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The GoPro HERO3  
Samsung's Tab 3 10.1



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# The Battle for the Top **5**

Every mid-November it's time for our team to quarrel about the best products of the year. The result is our December issue, which is jam-packed with Top 5s, including the best tablets, smartphones, games and tech news of the year. I hope you agree with some of our choices, but I'm also looking forward to those asking us "What were you smoking?" when we ranked the LG G2 higher than the Samsung S4.

My years in tech have started to blend together and the news stories and products are getting muddled up. Two things during the year stand out though. During September I lost a few weeks due to the fact that I managed to subscribe to Netflix. \$8 a month means I have a quick and easy way to stream movies and series when I want, although these days my selection has stagnated on *Family Guy*. I'm seeing and hearing from more and more people locally who do this, which can only mean trouble for the already ailing DVD rental shops, and maybe down the line, pay-TV subscription (although its sport offerings remain unbeaten).

On a more serious note, the revelations of Edward Snowden regarding the National Security Agency's massive online surveillance have left me shaken. The father of the internet, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, said it best when he commented: "Unwarranted government surveillance is an intrusion on basic human rights that threatens the very foundations of a democratic society." This is of course true, pointing to the fact that, as others have said, some people in power read *1984* as an instruction manual, not as a warning.

Live long and prosper,  
Mike (michael@techsmart.co.za)



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**Q+A with TechSmart cover model Courtney Abrahams**

**Q: How long have you been modelling?**

A: About three years now.

**Q: Favourite comic book hero?**

A: Iron Man.

**Q: Favourite comic book movie?**

A: The Avengers.

**Q: Console or PC?**

A: Console.

**Q: Favourite game ever?**

A: Need for Speed. I love racing games.

**Q: Favourite gadgets?**

A: My cellphone – a BlackBerry.



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# HOT STUFF

## JAGUAR F-TYPE COUPÉ

As far as British cars are concerned, Jaguar holds a special place in our hearts, with the new F-Type Coupé making it beat that much faster.



Need to leave an AMG in your dust? A dynamic mode enables sportier performance by stiffening the suspension, and quickening shift-schedule of the eight-speed SportShift automatic.

The pinnacle of the range, the F-Type R Coupé, is a beast, boasting a 404 kW 5-litre supercharged V8 engine, and is able to attain up to a catch-me-if-you-can top speed of 299 km/h.

Prices Stateside for the new coupé's are a cool R650 000, R770 000, and a make-your-wallet-weep R1 million. Locally, you may spot one flipping your old car the bird in June of next year.

This is one Coupé that Usain Bolt could quite fittingly drive, as much like the Olympic superstar, it too is no stranger to speed, and is able to sprint from 0 to 100 km/h in a blisteringly fast 4 seconds.



Joining the F-Type R Coupé is the F-Type S Coupé (279.4 kW) and the F-Type Coupé (250 kW), powered by 3-litre supercharged V6 engines and offering up top speeds of 275 km/h and 259 km/h respectively.

### IT'S THE MACAN, MAN!

If your tastes lean towards the SUV side of the motoring road, then Porsche's latest announcement may rev your engines. The Porsche Macan SUV flashed its headlights at the recent Los Angeles Auto Show and boasts a 3.6-litre, twin-turbo V6 petrol engine, apparently capable of attaining 0 to 100 km/h in 4.8 sec, or shaving off 0.2 seconds with an optional Sport Chrono pack. Additionally, the Macan will sport all wheel drive and a double clutch PDK transmission as standard. It is set for an April launch. **ts**



# D<sub>f</sub>

## Pure Photography



Inspiration on Contact



Experience the power of pure photography with the Nikon Df, boasting a retro-styled body and the same 16.2 megapixel FX format sensor as Nikon's flagship D4. With richly detailed photographs, smooth tonal gradations and a wide dynamic range, this camera expresses a passion for photography in both form and function.

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# HOT STUFF

## NIKON Df

Awesome retro looks are not the only attraction of the beautiful Nikon Df, since a full-frame sensor is also onboard. Hi-Ho Silver!

With looks reminiscent of Nikon's old 35 mm cameras (in our opinion the old F3), there is something very attractive about the Nikon Df's magnesium alloy body. With companies like Olympus and Fujifilm going retro for awhile now, we're glad Nikon finally jumped on the bandwagon.



In keeping with its old-school design philosophy, Nikon has left out the video recording functionality. If you want video you will have to pull out your Galaxy S4.

Matching its film-camera looks is the Df's 16.2 megapixel full-frame CMOS sensor, being the same size as a 35 mm film negative – 36 x 24 mm. It translates to good low light performance, wide dynamic range and of course better image quality.

With a weight of 765g it's Nikon's lightest camera in the FX (full-frame) line-up, being 85 g lighter than its D610 full-frame brother. Still, it's no match for the almost-not-there 465 g of Sony's recent A7R full-frame mirrorless camera (see below).

The Df will be available in SA mid-January. There is no local retail price available yet. \$2 747 Statesides (body only).



## NO WEIGH!

It's not only Nikon's Df that is heating up the full-frame segment, since Sony's recently announced Alpha 7 and 7R are also inspiring chatter for all the right reasons. One downside to going full-frame is the accompanying weight issue with these larger cameras. Thanks to its mirrorless design the Alpha 7 and 7R cuts down on bulk considerably, weighing in at 474 g and 465 g respectively. What needs to be seen is how pros take to the digital viewfinders on these, instead of the traditional optical ones. **ts**



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# TECH NEWS

of 2013

The old Chinese curse “May you live in interesting times” certainly seems to have been in effect on the technology front this year, as boredom was kept far at bay.



## Nº5 Bitcoin goes ballistic

It's not every day that we see a new digital currency begin a seemingly unstoppable ascent, but that is exactly the case with Bitcoin. In the four years since its inception, Bitcoin emerged this year as the king of the virtual currency hill. Indeed, perhaps proof of its resilience is that not even the shutdown of the Silk Road deep web site, which was an illicit drug bazaar and only accepted Bitcoins for payment, seems to have dented its reputation much at all. In fact, if anything, the Silk Road debacle seems to only strengthen Bitcoin's rise.

2013 saw Bitcoin enjoy unprecedented strength and adoption, in parts due to a growing mistrust of central banks and also as an investment opportunity. Also fueling its rise is the resounding support for the virtual currency from none other than economic superpower China, which currently lays claim to the largest Bitcoin exchange.

## Nº4 Next-gen consoles arrive

This year has presented more than a few shiny new gadgets to get excited about, but standing out amongst them was the launch of the next-generation of consoles from Sony and Microsoft. Notable as it essentially heralds a new chapter in the saga of interactive entertainment, the launches of the respective consoles weren't without their controversy and mirth.

Microsoft's Xbox One seemed to falter out of the gate, weighed down with onerous digital rights management policies which Sony took every opportunity to ridicule, such that Microsoft eventually did an about turn on a number of its initial announcements. Exacerbating matters was the confirmation that the Xbox One would only come to a few select markets this year, with others, including South Africa, left waiting. For Sony's part, its debut seems to have been comparatively smoother, with the console coming to local shores this month in fact, only a month after its launch Stateside.



## Nº3 Microsoft behemoth swallows Finnish giant



In case Nokia's partnership circa 2011 with Microsoft wasn't enough to indicate the two companies were close, then Nokia's decision to sell its mobile division to the Redmond giant certainly should. The R51 billion deal was further cemented by Microsoft acquiring Nokia's patents for a another R22 billion. The decision also had other effects, with in excess of 32 000 Nokia employees finding a new home at Microsoft, and Nokia's president and CEO, Stephen Elop stepping down from the company to take up a new of Nokia executive VP of Devices and Services.

However, the tale of two Steves had just begun, as the acquisition was followed by another clanger – Steve Ballmer's announcement that he would be bringing his term at Microsoft to an end within a year. Lo and behold, none other than Elop has since been pipped for the post as being a possible replacement.

## Nº2 BlackBerry turns sour

**B**lackBerry has been in trouble for quite some time, but this year, everything appeared to come to a head for the once upon a time darling of the business world. After posting record losses this year of around \$950 million, things moved from serious to dire. In August, the company announced that it was exploring its “strategic alternatives,” which included seeking a partner or selling itself off.

Alas, it appeared that few mobile companies were keen on the latter, exacerbated by an acquisition deal with Fairfax Financial Holdings that later fell through. And, while BlackBerry secured a \$1 billion investment deal from Fairfax and some other investors, it again sent tremors through the BlackBerry world by showing ex-CEO Thorsten Heins the door, and talks of a trim of 4 500 employees. In his place, the company hired a new interim CEO, John Chen, on whom BlackBerry has pinned its hopes that it can somehow return to glory.

## Nº1 NSA PRISM: YES WE SCAN!

**P**ossibly one of the most earth shattering happenings came from one Edward Snowden, who opened a can of worms when he revealed that the US National Security Agency (NSA) had been spying on, well, everyone. It turns out that the intelligence agency had been monitoring all sorts of electronic communications for years, including that of its own citizens, with even the German chancellor falling under its net.

This sparked not only an international run by Snowden, and political wrangling between countries around who would, and would not, offer him a safe haven, but also a major question about people’s privacy on a global scale. While this concern dominated 2013, the PRISM revelations also had rippling effects. One of these was that technology companies the likes of Microsoft and Google found themselves in the hot seat, when it emerged that the tech titans had been compelled by the US government to grant them access to certain users’ data. The debacle is far from over and is set to have a profound impact on the internet as we know it in years to come.

[RN] **ts**



# Top 5

Tablet technology seemed to have much in common with a geek's version of a fashion show this year, with one sexy sample sashaying down the runway after another.

# tablets of 2013



5

Samsung Ativ 500T

R10 500

The only Windows 8 offering on this list, the Ativ 500T nonetheless earned itself a spot on our list, thanks to its adaptability and its gutsiness – an Intel Atom Z2760 processor (1.8 GHz per core), combined with 2 GB of RAM. The 11.6" device also boasted an impressive 11 hours of battery life, meaning that it was able to stay up a little later than its competition. What's more, long after other models had passed out from heavy partying, Samsung's offering could also get down to business, thanks to the inclusion of a keyboard dock.

3

Samsung Galaxy Note 8

R7 200

The tablet that started off this year, Samsung's Galaxy Note 8, is still a contender, particularly for those seeking a writing and drawing companion, something it can do out of the box better than any of the other tablets in this list. The 8" tablet was also snappy and responsive in use, thanks to its combination of a 1.6 GHz A9 quad-core processor, 2 GB of memory and Android Jelly Bean. Also winning it more than a few admiring glances was its 1280 x 800 screen resolution (189 ppi), which bested the first gen iPad Mini.

4

Google Nexus 7 (2013)

R3 000

We loved the Nexus 7 when it came out in 2012, and this year's update upped the ante. Along with shaving off 20 g of weight for its debut, the 318 g tablet also came out grinning from ear to ear with an improved resolution of 1920 x 1200, amounting to a 'take that, iPad Mini' ppi of 323. The tablet had also ditched its old flame, the Tegra 3 quad-core for a new crush, namely a quad-core 1.5 GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon S4 Pro 8064. Android 4.3 almost made us forget that once again, the Nexus 7 had forgot about the microSD card slot.





## Apple iPad Air

**R5 000 - R9 200**

After months of speculation and rumour, Apple's next tablet offering, the iPad Air, finally exposed a long slender leg and batted her eyelashes. Judging by its 478 g weight and 7.5 mm thin profile, the latest out of Cupertino has apparently been given a supermodel's diet regime, subsisting on half a carrot while smoking the competition.

While the Retina display (2048 x 1536 resolution at 264 ppi) is the same as the iPad 3 and iPad 4, gone are the chunky bezels. Another point of difference is in the new A7 processor with 64-bit architecture and M7 motion coprocessor. Still the same as ever is the iPad's desirability and reign as queen of the tablet hill. [RN] **ts**



## Apple iPad Mini with Retina Display

**R4 000 - R8 200**

The 7.9" iPad Mini has also had a makeover, although with less regard to size and weight, rather bringing the luscious Retina display this time around; though on this screen size, it results in a beefier 326 ppi. With the same specifications internally, the Mini narrows the gap between it and the iPad Air, although the Mini is still considerably more portable. Furthermore, it too has seen its upper end capacity receive a boost, as it will now accommodate up to 128 GB. What remains to be seen is whether it will 'accidentally' kick or shove its bigger counterpart off the catwalk.

# 2



# Top 5 smartphones of 2013

Over the course of the year, smartphone display sizes, screen resolutions and processing power took leaps forward to challenge our budgets and jean pocket space. Here are our Top 5.

5



Apple iPhone 5s

iOS; 4" (326 ppi); 1.3 GHz A7 CPU  
R10 000

For iPhone 5 owners, upgrading to the 5s would be a hard sell seeing that Cupertino's latest smartphone boasts exactly the same design and Retina display found in its predecessor. However, upon closer inspection you'll find upgraded optics for capturing photos in low light, beefier processing power, as well as a fingerprint scanner to access the future of mobile password technology. Despite getting more of the same, iPhone 5s buyers won't be all that disappointed with their device seeing that is future proof thanks to its 64-bit A7 CPU.

Samsung Galaxy S4

Android; 5" (441 ppi); Exynos 5 Octa 5410  
R8 500

Samsung's Galaxy S4 combines outstanding hardware with a never-ending list of software features, all within a thin and light package. However, preventing the smartphone from landing a higher place on our top 5 is its disappointing all-plastic build, which does not stand up to the premium feel that comes standard on the iPhone 5s or HTC One. Its seemingly impressive software features list is also littered with additions most users will find a little gimmicky or simply too impractical for daily use, proving that less (features) can be more.



Samsung Galaxy Note 3

Android; 5.7" (381 ppi); Exynos 5 Octa 5410  
R9 000

The king of phablets – Samsung's Galaxy Note 3 – upped the stakes with a better S-pen and a spec sheet longer than a public petition list against e-tolling. Setting the Note 3 apart from the 2013 Galaxy S range was a slight, but noticeable styling change, involving a faux leather back cover complete with fake stitching. Despite being thinner and lighter than the Note 2, we found the Note 3 to be a little too big for our pockets, but users looking for the best note-taking companion don't have to search any further.

3

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# 1

## LG G2

**Android; 5.2" (423 ppi); 2.3 GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 800**  
**R8 000**

LG lifted its mobile game this year in order to deliver the Galaxy S4 trumping G2 flagship smartphone. The G2 offers the best combination of high-end specs (Qualcomm Snapdragon 800, 5.2" full HD display, 13 MP camera with IOS) and value for money, seeing that it undercuts most of its rivals in pricing.

The HTC One might feel more premium in hand, but the G2 counters with its higher specification, longer battery life thanks to its sizeable 3000 mAh battery, and own unique design element in the at-the-back placement of the volume rocker and power button. While the G2's screen might not have the class-leading ppi of the One, its excellent picture quality and barely-there (2.65 mm) edge-to-edge bezels enables a more immersive movie viewing experience that brings video and other content to the foreground. [HD] **ts**



# 2

## HTC One

**Android; 4.7" (468 ppi); 1.7 GHz Qualcomm**  
**Snapdragon 600**  
**R7 500**

HTC set the smartphone design bar high early in the year with its One, which still boasts the best styling and sound experience available on any smartphone. In spite of snappier chipsets outmuscling the One's Qualcomm Snapdragon 600, the CPU delivered a superb all-round performance in this phone.

The chink in the armour of the One is its 4 MP Ultrapixel camera that takes good-looking shots, but is not on par with the likes of the S4, Lumia 925, or LG G2. This should not prevent you from picking up the One though, which is a more appealing buy than ever as locals can pick up a 32 GB model for as little as R7 500.

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# TOP 3

## graphics cards of 2013

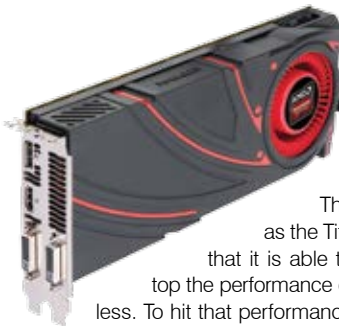
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**03**  
**Nvidia GeForce GTX Titan**  
**R13 500**

For most of 2013, the fastest single graphics card on the market was the GeForce GTX Titan. Whilst monstrous gaming performance is the Titan's forte, its achilles heel is its Everest-sized asking price. Rival single GPUs like AMD's R9 290X delivers similar performance to the Titan for a great deal less moola. Gamers can also buy two GTX 770's, have these run in SLI configuration to trump the Titan's performance and still save approximately R3 500. However, if your power supply and lack of space means you can only use one card, the Titan has few equals in terms of performance.



**02**  
**AMD Radeon R9 290X**  
**R8 500**

The Radeon R9 290X is unofficially known as the Titan killer on the GPU block, due to the fact that it is able to match, or in some cases even slightly top the performance of the Titan. This whilst costing nearly 50% less. To hit that performance level though, you will need to push the card to its limits, which results in the GPU running quite hot. As with the R9 290, buyers need a competent cooling solution in their PC case, but the old-school fan used by the 290X is able to keep the graphics card from overheating. The problem with the fan is that the RPM climbs into the stratosphere, causing us to reach for our gaming headset for a less distracting audio experience.

**01**  
**Nvidia GeForce GTX 780 TI**  
**R9 500**



In the aftermath of the pricing challenge from AMD'S R9 290X, Nvidia was forced to respond and it did so with the GeForce GTX 780 TI, which knocked the Titan off its fastest single-GPU card perch. Not only does the GTX 780 TI cost around R4 000 less than the Titan, it actually packs more firepower beneath the bonnet thanks to sporting 2880 CUDA cores compared to the Titan's 2688, and quicker 7 Gbps GDDR5 memory. For gaming rig buyers this means that even though the GTX 780 TI is more expensive than a R9 290X, the increase in performance makes the added investment worth it, which is definitely not the case when choosing between the 290X and the Titan. [HD] **ts**

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REVIEW

# SAMSUNG Galaxy Gear



**Wearable tech is forecasted to be the next big thing, but unfortunately Samsung's Galaxy Gear smartwatch's time has not yet come.**

Once you've downloaded the Gear manager application from Samsung's App marketplace to your phone, and paired the Gear with your smartphone via NFC/Bluetooth, you're ready to go. In essence the Gear acts as a second screen for your smartphone, by displaying notifications, received email, SMS and the like, which you can read but not reply to from the watch.

Unlike its rivals, the Gear elevates the smartwatch game thanks to sporting a camera, built-in speaker, plus two microphones (one is used for noise cancellation). The watch's 1.9 MP autofocus camera captures rather average looking stills and allows users to record lag-free 15 second video clips in 720p. These are saved to the Gear, with it packing 4 GB of internal storage, while it's also automatically shared with your smartphone over Bluetooth.

The smartwatch's microphones and speaker enable you to make or answer incoming calls. Call quality and volume levels are good if in a quiet room, but if you're in a noisy office environment you will struggle to hear callers and to be heard.

### More than a pretty (watch) face

Powering the Galaxy Gear is a single-core (make unspecified) processor clocked at 800 MHz, which is backed up by 512 MB RAM, translating to good performance on the Gear when scrolling or using apps. The jewel of the Gear's styling is its screen, which is a 1.63" (320 x 320) Super AMOLED. Despite this low resolution, the small display size translates into a healthy pixel density of 277 ppi, meaning that text and images appear crisp onscreen, with viewing angles being excellent.

### Gripes with the Gear

Also onboard is a minuscule 315 mAh Li-ion battery that unfortunately won't keep this watch ticking for more than a couple of days. We managed two days of usage only when we switched the Gear off at night between 23:00 and 05:30.

Besides battery life, the biggest issue with the Gear is that it only worked with two devices when it came out, namely the Galaxy Note 3 phablet and recently revamped Galaxy Note

10.1 tablet. The list is now up to three after adding the important Galaxy S4, but this is still a ridiculously low number. A trick is also missed by the lack of onboard GPS, which means it won't track your run when out for a jog by its own.

**THE GEAR ELEVATES THE SMARTWATCH GAME THANKS TO SPORTING A CAMERA, AND THE ABILITY TO MAKE AND ANSWER CALLS.**

Our last issue is with the sparsely populated app selection for the Galaxy Gear within Samsung Apps, with notable exclusions being Instagram, Vine, WhatsApp, and even official Twitter and Facebook apps.

### Watch this wearable tech space

Samsung's Galaxy Gear is the best looking and most feature rich smartwatch on the market, but is hampered by the sparse app selection, weak device support, a lack of a real killer feature, and its high RRP. The Gear goes for R4 600, expensive since you can pick up a splash-resistant Sony SmartWatch 2 with a metal strap for less than R2 500. [HD] **ts**



## QUICK SPECS

Screen  
1.63" Super AMOLED, 277 ppi

Processor  
800 MHz, Single-core

RAM  
512 MB

Camera  
1.9 megapixel

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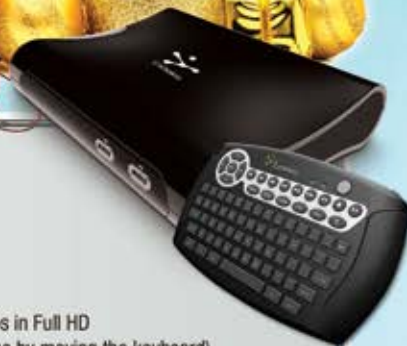
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# SONY VAIO 15A Multi-Flip



Just when ultrabooks were beginning to seem scarce or stale, Sony's latest VAIO Fit 15A flips itself on its head to impress.

The ultrabook looks similar to many others, except for one detail – a crease line running down the centre of the lid. This has its practical application, as you discover once you lift the lid. Much like on Acer's R7, this hinge enables you to view the screen as one would on a traditional notebook or flip the screen and drag it over the keyboard to concentrate on web browsing, for example. Furthermore, users can also flip the display entirely so that it is facing the other direction, with the keyboard and trackpad behind it; particularly handy when watching a movie. Finally, you can use it in a tablet orientation for those who prefer to do everything using the touch interface. Build quality both looks and feels top notch (for the most part), and certainly conveys a sense of being a premium product.

## First the good news

Another area where this ultrabook stands out in the 15.5" screen, which is a pleasure to behold, thanks in no small part to its full HD (1920 x 1080) resolution. What this means of course, is that the VAIO Fit practically begs

to be loaded up with photos and movies, and does a great job at rendering both. What's more, movie buffs will be glad to note that the ultrabook is capable of seriously loud sound output that practically reverberates across the entire frame, although the audio does get a little distorted at the very top end.

**THE FIT 15A CAN BE USED IN A TABLET ORIENTATION FOR THOSE WHO PREFER TO DO EVERYTHING USING THE TOUCH INTERFACE.**

So how does it perform? Well, in general tasks, very well in fact. Indeed, this was hardly a surprise, since under the hood purrs the all too familiar Core i5- 4200U CPU, accompanied by 4 GB of memory (which is alright, although we would have liked to have seen more), while a Nvidia GeForce GT 735M handles the graphics and 1 TB drive caters for storage.

## Now the bad

Moving on, the chiclet keyboard itself is a bit of a double edged sword. On the one hand, it boasts some lovely backlighting. On the other hand though, we found keypress to be particularly shallow, while the keys themselves seemed noticeably smaller than you would normally find. More disturbing was the sink that the keys were set in, which seemed to waver with the slightest touch.

Two USB 3.0 and one USB 2.0 port, an HDMI port and an SD card slot round off the VAIO Fit 15A; yours for R16 000 for the i5 version and a pricey R18 000 for a Core i7 processor. [RN] **ts**



## QUICK SPECS

Processor  
Core i5- 4200U

Memory & Storage  
4 GB RAM + 1 TB

GPU  
Nvidia Geforce GT 735M

USB  
2x USB 3.0. 1x USB 2.0

Display  
15.5" with 1920 x 1080 resolution



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# ACER Aspire 5600 U

**There is much to be said for the benefits of All in One PCs, but did Acer's Aspire U inspire us and should you aspire to own it?**

To start with, the Aspire U is certainly a modern and dare we say, exceedingly attractive All in One (AIO) PC. Its equal measures of transparent glass and glossy black aesthetic looked like it was straight from the set of *Minority Report*, and looks like PCs in the 21st century ought to. To really fulfil your *Minority Report* aspirations, you can try your hand at Acer's PointGrab Gesture control, which enables you to control the cursor and type with gestures. It worked well enough in our tests although it took some getting used to.

## ACER'S 5600 U LOOKS LIKE PCS IN THE 21ST CENTURY OUGHT TO.

Interestingly, our 15" notebook gobbled up more desk real estate than the glossy and sharp 23" full HD screen and the included keyboard combined. The PC's 1.3" frame also has a minimalistic feel to it; although it offers up pretty much everything we wanted, including an optical drive, three USB 2.0 and two USB 3.0 ports, HDMI in, an Ethernet port and SD card slot.

### Duty calls

Looks aren't everything, and on this Windows 8 PC, performance was smooth across the board, which counted for a



great deal. Doing duty here is the ever reliable Core i5 3230M processor, supported by a dollop of 4 GB of memory in our review model, apparently accommodating up to 8 GB, and a generous scoop of 1 TB of space for storage. Interestingly, the AIO comes with a stronger than average graphics solution for AIO's, boasting the GeForce GT630 M graphics card. This appeared up to some casual gaming (more so than Intel's built-in HD graphics), with the screen allowing photos, panoramas and video to look beautiful.

### Touching tomorrow

If we had to find one fault with the device it would belong to the onboard sound, which wasn't great and thus would certainly need to be supplemented. Nonetheless, for the most part, the 5600 U is certainly one of the more alluring AIO's we've seen to date. RRP: R14 000 for the 23" and R23 000 for the 27" version. [RN] **ts**

# BLACKBERRY Z30

**BlackBerry may be on the ropes but cannot be counted out yet thanks to the release of its new Z30. Is the biggest smartphone from Waterloo also its best?**

The Z30 is an all-touch smartphone that boasts a 5" (720 x 1280; 294 ppi) AMOLED screen that matches screen sizes on rivals like the Galaxy S4, but falls short of the ever more common 1080 x 1920 screen resolution and 400+ ppi tallies seen on displays such as that of the Xperia Z1.

### The power

Powering the Z30 is a 1.7 GHz dual-core Qualcomm Snapdragon S4 Pro chipset, which is backed up by 2 GB of RAM, meaning multitasking and 3D gaming are fluid and snappy. As smooth is navigation of the operating system, in this case BlackBerry 10.2, which packs a number of improvements. These include the ability to preview notifications on the lockscreen and the addition of Afrikaans as a predictive input language for the keyboard. Also onboard is LTE (4G) connectivity for speedier downloads, plus an 8 MP autofocus main camera and 2 MP front-facing snapper, with the camera performance being on par with 2012's best mobile shooters such as the Galaxy S3.

**AS WITH THE Z10, WE JUST WISHED THAT THE Z30 CAME OUT EARLIER WHEN THE DEVICE WOULD HAVE MATCHED ITS RIVALS.**



Users have access to 16 GB onboard storage, but can expand this by up to 64 GB via the microSD memory card slot. BlackBerry equipped the Z30 with a non-removeable 2880 mAh battery, which fares a lot better than the one used in the Z10, lasting a full working day on a single charge. The Z30 also sports stereo speakers which pack a volume wallop, but needs a bit more bass oomph.

### A bit too late

BlackBerry's Z30 is a very competent all-round smartphone offering a modern mobile experience for BlackBerry fans. As with the Z10, we just wished that it came out earlier when the device would have matched its rivals rather than year-end 2013, which sees it out-matched by the Galaxy S4, HTC One, and LG G2 when it comes to design appeal, specs, and number of quality apps available in their respective app fronts. RRP: R8 800. [HD] **ts**



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# TITAN-ICE COMPUTERS

## strong on SSD

With an eye on the latest trends, Titan-Ice Computers appears particularly strong on offering laudable SSD storage technology.

With solid state drives (SSDs) finding favour in notebooks, ultrabooks and, for the tech savvy, in PCs as well, and being highly regarded for their stability and speed, often the most difficult decision awaiting users is which SSD to invest in.

### THE 840 EVO RANGE IN PARTICULAR OFFERS A WALLET FRIENDLY ENTRY POINT INTO THE BENEFITS OFFERED BY SSD TECHNOLOGY.

Answering this concern, Titan-Ice Computers boasts two different ranges from Samsung, namely the Samsung 840 Evo and the Samsung 840 Evo Pro. The 840 Evo range in particular offers a wallet friendly entry point into the benefits offered by SSD technology, as its Samsung 840 Evo 120 GB drive carries an affordable R1 350 pricetag. For those seeking more capacity, the 250 GB, 500 GB and 1 TB offerings are also available.

#### Solidly speaking

In the Samsung 840 Pro range, users can avail themselves of the same capacities for a slight price increase – the Samsung 840 Pro 128 GB costs R1 900, the Samsung 840 Pro 256 GB commands R3 150 while the top of the range Samsung 840 Pro 512

GB will set you back R6 300 (just R1 800 more than the 512 GB Samsung 840 Evo).

The main difference between the two ranges is that the Evo Pro is faster and has been constructed to offer a longer life span as compared with the consumer orientated 840 Evo range, which in itself is no slouch in the longevity stakes. However, if your main use for the drives will be business-orientated, then the Evo Pro may be better suited.



#### Partners and promotions

Like the drives it offers, the company can also boast a solid run in the technology space, having been in business since 2008. To its credit, Titan-Ice Computers has been awarded Intel Technology Provider 2013 GOLD status, and can also lay claim to being a preferred partner of AMD, Seagate, Steelseries, Huntkey, Palit, ASRock, Arctic Silver, XSPC water cooling, Alphacool, Razer, Mad Catz, Genius GX-Gaming and CoolerMaster.

The [www.titan-ice.co.za](http://www.titan-ice.co.za) website is also worth checking out regularly, as the company periodically runs promotions on certain products. The company is located at 774 Jacqueline Drive, Garsfontein, Pretoria and can be contacted on 012-998-5668. **ts**

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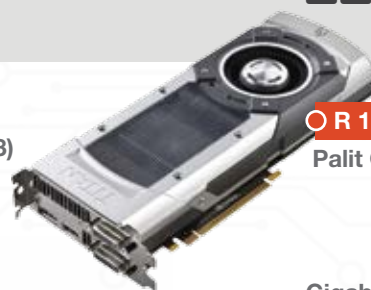
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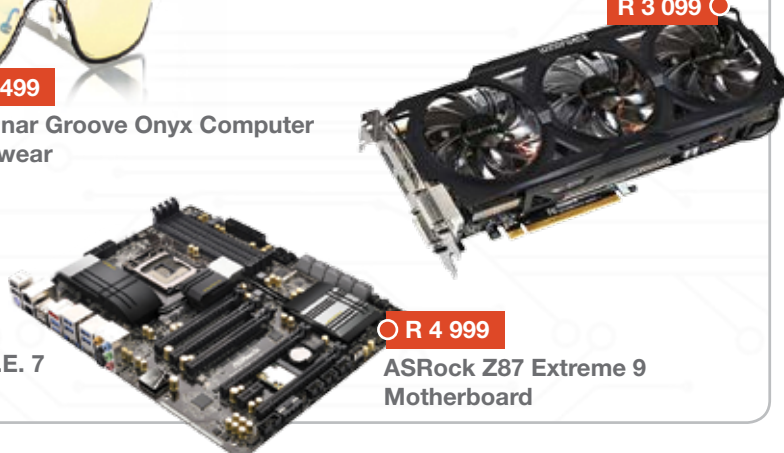
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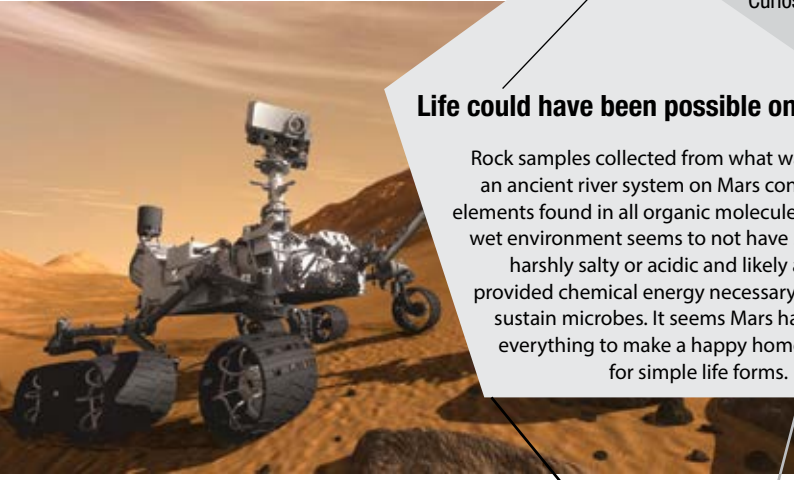
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**1.6 cm**

The diameter of the hole drilled in Martian rock by Curiosity.

**Life could have been possible on Mars<sup>1</sup>**

Rock samples collected from what was likely an ancient river system on Mars contained elements found in all organic molecules. The wet environment seems to not have been harshly salty or acidic and likely also provided chemical energy necessary to sustain microbes. It seems Mars had everything to make a happy home for simple life forms.

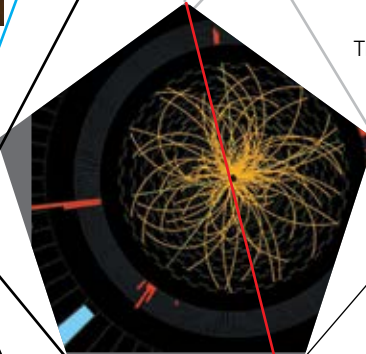


**30 hrs**

The age at which antiretroviral treatment started

**The first case of HIV remission in a child<sup>2</sup>**

Starting antiretroviral treatment in an HIV-positive newborn just hours after birth seems to have stopped the virus from settling down. After 29 days of treatment the viral load had dropped to undetectable levels. And 18 months after all treatment stopped, there was still no sign of the virus returning. This brings hope for new treatment strategies in HIV-positive infants.



**Subatomic particle confirmed as the Higgs boson<sup>3</sup>**

Although the Higgs boson was suggested to have been found last year already, it could only be confirmed this year. Further analysis of the original data showed with a high level of certainty that the elusive particle does indeed exist. If it didn't, the physics of our universe would have been turned on its head.

# The Big (Sci)Five of 2013

Science hit the headlines with some pretty big stories this year. Here is our pick of the best science news of 2013.

**1 in 3.5 million**

The chance of finding the energy signal associated with the Higgs boson if the particle didn't exist.

**1.98 million years**

The age of the Sediba fossil.

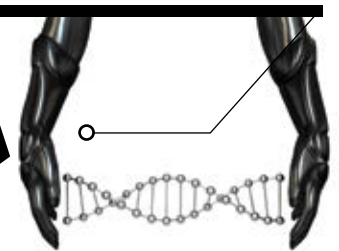
**SA hominin finds its place in our evolutionary tree<sup>4</sup>**

Reconstructions of the skeleton of *Australopithecus sediba* discovered at the Cradle of Humankind, suggest that it was human-like but also ape-like. The journal *Science* allocated substantial space to the findings, which included teeth and jaw characteristics similar to humans and a form of upright walking that was part human, part ape. The discovery suggests a close evolutionary relationship between *Sediba* and modern humans.



**1 & 0**

The Binary equivalents of true and false.



**Transistors built from genetic material<sup>5</sup>**

Scientists managed to build the third – and final – component needed for a computer that can work in a living cell. Using one enzyme to control the flow of another along a strand of DNA, they created biological logic gates that can control molecular processes. This is similar to the way transistors control the flow of electrons in electronics. [LP] **ts**

SOURCES: 1. NASA: [bit.ly/ZGbCWO](http://bit.ly/ZGbCWO) 2. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases: [1.usa.gov/Z83M6X](http://1.usa.gov/Z83M6X) 3. European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN): [bit.ly/XKLKey](http://bit.ly/XKLKey) 4. University of the Witwatersrand: [bit.ly/li2ZPb](http://bit.ly/li2ZPb) 5. Stanford University: [stanford.io/14vhNTC](http://stanford.io/14vhNTC)

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**R2 499**



## SAMSUNG GALAXY TAB3 -T211

[bit.ly/TSnp905s](http://bit.ly/TSnp905s)

7" display, 8 GB storage, 3G+Wi-Fi Connection, Android 4.1 Jelly Bean.

**R3 479**



## HP COMPAQ CQ58-D52SI BUNDLE

[bit.ly/compaqHP](http://bit.ly/compaqHP)

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# Alfa



**Hot hatchbacks come in two personas – those that flaunt their sportiness in your face and those who downplay it with an understated design. The QV falls under the former, and employs some Irish luck (plus a rocker switch) to exaggerate its driving appeal.**

When staring at the Mito 1.4 QV Sport, you would not think it was anything but a garden variety Mito hatchback, since its underplayed styling provides few hints of its sporty nature. You do receive some stunning alloy wheels, a splash of carbon fibre on the dashboard, and a strange sight on an Italian car – Irish cloverleaf badges on the sides.

These coincide with the green stitching on the leather covered steering wheel, handbrake, as well as the seats, and is actually the biggest tip-off for the Alfisti (Alfa Romeo enthusiasts) that this is not an ordinary Mito. Why? Well, because QV in the car's name stands for Quadrifoglio Verde, Italian for cloverleaf – Alfa's equivalent of VW's GTI badge or Ford's ST moniker.

## The DNA of a true hot hatch

Beneath the finely sculpted Italian bonnet, lives a 1.4 litre turbocharged engine that is mated to a far too uncommon sight in our test cars these days – a 6-speed manual transmission. This powerplant churns out 125 kW and up to 250 Nm of wheel-spinning torque, which is enough to rocket this Mito to 100 km/h from standstill in a brisk 7.5 seconds. The top speed of the QV is a see-you-in-jail 219 km/h.

**A Jekyll and Hyde transformation occurs when you put the car in dynamic mode, since the lively powerplant comes into its own.**

Next to the gear lever resides a rather gimmicky DNA rocker switch to select the dynamic driving mode. In this setting, the drivetrain delivers 250 Nm of torque rather than the 230 Nm available in the other driving modes (normal and all-weather).

# Romeo Mito

## 1.4 QV Sport



In Normal and All-weather mode, the Mito puts a muzzle on the gem of an engine, and delivers a muted exhaust note and little to no performance zing whatsoever. Average fuel consumption dips to around 8.7 litres per 100 km though, but, for a sportier vehicle driving in these modes are simply too boring.

Luckily, a Jekyll and Hyde transformation occurs when you put the car in Dynamic mode, since the lively powerplant sparks into its own. You get a titillating exhaust note, more torque, quicker power delivery, and the shift-up gear prompts below the rev counter and speedometer take longer, allowing you to let the rev counter reach the redline.

All this prompted us to scratch our heads, pondering the question as to the point of the DNA switch. Phrased differently: Why would you ever not want to have the car in Dynamic mode?

### Compact car, big fuel drinker

The answer came to us when looking at the combined-cycle (town and highway driving) fuel economy, which is a claimed 6 litres per 100 km. As always we found that the reality does differ from the manufacturer's theoretical figures (especially true within sportier cars), as we managed an average of 9.6 litres per 100 km. This disparity can be attributed to our affinity for the Dynamic driving mode, blasting the aircon in SA's summer heat, and keeping the pleasure pedal floored to get the most out of the little-engine-that-could.

Another point to take note of is that this car has lots of head and legroom upfront, but like most coupés is a bit

too cramped in the back to comfortably fit three adults. As with other pocket-rockets, the suspension has been tuned to deliver the best levels of grip and agility as opposed to providing the occupants with a wafty magic carpet ride. Due to this, the drive in the Mito is not as extended road-trip friendly as a Polo GTI for instance.

### Price of admission

Alfa's Mito 1.4 QV Sport might be down on power compared to most of its rivals, but makes up for it in its headturning design appeal, despite being very understated. When driving the car in dynamic mode it's also no less entertaining than the competition on the limit.

It goes for a recommended retail price of R314 990 which sounds pricey and is, considering buyers can get a Ford Fiesta 1.6 EcoBoost ST (R259 900) and VW Polo GTI for less (R289 600). At least Alfa undercut the price of the less common Fiat Abarth 695 Tributo Ferrari (R550 000) by a country mile, despite the Abarth offering similar performance in a less practical, but more eye-catching package. [HD] **ts**

### → CHECK THE TECH

Like Ferrari and Maserati, Alfa Romeo is owned by Fiat, and thus comes equipped with some of Fiat's tech including the Microsoft co-developed Blue&Me in-vehicle infotainment system. Blue&Me enables drivers to pair their smartphone and use voice commands and steering-wheel mounted buttons to access features the likes of making- or answering incoming calls. It works quite well, but unfortunately doesn't offer Bluetooth audio streaming. Instead, users get an auxiliary jack and can load all of their favourite tracks onto a USB memory stick and plug this into the provided port.



Whether you're visiting in-laws, relaxing with friends or tying up loose business ends, this time of the year almost always involves some form or fashion of travel. That's why we thought it useful to let you in on the three best-kept secrets of the stylish explorer: travelling fast, arriving fresh, and keeping it fashionable.



# TRAVEL STYLE

by Mynhardt van Pletzen

## TRAVELLING FAST

Let's just be honest here for a moment, navigating airports and public transport in general are our least favorite parts of getting around. You can, however, travel reasonably pain free if you can manage to minimize the hassle factor, know where you're going, and fake a friendly face.

So when you're forking out the odd thousand rand for a luggage set that'll enable you to skip the whole baggage claim scenario, don't see it as merely buying bags, rather view it as a lifelong investment in mental health and happiness.

## ARRIVING FRESH

Nothing says #travelfail like getting off a red-eye flight and having the concerned usher offer you the complimentary wheelchair. You want to disembark fresh as the breeze over Bloubergstrand.

A word of caution though: we're not advocating self-immersion in a misted cloud of deo spray, that'll instantly trigger your travel companions' gag reflexes. No, a subtle spritz of Hugo Boss' signature scent will do the trick just nicely.

## KEEPING IT FASHIONABLE

Going places has always been inherently linked with looking awesome. That's why we want to make sure that come wheels up, you're not only adequately prepared, you're also immaculately dressed. First off, you want to pack garments that are wrinkle resistant, comfortable, and can easily make the transition between meeting up with friends, family and colleagues.

Our top tip would be to assemble a collection of interchangeable items, consisting of your best informal pants, a v-neck t-shirt, and a formal blazer. Get them all in natural colours, add a crisp white-button down to throw over the T as you exit (just remember to tuck that sucker), and you'll be able to connect different looks faster than you can say 'brace for impact'.



Linen cotton blazer jacket in pewter. Trenerly Men's Apparel.

R2 300



Ovidio brogue lace-up boots. Marlboro Outfitters.

R4 000



V-neck t-shirt in charcoal grey. Woolworths.

R70



White cotton button shirt. Cape Union Mart.

R275

Hugo Boss eau de toilet spray, 150 ml. DisChem.

R795



Slimfit chino in stone. Studio W.

R350



Oakley Plaintiff Squared sunglasses. Sunglass Hut.

R2 190



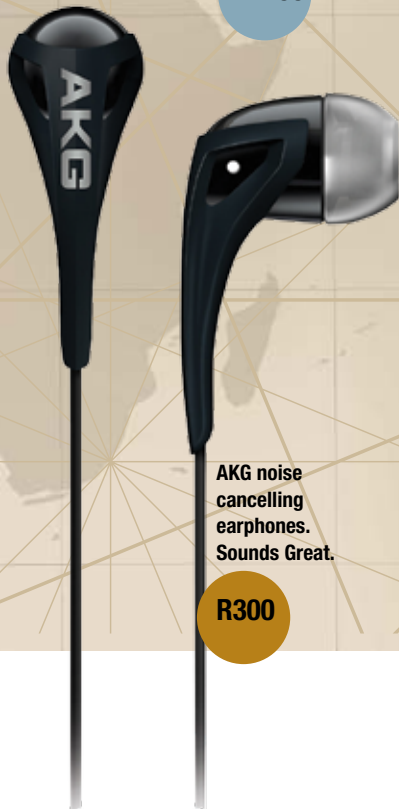
Leather cognac duffle bag. Fossil.

R3 300



Leather toiletries bag. Fossil.

R1 200



AKG noise cancelling earphones. Sounds Great.

R300



iPad Mini 16 GB Wi-Fi only. Dion Wired.

R3 600

Leather notebook. Fossil.

R2 700



# TOP 5 LIVE-ACTION VIDEO GAME MOVIES

Yes, believe it or not there were actually a few good films inspired by video games. Spling investigates.



## RESIDENT EVIL

*Resident Evil* is the most successful movie series to be based on a video game, having amassed over \$600 million worldwide with a sixth film slated for 2014. The video game to live-action movie adaptation was entrusted to Paul W.S. Anderson, who also directed *Mortal Kombat*.

The Umbrella Corp, T-virus, Raccoon City and most of the characters made the leap to the big screen, and in a retrospectively smart move, a new series' protagonist was created for the films. Milla Jovovich owns the tough-as-nails and hot-as-hell heroine, Alice, oozing big screen sex appeal and turning zombie-slaying into an art form.



## PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME

Swashbuckling swordplay, magic potions, do-or-die puzzles and life-like motion made the original *Prince of Persia* revolutionary for its time. The classic side scrolling video game evolved as graphics and game play improved enough to warrant a live-action film adaptation.

While the epic tale translated fairly well and gave *The Mummy Returns* a run for entertainment and CGI, the title character seems miscast. Jake Gyllenhaal's laidback temperament is more *Aladdin* than *Prince of Persia* and while the action is comparable with a theme park ride, the film's lofty *Pirates of the Caribbean* ambitions never fully materialised.

Don't WING it,  
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## SILENT HILL

This atmospheric and psychological video game is a staple in the survival horror genre, played from a third-person perspective and featuring 3D environments in the fictitious American town, Silent Hill. The 2006 film adaptation blended emotional, religious, design, and story elements from the first four games in the series.

*Silent Hill* stars Radha Mitchell (*Pitch Black*) as Rose, who begins a search after her adopted daughter goes missing in the eerie town. While the horror's nightmarish visuals were beautifully realised, steeping the film in a dark and suspenseful atmosphere, its long run time and muddled plot lines made the hellish experience too fragmented.



## LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER

Tomb Raider's third-person treasure hunting, ancient puzzles and uncharted exploration made the female-fronted video game an instant hit. Giving *Indiana Jones*-style adventures a sexy lead, broadened the game's appeal and led to a much-anticipated film adaptation starring Angelina Jolie.

While helmed by *Con Air*'s Simon West and carried by Jolie playing the much-loved adventurer, the slick actioner was underwhelming. It had its moments – Daniel Craig and an Illuminati link – but the plot baffled audiences and the video game adaptation turned into a star vehicle for the drop dead sexy Jolie.



## HITMAN

Agent 47 is the silent assassin, whose stealth tactics and quick kills gave gamers a chance to live vicariously as a hired killer. The behind-the-head game play and blend of action and street smarts developed a league of loyal hitmen with enough impetus for a film adaptation.

While Timothy Olyphant's (*Live Free or Die Hard*) face is not quite what you would expect, what emerged was a dark version of James Bond. *Hitman* is much more talkative than his video game persona, thanks to his Bond girl companion, Olga Kurylenko (*Quantum of Solace*). While a passable political conspiracy actioner, *Hitman* simply used the video game concept as a springboard. **ts**

## WORST 5

### ALONE IN THE DARK

While *Alone in the Dark*'s atmospheric setting, sharp sound effects and game play made it genuinely creepy and scary, Uwe Boll's film adaptation was a shot in the dark.

### BLOODRAYNE

Co-star, Michael Madsen, said it best: "an abomination... a horrifying and preposterous movie".

### IN THE NAME OF THE KING: A DUNGEON SIEGE TALE

Jason Statham fails to rescue this star-studded medieval action-adventure from being a stunted medieval joke.

### SUPER MARIO BROS.

It's like the film-makers haven't even played the video game... and it sucks.

### STREET FIGHTER: THE LEGEND OF CHUN-LI

Kristin Kreuk is the only good thing about this sluggish, uninspired, witless and unintentionally cheesy sequel.

# Geek's BEST BUYS Gadgets Gift Guide



## PARROT FLOWER POWER

Parrot Flower Power takes having a green thumb to the next level. The product, which entails planting a small sensor close to the flora, then enables users to monitor plants' health according to factors including soil moisture, fertilizer, ambient temperature and light intensity all from their iOS device.

R800 from [www.thegadgetshop.co.za](http://www.thegadgetshop.co.za).



## PARROT AR.DRONE 2.0 POWER EDITION

The Power Edition of the well-known Parrot AR Drone 2.0 includes two 1 500 mAh lithium polymer batteries for 36 minutes of flying time and four sets of various coloured propellers. The drone, which is wirelessly controlled via tablet or smartphone, sports a HD 720p camera and all footage can be recorded for later playback.

R4 900 from [www.thegadgetshop.co.za](http://www.thegadgetshop.co.za).



## iON BLOCK ROCKER BLUETOOTH

Block Rocker Bluetooth enables users to quite literally take their party with them – the portable speaker connects wirelessly to any Bluetooth capable mobile device, such as tablets and smartphones, and pumps out music for up to 50 hours. It also sports an integrated AM/FM radio and a power cord is also included. **ts**

R3 700 from [www.thegadgetshop.co.za](http://www.thegadgetshop.co.za).



## Learnfast:

### SMBs need enhanced skills

Small to medium-sized businesses (SMBs) continue to be haunted by the costs related to not only the recruitment, but also the retention of reliable and effective staff. In many cases, companies need to tap the best from the employees, hence the multiple 'caps' expected to be worn by team members. It is required of staff to give more of themselves and have knowledge outside of their immediate areas of expertise.

Therefore companies need to take responsibility for people development as if their livelihoods depended on it. This means not only focusing on tangible computer skills, but also the development of the emotional quotient of team members. After-all, it is one thing for someone to know what they are supposed to do by when, but how do they cope when they are faced with too many tasks all to be done now?

Short-course impact training is a key solution for SMBs, since investing in employees will make them feel valued, enhance core business skills, and aid in the retention of key staff members.

For more information on the short-courses on offer at Learnfast, visit [www.learnfast.co.za](http://www.learnfast.co.za) or contact 011-262-2054. **ts**



## Electronics FG

### LED Breadboard Projects for Kids

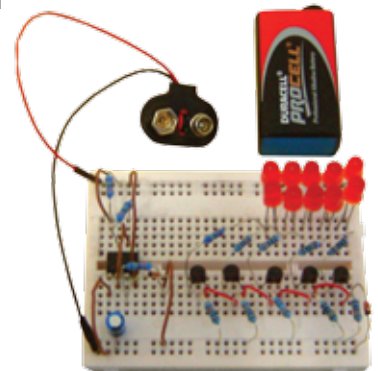
During this Festive period, what can be seen as the gift for kids that keeps on giving? Yet another toy definitely not, for kids with an interest in electronics it is definitely the LED Breadboard Projects for Kids for R347.

This new kit assumes that the constructor has little or no knowledge of electronics. This start-from-scratch approach teaches kids the basics, while the use of a breadboard for construction means that no soldering or special tools are necessary.

This kit comprises of a set of ten different fun projects that are aimed at children (seven years upwards) and is an ideal way of introducing them to the exciting world of electronics. Everything is included, the breadboard, all components, detailed instructions and an alkaline 9V battery.

#### Projects include:

- Knight Rider
- Police Lights
- Roulette Wheel
- Traffic Lights
- LED Dice (touch sensitive)



For more of these types of projects, call ElectronicsFG ([www.electronicstfg.co.za](http://www.electronicstfg.co.za)) on 012-3488-492, or visit them at the Atterbury Boulevard Shopping Centre. **ts**





# OUTDOOR Gift Guide

BY MYNHARDT VAN PLETSEN

Although most of those in our connected tribe gets overwhelmed when nature infringes on their indoorsy lives, nothing gets us more motivated to venture into the great unknown like a brand spankin' new gadget to do it with. So without further ado, here's the 2013 TechSmart Outdoor Gift Guide For Geeks. Let the salivating commence.



**R50** Nite-ize Curvymen Cord Supervisor

Because 'being entangled' should never have referred to your earphone cables in the first place.



**R500** LED Lenser SEO5 Headlamp

Never lose a finger to those crummy can openers in the tent again!



**R7 000** Suunto Ambit 2 HR Watch

This watch is so good, it will go on your adventure for you, and then tell you about it.



**R200** True Utility Truelite Mini 0.7 Flashlight

Pocket-sized, among other things.

**R4 700** GoPro Hero 3 Black Adventure

Take a picture of anything everywhere. The best invention since the GoPro Hero 2.



**R1 300** Leatherman Wave II Multitool

Evenly effective for removing nails or killing bears, as one does. **ts**



**R2 500** K-Way Celestial Scope

For looking at celestial things, not to be confused with celebrity thongs.



# SMART TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL



## GALAXY Note 3

### Design *your* life!

The new Samsung GALAXY Note 3 adds delight to daily tasks and is infused with features that help you to tell the story of your life! It comes with the most advanced wider full HD Super AMOLED display, 386 pixel density measuring 5.7 inches. The screen is bigger, but actually the width of the device remains unchanged, giving it an almost bezel-less display area. With a number of design enhancements, the S Pen has become so much more than just an input device. By just clicking a button on the side a “fan styled” menu appears, which gives quick access to useful features including Action Memo, Scrapbook, Pen Window and S-Finder. Making everyday life easier and faster.

SRP: R8 999 Available in Jet Black, Classic White and Blush Pink options

## GALAXY GEAR

### Smart *freedom!*

The GALAXY GEAR is wearable technology and the perfect companion for the GALAXY Note 3. Live in the moment while staying connected, the GEAR boasts a crystal clear 278 PPI display and will notify you of incoming messages, phone calls, SMS's, emails and alerts. A preview of these messages can be accepted or discreetly ignored. When an incoming message requires more than a quick glance, you can simply pick up your GALAXY Note 3 handset and the Smart Relay feature will instantly reveal the full content on the handset's screen.

SRP: R4 599 Available in six colours



## SAMSUNG ARNO

### WASHING MACHINE

With Samsung's 12kg washing machine, you can wash huge loads of laundry at once. The large capacity allows for fewer loads, without increasing the outer dimensions of the appliance. A+++ Energy rating and Eco Bubble technology ensures that a cold water wash will deliver the same clean results as if washed in warm water which helps preserve nature and saves you money by using less electricity. The unique wave design, with diamond drum, washes gently without damaging fabric ensuring clothes look new for longer. The state-of-art LCD colour display makes controlling your sophisticated washing machine as easy as possible.

SRP: R11 499 (WF1124XAU)



## Samsung Smart Camera

The compact NX300 makes it easy for anyone to achieve pro-like and impressive pictures with minimal technical knowledge or time spent adjusting parameters. Using the camera's Smart Mode, choose from 14 different settings, such as Creative Shot, Landscape, Light Trace or Action Freeze which will automatically adjust parameters such as aperture and shutter speed in order to obtain the best shot possible for the desired situation. The NX300 also includes i-Depth, an easy and simple way to adjust the depth of an image using the NX Series' unique i-Function system which enables you to modify camera parameters using the lens itself, adjusting the image without ever having to move off target.

SRP: R8 999 Available in Black and Brown



## GALAXY S4 Zoom

**Talk and Zoom!**

No more carrying a phone and a camera together. Samsung GALAXY S4 Zoom is the smartphone that has incredible optical performance. It functions both as an intelligent phone and a powerful digital camera and you can even take high resolution photos while making voice calls. Its compact size yet versatile performance enables you to capture every stunning moment wherever and whenever.

SRP: R5 999 Available in Cobalt Black and Pearl White



## SAMSUNG FRENCH DOOR REFRIGERATOR

Samsung's large capacity (614L net) French Door Refrigerator has all the space you need to stock up on your family favourites. Not only elegantly designed on the outside, thanks to Space Max Technology you get a bigger inside without having to increase the outer dimensions. Twin Cooling Plus technology keeps your food fresher for longer with precise temperature control for the fridge and freezer compartments individually.

SRP: R36 999 (RFG28MESL)



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# TOP Tweets!



**Nelson Mandela** @NelsonMandela  
"One of the most difficult things is not to change society – but to change yourself." #NelsonMandela



**Francois Crous** @fccrous  
@TechSmartMag brilliant magazine guys. Keep up the good working. Always looking forward to the comparisons on tech stuff.



**Matt Roller** @rollaggy  
Jackass movies are a lot deeper if you remember that Johnny Knoxville is probably really scared the moment before he gets hurt.



**Trevor Noah** @Trevornoah  
Never do I feel more robbed in life than when I wake up before my alarm goes off.



**Jerm** @mynamesjerm  
All these threats about protecting Nkandla and "civil disobedience" makes us look like the king's peasant... WAIT JUST A MINUTE...



**Not Will Ferrell** @itsWillyFerrell  
"Let the #HungerGames begin!!!"  
Grandma please, this is just an egg hunt...



**Zelda la Grange** @ZeldalaGrangeSA  
It was once also against the law to publish photos of Nelson Mandela. We are moving backwards at an alarming speed #Nkandlaphoto



**Deep Fried Man** @DeepFriedMan  
16 year old me is really excited about Eminem coming. Current me is trying to find a funny way to end this tweet.



**Brick Tamland** @Ch4BrickTamland  
What do you get when you cross a lion with a turtle?  
A genetically unstable animal that dies shortly after birth.



**Gape** @GapeZen  
Let me get knowledge of the tech world around me via @TechSmartMag. #Free and sooo #insightful. Bless this Magazine



**nerdreign** @nerdreign  
Simulating healthy relationships feels like a class I failed at Hogwarts.



**Awkward Jim** @AwkwardJim  
I gotta carry my phone around with me 24/7 just in case nobody texts me



**Gus Silber** @gussilber  
In Amsterdam, alcoholics are being paid in beer to clean streets. A fine example of lateral drinking. [bit.ly/1al2fgh](http://bit.ly/1al2fgh)



**Chester Missing** @chestermissing  
Revolutionary schizophrenia: where u spend 100 years fighting for freedom and then charge people money to drive on the road. #etotls



**Ejay** @ejaz\_k  
Etags will trend on twitter but never in real life. #etotls



**Dan** @ehdannyboy  
Hello new followers. I thought I'd tell you a little bit about myself. People have told me that I have the tendency to go on a bit. (1/476)



**Marc Ryan Rees** @MarcRyanRees  
If you're overwhelmed by the size of a task, divide it into smaller tasks. Then you can be overwhelmed by how many of them there are.



**Chris Forrest** @ChrisForrestSA  
My friend Cola really doesn't seem that excited about this "name on a coke bottle" campaign.

## Local RPG Might gather fans

Fans of role playing games will be happy to learn about Might, a system developed locally by Basil Koufos. We asked two players for their opinion on it.

**M**ight is by far the most accessible and well-thought-out RPG system I've played with. Players with different levels of experience can enjoy stimulating adventures with unique world and characters. The simplicity of the manual enables fluent game play and creative decision making without the hindrance of continuously looking up rules and regulations.  
– Joan Greeff

Might is a very simple, fast-paced and extremely flexible fantasy RPG that forgoes the normal class-based approaches. Instead it uses a points-based system that allows one to build the exact character one wants. It also doesn't have many assumptions about the setting, rather letting the story teller and players craft the world and story to their liking. I highly recommend Might to anyone.  
– Hennie Marais

Might retails for R199. For more info visit [www.might-rps.com](http://www.might-rps.com) or mail Basil on [info@might-rps.com](mailto:info@might-rps.com). It is also available from Outer Limits for R199. **ts**



## Gienius IT

### A genuine genius experience

**W**ith three stores located in the Eastrand Mall, Eastgate Mall and Bryanston, Gienius IT offers a range of IT related services. Their friendly staff can help with the upgrading, formatting and reloading of devices; as well as the repair and sales of hardware, software and gadgets. The company is also a reseller of Apple products, including iPhones, iPads, Macbooks and Apple TV.

And while you are at it, why not print a custom protective casing with your or your family's photos on there? Or catch the latest in Bluetooth technology with the WinLink Mobile Bracelet that pairs with your smartphone (R1 299, pictured).

### Repairs and something different

If you get unstuck with any new product, not to worry, since Gienius IT does provide training on all devices for both individuals and groups, while onsite support is also on offer. For those whose iPhone, iPad, Samsung, Nokia or BlackBerry had a run-in with the floor, the company can assist with repairs. You can also get your Mac or PC upgraded, or repaired down to component level at the Bryanston branch.

### Worth a visit

Come and visit their stores and they will show you what being a 'Genius' is all about, being open Monday through to Sunday. **ts**  
Visit [www.gienius.co.za](http://www.gienius.co.za) for more info.



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# ElectronicsFG

ElectronicsFG is a retail store located in Faerie Glen Pretoria. We stock a large range of electronic components, kits, electronic instruments and gadgets. We cater to the needs of electronic engineers, technicians, electronic hobbyists, and students as well as school children.

## ETCHING TANK WITH AGITATOR AND HEATER



Etch your own PC boards with this professional unit. Etching tank with pump and heater: 300 W / 230 Vac, spare heater available additionally. Dimensions: external: 360 x 280 x 40 mm, internal: 350 x 230 x 30 mm, tank capacity: 2 L.

**R1487**

## ROBOTIC ARM

A series of Robot Kits for the future engineer. Build these kits and find out how much fun electronics & mechanics can be! Enter the world of basic robotic technology and build your own robotic arm with five motors and five joints. The arm features a five-switch hard-wired control unit, a rotating base, elbow and wrist articulations, and a functional gripper. The built-in searchlight brings more fun when operated in the dark.



**R725**

## REPLACEMENT POWER PACKS

ALL TYPES OF COMPUTERS AND EQUIPMENT:  
Eg. CHARGER WITH USB OUTPUT 5V - 2.1A + CAR CHARGER WITH USB OUTPUT 5V - 2.1A

Very compact set of 1 charger + 1 car charger, high efficiency, low energy consumption, designed for a wide range of mobile phones, smart phones, digital cameras, MP3/MP4 media players, portable game devices, GPS, etc, each with a single USB output of 2.1 A and short-circuit protected.



From **R248**

## SOLDERING STATIONS

LED indication: digital display for installed and actual temperature, with on/off switch. Standard tip Ø 0.8mm.



From **R247**



From **R604**

## ILLUMINATED VISOR MAGNIFIER

Head magnifying glass with dual light, magnifying glass with adjustable dioptr: 1.8 / 2.3 / 3.7 / 4.8 by combining the various glasses. Power supply: 4 x 1.5V AAA batteries (not incl.), 200 x 60 x 140mm, weight: 150g



**R117**

## METAL DETECTORS

Waterproof search head, large LCD display, target ID, depth readout, sensitivity control, variable discrimination, variable notch, 3-tone audio discrimination, low-battery indicator.

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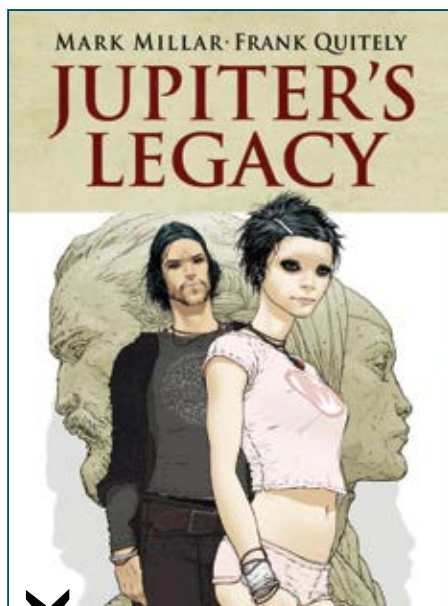
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# TOP 3 comics of 2013

Fantasy buffs, the superhero set, and kids/grownup kids all have something to snack on in our comic book guru Moray Rhoda's Top 3 Comics of 2013 selection.

## JUPITER'S LEGACY

Mark Millar & Frank Quitely  
Image Comics



**J**upiter's Legacy is the first collaboration between Millar and Quitely since their work on *The Authority*, and forms part of the creator-owned Millarworld. Although the comic explores some familiar Millar 'superhero deconstruction' territory in taking an adult view of superheroes and their humanity under the masks, it has been praised for the strong narrative, subtle writing and biting social satire hidden in action.

It is the story of superheroes and their connection to the American ideal and the friction between old-school aging superheroes and their children. Where the aging heroes used their powers to improve the world, the new heroes are less interested in pursuing this selfless legacy and more in living their own, sometimes hedonistic lives. On the art side Frank Quitely delivers some of the most incredible and detailed art of his career, undoubtedly helped by the bi-monthly schedule.



Cullen Bunn, Brian Hurtt  
Oni Press

**T**o call the *The Sixth Gun* a supernatural western adventure with zombies would be correct, but it would also be oversimplifying a book that reads like a summer blockbuster movie. Set after the American Civil War in the old West, it centres around a set of six pistols, each imbued with dark powers.

Each gun has a specific, unnatural ability and give their wielders unique powers, such as raising the dead or immortality. For better or worse, each gunman is tied to the weapon until they die, and their incredible power is sought by the forces of evil – in this case the wonderfully vile General Hume, the Knights of Solomon, the Sword of Abraham, and others. *The Sixth Gun* is a fun and inventive book that builds a deeper mythos around the old West with some clever writing and great artwork.



Ryan North, Shelli Paroline and Braden Lamb

BOOM! Studios

**B**ased on the top-rated Cartoon Network show, *Adventure Time* is set in the magical and unlimited Land Of Ooo, where anything is possible. The appeal of the TV show is the unusual and sometimes nonsensical situations and sequences the characters find themselves in, and the comic also follows the bizarre and all-new adventures of Finn the Human, Jake the Dog, Marceline the Vampire and Princess Bubblegum.

Each issue includes at least two comics: The lead story by North and one or more backup stories. The art-style seamlessly follows on to the look created for the show and the writing is of the same insane and zany level that had us lolling. *Adventure Time* has been a huge hit with young and old alike as it effortlessly mixes humour and some shockingly dark moments, creating a book that is deceptively complex, incredibly funny and startlingly human. **ts**



# 2013: THE WORST OF

By Pippa Tshabalala

Picture courtesy of

Adriaan Louw from [we-are-awesome.com](http://we-are-awesome.com)

**2013 HAS BEEN ONE OF THE BIGGEST YEARS WE'VE SEEN IN THE GAMING INDUSTRY IN A WHILE. BUT WHAT OF THE GAMES THAT LEFT US DISAPPOINTED IN THE WAKE OF THEIR RELEASE?**

There are a number of games that had us excited in the lead-up to their launch, but which sadly failed to deliver. I'm going to divide this into two categories, just for clarity's sake.

## Low expectations

Firstly, games that nobody really expected to be very good, but which somehow I feel are worth a mention, if only to warn you off buying them in the bargain bin. The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct is probably one of the worst games I have ever played. Ever. I don't even want to talk about it more than this, it pains me too much.

It's followed by the ultra disappointing Aliens: Colonial Marines. The only positive thing I can mention about this game is that I was given a pretty cool t-shirt at the launch. SimCity sadly is a game I was really looking forward to playing, but in which my interest flagged after a couple of hours. A game that just doesn't live up to its predecessors no matter how much shinier it may look.

## Underwhelmed

Secondly, there are the games that I was really, really hoping would be amazing. Imagine then the disappointment when I was significantly underwhelmed when playing.

The first of these is The Bureau: XCOM Declassified. This is not a bad game, but the demo I played

focused on specific battle situations that were really engaging and exciting. The final product ended up being not quite as interesting as the demo suggested, and when up against some of the other recent XCOM games, really just lost a lot of the glamour.

**I DON'T EVEN WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT MORE THAN THIS, IT PAINS ME TOO MUCH.**

Remember Me is another game where the pre-release demo showcased the best parts of the game. It the impression that there are regular moments where you can remix memories, when in fact this occurs only a handful of times throughout the game. While this is an awesome gameplay concept, the game as a whole is ultimately let down by the fact that the rest of the gameplay becomes uninteresting and uninspired.

I loved Heavy Rain and after seeing Beyond: Two Souls at E3, I was preparing myself for another epic narrative experience from Quantic Dream. Sadly what I got instead was a slow, at times boring, and at other times pointless experience that is decidedly 'meh'.

I was already apprehensive about Batman: Arkham Origins when it was announced that Rocksteady, creators of Arkham Asylum and Arkham City, were no longer the developers. Unfortunately the result is as expected. Not a bad game, but forgettable.

Forgettable – sadly the word that I think describes most of these titles. **ts**



# CALL OF DUTY GHOSTS

**Call of Duty: Ghosts certainly knows how to make a dramatic entrance, but this time, it also begs the question: Is this the best Call of Duty to date?**

The Call of Duty franchise has never shied away from offering huge dollops of blockbuster-type action on a Michael Bay scale, and in this regard, Ghosts certainly delivers as anticipated. Setting the stage for the game's somewhat convoluted story, players both witness from above the Earth, and experience on ground level, a devastating attack on the US, as South America has united as one force called The Federation, with America in its crosshairs.



**WE WISHED MORE THAN ONCE THAT WE COULD STOP AND TAKE OUR TIME DRINKING IN THE RUINED ENVIRONS.**

Fast forward ten years and you find yourself, along with your brother, and the much mentioned dog, Riley, a handsome German shepherd, fighting a protracted and defensive war alongside the titular Ghosts using guerilla tactics.

### Life of Riley

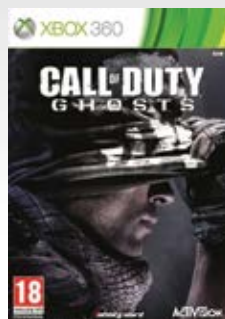
While many of the combat mechanics are familiar to previous entries, Riley isn't, serving as both an able companion in scouting areas and stealthily attacking enemies, as well as helping forge an emotional connection. Unfortunately, these sections are few and far apart, and only available at scripted points during the game. Nonetheless, it still makes Ghosts feel seems less bogged down by geo-political complexity (at least for the most part) than its predecessors, and more relatable thanks to the fact that you are fighting alongside your family.

Granted, you do still follow a linear and at times heavily scripted path in the game, although this does occur at a brisk pace. On one hand, this lends the game an urgency often found in blockbuster action movies, on the other we wished more than once that we could stop and take our time drinking in the ruined environs and the ramifications of a broken America.

Nonetheless, Ghosts is still a highly engaging, and well paced game, that quickly hooked our attention. Graphics on the Xbox 360 version are good, if not outstanding, and although production values are a little by the numbers for the franchise, they are still high. Add in an extensive multiplayer component (which brings bug-like aliens to the mix), and Ghosts delivers much that we, and millions of fans, have come to expect from the franchise.

### Fans will be pleased

If there was any criticism of the title, it would be that Ghosts doesn't depart too much from the Modern Warfare formula, unlike Black Ops, with Activision seeming to opt for a 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' approach. Nonetheless, Ghosts is still a spectacle-filled shooter that will no doubt satiate FPS fans, and it does so with enough compelling firefights and jaw-dropping sequences through a variety of terrains to keep you coming back for more. R700. [RN] **ts**





# BATTLEFIELD 4™

**DEATH, TAXES AND A HOLIDAY RELEASE FOR COD AND BATTLEFIELD. IS THE NEW BATTLEFIELD ON TARGET OR SPRAYING AND PRAYING?**

**E**A and DICE once again aim to immerse shooter fans in a veritable feast of both vehicular and gun-slinging combat, with DICE's new Frostbite 3 engine doing duty, promising (and delivering) in-game destruction on a scale never seen before. There's no denying that BF4 sports an action-packed single player campaign filled with gorgeous scenery, dazzling explosions and mind-bending displays of in-game physics. The 4-5 hour campaign sticks with the cinematic formula inherent in modern FPS titles, and delivers many exciting moments ranging from firefights on the deck of an aircraft carrier to breaking out of a Mongolian gulag with nothing but a prison shank.



**OUR JAWS DROPPED AS WE WATCHED SKYSCRAPERS TUMBLE AND DAM WALLS BURST TO FLOOD ENTIRE MAPS.**

While the single player provides plenty of fun, we all know that Battlefield's true beauty lies in its online multiplayer component. A plethora of massive new maps, a new faction (the Chinese), and a host of new vehicles and weapons serves to ensure gamers have more than enough to keep them fighting for many months to come. One of the biggest new additions to the multiplayer is Frostbite 3's new 'levolution' mechanic, and it works. Our jaws dropped as we watched skyscrapers tumble, destroyers smash into tropical islands, and dam walls burst to flood entire maps.

#### Lock and load

Like its predecessor BF4 allows players to jump into the boots of either

the assault, engineer, support, or recon classes. Each class has been given new toys for BF4, including motion sensor balls, wire-guided missiles and remote mortars to name but a few. Vehicles old and new, all resplendent in gorgeous graphical make-overs are also available, with advanced military aircraft, helicopters, tanks and even naval vessels vying for control of the battlefield.

One of the biggest changes to vehicle combat in BF4 is a new ammo system for certain types of vehicles (such as tanks and attack helicopters). This prevents players from spamming shells and unguided rockets mindlessly, and places more of an emphasis on strategic engagements.

Weapon customisation has also been greatly expanded, with hundreds of new sights, stocks, attachments, ammo types and colour schemes available in addition to a host of new guns in all shapes and sizes. Expect a few online connection hiccups, but these are quickly being addressed in patches.



#### The best looking

Battlefield 4 performs like a beast, and is arguably the best-looking shooter available right now. While the single-player campaign is quite short, you will get money's worth in an excellent online multiplayer campaign.

R450 on PC. [JK] **S**

# Top 5 games of 2013

This year has been a terrific one for games, with a number of fantastic titles demanding players' leisure time. It was a difficult process, but here, at last, our Top 5 for the year.



## Tomb Raider

### Rebirth of a legend

Poor Lara Croft. In times past, a fixation with the intrepid explorer's assets seemed to blot out just what a compelling character she is. Thankfully though, Crystal Dynamics' reboot of the series, which tells an origin story of how a younger Lara became who we know her to be, was one of this year's true gems. Along with giving us a superbly well realised female protagonist who seemed to leap from the screen with both depth and grit, Tomb Raider was also a damn fine action adventure in its own right, offering a number of 'did that just happen!' moments.



## Grand Theft Auto V

### F-bombs and bullets

Grand Theft Auto V is not in fact a documentary of life in Joburg in game form as you may have first thought, but rather, an immersive adventure into an open world that is just as, if not more, mad, bad, lewd and crude – and these are its good points. The game is unapologetically violent, with its cutting satire of society been sprayed as liberally as F-bombs and bullets. While tracking the lives of three very different criminals, players can also indulge in just as much (virtual) recreation as criminal activity. Not a tutorial for living here, but a game well worth your time.



## Top 3 of 2013: Readers' choice

You had your say at our online poll – here is your selection for 2013.

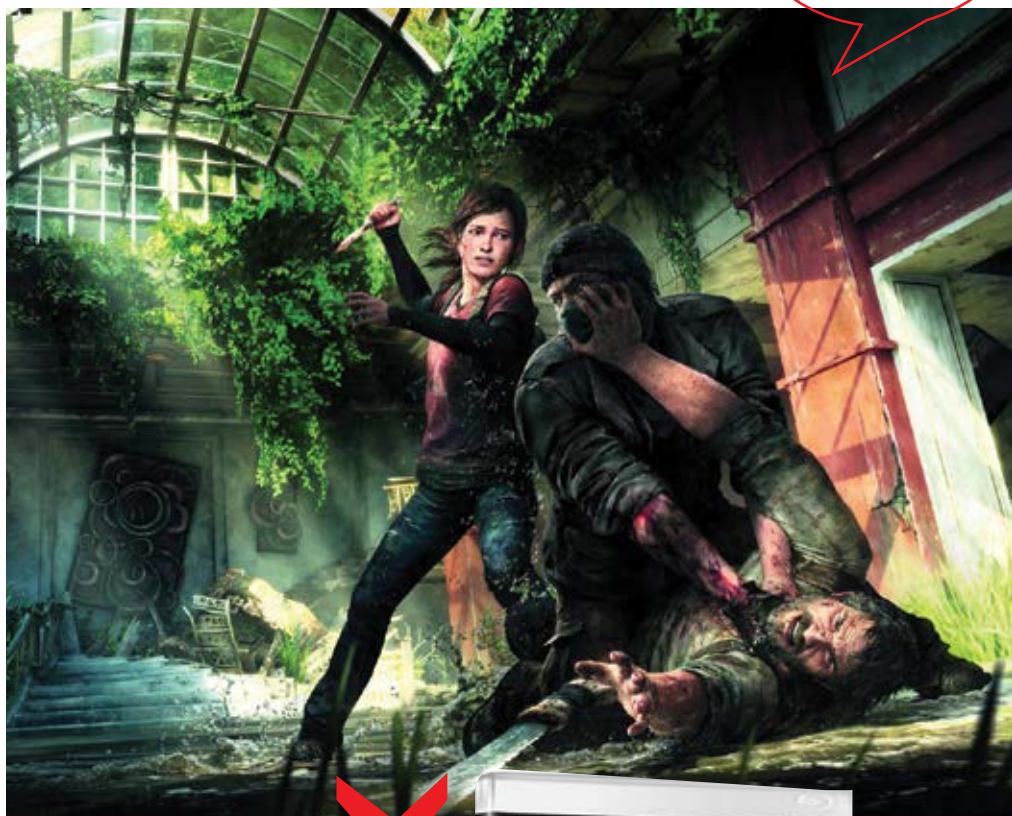
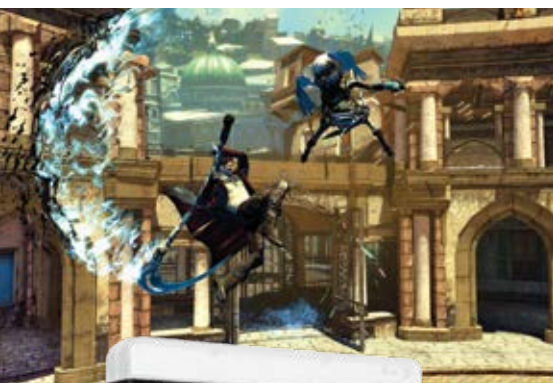
1. GTA V
2. FIFA 14
3. The Last of Us

## 3 DmC: Devil May Cry

### Sliced, diced and sworn at

Kicking off the year was this gem from Ninja Theory, a stylish reboot of the Devil May Cry franchise that had us gleefully lopping off the limbs of an assortment of demons. Dante also brought the right amount of attitude, swagger and a potty mouth that would make Dexter's Debra Morgan blush. It also helped that the game boasted an interesting story and was a blast to play, offering fluid combat, an array of interesting weapons, levels dripping with atmosphere, and engaging boss fights. Like many of Ninja Theory's underrated titles, it most certainly was a standout for us.





2

## BioShock Infinite

### Pie in the sky

Another title with its sights literally sky-high, BioShock Infinite freed players' from the leaky underwater confines of its predecessors and instead sent them to the floating city of Columbia. To say its citizens have their heads in the clouds wouldn't be an exaggeration. Unfortunately, it quickly becomes apparent that Columbia's rulers have their head stuck somewhere entirely darker. It's when the alternate 1950s façade of Stepford wives perfection dropped though, that BioShock Infinite really started showing how a good (and stylish) a game it actually is. And what an absolute blast it was and still is to play.

1

## The Last of Us

### The first of them

The Last of Us was everything we wanted in an action-survival horror title, offering loads of suspense, compelling gameplay, a rich story and magnificently drawn and well-acted characters. The game follows the plight of survivors, Joel and Ellie, after the human population has been ravaged and mutated by the cordyceps fungus. Stellar voice acting, a gripping, dramatic story, and more than a few moments that had us on the edge of our seats are some of the reasons why The Last of Us is a game we will not soon (if ever) forget. Well done, Naughty Dog, well done. [RN] **ts**

# DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME

**NOT BEING INTO  
GAMES  
MAY MAKE MOST  
SELF-RESPECTING  
GEEKS THINK  
LESS OF YOU, BUT  
IT DOES HAVE ITS PERKS,  
WRITES DEEP FRIED MAN.**

I have a terrible confession to make, and an especially terrible confession to make in TechSmart – I am not a gamer. I haven't always been the total disgrace to geekdom that I am today, once being so into games that I found the line between the real world and the virtual one beginning to blur. I became addicted to a game called Carmageddon at roughly the same time as I got my driver's license.

### License to kill

For those who've never heard of Carmageddon, it's essentially a racing game, the twist being that you are not only able to run over the many pedestrians walking around, but encouraged. Interestingly, the game was initially populated with human beings but censors forced the developers to change them to zombies, because for some reason mowing down hoards of innocent passer-bys indiscriminately was seen as a controversial idea back in 1999.

### GAMING DOES A LOT OF THINGS FOR YOU, BUT MAKING YOU SEEM ATTRACTIVE IN THE EYES OF THE FAIRER SEX IS NOT ONE OF THEM.

I played so much Carmageddon that when I eventually did find my way out into the sunlight and into my first ever car, I had to constantly restrain myself from swerving off the road so that I could take out a granny or two and pick up a few points. Thank goodness I wasn't into Grand Theft Auto or I may have found myself struggling to resist the urge to kill prostitutes or torture people until they confess.

### To get lucky

Apart from having less homicidal urges, what I really don't miss about my days of gaming is the sheer amount of time it consumed. The biggest advantage of my non-gaming ways is as follows: While you are spending all night playing Final Fantasy XIV, I am hitting on your woman.

I must apologise to TechSmart gaming columnist Pippa Tshabalala for the sexist implication here that all gamers are men. And thanks to Wikipedia I am shocked to report that, in fact, females made up 47% of the global gaming population in 2012. I therefore direct this at the pasty-faced male gamers out there who prefer a night in with their console or PC to a night out on the prowl.

Gaming does a lot of things for you, but making you seem attractive in the eyes of the fairer sex is not one of them. For many women, just explaining that you're not interested in games will make you seem vastly more attractive than you did seconds before. In some cases you may as well tell her that you own a yacht. So by all means, enjoy your new game. I'm going out to try and hone my new strategy. Something along the lines of: "Your boyfriend's at home playing games? Sorry to hear. But don't worry, I'll keep you company..." **ts**

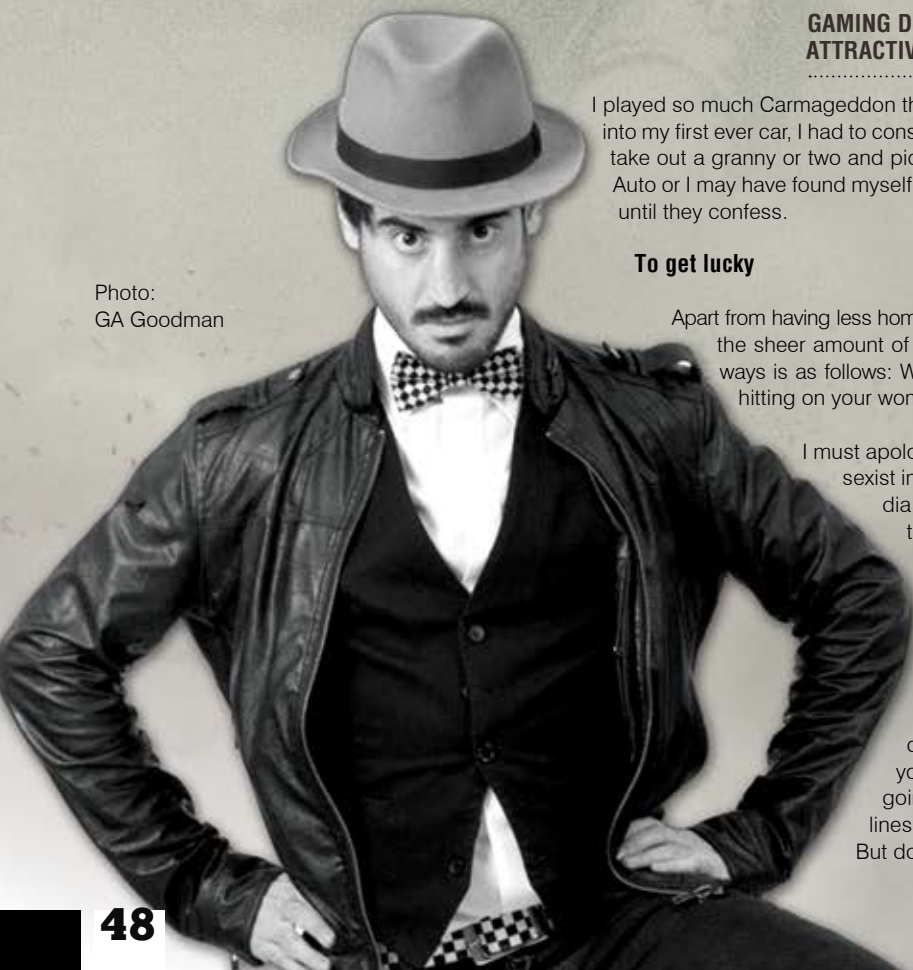


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