up as compared with the D7000's 39 focus points and 9 cross-type focus points. We enjoyed the 100% viewfinder coverage and two SD card slots on the D7000 and luckily the D7100 inherits these traits. Nikon, however, also sticks with the relatively slow six frames per second (fps) shooting speed, but adds an interesting extra in the form of a 1.3x crop mode. With this, a smaller size of the sensor is utilised, reducing image size to 16 MP but upping shooting speed to a more respectable 7 fps. It also bumps up the focal length and increases the amount of fps when recording video to a slow motion ready 50i and 60i.

To the point

In a very brief hands-on session we've had with the camera at the local launch, it's clear that solid construction is a given. The camera felt robust, but still very grip friendly. It appears that the Nikon D7100 only adds to 2010's highly respected D7000's impressive range of features. It should hit the shops at the end of April for about R16 500 for the body only. 🌟



Nikon Coolpix A coming

Nikon's big small news over the last several months is the debut of the Coolpix A, a compact camera with more than a few surprises up its sleeve.

To begin with, the Coolpix A boasts a DX-format 16.2-megapixel CMOS sensor, usually found in DSLRs (23.6 x 15.6 mm), in a small compact body. Interestingly, the Coolpix A sensor does not incorporate an optical low-pass filter, which is standard in most cameras, but also absent in the D7100 (left). This produces an optical system that makes the most of the potential of the high-definition Nikkor lens and the resolution of the DX-format (APS-C sized) sensor.

Nikon's Coolpix A is one camera that we can't wait to take shooting.

Also worth noting is that the compact offers a fixed Nikkor wide-angle 18.5 mm f2.8 lens (28 mm equivalent) and not a regular zoom lens. This, coupled with a very decent ISO range of 100 to 6400 (extendable to 25 600), should make this a compact that can adeptly handle low light and should be a boon for street photography.

Cool under fire

As befitting a camera that Nikon is touting as being "the professional's choice of compact camera", the new compact further offers greater manual control. A customisable function button enables users to bypass the menu and set shortcuts to their favourite camera settings for fast setup, while the lens focusing ring offers manual focus and manual override when in auto-focus mode.

Furthermore, the Coolpix A supports 14 bits compressed RAW image data, while allowing pure, unprocessed images to be edited in-camera, on the 3" (921k dot) LCD monitor. Another feature boasted by the tiny titan that is found on its bigger DSLR brothers is Picture Control, which allows users to adjust the contrast and colour settings (Standard, Neutral, Vivid, Monochrome, Portrait, Landscape, and Custom) to match their particular situation. Finally, also onboard is full HD movie recording (1080p) in 30, 25 or 24 fps, Wi-Fi compatibility and an Expeed 2 image processing engine.

To the point

As competition for Canon's PowerShot G1x and Fujifilm's X100S, Nikon's Coolpix A is one camera we can't wait to take shooting. It should be arriving locally this May, and will command a cool R10 800 for its presence. 🌟

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TOP 5

Small car hatchbacks

For first-time car buyers looking for a new hatchback (sub R130 000), emphasis should be placed on affordability, reliability and fuel efficiency. Here are our Top 5 picks of the best entry-level B-segment hatchbacks.



5 Toyota Etios 1.5 Xs Hatch

Due to its uninspired design, the Etios can be considered the ugly duckling in this comparison, but Toyota's legendary build quality and reliability might just turn it into a small car swan.

The second best-selling car in South Africa during February costs R121 000, which nets buyers a fair amount of standard features including EBD (Electronic brake-force distribution), electric power steering and remote control central locking. Unfortunately, as with the styling, the Japanese powerplant of the Etios is a bit undercooked, with a 1.5 litre (biggest capacity engine in this comparison) delivering only 66 kW at 5600 RPM and 132 Nm of torque at 3000 RPM.



4 Ford Figo 1.4 Ambiente Hatch

The Figo is primarily aimed at younger, first time car buyers and as a result it retails for an affordable R120 484, while offering plenty of standard kit including dual airbags, air-conditioning radio/CD audio system, power steering, ABS with EBD, and key operated central locking.

Some of the more upmarket features we want, such as Ford Sync, the Blue Oval's in-vehicle infotainment system that offers Bluetooth music streaming, did not get the green light on the Figo though. Its 1388 cc Duratec petrol engine only churns out 62 kW at 6000 RPM and 127 Nm of torque at 4000 RPM. Fuel usage figures are a claimed 6.6 litres per 100 km.



3 Hyundai i10 1.25 Fluid Manual

Hyundai's designers have impressed us of late, but we find the look of the i10 a bit too bland and safe. The i10 does, however, make for a reliable and practical little car, offering a claimed sub-5 litres per 100 km fuel usage on a combined cycle, and a 5 year or 150 000 km warranty.

Like the design, the performance of the 1248 cc four cylinder motor is uninspiring, delivering a so-so 64 kW at 6000 RPM and 119 Nm at 4000 RPM. The i10 retails for R119 900, landing buyers plenty of standard kit such as an in-car sound system, aircon and as well as passenger and driver airbags.



2 VW Polo Vivo 1.4


At a recommended retail price of R123 100, the Polo Vivo is only the second most expensive car in this comparison, but its Achilles' heel is a lack of standard options. Gone are the ABS braking (R2 040) and radio/CD sound system (R3 200) as found on the other vehicles, but luckily you do receive air-conditioning, airbags and power steering.

In February, the Vivo was the best-selling passenger car in SA, so this should equate to some excellent resale value come trade-in time. Finally, the 1.4 litre four cylinder engine can deliver a claimed 6.2 litres of fuel usage per 100 km.



1 Kia Picanto 1.2 EX manual

On this list, at an RRP of R127 995, the Kia will put the biggest dent in your bank account. However, as with the i10, it is kitted out with plenty of spec-bang to match its pricetag, including Bluetooth connectivity. The Picanto's 1248 cc DOHC inline four cylinder motor produces 65 kW at 6000 RPM and 120 Nm of torque at 4000 RPM, with this powerplant good for six litres per 100 km.

Although the equipment level and performance of the Picanto matches that of the i10, this vehicle does come wrapped up in a far more easy-on-the-eye package than either the i10 and Polo Vivo. Beyond its design, the Picanto's interior and ride quality punches above its lower B-segment weight division, helping it reach the pinnacle of our list of lower B-segment hatchbacks. [HD] 

50 minutes. Average amount of travel time TomTom's HD traffic info saves motorists every week, coming to around 40 hours annually.

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Ford Fiesta 1.0 Ecoboost Trend



Ford's aggressive new Fiesta is tasked with enticing buyers away from more conservative rivals. Is it up to the task, or does a drive in the Fiesta lead to a deep siesta?

From the outside, Ford has not tinkered much in terms of design, with the exterior changes highlighted by a new front, dominated by a large trapezoidal grille. This grille design is the new family face of Ford and consequently makes the Fiesta look like a smaller Focus from the front. It helps the car stand out from amongst the current crop of b-segment hatch rivals including the Kia Rio.

No fence sitters when it comes to design

On the inside, we found the cabin layout to be comfortable, quite spacious and for the most part well laid out, but we are still put off by the fussy dashboard and its conglomeration of switches and dials. You rarely use those buttons thanks to Ford's capable in-vehicle infotainment system dubbed Sync and its useful voice functionality. When connected via Bluetooth with your smartphone, Sync enables

drivers to perform functions like making calls by using only their voice and steering mounted buttons.

Under the American bonnet

The 1.0 Ecoboost model sits atop of the Fiesta range, which is a little strange given its mini-me, one litre, three cylinder turbocharged engine. Diminutive it may be, but this little gem of a powerplant effortlessly churns out a highly respectable 92 kW and 170 Nm of torque. As impressive as those figures is the surprisingly glorious, bassy engine note emanating from under the bonnet, every time you floor the pedal (or pleasure pedal as we dubbed it). Ford provides a claimed fuel usage figure of 4.3 litres of petrol per 100 km on a combined cycle (highway and town) route, but we only managed to get around eight litres per 100 km in our limited review period.

To the point

Ford's Fiesta 1.0 Ecoboost Trend might sport a mini engine, but slipping into the driver seat will require having to fork out plenty of cash to cover its maxi R211 200 price tag. The Ecoboost engine does manage to punch well above its weight in terms of performance though, and has us drooling over the prospect that is the forthcoming Fiesta ST. [HD]

Lexus launches LS460 executive sedan



Lexus South Africa has launched its new LS460 luxury executive saloon locally, with the exterior door panels being the only part of the new model that is shared with its predecessor.

According to Lexus, more than 3000 major parts and components, ranging from the dashboard through to the engine control unit, have either been redesigned or enhanced, with the Lexus's executive price tag counting a number of extras as standard.

More luxurious, tech savvy cabin

Inside the cabin, the driver now has access to numerous information screens, most notably a 5.8" colour display sandwiched in between the speedometer and rev counter, as well as a 12.3" electro multi vision (EMV) screen above the analogue clock in the centre console.

An upgraded Mark Levinson sound system takes care of all of the auditory needs, with this system featuring 19 speakers, a 15 channel amplifier, true 7.1 surround sound and connectivity for virtually every type of sound input the likes of Bluetooth audio streaming, Blu-ray discs, iPod/iPhone input, USB and MP3 discs.

Under the Japanese bonnet

Almost as glorious as the premium audio system of the LS460, is its upgraded 4.6 litre V8 with 32 valves and dual intelligent variable valve timing (dual VVT-i). It propels the big frame of the LS460 to 100 km/h from rest in 5.7 seconds, onto an electronically governed terminal velocity of 250 km/h.

Lexus's new Drive Mode Select control system enables the driver to alter the car's handling dynamics, by making changes to the firmness of the suspension and steering feel, through to the LS460's engine characteristics and throttle response. Drivers are able to switch between Eco or Comfort, Normal, Sport and track-focused Sport+ modes.

The Lexus LS460 is also equipped with a stereo millimetre wave radar system. This is one of the world's most advanced pre-crash avoidance systems (PCS), which, amongst others, prepares the cabin safety equipment such as the headrests and seat belts, if an accident looks probable.

Local market info

The Lexus LS460 is available now at your local Lexus/Toyota dealership for the bargain basement price of R1 236 700. This nets buyers a full four year or 100 000 km Lexus Distance Plan complete with a full maintenance plan, as well as warranty with roadside assistance.



CompEd IT Training Personalised on and off-site training and development

Not many companies make it their mission to enthuse individuals to make the most of their abilities. CompEd IT Training is one of a few to do so.

Based in Centurion, CompEd IT Training provides government, corporate clients and small and micro enterprises with personalised end-user NQF-aligned computer training. This is specifically directed towards the users' everyday needs, with training and courseware (either hard copy or electronic) developed for in-house packages as well as new systems which need to be implemented for go-live dates. Keeping with their personalised approach, this training is either facilitator led, available as e-learning courses, tuition disks or online.

Services

CompEd IT Training's services are based around two divisions:

1. E-learning and development services
2. Facilitator led training

1. E-learning and development services

Services presented under this division include:

a) Accredited course material in E-learning format

These include mapped and aligned course material, with all courses being interactive and involving videos, activities, games and assignments. After each segment, delegates will be subjected to continuous assessments and will not be able to progress to the next section unless the evaluation is complete.

b) Pre-assessments development:

Based on the company's requirements, CompEd IT Training can develop personalised pre-assessments. This is web-based and tailored to include, amongst others, the company's logo; user names and passwords; training for the assessment for national in-house roll out; and administration of results.

c) Course development and training rollout

Many companies require in-house end-user education solutions, with CompEd IT Training skilled in this type of development and deployment. This includes the creation of courseware; learning tools; training strategy design and training course development.


2. Facilitator led training

Services under this division include:

- a) Executive one-on-one computer literacy at delegate's desk.
- b) On-site group classroom training that incorporates lectures and hands-on experience.
- c) Group classroom training at CompEd's premises in Centurion.
- d) On-line pre-assessments to identify skills gaps, available online, to provide a list of suggested courses.

Accreditation and contact details

CompEd IT Training is a fully accredited ISETT training provider (ACC 2008/07/788) and is also rated a Level 4 BBEE contributor.

For more information on any of CompEd IT Training's solutions, or how they can tailor a package for your company, contact them on 012-644-2182 or info@comped.co.za. You can visit them online at www.comped.co.za. 

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Coexist

www.fastcoexist.com

For those interested in innovation, Coexist.com is a fine place to stir thoughts and ideas. The site, which takes a look at world changing ideas and innovation, contains some alluring and interesting stories. For example, on offer is an exploration about whether better data can prevent school shootings in the future; the impact of email on tactile experiences; and the future urban world. The site further highlights inventive approaches to modern life and considers their potential impact. Just one such example that can be found on the site is whether micro-donations that reward content creators and worthy charities simultaneously could lead to the rise of a new online economy.



Twaggies

www.twaggies.com

If you're the kind of person who regularly checks Twitter in the hope of finding something smart or funny, then the oddly named Twaggies will be right up your alley. The site collects some of the more amusing tweets on the

microblogging site, and then, offers them up in fully illustrated glory. Some of the tweets fare better than others when given the visual treatment, but on the whole, the site offers a colourful, amusing way to waste a significant amount of time.



Treehugger

www.treehugger.com

Although once used as an adjective to dismiss hippies or those foolish enough to be environmentally aware in the 60s, this site is certainly nothing to scoff at. Its focus, as you have no doubt already guessed, is on eco-

friendly practises. On offer is content regarding renewable energy and climate change, as well as eye-opening articles on bringing species back from extinction (all too pertinent for our beleaguered rhino) and a piece on how businesses can help save bees.



Passive Aggressive Notes

www.passiveaggressivenotes.com


Being on the receiving end of someone's passive aggressive behaviour is seldom fun, however, reading other people's passive

aggressive notes can certainly be entertaining. As incredulous as it may sound, indeed someone has dedicated a site to recording other people's passive aggressive response to daily life, often to very amusing effect.

TechSmart's top tweets



Here are the tweets that struck our fancy last month.

- 
Trevor Noah @Trevornoah
 Waiting for bags in the airport reminds me of waiting for my parents after school. I hope they come.
- 
Barry Hilton @barry_hilton
 Corruption is completely out of control. I rode from Bburg to PTA this a.m and was stopped 3 times to hand over money. Don't you hate etoll?
- 
Brendan Jack @brendanjack
 If Google Glass doesn't come standard with Beer Goggle mode, then they're wasting our time. #BeerGoggles trademarked by @Daveylevinsohn
- 
Adrian Briggs @adrianbriggs
 Sitting in my garden. Frogs are croaking, and I'm admiring the moon and Jupiter in a clear sky. Feel like a very fortunate ape.
- 
Cecilia Haak @ceciliahaak
 What's the point of Earth Hour? Why switch off for 60min on some random March day when we should ALWAYS be using electricity wisely?
- 
i am LEGEND @siz_THA_LEGEND
 @TechSmartMag I'm addicted to the TechSmart site so much cool stuff there
- 
David Smith @SmithInAfrica
 Sitting in a posh hotel in Cape Town wondering why my internet was faster in Mogadishu.
- 
Justice Malala @justicemalala
 Mmmm, that Lionel Messi. I hope the Cardinals know that he is available for the papacy. Because he deserves it.
- 
Ricky Gervais @rickygervais
 The best way to avoid criticism is never do anything ever. Or, do what you love, have a great life & let others spend their time criticising
- 
Wehnke Botha @XBearer_ZA
 On the internet you can be anything, why some many people choose to be stupid never ceases to amaze me
- 
Max du Preez @MaxduPreez
 Some think having a dancing president in leopard skin is odd but old men in weird dresses & hats performing strange rituals are not? #Pope

TechSmart.co.za online poll results

How do you feel about Windows 8?



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Apple iOS Apps of the month



Haiku Deck

This app has little to do with the short Japanese poems from which it has derived its name, and everything to do with creating beautiful presentations, using your words and images, or those sourced from common-licensed ones, on top of theme and layout templates. The resulting presentation can then be viewed on any web-enabled device, or embedded in the users' own blog or site.



Read.it!

In case you wanted or needed yet more content in your life, Read.it! is a very good free app to take a look at. This content aggregators' claim to fame is that it offers media on your favourite topics, curated by experts in their field. The usual broad offering of categories and content are on offer, including technology, social media, science, art and culture, travel, food, lifestyle and education. Anything not listed in the above can be added by searching for it.



Cordy 2

Cordy 2 impresses just as much as Cordy 1 did, if not more, offering beautiful, lovingly crafted levels, the same affable robot and silky smooth platforming. The game sees Cordy and Volt land on World 2 only to find it under threat by a nasty piece of work named Boogaloo. In order to stave off danger, Cordy has to collect Zap Drops, scattered across the three worlds. While the first four levels of Carnival City are free, the full game costs R40. 🍷

Android Apps of the month



The Sandbox

Are you in need of a new challenge after crafting a vast 3D pixel-art empire within Minecraft? If so, then The Sandbox offers the same pixel-art creation formula and applies it to a 2D environment for smartphones and tablets. There are 71 levels to make your way through, allowing players to create new life forms, and try their hand at one-upping real man-made structures like the Pyramids.



Moment.me

For those suffering from social networking overload, Moment.me will help them aggregate and organise all of their social posts around specific events and places. All of your photos, tweets, Facebook posts, and videos having to do with a particular event or linked to a location, will be grouped and sorted into collections. You can even group certain contacts or friends in the same manner too, and have a family collection for instance.



Guess The Movie!

Fans of general trivia and film buffs will love Guess The Movie, which is an interesting way to spend a few hours. The goal for the user is to correctly guess the name of movie, with your sole clue coming in the shape of a minimalistic poster based on that film. There are a variety of categories including one for Oscar winning flicks and multiple difficulty levels to keep things challenging. 🍷

BlackBerry Apps of the month



Aerize WiFix

Get the best out of your BlackBerry's Wi-Fi with Aerize. This R8 application allows you to use your Wi-Fi even when your BIS expires, which means you can still browse the web and use applications such as WhatsApp. WiFix contains more than 20 different websites preloaded but you can also add your own to the list. However do note that this app may take some time getting used to and secure sites such as banking websites are not supported.



The Oregon Trail: American Settler

Gameloft's The Oregon Trail puts you in the shoes of a pioneer who has to trek into the unknown, facing dangers such as wild buffalos, hurricanes and dysentery. If you tire from the campaign, take a rest by trying out the fishing and hunting mini games. This game has decent sound effects and graphics, however, it does suffer from a frame rate drop which is more noticeable on slower BlackBerry devices.



App Stalker

The best things in life are free so why pay for applications when you can get them for mahala thanks to App Stalker? App Stalker checks if there are paid for apps in BlackBerry World that have now gone free, or if any apps have received a price-cut. The app integrates with the OS by alerting you via notification icons. Do note some of the applications listed in App Stalker are not always available in South Africa. [IF] 🍷

Smartphone top tips

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

Apple iOS tip

If like us you have no interest in Game Centre and are annoyed by its tendency to constantly pop up, here is how to disable it, at least for a time.

Open a Game Centre enabled game and clear all fields completely, then press cancel. You may need to do this once or twice more until a screen pops up asking you if you want to disable Game Centre. Click in the affirmative and enjoy one less annoyance in your digital life. The only caveat is you may need to repeat this banishing process if you sign in and purchase an app from your device.



BlackBerry tip

If you are browsing the web with the native browser on your BlackBerry device then have a look at these shortcuts. Press the 'V' or 'F' key to search for something on the webpage. The 'R' key will refresh the webpage. To view Connection Information press the 'C' key and lastly press the 'K' to access your bookmarks.

Android tip

A good way of boosting the battery life of your device is to disable your mobile data connection, when you do not need up-to-the-minute app updates. Alternatively, users can change the frequency of updates for each individual app, by going to Settings > Accounts and sync. 🍷

Sci News



Make it a bee-caf

We're not the only ones who need a caffeine pick-me-up. According to a study published in a recent issue of *Science*, a bit of caffeine-infused nectar perks up bees too. Tests showed that bees that sipped on a

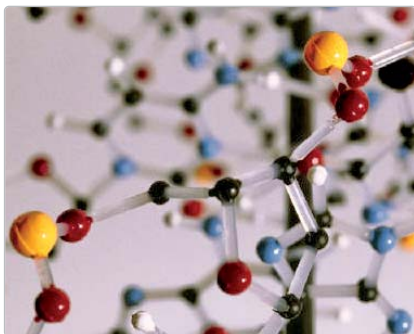
caffeine-containing sugar solution were three times more likely to remember a flower's scent than those that fed on a sugar-only solution. The effect lasted at least a day, and for some bees up to three days. The nectar of some citrus and coffee plants was found to contain just enough caffeine to elicit the memory boost without creating a repelling bitter taste. The researchers think the relationship may be a win-win arrangement: since the caffeine helps the bees remember the flowers as a good source of nectar, the plants' pollination chances improve. Sweet.



Bigfoot

If the shoe doesn't fit (anymore), blame it on your baby. So say researchers in a recent article in the *American Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*. The team measured 49 pregnant women's feet early on in their pregnancies and

again five months after childbirth. For more than two thirds of the women, feet measured up to a centimetre longer after childbirth than during pregnancy and foot arches were markedly flatter and less rigid. The findings suggest that as a result of joints becoming more flexible during pregnancy, mom's extra weight lets her feet flatten out. The results may help to explain why women who have had children are more prone to some kinds of arthritis later in life. But for now we say just go buy new shoes.



It's a bug's life

If you think your life is tough, spare a thought for a few simple bacteria-like cells. These little creatures, known as *Archaea*, are thought to have given rise to all life. And according to a study that appeared in a

March issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy*, we may be one step closer to understanding how. Researchers studied almost 1800 genes of a specific archeon species and found that about 30% of them are essential for life. These genes make up the systems needed to encode information into DNA and are similar to those found in cells of more complex organisms such as plants and animals. The findings not only strengthen the idea that life began with Archaea but also help to unravel the mechanisms that lay down the code of life in DNA. [LP]

Green News



LaFerrari

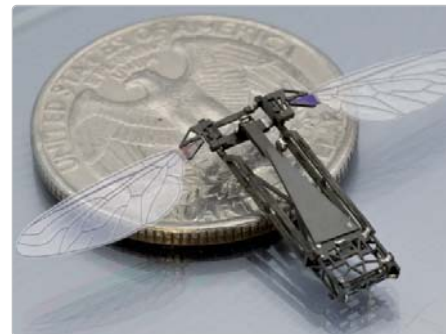
Ferrari's latest supercar, the LaFerrari, is the company's first ever hybrid. It boasts two Italian hearts (a 6262cc V12 and dual electric motors) that beat as one to deliver a combined peak power output of 708 kW and enough torque (900 Nm) to reverse the earth's rotation. This sees the Italian Stallion galloping to 100 km/h in less than three seconds onto a terminal top end of 350 km/h. Only 499 samples will be made, so the chance of seeing one blasting down Grayston Drive is pretty slim (but not out of the question altogether).



Vodacom implements renewable energy solutions

Vodacom has unveiled the largest solar array of panels on a single building on the African continent at its offices in Century City, Cape

Town. The installation of this solar array is part of the company's ongoing drive to reduce its energy consumption, as the panels are expected to provide up to 75% of all electricity needed by the building during peak production. Solar power generated by the array will feed into two main distribution boards and a display panel installed in the reception area of the building, and will showcase factors such as instantaneous power produced and carbon emission savings.



Robots to take sting out of dwindling bee population

A major ecological concern and threat to the world's ecosystems is rapidly

dwindling Honey bee populations. This issue has prompted a team of Harvard and Northeastern University scientists to collaborate on a swarm of miniature 'RoboBee robots'. These mini-bee robots will be able to assume the role of real bees within ecosystems around the globe by pollinating flowers. Scientists are working on methods to make thousands of these RoboBees cooperate as though they were functioning as a real hive. Possible alternative uses for the RoboBees include search and rescue missions, where the environment is too hazardous or volatile to explore on foot.

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Digital Laser Thermometer

Here's a nifty way to measure temperature – just point and fire. This laser targeting infrared thermometer provides accurate surface temperature readings in less than a second. Readings appear on the integrated LCD display and can further be viewed in the dark using the display's backlight. Applications for it are vast, such as detecting temperature variations in one's home, or ensuring that an infant's milk or bathwater is at the right temperature. It has an RRP of R570 from Mantality.co.za.



USB Snake Scope

It is not only fictional secret agents who have the best gadgets, as the snake cam enables anyone to peek under doors or into hard to reach places. The Snake Scope, which has a flexible 600 mm 'neck', sports two white LED lights on either side of the camera to illuminate one's path, and the resulting discoveries can be captured in both still and video images with a 640 x 480 resolution. The USB powered device does require a PC to work, which might just blow your cover. It's yours for R995 via Mantality.co.za.



Digital Luggage Scale

Considering how particular travel transportation authorities can be, this digital luggage scale can quite easily save one having to pay overweight baggage charges, and thus make globetrotting a little less stressful. The portable device, which can accommodate up to 50 kg of weight, displays a bag's weight on an LCD screen, and only needs to be looped through the handle of one's luggage and lifted. Additionally, it offers an overload indicator, which should give travellers an indication that they need to repack their bag long before they sidle up to check-in. R300 for stress-free travel.

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Gear in the office

The TechSmart office usually overflows with new products coming in for review. Here are our thoughts on a few of them.



Nashua Ricoh ultra short throw projector

Nashua's ultra short throw projector (1280 x 800) is great for offices where restrictions don't allow for a projector on the boardroom table, since its upright design enables it to fit quite snugly next to the wall it projects

onto. We were impressed by the sound, while it also comes with a great remote and carry bag. Price though will be a problem – close to R20 000 from <https://shop.nashua.co.za>.



Samsung Galaxy Camera

Coming equipped with Android Jelly Bean, a 4.8" screen and a SIM card slot, the Galaxy camera takes mobile photography to the next level. If you are one of those snappers that can't

wait to upload images to social networking sites, this is the camera for you, but its sheer size and price will deter others. R6 000.



Tomb Raider

It has been quietly begging for more of our attention; and by all accounts, Tomb Raider is a masterpiece of a game. For the first time in a long while we can honestly say Uncharted has some serious competition; Tomb Raider is an action-adventure title that not only succeeds at

immersing us fully in its world, but also shines brightly as an example of the heights interactive entertainment can reach. R600.



Logitech G600 MMO Gaming Mouse

With its G600 MMO Gaming Mouse Logitech forgoes the 'less is more' design philosophy, offering more programmable buttons than a user has fingers. Customisation might be the

name of the game, but unfortunately the same cannot be said for the ergonomics, since clip-on panels or an adjustable palm rest are not included. R2 000.



Sony Xperia Z

Sony's flagship Xperia Z is the first of the next-gen smartphones to arrive at the office. It sports an impressive full HD screen, but beyond that it has not really set our world alight. The water resistant body is a big pro though. R8 000. ❖



To watch



Seven Psychopaths

12 April 2013

Seven Psychopaths is basically a dog movie. Or rather, a missing dog movie. Or rather, a missing Shih Tzu, belonging to a crazy gangster, kidnapped by a bunch of oddballs, movie. With Woody Harrelson, Christopher Walken, Sam Rockwell, Tom Waits and Colin Farrell starring, we can't complain too much about the cast, but it seems as if *Seven Psychopaths* could either be awesome, or turn out a defective soufflé.



Oblivion

19 April 2013

After his miscasting in *Jack Reacher* does Tom Cruise still have his blockbuster appeal? The producers of *Oblivion* certainly hope so. Gaming fans will be disappointed to hear that the movie is not in fact based on the fourth chapter in The Elder Scrolls series, but rather a science-fiction title. Cruise is a drone repairman, assigned to a now long destroyed Earth, and, like most Cruise movies, the fate of humanity soon ends up in his hands. We're looking forward to the score composed by M83 and some great visuals.



Trance

26 April 2013

After masterminding the London Olympics' opening ceremony, Oscar winning Danny Boyle is back at his day job with *Trance*. With a gang on his back, amnesiac art auctioneer Simon (James McAvoy, Xavier in *X-Men: First Class*) struggles to remember what happened to a lost painting. Enlisted to help is hypnotherapist (Rosario Dawson, *Men in Black II*) and this is where the fun starts. If something more challenging than the usual fluff is required, *Trance* should suffice.



GI Joe: Retaliation

5 April 2013

Ever since his portrayal as a gay cowboy in *Be Cool*, we've wished to see former WWE superstar Dwayne Johnson's (aka The Rock) in some more off-the-wall castings. Alas, he headlines *GI Joe: Retaliation*, the correct movie to accommodate a serious session of popcorn crunching this holiday. Also starring is Bruce Willis, and our very own Arnold Vosloo, who is playing the role of a supervillain (what else?). This time he takes the form of Zartan, responsible for turning the world against the G.I. Joe super-troopers. ❖

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SPHERO

Sphero is a completely new type of gaming system. It's the world's first robotic ball that you control with a tilt, touch, or swing from your smartphone or tablet. You can drive Sphero, play tabletop and multiplayer games, hold Sphero in your hand to use it as a controller for on-screen gameplay, learn basic programming and even explore augmented reality.



iGRILL

The iGrill is an app-enabled wireless Bluetooth meat thermometer and allows you to monitor your food from up to 60 meters away.



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AR DRONE 2.0

Parrot, a France-based company, has transformed AR.Drone from a fun toy to a flying robot that could attract everyone from amateur pilots to film directors. The camera now shoots 720p video.



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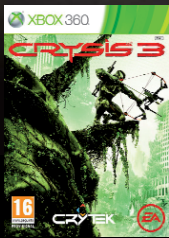
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Crisis 3



Nanosuit? Check. Amazing graphics? Check. Evil corporations and aliens? Check. Oh, it must be the new Crisis 3 then.

Set in 2047, Crisis 3 has Prophet waging a war on two fronts within New York City. Long gone is the metropolis that never sleeps, since the Big Apple

has been transformed into a sprawling urban jungle after evil corporation C.E.L.L. covered it in a gigantic Nanodome.

An apocalypse has never looked this amazing

Developer Crytek has always been known for its class-leading graphic prowess that has left many a custom-built gaming PCs crying out for mercy. Crisis 3 is no exception and even on the Xbox 360 version of the game, Crytek takes the graphical eye-candy of the series to the next level. The result is stop-and-stare visuals that are simply unparalleled.

Also on offer are a few new gameplay elements, including the ability to utilise Ceph weaponry, thanks to Prophet tinkering with his nanosuit and experimenting with Ceph DNA. Although all the alien weapons look fantastic, they boast about the same kick as the large assortment of human guns players will find scattered across NYC.

Crisis 3 is the graphical yardstick by which all other games will now be measured.

We loved the fact that you can either run and gun your way through the game using the large selection of weapons on offer or take the stealth approach. We preferred the latter as it's enormously entertaining skewering C.E.L.L. troops and Ceph Stalker units alike with the normal arrowheads, bringing down Ceph Pinger sentry robots via the exploding- or electric shock arrowheads. The familiar HUD now sports the ability to hack all manner of electronic equipment, from rendering landmines redundant through to turning enemy torrent guns on their creators.

To the point

As expected, Crisis 3 blows its FPS competition out of the water in terms of its graphics, and also packs some solid FPS gameplay mechanics. This title is a definite must-buy for fans of the series and FPS gamers in general. It is not only the graphical yardstick by which all other games will now be measured, but also proves to be the first big blockbuster title of the year to live up to its billing (the second is reviewed on the right). [HD] 🍌

Starcraft II

Heart of the swarm



After a three-year wait Starcraft II's new Heart of the Swarm (HoTS) expansion has officially launched its invasion on humanity.

The expansion, which includes so much content that it almost deserves the title of sequel, has players taking the reins of the Zerg swarm and continues the story where the original left off.

On the campaign trail

The story follows Sarah Kerrigan, freshly purged of most of her Zerg influence. Imprisoned in a Terran research centre, the Queen of Blades seems all but stripped of her former glory, her control of the swarm shattered. Kerrigan however is no damsel in distress, and as the story unfolds we learn to control her psionic abilities with deadly efficiency.

In the HoTS campaign, missions are presented in wildly varying ways. In some the player controls Kerrigan and a small band of troops, while in others you are able to harness entire Zerg hives, fielding hundreds of ravenous Zerg to overrun the enemy.

Take our word for it, Heart of the Swarm is no cheap add-on.

This variation keeps the action from becoming stale, with each mission requiring players to utilise increasingly complex Zerg mechanics and units in order to achieve victory. It warrants mention that the sheer quality of the narrative in HoTS makes for a truly movie-like experience while playing. If you like a good story, HoTS is definitely going to make your day.

Multiplayer

Once players have completed the single player campaign, the game is far from over. As always, Starcraft II's real strength makes itself felt in the online multiplayer compartment. Battle.net, Blizzard's online matchmaking service, has received a number of big updates over the past few months in preparation for the game, and they definitely show.

Conclusion

Take our word for it, HoTS is no cheap add-on. The campaign, complete with Blizzard's gorgeous cinematics and gripping storyline, definitely operates on a playing field of its own. So if you haven't logged onto Starcraft II for a while, or wondering whether or not the expansion is worthwhile, do yourself a favour and check out the new Battle.net. The new changes (available to Wings of Liberty players as well) will surely help whet your appetite for getting back into the saddle. [JK] 🍌

Microsoft

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