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Huawei Ascend P6
High-end phone, mid-range price



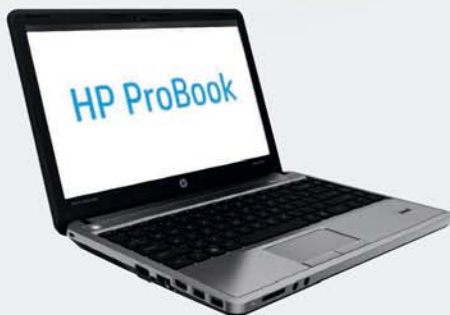
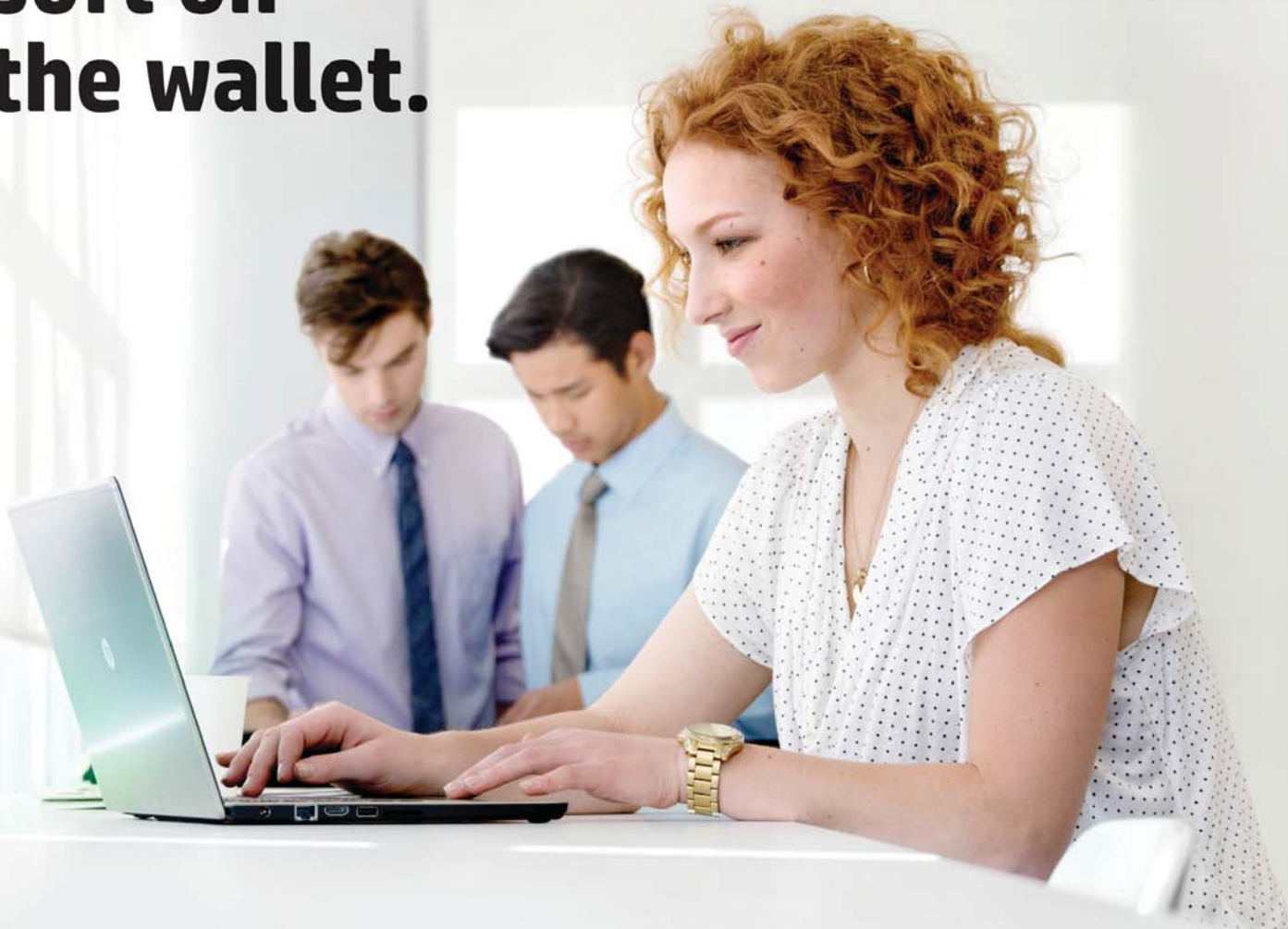
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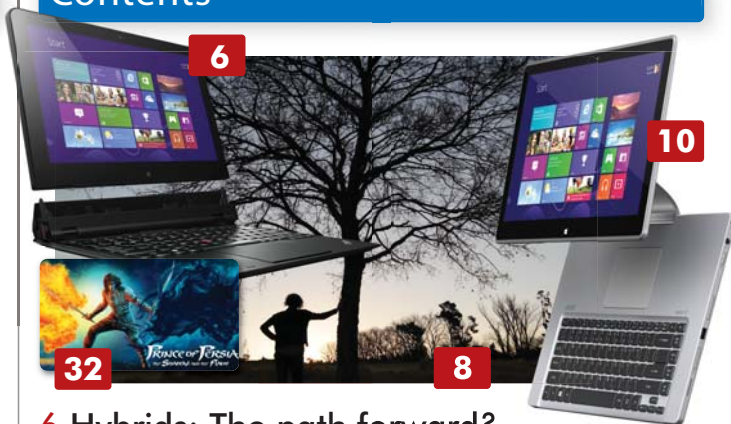
Watch this space

Depending on when you read this, the tech world might have already exploded with the news of Samsung's latest gadget. The Gear (as it was rumoured to be called) will be leading the smartwatch offensive, trying to do to wristwatches what smartphones did to cellphones.

These watches connect via Bluetooth to smartphones, in essence acting as a second screen where one can check messages, tweets, Facebook or email. With an estimated five million of these devices expected to be sold in 2014, up from 500 000 units this year, companies such as Samsung and Apple must be licking their lips for a healthy return.

This new wearable tech is not without its doubters, with questions being raised regarding the willingness of buyers to cough up for a device with a relatively small convenience factor. Still, with a reported group of 100 Apple employees from different divisions working on its iWatch, one can't help but think that maybe there will be more to smartwatches than simply not having to take your smartphone out of your pocket to check a WhatsApp message.

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



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Is the future of the notebook in the type of hybrid device we are seeing on the market these days? We try to make sense of tablet/notebooks, or is that notebooks/tablets?

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With its weird Ezel hinge and a mousepad placed above the keyboard, does Acer's R7 provide a more convenient Windows 8 experience?

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Top Tech Titbits



Sony's PS4 confirmed for South Africa this year

South Africa's Sony faithful won't have to wait till next year to pick up a PS4. Distributor Ster Kinekor Entertainment has confirmed that the next gen console will be wooing local shores on or by the 6th of December. The price, while still to be confirmed subject to the ever-fluctuating exchange rate, has been indicated to be no more expensive than R6 300.



Elon Musk proposes Hyperloop transportation system

South African born entrepreneur Elon Musk has proposed his latest vision - a high-speed Hyperloop transportation system between Los Angeles and San Francisco. With the system, passengers and cars in special pods, travelling at 1280 km/hour, could bridge the cities in a mere 30 minutes. The pods, containing 28 people each, would be 'shot' through a low pressure steel tube flanking the California coast.



Samsung expected to unveil Galaxy Smartwatch

Samsung is largely expected to unveil its stab at the 'next big thing', namely smartwatches, this month. Eyes are on the mobile titan, with many expecting it to reveal its Galaxy Gear smartwatch. The device, if and when it comes to light, would likely contain a curved screen, a dual core processor, a speaker and mic, with rumours also predicting that the Gear might not be dependent on Google's Play store for apps, but rather Samsung's own app store. *Design concept: www.vouchercodespro.co.uk.*

BB ponders whether its end is nigh

Beleaguered Canadian company BlackBerry revealed that it has formed a special committee to explore its "strategic alternatives. Options on the table include finding a mobile partner with which to enter into a joint venture, continuing to battle across the competitive smartphone field while flying its BlackBerry 10 flag, or admitting defeat and selling the company altogether.



Rockstar announces GTA V Online

Rockstar caused some waves of its own, announcing that its highly anticipated GTA V will boast an online mode and multiplayer component. This will enable players to team up, cooperatively, and wreak havoc across the title's open world, partaking in a range of activities, including a coordinated bank heist. The multiplayer mode will become available from October. 🎮

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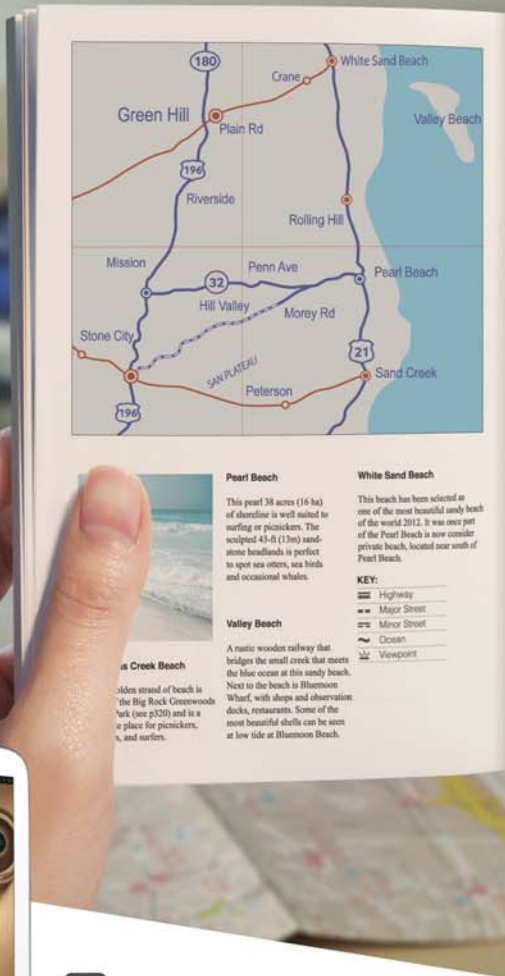
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2014 Lamborghini Gallardo LP 570-4 Squadra Corse

Lamborghini's latest drool-machine is powered by a ferocious 425 kW V10 engine and thanks to large helpings of aluminium and carbon fibre, the Squadra Corse tips the scales at only 1340 kg - 70 kg lighter than the standard Gallardo LP 560-4. With this you can race to 200 km/h in a mere 10.4 seconds, onto a blink-and-you'll miss top speed of around 320 km/h. More details surrounding the supercar will be announced at this month's Frankfurt Motor Show.



Samsung Curved OLED TV

Besides boasting eye-catching curves, Samsung's new 55" Curved OLED TV (KN55S9C) brings an end to the old problem of who has control over the TV. With its Multi View functionality it enables two users to simultaneously watch completely different full screen full HD content (in 2D or 3D), with corresponding audio. How? Multi View employs Samsung's 3D Active glasses, which pack built-in personal speakers that offer full stereo sound. RRP: \$9 000 Stateside. No local release info is available yet.



Razer Kraken 7.1 Surround Sound USB gaming headset

Razer's has release the Kraken 7.1 Surround Sound USB gaming headphones. The Kraken's advanced virtual surround sound engine is capable of ultra-low latency audio processing, which perfectly simulates 360° surround sound. Gaming aural bliss comes at a cool R1 200.



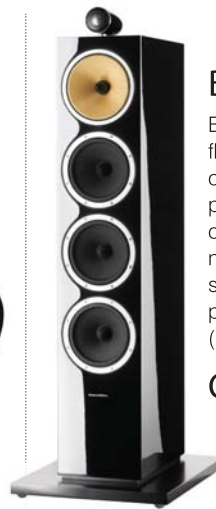
Casio G-Shock Twisted MT-G wrist watch

Casio's G-Shock Twisted MT-G can take the knocks both outdoors and inside the most ferocious boardroom. The rugged but stylish chronograph timepiece boast Triple G Resist for shock, gravitational drop and centrifugal force resistance. It should be available in November in polished stainless steel (\$900); black Ion plated stainless steel (\$1 000); and a limited edition version boasting gold highlights and a red paneled bracelet band (\$1 100).



Bowers & Wilkins CM10 speakers

British audio aficionados Bowers & Wilkins' (B&W's) new flagship floorstanding loudspeaker - the CM10 - marries opulent design (Rosenuot or Wengé real wood veneers) with phenomenal sound quality. The latter is due to its tweeter-on-top design which aids sound dispersion for a more natural, spacious sound. This design also creates enough space inside the speaker cabinet for a third bass driver to provide a more powerful bass punch. RRP: \$4 000 (R40 000) per pair.



Canon PowerShot G16

Looking almost exactly like the G15 is the recently announced Canon G16 compact camera. The 12.1 megapixel camera boasts the company's new DIGIC 6 image processor, a sensitivity range up to ISO 12 800 and up to a superb 9 fps shooting. New to the unit is full HD (1920 x 1080) 60p movie recording and also wireless connectivity - but is it enough to keep strong competition from Sony and Fujifilm in the premier compact market at bay? Stateside at least, you can expect to pay \$550 (R5 500).



Wacom Cintiq Companion

Wacom's newly announced 13.3" Cintiq Companion tablet, aimed at creatives, boasts a luscious 1920 x 1080 screen resolution, 3rd generation Intel Core processor, a generous 8 GB of memory and Intel HD Graphics 4000. The tablet is accompanied by Wacom's Pro Pen, which offers up 2048 levels of pressure sensitivity, and is compatible out the box with the likes of Photoshop, Illustrator and Painter. Users will be able to choose between a 256 GB SSD or a 512 GB capacity for a 'mere' \$2 000 (R20 000) or \$2 500 (R25 000) respectively.



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Hybrids: The path forward?

It would be no exaggeration to say that the PC industry as a whole is battling to stay relevant in an environment increasingly ruled by smartphones and tablet devices. To its rescue, perhaps, enters the hybrid PC.



Asus TaiChi

It could be argued that the premise behind hybrids – those devices which double as both tablets and small notebooks or ultrabooks – is not exactly new. Indeed, when tablets, such as the iPad and various Android offerings began addressing their most glaring omission (no keyboard) with an array of accessories, they could technically have been considered hybrids of sorts. In fact, it was Asus who led the charge back in 2011, with its EEE Pad Slider, an Android tablet with an integrated, slide out QWERTY keyboard. With the introduction of Windows 8, however, hybrids really began to come to the fore.

Enter the hybrid

Since the iPad took the world by storm three years ago, a number of very good third party external keyboards and keyboard-covers have made typing on a tablet a little more akin to doing so on a notebook or ultrabook. This is changing the perception that tablets are mainly for content consumption.

Complicating matters is the fact that now there are two types of hybrids - tablet hybrids (tablets that come with keyboard docks) and notebook or ultrabook hybrids (essentially notebooks with detachable screens that can then be used independently).

Tablet hybrids

However, each are doing so in different ways, with some choosing to focus on the tablet component of their hybrid first, with the keyboard dock segment trailing behind, and others doing exactly the opposite. For example, Acer has launched its Windows 8-based Iconia W510, a significant improvement over the W700, which is essentially a 10" Windows 8 tablet, running the cost and energy efficient Intel Atom Z2760 processor with a dollop of 2 GB of memory. Falling into the same category is Samsung's Ativ 500T; while it has similar specifications, it bumps the screen up to 11.6", making it quite a bit larger. On HP's end, it offers the 10.1" SlateBook X2, which sports a Tegra 4 processor, 1920 x 1200 IPS display and takes firm aim at the business user.



Samsung Ativ 500

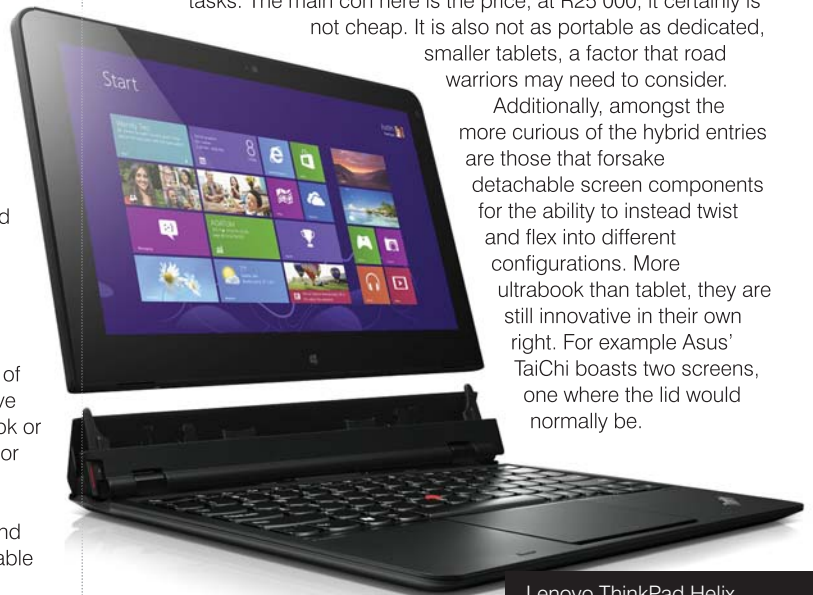
The pros in this approach is that it essentially delivers a bit of each – some of the portability extolled by tablets, along with a good balance between energy efficiency and processing power. The main con though, is that it occupies a middle of the road between being a very powerful tablet and a particularly portable notebook, not really pulling either off.

Notebook/Ultrabook hybrids

Moving into the notebook and ultrabook hybrids, a prime example here is the Lenovo ThinkPad Helix with its detachable 11.6" screen, which offers a potent Intel Core i7 processor, 8 GB of memory, with a hearty 256 GB SSD drive, all running on Windows 8.

On the plus side it seems like an ideal solution – a detachable screen for tablet time on the couch, and all the power needed to do typical tasks. The main con here is the price, at R25 000, it certainly is not cheap. It is also not as portable as dedicated, smaller tablets, a factor that road warriors may need to consider.

Additionally, amongst the more curious of the hybrid entries are those that forsake detachable screen components for the ability to instead twist and flex into different configurations. More ultrabook than tablet, they are still innovative in their own right. For example Asus' TaiChi boasts two screens, one where the lid would normally be.



Lenovo ThinkPad Helix

This is changing the perception that tablets are mainly for content consumption.

Then there are the twistable Lenovo ThinkPad Twist and the bendable IdeaPad Yoga, with the former sporting a 12.5" screen

with a high-end processor and memory. While useful for a variety of functions such as watching movies or working on a slate type setup, ultrabook hybrids are typically thicker and heavier than their other hybrid counterparts. We've tested these machines and might have used it as tablets more if Windows 8's Metro interface offered the same usability as Android does.

To the point

In the final analysis, hybrids have nonetheless breathed a fresh air of innovation into the notebook segment, offering general and business users alike more choice, which is certainly nothing to scoff at. [RN] ❖



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¹This system is Windows 8 certified and supports the new Windows UI. The integrated display resolution is below the threshold for Snap, a Windows UI feature that allows two Windows Store apps to be viewed simultaneously. This feature may be enabled by attaching an external 1366 x 768 or higher resolution display. Not all features are available in all editions of Windows 8. Systems may require upgraded and/or separately purchased hardware, drivers and/or software to take full advantage of Windows 8 functionality. See microsoft.com

²Requires purchase of HP service tool. For customers located in the United States and Canada, visit this link to find out more about our self-maintainer program: hp.com/partners/SMprogram. For customers in Latin America, EMEA and Asia Pacific, please work directly with your sales account representative to understand what self-repair program options may be available for you.

³Optional accessories. Sold separately. Various availability dates from February 2013. Please check with your local reseller for details. Ultrabook, Celeron, Celeron Inside, Core Inside, Intel, Intel Logo, Intel Atom, Intel Atom Inside, Intel Core, Intel Inside, Intel Inside Logo, Intel vPro, Itanium, Itanium Inside, Pentium, Pentium Inside, vPro Inside, Xeon, Xeon Phi, and Xeon Inside are trademarks of Intel Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries.





Welcome to the Great (Tech) Outdoors

No need to choose between enjoying technology amid home comforts, versus forsaking it for the fresh air and adventure to be found in the great outdoors. In fact, certain technologies come into their own when you step foot outside.

**Reboot your life:
Hi-Tec V-LITE SPHike mid WP boots**

These V-LITE SPHike mid WP boots from Hi-Tec are certainly on top of our must-buy-for-summer list. As the 'V-Lite' portion of the name suggests, they are of the lightweight variety of hiking boots, and boast a number of technological advances. These include waterproof synthetic uppers to keep one's feet dry when striding through streams, Hi-Tec's Liquid Rubber on the toe and heel for added protection, as well as Vibram rubber outsoles, which the company promises will deliver traction, comfort and durability. At R1 200, they aren't cheap, but are still less expensive than accidentally straining your ankle on the first day of the Otter.



going geocaching) is a decent GPS. Garmin's GPSMap 62s is certainly that. The rugged and waterproof device sports a 3-axis compass, barometric altimeter and ships with integrated worldwide basemap with shaded relief. Critical to a GPS, it also boasts a quad helix antenna, Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS)-enabled GPS receiver as well as HotFix satellite prediction, to enable you to find your way regardless of whether you are surrounded by heavy foliage or in the bowels of a gorge. It has a not too bad RRP of R4 500.



**Look out:
Nikon Monarch 7 10x30 binoculars**

Presuming your family tree cannot count eagle or owl in its genealogy, no doubt your long range vision could do with a bit of a boost. These Monarch 7 10x30 binoculars from Nikon would be our choice. The binocs are built with extra-low dispersion (ED) glass for clearer viewing, brighter images and natural colours, while also compensating for chromatic aberration. The Monarch 7 boast waterproofing up to one metre for ten minutes, as well as rubber armouring for shock resistance, helping ensure the precious glass contained within is less likely to encounter its premature mortality in the event of a fall. RRP: R6 500.

**Be empowered:
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Sure, there comes a weekend when you just have to turn off Twitter and show Facebook your back, but we would still recommend you stow a smartphone and an extra boost of power along for the ride. After all, suffering an unforeseen accident miles away from civilisation, with no way to call for help, is no joke (as 127 hours proved). This Powerchimp 4A will ensure that your cellular phone of choice doesn't resort to 'expensive paperweight mode' when you need it most, allowing you up to two additional charges using rechargeable AA or AAA batteries. RRP: R600.



**Run, run, run:
Puma Faas 100 TR**

Puma's Faas 100 TR is built for the trail runner who wishes he could actually run barefoot. With the least amount of cushioning in the Faas line, it is more a training shoe, with a zero millimetre heel-to-toe drop that helps toughen a runner's feet. Also onboard is high rebound Ortholite sockliner which Puma believes provides higher responsiveness through the gait cycle. RRP: R1 300. [RN]



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*Not an actual device, for display purposes only.

GALAXY S4 mini





Acer Aspire R7

Acer's Aspire R7 typifies the latest PC trend, towards notebooks that twist themselves into a variety of form factors, in a quest to be both novel and useful.

As to the former, it is certainly that. The notebook's screen can swivel into four configurations thanks to its sturdy but agile Ezel hinge – upright, as is the conventional tradition. Ezel, which makes it resemble an artist's easel; Display, which hides the keyboard and is ideal for watching movies; and Pad, which turns the device into a slate, are the main positions.

You can swing the screen closer to you, something which works particularly well when using the touchscreen to navigate through Windows 8.

Additionally, and adding to its distinctiveness, are the fact that the generously sized trackpad and the palmrest is found not below the keyboard, but rather above it. While it may take a little getting used to, on the positive front, it means that you can swing the screen closer to you, something which works particularly well when using the touchscreen to navigate through Windows 8 or reading off the screen.

Make an impression

The notebook's 15.6" screen is superb, not surprisingly, considering the full HD 1920 x 1080 resolution on offer here, boasting deep, rich colours and excellent clarity. Also winning us over was its quick and responsive performance, thanks to the ever-exemplary third-gen Core i5 (337U) processor and a generous dollop of 8 GB RAM. Storage is also well catered to, with a 1 TB hard drive, while Intel's integrated graphics 4000 (a significant step up from the 3000) ably handles the graphics.

Acer has also improved considerably on the keyboard front, with its backlit, chiclet keyboard proving to be a pleasure to use, offering enough depth of key press to satisfy. Furthermore, the R7 offers some very impressive and particularly loud sound, again making this a machine well suited for consuming entertainment.

To the point

Has the Aspire R7 succeeded at being novel and useful? To our minds yes, although it is probably more suited towards a certain kind of user, namely one who tends to consume content and wants a more convenient, accessible means of using the touchscreen. At R16 000 it certainly isn't cheap. [RN] 🍷



Logitech G19s gaming keyboard

Gamers tend to be a critical bunch, and thus creating a gaming orientated keyboard is certainly a brave feat. Does Logitech get it right for the discerning PC gamer with its G19s keyboard?

To start with, the G19s is certainly an attractive and sleek piece of kit, with subtle silver accents and the occasional backlighting, dotting the keyboard's chassis. Logitech has taken a more classy, rather than garish approach, less Las Vegas strip at night and more evocative of The Michelangelo during the day.

Lock and load

Even with its optional palmrest attached, the keyboard itself is not gargantuan but actually a decent size. On the functionality side, a key part of any keyboard is the depth of its press and the springiness – how quickly it returns to its original state – and on this front, we have to say the G19s was a pleasure to use and type on.

Not forgetting its gaming orientated missive, the all important WASD keys are highlighted in a different colour and have a slightly different texture to the rest of the keys, making them easier to identify by touch alone. The G19s also boasts a great deal of customisation options. You can, for example, change the colour of the key backlighting to your liking. Additionally, the twelve G keys on the left

We can't imagine any PC gamer being remotely dissatisfied with what is on offer here.

hand side of the keyboard can be assigned a plethora of commands; used to reload or switch between weapons; access important in-game items or each key can be assigned to an important MMO macro.

Indeed, via the software, users can also download and install game-specific profiles for these G keys, which offer up genre-relevant alternatives that can be used to map to the keys of one's choice.

To the point

In the final analysis, the G19s is a fine keyboard that was a pleasure to use, as much for general work as for play. We can't imagine any PC gamer being remotely dissatisfied with what is on offer here. It has a RRP of R2 450 [RN] 🍷

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Huawei Ascend P6: 3 things to love

Huawei aimed for the heart of its mid-market competition, launching its R5 000 Ascend P6. Here are our top three impressions as to why other phone makers should be on guard.

1 Bearable thinness of being

To start with, the device is really thin at 6.18 mm, and surprisingly light (120 g) in the hand. The P6's design was apparently inspired by the humble sheet of paper, intended to similarly offer a slim profile and natural curvature.

Refreshingly, the smartphone further boasts a brushed metallic body, and certainly feels and looks like a premium device. On the specs front, the P6 is no slouch, sporting a 1.5 GHz quad-core processor, Android Jelly Bean (4.2.2), and 2 GB of memory. Thus, it came as little surprise that the smartphone was swift and responsive in our initial general use.

2 Smile for the cameras

Also onboard the smartphone are two cameras, namely a front-facing 5 megapixel one and an 8 megapixel back snapper.

Huawei has incorporated its own IMAGESmart software, which offers contrast and colour enhancement as well as auto scene recognition and left us quite impressed with the images it produced. Also winning us over was the inclusion of full HD (1080p) video and macro facility from as little as 4 cm away.

3 The price is right

The Ascend P6 may feel like a high-end phone, but it is not priced like one. Rather, the upper mid-market offering comes in at a reasonable R5 000. This and its specs, puts in the similar league as the Sony Xperia V, although the latter costs R500 more. There is a tradeoff here though, while the Ascend P6 boasts 2 GB of memory to the Xperia V's 1 GB, Sony's offering caters to LTE, which the P6 does not.

To the point

Nonetheless, it doesn't make the device any less appealing, but rather gives those shopping for an upper mid-market device yet another option. The Ascend P6 is currently available in black or white for R5 000, with a pink version coming later this year. [RN] ❖



LG Optimus L7 II

LG plays second fiddle to Samsung when it comes to smartphone sales, but the company is looking to close the gap via its newest smartphones such as the L7 II.

Although the all-plastic Optimus L7 II boasts a solid overall build quality, we do feel it could do with a bit of a design makeover - you would not be able to spot it in a smartphone line-up if not for the logo on top. LG equipped the Optimus L7 II with a 4.3" (480 x 800 pixels; 217 ppi pixel density) IPS LCD capacitive touchscreen, which can be counted amongst our favourite midrange smartphone touchscreens thanks to excellent viewing angles and good colour saturation.

The L7 II might not have an eye-catching design, but it does sport all the functionality and midrange specs at a very decent price-point.

Snappy Snapdragon performance

Keeping things smooth within Android 4.1.2 (Jelly Bean) is a Qualcomm Snapdragon MSM8225 chipset that packs a dual-core 1 GHz Cortex-A5 CPU coupled with just 768 MB of RAM. This combination managed to best most of the L7 II's midrange rivals, including the Samsung Galaxy S3 mini and Sony Xperia sola, within Smartbench 2012 and AnTuTu. We found that the device delivered smooth and snappy performance whilst navigating the OS, but there is some very noticeable lag when multitasking.

In terms of optics, users get a VGA front-facing snapper for selfies and 8 MP rear-facing camera, which delivers surprisingly good photo quality when there is decent amount of natural light available. Onboard is a mere 4 GB worth of internal storage, but luckily one can expand this by up to 32 GB via a microSD memory card slot.

To the point

LG's Optimus L7 II goes for a RRP of just R2 600, making it more affordable than rival devices like the Galaxy S3 mini (R3 500). It might not have the most recognisable branding or eye-catching design, but the L7 II does sport all the functionality and midrange specs that a user needs at a very decent price-point. [HD] ❖

Full review: bit.ly/L7IIreview



PROVIDING FLEXIBLE, COST-EFFECTIVE DISPLAY SOLUTIONS

An integrated platform for digital signage that eliminates the need for external media players and streamlines the deployment process, saving time and money for integrators and businesses.

The large format displays (LFDs) market in South Africa is really growing in strength, but with so many options out there, how does a company go about selecting solutions that fit their budgets and that are easy to use? This is especially important considering that LFDs are used to not only drive corporate communication, but draw attention to the brand and position it in the hearts and minds of customers.

Moreover, companies need flexible solutions that let them focus on managing their content easily while worrying less about wires, media boxes, and unwieldy software.

Manoj Bhoola, Head of Business to Business at Samsung Electronics South Africa explains, "using a manufacturer who has a trusted brand name in the market is one way to approach it. Yet, the solutions being offered need to be able to support that trust and provide an effective way of reducing the total cost of ownership of LFDs."

Traditionally a digital signage network required a separate media player running its own operating system, attached behind the screen. Both devices required power and cabling to link them. This not only uses more electric-

ity, but the additional cabling is often unsightly. Having said that, this has been the only way to effectively manage digital displays – until now!

“Fewer cables are required, installation is virtually plug-and-play”

Today, there is the option to incorporate a media player as a system-on-chip on the same board as the display chipset, eliminating the need to have external media players for customised content. This means that fewer cables are required, installation is virtually plug-and-play, and the point of network failure is significantly reduced. In addition, through this type of set up, more impactful messages can be delivered to customers in real-time irrespective of the display being viewed. While businesses not only minimise equipment and installation costs, they can also better manage their operational costs.

The Samsung Smart Signage Platform is a pure example of this type of LFD display which also includes an added

enhancement - the Samsung MagicInfo S-authoring solution for content management. It ships as an open source development kit, which enables partners to provide expanded software services to business users.

“Ultimately, a business looking for an LFD solution should look to partner with a brand that is focused on providing solutions that meet the unique needs of the South African market, one that ensures cost-effective and flexible offerings and that is designed to bring a client’s vision to life on the big screen,” concludes Bhoola.



Manoj Bhoola
Business Leader for B2B
Samsung Electronics South Africa



Canon Legria mini

Canon has announced a new addition to its Legria family, fittingly called, considering its portability, the Legria mini. The big question is, can this camera lure people away from shooting video on their smartphones?

It appears that the company is certainly willing to pull out all the stops to tempt users back to dedicated camcorders - the Legria mini, which is apparently aimed at addressing a “growing trend for self-expression through video,” also offers a break from the traditional camcorder form factor.

Instead, it seems to have taken a little design inspiration from the equally unique PowerShot N, and in appearance at least, reminds a little of the old Polaroid cameras. However, one look at the feature set and specs on offer confirm that the Legria mini is not just a throwback to the ‘good old days’.

To start with, the camera boasts a 12.8 MP CMOS sensor and Canon’s DIGIC DV4 processing platform, which produces full HD (1920 x 1080) video and 12.8 megapixel stills. The company promises that its newest will also deliver excellent low-light performance and wide dynamic range.

Give me the nitty gritty

The camera further sports an f2.8 ultra-wide angle lens, and employs a variable 2.7” screen to film from awkward angles as well as switch between filming themselves or their subject in front of them.

Taking into account that this camera will likely be routinely turned on its head, the camera also boasts a rotation detection switch system. This ensures that the image is always displayed the right way up, irrespective of how the

device is held. Rounding off the camcorder’s features is an integrated stereo microphone and built-in Wi-Fi connectivity to enable the sharing of high quality video.

To the point

While local pricing has yet to be revealed, given its price in the UK of £269, we expect it to ask in the region of R4 000. There is certainly nothing wrong with rocking the established form factor boat every once in a while; hopefully the Legria mini will do so in an innovative and inspiring way when it arrives here at the end of this month. 🍷

Canon SX50 HS

Much like the twilight hovers between evening and night, so too does the SX50 HS occupy a distinctive space of its own between compact cameras and DSLRs.

While larger than most compact cameras, the SX 50 HS is still smaller than a DSLR, and thus makes itself an attractive proposition where portability is a key concern.

The camera’s main drawcard is its massive 50x optical superzoom, a 35 mm equivalent that spans from 24 mm all the way to 1200 mm - right up to the lion’s eyelashes. In practical terms, obtaining the equivalent range for a DSLR would cost a small fortune, and remains out of reach for most photographers. This also makes it particularly versatile for casual shooters, who may not have the time, inclination or budget for a DSLR but who also want a little bit more than a standard compact would offer.

The massive 50x optical superzoom extends right up to the lion’s eyelashes.

Finding its balance

On the build front, the 12.1 megapixel SX 50 HS is certainly a comfortable and ergonomic camera to hold, as it seems to snugly slip into the hand with the most important buttons (shutter release, dedicated video and the thumb wheel) all within easy reach. Also immediately noticeable is the balance of the camera’s weight, considering the prominent optical zoom which dominates the camera’s front. Thankfully, the camera doesn’t feel like it is inclined to tip forward; a flaw which could have otherwise placed some ongoing strain on one’s wrist.

To compensate for camera shake which can tend to occur at the longest of its range, the camera also packs an image stabiliser, something that, in practice, we found worked rather well. Also worth noting is the camera’s sensitivity range, from ISO 80 to a commendable 6400, for more ably coping with low light conditions. Additionally, the camera further boasts a 2.8” variable-angle screen (461 000 dots), often a boon for videographers and those inclined to capturing images from awkward angles, a hotshoe to add an external flash, as well as the facility to capture images in RAW as well as JPEG.

To the point

The SX 50 HS is packed with features, but it is also exceptionally easy to pick up and start photographing with, not forgetting its massive 50x zoom makes it ideal for shooting wildlife or kids’ sport. It has a RRP of R5 000 [RN] 🍷

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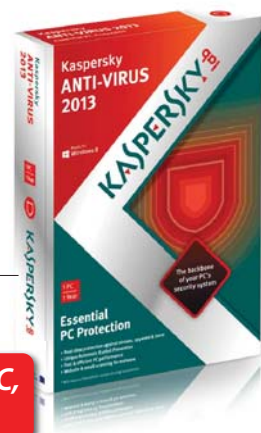
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iON adventure cameras: Capturing the spirit of adventure

Looking for an outdoor adventure camera that can show those amazing things which you find difficult to describe? The iON Adventure Camera range has been launched locally, bringing with it weatherproof casings, free online storage and Wi-Fi connectivity. Here are a few of the cameras available.



iON Air Pro: R2 499 incl. VAT
iON Air Pro Wi-Fi: R2 999 incl. VAT

Tilting the scale at a very low 138 g, the iON Air Pro is an obvious choice for outdoor activities. One of the biggest benefits is that a waterproof casing is not needed, simply because the Air Pro can already survive in up to 10 metres of water. With 1080p recording at 30 frames per second (FPS)(127°), or 960p recording at a fast 60 fps (170°), the Air Pro will capture the thrills, spills, fails and wins, with recording taking place on a MicroSD card. It's also dead-easy to use – simply slip the record button forward to start, while an internal G-sensor recognises if the camera is mounted upside down, automatically flipping it right side up.

The iON Air Pro Wi-Fi comes complete with a Wi-Fi PODZ included, which, together with the iON app, allows you to see exactly what the camera is capturing on your iOS or Android device.



iON Air Pro 2: R3 499 incl. VAT
iON Air Pro 2 Wi-Fi: R4 499 incl. VAT


The iON Air Pro 2 takes action videography to the next level, with one of the highest resolution sensors in the business – a solid 14 megapixels. 1080p video capturing can take place with a viewing angle of 169°, while scaling the video down to 960p allows for an even wider view of 180°. Much like the Air Pro, the Air Pro 2 is waterproof up to 10 metres with the G-sensor also present. For those who need

better audio quality, the Pro Air 2 provides a port for an external microphone.

The Air Pro 2 Wi-Fi adds Wi-Fi connectivity, which allows direct video transfers between your iOS/Android device amongst other functionality.

iON The Game: R4 499 incl. VAT

Analyzing your golf swing, tennis serve, javelin throwing technique or gymnastic dismount is made easy as pie with iON's The Game. It does indeed let you keep your 'eye on the game', with this little camera meant to be stationary rather than travelling on a helmet (although it can do so too). It comes with a little stand and tripod, and can not only capture 1080p at 30 fps and 960p at 60 fps, but also stills and time-lapse sequences.

Hooked that swing? Immediately check what went wrong on the 2.5" screen with slow-motion playback. Also included is Wi-Fi to communicate with iOS/Android devices. 



Lexar recommended
 card: MicroSD
 Class 10, 32 GB

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HOT ITEM

Love the rich, warm sound of vinyl, but wish it was a more moveable music format?

Put down the iPod and mobilise your music with the Crosley Cruiser three-speed portable turntable. Constructed of wood and bound in a leatherette material, the briefcase-styled record player is lightweight and easily transported. Featuring built-in stereo speakers so you can listen to your music without having to connect it to a speaker system. Cruise over to a friend's house and experience vinyl's superior sound together.



PQI AIR BANK

The PQI Air Bank features the latest in wireless technology and Wi-Fi sharing to effortlessly provide extra storage capacity to smartphones, tablets, iPhones, iPads, and other mobile devices. The built-in 802.11bgn Wi-Fi standard lets you leave the cables at home and conveniently sync with up to 5 devices. Available in 500GB and 1TB.



MEZMER EYEZ

If you are after a contact lens that will dramatically change the colour of your eyes then MezmerEyz lenses are the perfect choice. These eye accessories allow you to simply change your eye colour without affecting your vision. Comfortable, safe, fun and easy to use. With a range of colours to get the perfect look for you.



HOT ITEM

TEMPERATURE MUG

Have your drink at the perfect temperature every time with the Temperature Mug. Simply pour in your drink of choice, press the button on the handle and see the drinks exact temperature - to the nearest decimal point displayed on the screen. No more scalding coffee, no more cold tea, just the perfect hot drink at the right temperature for you.



GORILLA TORCH FLARE

The adjustable tripod flashlight is hands-free, making it easy to work with both hands in the darkest of places. Tackle even your toughest of chores—the flexible, bendable legs and powerful magnetic feet make it easy to attach the flashlight at any angle, in any location, and illuminate your work space.



CORDIES

KEEP CABLES ON THE TABLE

Cordies keeps all of your cables organised and weighted down: phone chargers, digital camera cords, audio cables... whatever isn't in use but shouldn't be flopping around.



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The Samsung Galaxy S4 Zoom is a powerful new device which combines the design language of the Galaxy S4 smartphone with advanced photographic capabilities. As part of the Galaxy S4 family, the 16 megapixel S4 Zoom combines a 10x optical zoom, optical image stabilisation and Xenon Flash with the very latest Samsung Galaxy S4 technology, setting new standards for perfect mobile photography. It is as much a camera as it is a smartphone.

So do it all and miss nothing thanks to the revolutionary new Zoom Ring, a simple and intuitive way to access the Galaxy S4 Zoom's key features. When you're in the middle of a phone call and you see

something you absolutely have to share, a quick twist of the Zoom Ring will activate the In-Call Photo Share feature, lets you capture and send an image directly via MMS, to whoever you are talking to, simply.

For more information about the Galaxy Zoom go to www.Samsung.com or call 011-549-1500.

Competition runs from 1 September 2013 to 30 September 2013. Only entries from people living in South Africa will be considered. The judges' decision is final. Terms and conditions apply. The winner will be announced during the first week of October. ❖

Jabra Revo Wireless headset

Revo's Wireless headset removes the need for annoying audio cable ties via the convenience of Bluetooth audio streaming, but does the sound bang match its potent pricetag?

To get started, you simply touch your NFC-enabled smartphone to the left earcup for your device to be paired with the Revo Wireless. When you want to stop streaming music from your mobile, you just tap the device on the left earcup once more to unpair both devices. If your smartphone does not support Bluetooth audio streaming, you can make use of Jabra's included tangle-free 3.5 mm audio cable with inline controls to play/pause music or answer incoming phone calls, since the headset boasts an onboard microphone.

Sound Performance

Revo joined forces with audio specialists Dolby to enhance the sound experience offered by the Wireless via Dolby Digital Plus. This venture results in sound that packed enough volume to remain clearly audible even at midrange volume levels and we were highly impressed by the sound quality, as well as the bass response.

Users control music playback via the headset's Turntable Touch Controls, located on the right earcup. Navigating through your playlist is done by tapping the front of the earcup to skip a track and pressing on the back part of the earcup allows users to listen to a previously played song. You turn up the volume by performing a clockwise motion with your finger on the right earcup whilst an anti-clockwise scrolling gesture turns the volume down.

To the point

Jabra's Revo Wireless headset provide users with amazingly clear sound that has been enhanced with the help of **Dolby Digital Plus** technology for a pricey R4 000. If audio quality is a paramount concern and price is an afterthought, Jabra's Revo Wireless headphones will be music to your ears. [HD] ❖



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The gadgets you want

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

Veho SAEM Bluetooth Car Kit with Motion Sensor

The SAEM car kit packs a mounting clip that enables users to connect the unit to their car's sun visor. This device pairs with a user's smartphone via Bluetooth (up to two devices can be paired simultaneously) and diverts all incoming calls to its built-in speaker for hands-free calling. Veho's kit also activates when movement is detected in the car, so users won't drain the devices battery unnecessarily, and it returns a talk time up to 32 hours and standby time up to 66 days from a single charge. Retails for R900 from Mantality.



Nitho PS3 and PC Racing Pro steering wheel

For those gamers craving a more realistic driving experience within racing simulation titles such as Gran Turismo 5 and the upcoming Formula 1 2013, Mantality offers the Nitho PS3 and PC Racing Pro steering wheel. This steering wheel integrates a bucket seat, as well as an accelerator- and a braking pedal, both of which boast gradual resistance for a more true-to-life feel. RRP: R1 800.



Camera Lens Mug

Photography fans and coffee lovers alike will be able to focus their attention in the morning after enjoying a freshly brewed cup of coffee in the Camera Lens Mug, which has been designed to look and feel like a regular camera lens. This novelty mug's flared lens-cap lid can also double as a coaster or biscuit holder. RRP: R250.



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TOP 5 Compact SUVs

Compact SUVs sell like hotcakes in the South African car market thanks to offering better ground clearance than normal vehicles, as well as an elevated driving position for improved all-round visibility. Here are our top 5 compact SUVs:



5

Kia Sportage 2.0 2WD manual

Kia Sportage buyers definitely get a car that looks good in their garage and on the open road thanks to exterior styling cues like LED daytime running lights and 17" alloy wheels. On the inside, things remain practical and classy thanks to the

leather upholstery. Beneath the bonnet is a 1998 cc petrol engine produces 122 kW at 6200 RPM and 197 Nm of torque at 4600 RPM.

The Sportage may not sport the fancy rearview camera display found in its Korean sibling - the ix35 (Hyundai owns Kia) - but it does boast the equally useful rear parking assist system. Unlike Hyundai, Kia does include Bluetooth connectivity, whilst cruise control, and a full complement of airbags also form part of the Sportage's standard feature list. Unfortunately these features mean that the RRP of the entry-level Sportage comes to R315 000 making it the most expensive car in this comparison.



3

Toyota RAV4 2.0 manual GX

Toyota's vehicles are normally well built and über-reliable but very bland when it comes to styling. This perception is beginning to change though, following the release of some eye-candy from the car maker's stable including the new Toyota 86, Auris and the RAV4.

Under the bonnet resides a two litre four cylinder Dual Vt-i engine that develops 107 kW at 6000 RPM, coupled with 187 Nm of torque at 3600 RPM. This ensures a good 0-100 km/h sprint time of 10.2 seconds, with the top end for this car being 180 km/h. Drivers are able to return a combined-cycle fuel consumption figure of 7.7 litres per 100 km.

Toyota has priced the RAV4 very well at R279 900, especially considering the lengthy list of standard features, such as a six speaker audio system catering to a large amount of media input including CD, USB and Bluetooth streaming.



4

Hyundai ix35 2.0 Premium

Although none of the vehicles in this comparison can be described as an eyesore, the Kia Sportage and especially the ix35 boast stunning exteriors. The ix35 is propelled forward by the same engine doing duty in the Sportage,

so performance output figures are identical (122 kW and 197 Nm).

For R290 900 you get a reasonably well-specified car that boasts a differentiating feature in the rear parking camera. Incorporated into the electrochromic rearview mirror is a 3.5" rear camera display that makes parking easier by enabling the driver to view what is directly behind the car. However, the lack of Bluetooth with voice control and the excellent ESC (electronic stability control) program which features on the R321 900 ix35 2.0 Executive variant, prevent the ix35 from landing a higher spot on our list.



2

Nissan Qashqai 1.6 Acenta Limited Edition

Nissan recently made its Qashqai a bit more enticing for local buyers with its Limited Edition versions. These add more than R10 000 worth of styling enhancements, such as 18" diamond-cut black alloy wheels, to the feature list, whilst only adding R4 000 to the

respective basement model's RRP.

The Japanese company's more conventional (compared to the Juke) compact SUV boasts a 1598 cc four cylinder powerplant that delivers 81 kW at 6000 RPM and 154 Nm of torque at 4400 RPM. This is a bit off the pace and it shows in the nearly 12 second 0-100 km/h acceleration time of the Qashqai, while the top speed is an illegal 178 km/h. More conservative drivers will be able to return a combined cycle (town and highway driving) fuel usage figure of 7.1 litres per 100 km. The RRP of the 1.6 Acenta Limited Edition version of the Qashqai is R278 900, which ticks a hands-free Bluetooth system with steering switch off the standard feature list.



1

Ford Kuga 1.6T Ambiente FWD

The Blue Oval's stylish Kuga is powered by a 1597 cc inline four cylinder turbocharged petrol engine that churns out 110 kW at 5700 RPM and a handy 240 Nm of torque between 1600 and 4000 RPM. Delivering a boost to the driving dynamics, especially when driving around twisting mountain pathways, is Ford's torque vectoring control system. This system sends torque to the wheels with the most grip while braking slipping wheels in order to optimise traction.

Ford claims an impressively low fuel consumption figure of just 6.6 litres per 100 km on a combined cycle. This is down to fuel conserving tech that includes standard Auto-Start-Stop.

So what's the damage? R298 900 for the 1.6T Ambiente FWD which includes VAT and carbon emissions tax. This nets you Ford's excellent Sync in-vehicle infotainment system, which enables users to make- or answer calls, and control music playback for tracks streamed over Bluetooth, electronic stability programme (ESP) with traction control and hill launch assist. [HD] 🍀

Test Drive: BMW 330d Steptronic M Sport



BMW's 3 series is the best selling executive compact saloon in South Africa, with the polished 330d being the top of the range diesel option. We barely had to get out the parking lot to be impressed.

Under the precision sculpted bonnet of the German saloon resides a 2993 cc turbocharged V6 that efficiently churns out a buttery smooth 190 kW of power and enough torque (560 Nm) to transform Table Mountain into Table Molehill. Unlike the twin-turbo petrol-powered 335i, peak power is delivered at just 4000 RPM (compared to 5800 RPM on the 335i), whilst peak torque is obtained within a narrow rev range between 2000 and 2750 RPM (compared to between 1200 and 5000 RPM in the 335i). Unfortunately this means that when you floor the accelerator, you do not get a pulse raising high pitched engine soundtrack of the 335i, but a steady, unhurried drone of the diesel powerplant.

Power is sent to the rear wheels via a smooth as silk eight speed automatic transmission. Drivers can change gears manually via the pedals on the M Sport steering wheel or by flicking the gear lever to the left and then pulling it towards you to change up or pushing it up to change down. Both of these methods work wonderfully and allows for a slightly more engaging driving experience than a plain automatic.

Performance and fuel efficiency

Thanks to the grunt from beneath the hood and the slick gearbox, the 330d brings up 100 km/h on the speedo in just 5.6 seconds, and is able to reach an illegal top end of 250 km/h. The cabin is so well insulated against road- and environmental noise that it's really hard to tell how fast you are going, without looking at the windscreen in front of you. You do this not to check how quickly the landscape passes by, but to view your current speed on the HUD (head-up display). This figure is projected onto the windscreen directly in your field of vision.

We achieved a decent average fuel consumption figure of 8.6 litres per 100 km over the duration of our week-long test period. The fuel usage figure only ever dropped below 6 litres per 100 km whilst driving around in Eco Pro. Unlike driving in the other modes, the 330d does not take off like a bat out of hell and its acceleration goes from the sportscar pace of Usain Bolt to the unhurried sprint of a youthful Bruce Fordyce, consequently making it a little too boring for our liking.

Besides Eco Pro, you can also select Comfort mode for a smooth cruise around town and on the highway, and our driving drug of choice - Sport mode - which stiffens up the suspension, sharpens the throttle and steering

response, and puts a huge smile on any driving enthusiast's face. BMW claims that the powerplant is able to deliver a combined-cycle fuel consumption figure of 4.9 litres per 100 km, but we were never destined for such impressive figures thanks to our affinity for the Sport mode and keeping the rev counter dial north of 4000 RPM.



M stands for Must-have options

Our test vehicle was kitted out with BMW's M Sport package which includes a plethora of extras, such as M Sport suspension that has been lowered by ten millimetres with stiffer springs, damper settings and harder stabilisers. Also onboard the M is a special aerodynamics package with numerous body components, chromium exhaust pipe finishers, and M 19" Sport light-alloy wheels, culminating in an overall stylish package that nabs plenty of envious glares if our rearview mirror was anything to go by.

Beyond the M Sport package, our 330d also packed virtually every conceivable feature on the options list. These include a Harman Kardon surround sound system, Bluetooth audio streaming and hands-free calling, BMW turn-by-turn voice-guided satellite navigation system, reverse camera, and parking assist system with front and rear proximity sensors. All of the sensors and cameras combine to turn even the most difficult of parking manoeuvres into child's play. The rearview camera is handy for checking traffic or passers by directly behind you, whilst the top view delivers a 270° bird's eye view of your surroundings - useful for checking whether you parked nicely in between the lines.

To the point

Money might not buy you happiness, but for R511 000 buyers do get sheer driving pleasure from being in the driving seat of the 330d. That unfortunately is the base price - as tested here with the M Sport package and extra options, our review model puts a crater-sized hole in your bank balance thanks to its RRP of R735 970.

In all we can say is that the 330d Steptronic M Sport provides you with M3-like looks, sportscar performance, plus every conceivable creature comfort you will ever want or need. The only chink in its appeal armour is the fact that we missed the auditory stimulation that comes standard with its petrol equivalent, the 335i. [HD]

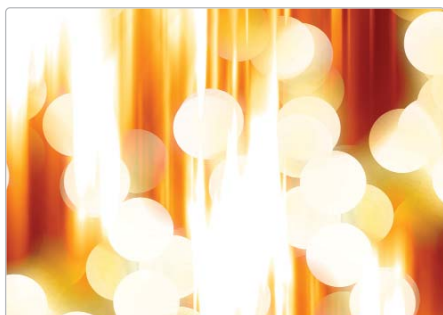
Sci News



Must love dogs

Seems dogs really are man's best friend. According to a study that recently appeared in the journal *PLoS ONE*, dogs yawn contagiously when their owners yawn. In the study, pet dogs

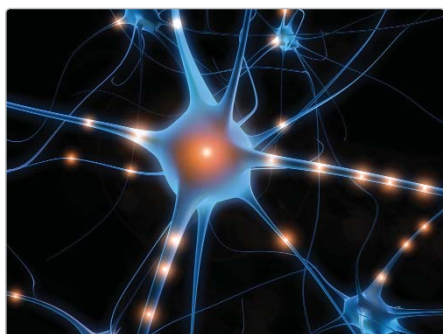
watched the actions of both their owners and strangers. The humans either yawned genuinely or mimicked a yawn. The dogs yawned significantly more in response to their owners' yawns, and more so to genuine yawns. As it has previously been suggested that dogs yawn as a mild stress response, the researchers also measured the dogs' heart rates during the study. No increase in heart rate was found when the dogs yawned, though. The findings suggest that, similar to humans, dogs yawn contagiously as a sign of empathy. Good dog.



On a glow-slow

'Not so fast!' scientists write about slowing down light to a traffic-jam crawl in the journal *Optics Express*. Light pulses usually travel as a group of waves through the air at

close to 300 000 km/h. When the bundle hits another medium it slows down, but never to less than half its original speed. Researchers developed a liquid crystal matrix consisting of helical molecules and then added a special dye. When light was passed through the mix, the dye molecules changed their shape. The changing shape of the molecules created unpredictable obstacles in the light's path, which bogged it down substantially more. The findings may be used to develop tools to measure very low speeds in very short intervals. Light stuff.



The long and short of neurons

Neurons know their way – thanks to a handy built-in signal. Scientists recently wrote in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, that a protein called aPKC (atypical

protein kinase C) dictates whether a nerve cell should sprout dendrites or an axon. Dendrites are short growths at the receiving end of a neuron, while axons are long message-sending extensions. Neurons express both long and short versions of aPKC but only one receptor to bind either of the types. Scientists found that neurons developed dendrites when the short form bound to the receptor, while axons sprouted when the long form slotted into the receptor. The findings suggest that nerve cells can be tuned to preferentially grow either dendrites or axons, which could be useful for developing new treatments for spinal injuries. [LP]

Green News



Boosting smartphone battery life

Memory chip maker, Crossbar, aims to make the single-day battery life of mobile devices passe by the year 2015. The company has developed high

capacity and high-performance non-volatile resistive RAM (RRAM) technology offering up to 1 terabyte of storage on a chip the size of a postage stamp. According to Crossbar, this chip delivers 20 times higher performance than NAND flash memory, and utilises around 20 times less energy when performing functions like reading from- or saving to the storage chip. The firm claims that this memory chip will result in a smartphone that can last a couple of weeks on a single charge rather than a couple of days.



BMW keeps an eye on eco power with the i8

BMW will be unveiling its i8 concept car at the 65th International Motor Show in Frankfurt, Germany this month. The i8

combines a modified version of the electric drive system powering BMW's i3 Concept car with a high-performance three-cylinder combustion engine churning out 164 kW and 300 Nm of torque. Both of these powerplants work in tandem to rocket the vehicle to 100 km/h in less than five seconds, while delivering combined-cycle (town and highway driving) fuel consumption of under three liters per 100 kilometers. Thanks to its large lithium-ion battery that can be charged from a domestic power supply, the BMW i8 Concept can travel up to 32 km on electric power alone.



Solar powered Linux notebook revealed

WeWi Telecommunications (WT) has lifted the lid on its new UBUNTU-operating Sol

notebook, powered by a 1.86 GHz dual-core Intel Atom CPU. This notebook sports 2 GB of RAM (upgradeable to 4 GB), a USB 2.0 port, Wi-Fi, Ethernet port, Bluetooth, SD card port, HDMI, 320 GB Seagate HDD, 13.3" (1366 x 768) LCD, and a 3 megapixel front-facing camera. The Sol employs built-in foldable solar panels to recharge fully within two hours and deliver battery life of up to ten hours. WT plans on launching the Sol in Africa first before making it available Stateside and across Europe for \$350 (around R3 500) or \$400 (about R4 000) for the waterproof version.



To watch

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



Jobs

6 September 2013

For modern geeks, Steve Jobs came close to a god. His impact can be seen throughout modern culture, with his death in 2011 for some as tragic as John Lennon's in 1980. While Ashton Kutcher sure looks the part, is his acting up to portraying Jobs rising from young college drop-out to a modern day Da Vinci?

Watch out for the wacky Josh Gad as Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak.

TechSmart will be giving away 5x double tickets to *Jobs* courtesy of Nu-Metro. Follow us (@techsmartmag) close to the release for more info.



R.I.P.D.

6 September 2013

If you've enjoyed *Men in Black*, then *R.I.P.D.* should be straight up your alley. Based on a comic book, the movie follows the Rest In Peace Department, which tracks and disposes of spirits that have not 'crossed over' and are still haunting the earth. The movie does not star John Edward, but rather Ryan Reynolds and our favourite dude, Jeff Bridges, as an old Wild West sheriff that

seems to have as much dust on his voice as on his boots.



Behind the Candelabra

27 September 2013


No one can accuse Matt Damon of having a limited range. From the actor that once played World Cup rugby winning Francois Pienaar, comes something slightly more, well, flamboyant, in *Behind the Candelabra*. Damon is Scott Thorson, love interest to piano player extraordinaire Liberace, portrayed with all the razzmatazz by an excellent Michael Douglas.

Behind the Candelabra might not be for everyone, but should provide some acting gold.



Welcome to the Punch

20 September 2013

It seems as if Scotsman James McAvoy (*X-Men: First Class*) is turning into the go-to British bloke for action movies. His latest, *Welcome to the Punch*, also features our favourite baddie, Mark Strong (*Sherlock Holmes*), as an ex-criminal returning to London when his son is wounded in a botched robbery. Detective Max Lewinsky (McAvoy) sees this as his last chance to arrest Strong in what soon becomes a do-or-die quest for survival by both parties. 

TechSmart's top tweets



Here are the tweets that struck our fancy last month.



Bill Murray @BillMurray

I won't be impressed with technology until I can download food



marc maron @marcmaron

Love an email that is so precise in its attack you can read it over and over and get the same feeling of angry clarity. #HitSend



Siphumze @siphumze

Do I read @TechSmartMag because of the cover ladies? The answer isn't NO



David Brent @DavidBrent

Remember, When you think you can see light at the end of the tunnel, it's probably some bastard with a torch bringing you more work.



Matt Roller @rolldiggity

If I lived in Gotham, at every crime scene I'd point at all the batarangs and shout at Batman, "Hey! You gonna pick these up?!"



Songezo @SongezoZibi

True freedom ends the moment you fear, however slightly, speaking your mind even though you are advocating neither hate nor violence.



Trevor Noah @Trevomoah

I only take selfies of other people. #Selfless



Gus Silber @gussilber

Email is now such an unsecure means of communication, that we may as well just use graffiti to leave each other messages.



Deep Fried Man @DeepFriedMan

If he wins his lawsuit, the first thing the guy who invented the Please Call Me is going to do is buy airtime.



Word Spy @wordspy

digital hangover n. Feelings of shame, regret caused by photos & other online evidence of one's embarrassing behavior wspy.ws/4h



John Perلمان @JohnPerلمان

The difference between us and the US? They invent drones to kill their enemies. We invent drones which deliver beer. timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2013/...



Themba Ngoma @ThembaNgoma30

YOU Won't regret." @TechSmartMag: Our August issue for you to download or read for mahala, gratis, free, verniet. buff.ly/1cqQJ77"

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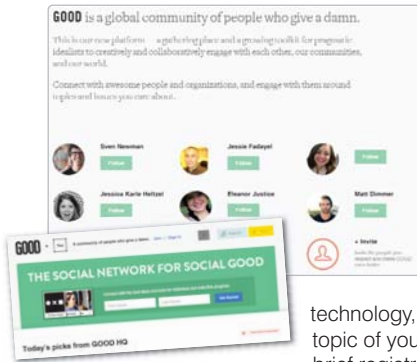
Web Time Wasters



Good.is

<http://www.good.is/>

Good.is is essentially a social network for people who want to make a difference in one way or another. The site allows you to follow and connect with idealists and organisations on a variety of topics, including the environment, animals, technology, pets, global citizenship, or a topic of your creation. Additionally, after a brief registration, users can find 'good things to do' and add them to a to-do list. If nothing else, visiting the site will leave you with a renewed sense of hope in humankind.



Feature Shoot



Feature Shoot

<http://www.featureshoot.com/>

If you have fond memories of the photo features that took pride of place in magazines the likes of *Life*, then Feature Shoot is a website you will definitely want to check out. The site is dedicated, first and foremost, to the art and

craft of photography, and is host to a variety of photographic genres, such as editorial and fashion, to travel, landscape and nature, and everything inbetween, such as still life, portraiture and conceptual. Go there now, and then visit <http://lightbox.time.com/>.

Dear Blank Please Blank

<http://dearblankpleaseblank.com/>

This seemingly oddly named site is so for a good reason – it invites visitors to write anonymous letters to whoever they choose about whatever topic they wish. The result? Often poignant, insightful and profound points or revelations, made in letter form, such as the letter to cancer, or the one to a fallen soldier. Also to be found is a fair share of humour and snark, for when you want a brief mood lift.



Despair.com

<http://www.despair.com/demotivators.html>

Take two parts humour and mix it with one part disturbing, and no doubt, this will be the result. The site takes a somewhat darker, more twisted view of the motivational industry. It takes those up-and-at'em

motivational posters, that usually feature a fantastic photo or piece of art, and adds a more cynical quote (on government for example: Politicians are like diapers. They need to be changed often and for the same reason). Provided you have a sense of humour, you will actually find plenty of levity here. 🍀



Gear in the office

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

Garmin Forerunner 10

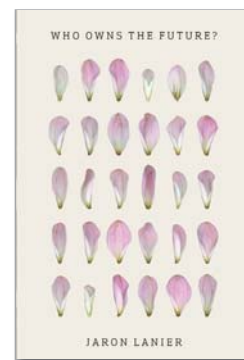
If you've recently taken up running, the Forerunner 10 is a perfect training partner. Sporty and easy to use, the Forerunner does all the things expected from it, including tracking your speed, pace, time and calories burnt, although it takes it time to connect to GPS satellites. Afterwards you can upload your data to Garmin's utilitarian Connect webpage to view your route. RRP: R1 600.



Who Owns the Future - Jaron Lanier

Penguin Books

With everyone sharing information and content online, pioneer of virtual reality, Jaron Lanier, believes that the rise of digital networks have led to economic recession, also impacting the middle class. Fascinating, controversial, and not an easy read, he also plots a way out - people must be rewarded for what they share. RRP: R365 hardcover. 🍀



Promansys: All in one IT expertise

Promansys was launched in 2011 by Michael Mndau, who has been in the IT business environment for over ten years and in business for more than 15 years. As testament to its flexibility, the company boasts a vast array of services.



To start with, Promansys offers quality products from manufacturers such as Mecer, HP, Dell, Acer, Lenovo, and many more. Promansys is also a software solutions provider, offering telephone management systems such as Man 3000. It further offers Customised Hotel Management systems such as Semper, and point of sale (POS) systems that work hand in hand with the property management systems to allow for stock control and POS services.

Promansys is also a service provider, catering for basic day to day IT support to small and medium sized entities. As a web hosting partner, Promansys provides internet services such as email and website hosting and design. Promansys is unique in that clients can monitor their work in real time while their websites are being updated and even implement changes according to their needs. The company's extensive client list bears testament to its expertise and customer satisfaction.

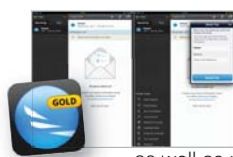
Visit www.promansys.co.za or call 011-036-5887 to see how they can help your business.

Apple iOS Apps of the month



Rise Alarm Clock

Sometimes, the most useful apps are also the simplest, such as this one. This easy to use alarm clock app enables you to use your iOS device as an alarm clock and set wake-up times by just dragging your finger up or down the screen, while the alarm can be turned off by shaking the device or swiping across the screen from left or right. You can either elect to be woken by a song, or from a choice of sounds, the likes of travelling winds, ancient temple, or babbling brook.



WorldMate Gold

One of the premium travel apps, WorldMate Gold appears to do it all for the veteran traveller. The app allows you to manage the minutiae of a trip, from the flights, hotel bookings, itineraries as well as maps to destinations, weather forecasts and a currency converter. All this functionality doesn't come cheap though, as the app costs a pricey R80. Good news is that it is just a once-off fee rather than a subscription.



Splinter Cell Blacklist Spider-Bot

With Splinter Cell Blacklist having launched at the end of last month, so too comes this very decent companion app/game. In it, you commandeer a Spider-Bot, and are tasked with collecting glowing orbs of intel while avoiding traps and leading drones into lasers to proceed from one room to the next. Furthermore, by signing in to your Uplay account, currency earned in this free iOS game can be transferred towards the full PC or console version of the game for Fourth Echelon upgrades. ❖

Android Apps of the month



1 Second Everyday

Imagine watching a video that contains footage from every single day in your life. This is the premise of the 1 Second Everyday app that allows users to record a second worth of video every day and then mash this together after a month or year, resulting in a moving collage of that period in your life. The results can be fascinating if you are willing to commit. 1 Second Everyday is free for 30 days after which you'll have to pay around R10 to unlock the full version.



Word Bucket

Although Word Bucket is primarily aimed at users who are learning a new foreign language, this app can also serve as a language dictionary or word learning game. The application enables users to beef up their vocabulary when learning Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Mandarin or Japanese amongst others, via a couple of entertaining word-based mini games. You can also share new words you learn over social networks.



Monster Shooter 2: Back to Earth

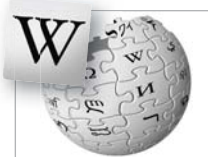
Within Monster Shooter 2, every dog's dream becomes reality as aliens invade earth with the goal of 'catnapping' every single feline. The hairball clogging up their plan is you and your arsenal of weapons via which you use to blast these cat-stealing-alien-invaders into the next world through more than 80 levels and four types of environments. Be warned though that this title is more addictive than catnip is to your kitty, and is a hefty 600 MB download. ❖

BlackBerry Apps of the month



Camera Timer

Camera Timer does what the name states – it adds a delay to camera before it actually takes the picture. Other features include the ability to select the amount of delay of the timer, while you can also choose the number of pictures you would like to take and the gap between each. It's a shame that this ability is not integrated into your BlackBerry camera menu in the first place, so you would have to cough up R16. The free version comes with an annoying watermark.



Wikipedia

The world's most popular encyclopaedia is now available in the palm of your hand thanks to SCrApps. Besides allowing you to view Wikipedia, this R8 application also grants you access to the full features of the Wiki site including the ability to view the daily, featured and newest articles. While other features include the intuitive interface and the ability to read articles later. However do note that you need at least OS7 to run this application.



Assassin's Creed 3

Fans of Assassin's Creed should definitely check out this R8 application. Assassin's Creed 3 (AC3) is the condensed version of the console and PC release which means you will still play as Conner and visit US-based locations such as Boston. Features include detailed sound effects and graphics along with the ability to engage in naval battles. Unfortunately AC3 is rather short, and even though it's not exactly like its big brother it's still worth the money. [IF] ❖

Smartphone top tips

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

Apple iOS tip

Want another way to share photos via email? Instead of navigating to your photo album and scouring the reams of images that you may have on your device, simply start typing an email, and then press and hold in any blank space. An option will pop up to insert photo or video, which will then bring up a dialogue box for your photos, and if you have them, albums. In these you will find thumbnails of all images available to you from which to quickly select and insert.

BlackBerry tips

The old way of activating the speakerphone is to use Menu > Speakerphone, and you would do the same to activate it back to the handset. However there is in fact an easier way to switch it on. All you have to do is press the '\$' during the call. If you press it again it will go back to handset.

Android tip

Google has finally brought the same security features to Android that Windows Phone, BlackBerry, and iPhone users have had access to for a while now, courtesy of the Device Manager utility.

By going to the Device Manager website (<https://www.google.com/android/devicemanager/>), Android users can track their lost/stolen device, let it ring, or even remotely wipe their smartphone or tablet. ❖



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The Liquid Image EGO is a mountable HD Action Camera that is also Wi-Fi enabled to work with Android and IOS iPhone platforms through a downloadable App. The Ego is highly adaptable and can be mounted with a variety of accessories, it is much more than your average helmet cam.



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USB Cup Warmer
With a USB Cup Warmer, you'll never have to put up with drinking cold half-cups of tea or coffee again! The USB Cup Warmer is pretty self-explanatory – it plugs into your PC's USB port and keeps your hot beverage hot for you!



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Sharp Act Knife Sharpener
It's the perfect set-up - the mysterious wooden box, the lovely volunteer from the audience, the glint of finely-honed carbon steel...and YOU! The boring old knife sharpener has been elevated into death-defying magic, and you are the star.



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Deutchmark Mighty Wallet
The Mighty Wallet is tear-resistant, water-resistant, expandable and recyclable. Made from Tyvek (think express mail envelopes), these cool wallets resist tearing because of thousands of interlocking plastic fibers spun in random patterns, giving them incredible strength.

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Halo: Spartan Assault

Windows Phone

Although Android and iOS usually hog all the best mobile gaming titles, Microsoft has an ace up its 3rd person shooter sleeve courtesy of Halo: Spartan Assault. This game is available exclusively for Windows 8-powered tablets and Windows Phone 8-running smartphones for a pricey R55. Players get to explore the origin of the Spartan Ops program and blast their way through 25 action-packed missions against the Covenant.



Major Mayhem

BlackBerry 10

Major Mayhem has been getting the better of shuriken-throwing ninjas on iOS and Android for awhile, but only recently got a chopper lift onto BlackBerry 10-operating smartphones and the PlayBook. Players can conquer the forces of evil on their home turf in the Tropics, before taking the fight to the Metropolis and Desert within 45 levels. A grand total of 20 weapons can be used in-game including the automatic shotgun, minigun, and Quadzooka. R25 from BlackBerry World.



Riptide GP 2

Android, iOS

Riptide GP was one of the best mobile racing games of all time, boasting rocket-powered hydro jets that race on water, around futuristic, Wipe-out-styled tracks. Its sequel, Riptide GP 2, kicks things up a notch via upgradeable hydro jets and riders, enhanced graphics (especially if you use a Tegra or Android 4.3-powered mobile device), all-new career mode, and plenty of new tricks to perform. The cost of riding circles around boredom is R30 from Google Play and Apple App Store.



Prince of Persia: The Shadow and the Flame

Android, iOS

The newest entry in the Prince of Persia universe, The Shadow and the Flame, continues on from The Prince of Persia Classic. The side scrolling platformer, which is available on both iOS and Android platforms for the princely sum of R30, sports 14 levels of striking 3D-rendered environments. Also on offer is one of the more intuitive control schemes we have come across, with players swiping up to jump, down to crouch and in the direction they want to slash at their foes when in the heat of combat. Quite simply, one of the more nostalgic and enjoyable games we've swung a virtual sword at on our tablet to date.



For those with a lack of PS3, Xbox or decently specced PC, mobile phones/tablets are still very viable gaming platforms, with games improving every month. Download one of these now.



Cut the Rope

Android, iOS

Following in the wake of the Steam Box and Lantern Box comes now a new update called Cheese Box. This sees Om Nom being beset by a mouse intent on keeping the previous candy out of reach. As with previous boxes, players have to exercise their grey matter across 25 levels to successfully get the candy to Om Nom's waiting mouth, while collecting the stars in each level. Also updated is spin off Cut the Rope: Time Travel, with a new Disco era. The updates are free to previous purchasers, and the games are available on iOS and Android platforms.



The Drowning

iOS

If you are hungering for a great post-apocalyptic first person shooter on iOS, then jump in and submerge yourself in The Drowning. The game, which looks gorgeous and plays brilliantly, takes place in a world beset by an ecological disaster which turned most of humanity into zombies. Thankfully though, you can scavenge for and build up a fearsome arsenal that would make the cast of *The Walking Dead* weep. The game is free, with optional in-app purchases. 🎮

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