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EDITORIAL



Ts peer-to-peer (P2P) networking

right or wrong? That was the guestion we asked you last month, and from your replies it seems like it is. And isn't. I think the changes brought about by the Internet regarding

the distribution of digital content, including movies, music and books, came just too fast to thoroughly comprehend the implications, never mind dealing with it. One answer might lie in the way we look at copyright, so have a look at our Creative Commons (CC) article on p33. CC encourages sharing, and being a free magazine we here at TechSmart love the concept.

So as per usual we have all the free info you need to make your digital living just that little bit easier and more enjoyable.

Mike Joubert <michael@techsmart.co.za>

I am typing on the excellent HP DV3 Notebook (p 14).

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Corrections

- We mistakenly published the wrong number in the vehicle tracking article for **Active Vision** in Issue 68. Their correct number is 011-450-3361 (see their ad on p 24).
- The correct URL for the VirtualBox website is www.virtualbox.org and not www.virtualbox.com as stated last month

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CONTENTS

TechSmart 70

Features

12 The Digital Hustle **13** How not to DIE ONLINE

Regulars

- 6 Letters 8 Smart Celeb: Paul Rothman
- 10 Tech News
- 11 Sci News
- 22 Industry Expert: Monique Chatterjee
- 24 Industry Expert: Victor Dronov
- **28** DIY Dude: How to make a Teddy Bear Nanny-Cam
- **29** The BIG Issue: Creative Commons **34** NetSmart: Reduce your spam
- 35 Web Time Wasters

PC Hardware

- 14 HP Pavilion DV3-2030Ei Notebook
- 14 Samsung R710 Notebook
- 15 Advent ADV3500 Tablet PC
- 16 Plustek Smart Office PL2546
- 16 Epson Perfection V300 Photo Scanner
- 17 EDIMAX NS-2502 SATA NAS Server
- 17 AirLive AirMax Wireless Outdoor CPE

Mobiles



19 HTC Magic

Security

- 23 10 Steps to Better Data Security Protection
- 23 APC SurgeArrest Notebook Surge Protector
- 23 Asus U3000 Hybrid TV tuner

Education

25 The Photoshop Teacher

Books

26 Security Monitoring

Software

30 Kaspersky Mobile Security 8.0

Internet

32 AxxessDSL Internet Service Provider

Games

36 Wii MotionPlus

36 *Red Faction: Guerrilla* 37 Prototype

37 E3 2009 Round-up

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Distributed by

Competitions

20 Hacking for dummies

36 *Red Faction: Guerrilla*

30 Kaspersky Mobile Security



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Hi guys,

Last month we asked: Is P2P file-sharing right or wrong? This is your feedback.

Letter of the Month

Hi there TechSmart,

think P2P is wrong or a bad thing. The fact that you can connect to a P2P network and download files is awesome. The fact that many people all over the world upload movies or games etc. that are actually selling in stores, is not. P2P can be used legally, and I do believe that it shouldn't be banned or made illegal. If people want to take the chance of downloading a pirated game or movie they should be aware of the possibilities of prosecution as I'm sure The Pirate Bay guys were. It's a chance you take, such as going into a shop and thinking about stealing a chocolate and actually getting away with it or getting caught.

I would like to start off by saying I don't

Tim Schenk Congrats Tim. You are the lucky winner of a Lexmark X6675 wireless 4-in-1 with a 5-year quarantee sponsored by Lexmark.

These letters make valid points. We'll sit on the fence until there is valid evidence that P2P is killing the TV/ Movie/ Music industry. -ED

No matter how you try to sugar-coat P2P, it is wrong, illegal and immoral. There is no excuse to justify it and people who moan that the originals are too expensive shouldn't be too judgmental. I agree that some things can be overpriced, but it is the artists' material. I think the best way to illustrate whether or not you find these acts right or wrong is this: Imagine you have just created/designed/ invented a movie/book/song. Now imagine that this item is to provide you with your income and the entire world simply gets a copy of this item at no cost and you don't earn a single cent for all your effort. How does that feel?

Denzil van der Merwe

Hi Everyone,

As a foreigner living in Gauteng I can safely say P2P file-sharing is right. I can't go back home as much as I would like to and also I can't constantly ask my keepers for money in this harsh economic environment. So what do I do? I engage in P2P file-sharing and it doesn't disappoint. I get to watch native music videos, documentaries, serial dramas, stuff I'll never find here no matter how hard I search. Above all, I get study material from different parts of the world which has made my understanding so much easier. To me P2P filesharing is the best thing since Windows 95. Budirirai T R Chanyau

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Question:

Would you ever release work that you created under Creative Commons License? (Read more on the subject on p33). Share your thoughts by emailing us on info@techsmart.co.za. Our Letter of the Month wins this incredible

Lexmark X6675 wireless 4-in-1 with a 5-year quarantee. (Also available from IT retailers.)

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SMART CELEB Paul Rothmann 8

TechSmart caught up with Paul Rothmann. SA's sexiest man according to Cosmo, Pasella presenter and all round nice guy. He talks to us about Lord of the Rings, the pocket knife, and blokes wanting to tear him apart.



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Vou've been described as SA's sexiest man. How do you feel about that?

It was a huge compliment to be chosen as SA's sexiest man, especially by Cosmopolitan magazine (which has been my source to understanding women for many years... although that is an impossible task). But I certainly did not let it go to my head, and at the end of the day, there are many things in life that are far more important than the title of 'sexiest'.

Do you miss your kick-boxing days much?

Very much, especially as I have been ring announcing for several fights over the last few months. That really got me fired-up because there is just nothing that compares to the experience of entering a full-contact arena, to confront and fight against an opponent who has spent the last several months training with the single intent of taking you apart. Yip, hectic stuff.

What town is SA's hidden gem?

If I have to single out a 'new-old-find' (I stumbled across it this past December on my way to Port Alfred) it would be Hoggsback in the Eastern Cape. According to legend, JRR Tolkien based the *Lord of the Rings* series on his experiences growing up in the area. This has now been disputed, but regardless it is a magical place, and one could clearly see how he could have been inspired by the beauty.

Tell us about your home entertainment set-up.

I have a great LG flatscreen TV, wirelessly connected to my decoder and DVD player. My wife didn't want to have all the 'machines' visible in the living room, so I put them elsewhere and connected them. I'm not too big on sound though, and simply connect some speakers to my laptop when I'm hosting a party.

What would you call the most important gadget of all time?

Historically... a pocket knife, (although you can still use the knife for technological advancement... by way of mugging somebody, and taking their cellphone.... this is South Africa after all).

But seriously, I love gadgets, especially where one item has loads of different functions, like a Leatherman and the new generation cellphones. I am a big Sony Ericsson fan, having gone through the entire P-series (P900, P910, P990) and now I have the XPERIA which is great.

How do you stay connected all the time?

Except for my phone with full connectivity, I also recently bought an Acer Aspire One Netbook, because I travel so often. I need to be lightweight and mobile, and by using an MTN USB Modem, I can pretty much connect anywhere. (Hopefully my colleagues don't realise this too soon, because then I no longer have an excuse for late reports.)

For the full interview visit www.techsmart.co.za

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TECH NEWS Titbits

Twitter maintenance delayed

witter delayed scheduled maintenance that would have seen Iran's service going down during daylight hours. Dissatisfied Iranian protesters have increasingly

10



SACOM PROGRESS MA

made use of Twitter to communicate about the protests and organise themselves after last month's disputed elections. Twitter co-founder Biz Stone said a US State Department request to delay the maintenance had no influence on their decision.

Seacom delayed, too

The Seacom cable, which was scheduled to go live on 27 June 2009, has been rescheduled for launch on 23 July. Increased pirate activity around the east coast of Africa is blamed. However, Somalian Pirates claim their P2P networks have never been faster and promised to seed liberally.

Tech News in Short

- An American woman is fined \$80 000 per track after illegally downloading 24 songs online. Somalian Pirates hold an all night vigil in solidarity.
- China is continuing with plans to install their "Green Dam" filtering software on every new PC sold from June 1, 2009. It's set to restrict access to pornographic material, but reports abound that it will also prevent access to "controversial" political information.
- In what is called the biggest land grab in history, millions of people rushed to get their Facebook user names registered. In the first 12 hours of being able to get



www.facebook.com/yournamehere, 3 million people staked their name claim. Thousands of John Smiths worldwide were left disappointed.

Hot New Products

- The Apple iPhone 3Gs is getting some pretty decent reviews after last month's launch in the US. It features better download speeds, video recording, voice control and a compass after a request from adventure man, Bear Grylls. Vodacom says we should have it soon.
- Meanwhile the almost mythical **Palm** Pre finally made its debut in the US. Its iPhone slaying powers include an excellent multi-touch screen, Web OS, and a "cards" interface. Sales of the Pre are apparently only going so-so though.
- **Olympus** is reviving its Pen camera legacy with the announcement of their E-P1 Micro Four Thirds camera. It promises DSLR quality in a compact body with an interchangeable lens system.

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Monkey business

Deople are not all equally clever. And, it seems, neither are our primate relatives. Scientists report in the online journal PLoS One, that when a group of cotton-top tamarins were tested for broad cognitive ability, some were top achievers, others more average and a few

were, uhm, a bit daft. In what the researchers fondly refer to as the 'monkey IQ test', 22 monkeys had to perform 11 cognitive tasks. The tasks were designed to test functions such as working memory, information processing speed, and executive and inhibitory control. Results showed that the variation in individual test scores relate to a factor 'q', which describes a measure of general intelligence. Just as in humans, not all individuals in a species have the same level of general intelligence. The researchers believe that humans' overall higher g-values may help explain how we are able to combine knowledge from different domains for new applications, while other primates are only monkeying around



Twisted memories

 A^{ccording} to a study published in Athe July issue of the journal <code>IEEE</code> *Electron Device Letters*, engineers created flexible circuit components that can also store information. Scientists predicted almost 40 years ago that such components, which they dubbed memristors, would

become the fourth fundamental circuit component. What makes the invention so special is that the chips were created



using inexpensive methods and generally available materials. These include polymer sheets, like the kind transparencies for overhead projectors are made of, covered with a thin jelly of titanium dioxide, a common ingredient in sunscreen. Adding a few electrical contacts and zapping the chip with current, created circuits of which the resistance changed depending on the amount of current applied. The circuits retained their resistance even after power was turned off. The team thinks the chips may come in really useful in portable electronic devices and small biosensors.



Old dog, new tricks

Spot's been up to no good just by looking at him. Well actually you can't. According to a recent report in the journal Behavioural Processes, dog owners think their pets look 'quilty' when they suspect them of wrongdoing. Researchers asked a group of dog owners to

order their pets not to eat a tasty treat, and then left the room. While away, researchers allowed some dogs the treats. Upon the owners' return, some were told their pets had eaten the forbidden treat, while others were told they had not. However, this was often the opposite of what really happened. When asked to judge their pets' body language, owners who believed their dogs had been disobedient judged them to look decidedly more quilty than when they believed they had obeyed - even if untrue. The scientists believe that the findings have important implications for better understanding the relationship between man and his best friend. [LP]

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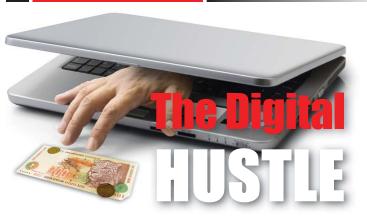
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Con artists, hustlers, crooks... whatever you want to call them, the World Wide Web is crawling with criminals. These cyber-thiefs fool you into believing that they are reputable, and do this to gain access to your personal and financial information. So what are some of the more recent trends you should be on the look out for?

The CashSend Scam

ABSA offers a rather ingenious service called CashSend. Basically you are able to transfer cash to anyone using an ABSA ATM, without the recipient requiring so much as a bank account. They need only punch in a reference number, which you provide them with, and *voila* they have the cash.

Die Burger reported, in January this year, cases of holiday makers, having found suitable holiday venues on Gumtree classifieds, sending advertisers deposits via CashSend, only to never hear from them again. Since there is no bank account to trace the transaction to, it's very difficult to find the culprit.

Online job scams

Even a few months out of a job will make you more receptive to financial hoodwinks than you normally would be.

Con artists exploit this by offering "work-from-home" jobs in which you need only receive or transfer a few payments from your personal bank account or PayPal account for a decent wage. What you actually end up doing is laundering money and defrauding others.

The other favourite job seeker pull is fake employment offers or job websites. Operating under this pretext, criminals are able to garner personal or financial information from unsuspecting victims. And then it's just a matter of time until they get your money.

Ticket lotteries

International sporting spectacles like the 2010 World Cup are often used to sucker people into providing conmen with financial information.

FIFA warned fans about these scams on the SA2010 website earlier this year urging, "people not to provide any personal or financial details if requested to do so".

Unsolicited email that informs you that you have won a 2010 FIFA World Cup lottery is a scam. You will likely be asked to fill in personal information on some site or another – their lifeblood.

Avoiding the trap

According to a Symantec report, released this year, South Africa is the 50th worst-affected country by cyber crime. This position is likely to worsen as more South Africans gain access to the Internet and events like the 2010 World Cup rev up. The best advice we can give is to simply never give your bank details to anyone online. You can also visit the following sites for more info: **www.slamtheonlinescam.com www.scambusters.org**. [TM]

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How not to **DIE ONLINE**

The Internet has truly revolutionised the way we live our lives. Unless you live in a small cave on a rocky outcrop somewhere in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal, it will very definitely have affected your life. But there is a sinister side to this otherwise benign and benevolent looking tool we are all almost completely dependent upon. Please pay careful attention; this article could very well save your life.

Gaming Yourself to Death

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There are essentially two ways of dying whilst playing games. The first is through pure exhaustion and fatigue. There are numerous cases where die-hard gamers end up really dying... hard. In 2005 a South Korean man collapsed after playing *Starcraft* for almost 50 hours, barely eating or sleeping. Eventually he succumbed to exhaustion and died. In another incident a Chinese man died after playing games all throughout his seven day holiday. Apparently in both incidents the deceased got so engrossed in the gaming that they forgot about the "living" part.

The other way of dying whilst gaming is by meeting fellow gamers who take things a bit too seriously; as Zhu Caoyuan, a man from Beijing, found out when his friend Qiu Chengwei stabbed him to death after he had sold the "dragon sabre" in a game of *Legend of Mir 3*. They apparently won it together, but the thieving Zhu tried to pull a fast one, but had one pulled on him.

Cyberchondria

You lie in bed awake at night, you are restless and worried, as for weeks now, you have this terribly strange twitching in muscles all over your body. Then you decide to Google: "muscle twitching" and you determine that you must have "Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease", an incurable and fatal brain disease, a symptom of which is twitching muscles.

More and more people are self-diagnosing in this way, causing seriously unnecessary concern. The opposite of this effect, and possibly more dangerous, is when people diagnose themselves with harmless conditions, not bothering to go see a doctor. A word of warning: Don't do this.

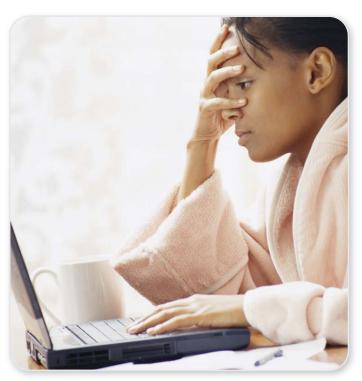
Epilepsy Hackers

There is a certain group of people out there often referred to as "trolls". They like to spend their free time making people's lives miserable by "trolling" their websites, usually just for the "lulz". This happened to the Epilepsy Foundation's website (**www.epilepsyfoundation.org**) in 2008. A group of trolls hacked the site and posted numerous flashing images in the support forums that caused massive headaches and near seizures in some photosensitive epilepsy sufferers. For an example of the type of thing the trolls did on the epilepsy site, have a gander at this: **www.encyclopediadramatica.com/Epilepsy** (unless you have photosensitive epilepsy).

Trusting Creeps

No article on the dangers of the Internet would be complete without a word or two about Internet chat rooms. They've been around since the Internet was conceived. They may provide hours of pleasant conversation about whatever suits Safety

SECURITY



your fancy. But, it's what suits Mr. Creep's fancy that you should be worried about. It might sound obvious, but if you are going to meet someone that you met online, take someone that you know in real life with you. Failing this, meet your cyber acquaintance where other people can hear you scream. And if the person you're meeting doesn't look like the picture on their profile, run. [AG]

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HP Pavilion DV3-2030Ei Notebook **That's Entertainment**

The first thing you notice about the HP is its eye catching design. Gone is the plain black body found on so many notebooks. Instead you have a design minded motif, not only spicing up the outer lid but also the space below the keyboard.

What's on offer?

So what does the DV3 have on offer? First off, it carries a very decent 320GB of hard disk space, enough to store a number of series, movies and music onboard, without having to worry about hooking up your portable hard drive. Add to this an Intel Core 2 Duo processor T6400 (2.0 GHz) and a very decent 3072MB RAM and you have a PC not only able to handle your entertainment requirements, but also pulling its weight in the work department. Speaking of weight, the DV3 is a little bit smaller than standard laptop size. It weighs about 2.2 kg, so it's not a bother to carry around. The 13.4" screen is decent, although with a resolution of 1366 x 768, it doesn't qualify as full HD.

Connectivity

The DV3 is tops with connectivity, and includes an HDMI port to hook it up to an HD screen, as well as an eSATA connection for faster data transfer. You'll also find a PC Express Slot, a data card reader, as well as Wi-Fi onboard. HP

Samsung R710 Notebook Power is Everything

The general idea behind notebooks is portability, with power and performance relegated to second place. **Obviously the guys behind Samsung's desktop** replacement notebook, the R710, didn't get the memo. The R710 is an absolute monster in size and power.

Size

When you have 17" screen on a notebook, you know it's not going to be light. At 3.1 kg the Samsung R710 is about the same weight as three netbooks. But for that you get performance that matches what most desktops can throw at you, and an anti-bacterial keyboard complete with number pad.

Performance

Power and performance are what the R710 is all about. Our test model had an Intel Core 2 Duo CPU (T6400) rated at 2 GHz, with a very impressive 3032MB of RAM. This was more than enough to run games, resourceintensive applications and watch HD videos. The 300GB hard drive makes it easy to store your music and videos. In our experience, the more hard disk space the better, so if you can, go for a 500GB drive. Gamers will also be thankful for the nVIDIA GeForce Go 9600M GT graphics card, which makes gaming not only possible, but a treat.

includes a stock standard webcam and a fingerprint reader for biometric security. Finally your DVD requirements are fulfilled by a LightScribe Super Multi 8x DVD optical drive.

The power cord is a little bit longer than the standard length, but one minor niggle is that the power cord plugs in at the side, and not the back, which means having to deal with a protruding cable all the time.

Remote Control

We really enjoyed the included mini remote. It's just a shame that some functions only works with Windows Media Player (WMP), as WMP doesn't support some video codecs. Add to

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this the Altec-Lansing speakers, which at least make listening to movies possible without having to call on external

speakers, and you have a very respectable multimedia set-up.

The glossy keyboard you'll either love or hate. Personally we did not like the feel and the tactile feedback, although we're sure we could have gotten used to it in time. The touchpad left us unimpressed which made an accompanying mouse a must.

As a multimedia notebook, the DV3 sure looks the part. It is a decent size with excellent specs, and retails for R12 999 from www.hpshop.co.za. [MJ]

Looks

Ø

If you're worried that a notebook this big will look unsightly, you need not worry a jot. Samsung has given the R710 a lick of red glossy paint that will definitely get it noticed. But it's really the screen we like. The 17" WUXGA (1440 x 900) glossy display will give you an HD experience, although it's not full 1080p resolution. Add to this the optional Blu-ray player, and you have yourself a nice HD entertainment unit. The Samsung R710 has most of the connectivity options you'll need, including 4 x USB ports, Wi-Fi and HDMI to hook it up to a HDTV. A 7-in-1 card reader is included but no FireWire. One bit of bother is that the trackpad is relatively small, making a mouse a must have.

All-in-all the R710 is a well endowed computing power house. At **R12 999** it comes reasonably priced too. [AG]

Advent ADV3500 Tablet PC Convergence Now

The concept of a tablet PC was defined by Microsoft in 2001 as a "pen-enabled computer" that operated on a licensed copy of "Windows XP Tablet PC Edition". A bit of a narrow definition, but taking stock of tablet PCs currently available on the market they haven't exactly come very far since 2001.

he point, however, is that tablets don't really need to develop much further to meet their ultimate objective: offering a mobile alternative to bulkier notebooks and meeting certain environmental requirements and restrictions, namely space. Performance isn't really high on the agenda then, as resource intensive applications are generally avoided on these machines. The Advent ADV3500 also follows suit.

It utilises Windows XP Home, and has a cute Advent interface that sits on top of XP, offering shortcuts to Windows, Navigation, the Internet, computer settings and various media players and an on-screen keyboard. All this makes it extremely easy to use while offering the familiarity and resource efficiency of XP.

Onboard

The device also offers a 7" touch-screen, optimally navigated via a stylus, a 1 GHz CPU, 256MB of RAM, a 30GB hard drive and Wi-Fi connectivity. While we would have preferred 512MB of RAM to make running multiple applications a little smoother, the machine ran well with few hiccups.



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Tablet PCs PC HARDWARE



Here in my Car

Where the device really shines is in the car. More than just a tablet PC, the ADV3500 has a built-in SiRF III GPS receiver. Consequently you get a fantastic convergence device if you take the optional SATNAV software on offer when purchasing the tablet. The fact that it is also packaged with a windscreen mount, an AC/DC adapter for the car and a remote control. make it even more appealing.

Its multimedia offering further enhances it appeal as a mobile device. Watching videos or listening to music while travelling is very easy as it offers a 3.5 mm audio jack, 2 x USB ports, a mini SD Card slot and AV output. Although the battery life of only about 2 hours in full use, is a bit frustrating.

This good mix of hardware, software, and connectivity features make the ADV3500 a great convergence device for a reasonable **R5899**. Available from Computer Corporation on 08616-08616. [TM]

Plustek Smart Office PL2546 Serious Scanning made Easy

Whether it's for a single department in a big company or a SME, if you're thinking about getting years of old documents digitised or going paperless, the Plustek Smart Office PL2546 is a good way to go.

he PL2546 provides full colour duplex flatbed scanning with an automatic document feeder (ADF). This 50 sheet ADF feeder automates the process of capturing all the data that could actually be useful to the company, as opposed to being useless in boxes in cold storage.

The Smart Office is not limited to normal copy paper though; it can handle a wide range of document types and thicknesses, including: thicker paper documents and plastic cards such as insurance cards, credit cards, ID cards and drivers' licenses.

When using the flatbed scanner the FL2546 can achieve a scanning resolution of 1200 x 1200 dpi, suitable for high resolution photo scanning. The Smart Office also makes the job of data capture easier via the OCR (optical character recognition) software included. That said, the device is quite bulky and heavy, so it's best left in one place. From imageTEK on 011-608-1964 for R8999.

Epson Perfection V300 Photo Scanner **Picture Perfection**

Scanners have come a long way in a short time, a tale not unfamiliar to anyone who knows anything about the consumer electronics industry. You don't have to fork out a fortune anymore to get some good quality scans; as is proven by the very well priced and very much liked Epson Perfection V300 Photo Scanner.

o give your product a name like "Perfection" takes courage, or arrogance, but does the V300 live up to this marketing hype? The short answer, yes it does. Scanning at a considerable 4800 x 9600 dpi, the V300 can do far more than scan the odd newspaper clipping. For starters, you can scan all

your photos at archive quality

resolutions, without having to wait an eternity for scans to complete either. The V300 will also allow you to convert all your slides and negatives to digital as it has a built-in film and slide holder. You can even scan 3D - and over-sized objects, making use of its 180 degrees lid, making it ideal for scanning from books or old albums. R1670 (incl VAT). Call Epson SA on 011-465-9621 for more info.

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EDIMAX NS-2502 SATA NAS Server Home Storage made Simple

NAS or "Network Attached Storage" may sound alien to most, but the idea is pretty simple and very clever. You can think of a NAS server as a hard drive that connects to a network so you can share files with anyone on that network.

Take the EDIMAX NS-2502 NAS server for instance. We were impressed by its combination of a simple set-up and its depth of functionality. The NS-2502 has two bays that each accommodates a 3.5" SATA hard drive, up to 1TB in capacity (giving you an effective 2TB server). The EDIMAX is very simple to install and requires no mounting screws or tools.

You simply slot in a hard drive and connect the NS-2502 to your network via gigabit Ethernet.

The NS-2502 features password protected security and various networking protocols (HTTP, FTP and BitTorrent), and can even be used as an iTunes Server for iPod devices. We also like the "Copy" button that allows you to copy the entire contents from any USB external hard drive to the NS-2502. The Edimax NS2502 costs R1913. Contact Miro for more info on 086-123-MIRO.



AirLive AirMax Wireless Outdoor CPE The Powerful way to Connect

The AirLive AirMax5 is an all-in-one wireless 5GHz CPE. If you are looking for a cost effectively way to build a wireless outdoor network then this device is the ideal

solution.

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he most impressive thing about the device is its multiple operation modes function. It can be used in Access Point, Client, Wireless Distribution System, or Wireless Internet Service Provider mode. This means you can use it to access a network via a wireless device, bridge networks, and even provide others with network access.

The AirMax5 has an integrated 14dBi 5 GHz antenna, can be powered via Ethernet (up to 100 meters) and sports a high grade anti-UV casing. When considering that it can provide wireless coverage over a distance of 3 km, thanks largely to its 108 Mbps Atheros 11a radio, the AirMax 5 really is a powerful unit. The fact that it cost just R1249 (excl VAT) makes it affordable as well.

Call Nology for more info on 012-657-1317.



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Smartphones

MOBILES

19

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Nokia E75 **Business as Usual**

Just holding Nokia's E75 in your hand will tell you that it is a quality handset. A good indication of this is its horizontal slider. Closing this slider is reminiscent of shutting the door of a luxury German sedan - it feels different, it sounds different, and you just know you are using something special.

Size

18

The E75 is the same size as a regular candybar phone. There is no way to tell that it hides a slide-out QWERTY keyboard as it doesn't carry the bulk associated with such handsets. The keyboard is excellent. Although the keys are flush we never had any trouble typing. The same cannot be said of the front keypad, with Nokia making it especially difficult to unlock the device thanks to an undersized *, and generally small keys.

Connectivity

The device ticks all the connectivity boxes as it is HSDPA enabled and supports Wi-Fi. You are also able to set-up a VPN network via the phone to connect to a business network functionality not found on other phones. Add to this A-GPS, a good browser, Real Player for video playback, a 3.2 megapixel camera and a 3.5 mm jack, and you basically have all you need. Quickoffice and a PDF reader round off its business offering nicely.

Fmail

As with most business phones these days, one of the E75's key features is the ability to set-up a number of email



inboxes in a hassle free manner. We managed to set-up Gmail easily but ran into trouble setting up our regular Microsoft Exchange mail for work. Nokia does not make it easy to fix the problem, as the E75 does not explain the problem or give options to fix it. We did not experience the same trouble with the HTC Android phones or the BlackBerry Storm.

Screen

For us the ultimate problem lies with the screen. It is of no concern that it is only 2.4" in size and isn't a touch-screen.

What really matters is the interface design; graphically it looks the same as what Nokia had on offer two years ago. It feels a bit like climbing into a Mercedes and finding a Kia dashboard. You can put this down as a superficial problem, but it makes a difference when dealing with email or documents. Compared to the iPhone, BlackBerrys and the new Android phones, it just doesn't compare.

Final Word

As much as we were impressed by the excellent design and the range of features the E75 offers, ultimately we felt let down by a very unimpressive screen interface. [MJ]

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HTC Magic 22 It's a kind of Magic

The Magic is HTC's second Android smartphone, and in our opinion the better of the two released to date. The Magic runs on Android OS 1.5, is exclusively available on the Vodacom network, and can support Microsoft Exchange – though not out the box mind you.

Smartphones

Form factor

The Magic weighs just 116 g, has dimensions of 113 x 55.56 x 13.65 mm, and boasts a glossy plastic, two-tone case. It is consequently slimmer and lighter than its big brother, the Dream. It sports a 3.2" capacitive touch-screen which is evenly lit and proves very responsive. We were very pleased with the touch experience it offered.

Connectivity

Besides excellent call quality the Magic offers Wi-Fi and HSDPA, so you can stay connected wherever you are. It also features a full compliment of Google services including Gmail, Google Talk, and Google Maps. All you need do to access these services is type in your Google

username and password when setting up the device. The ability to download still more communication applications from the Android Market (if it is ever launched in





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SA) makes its communications features seem almost limitless with apps like Skype and Twitroid.

Cupcake

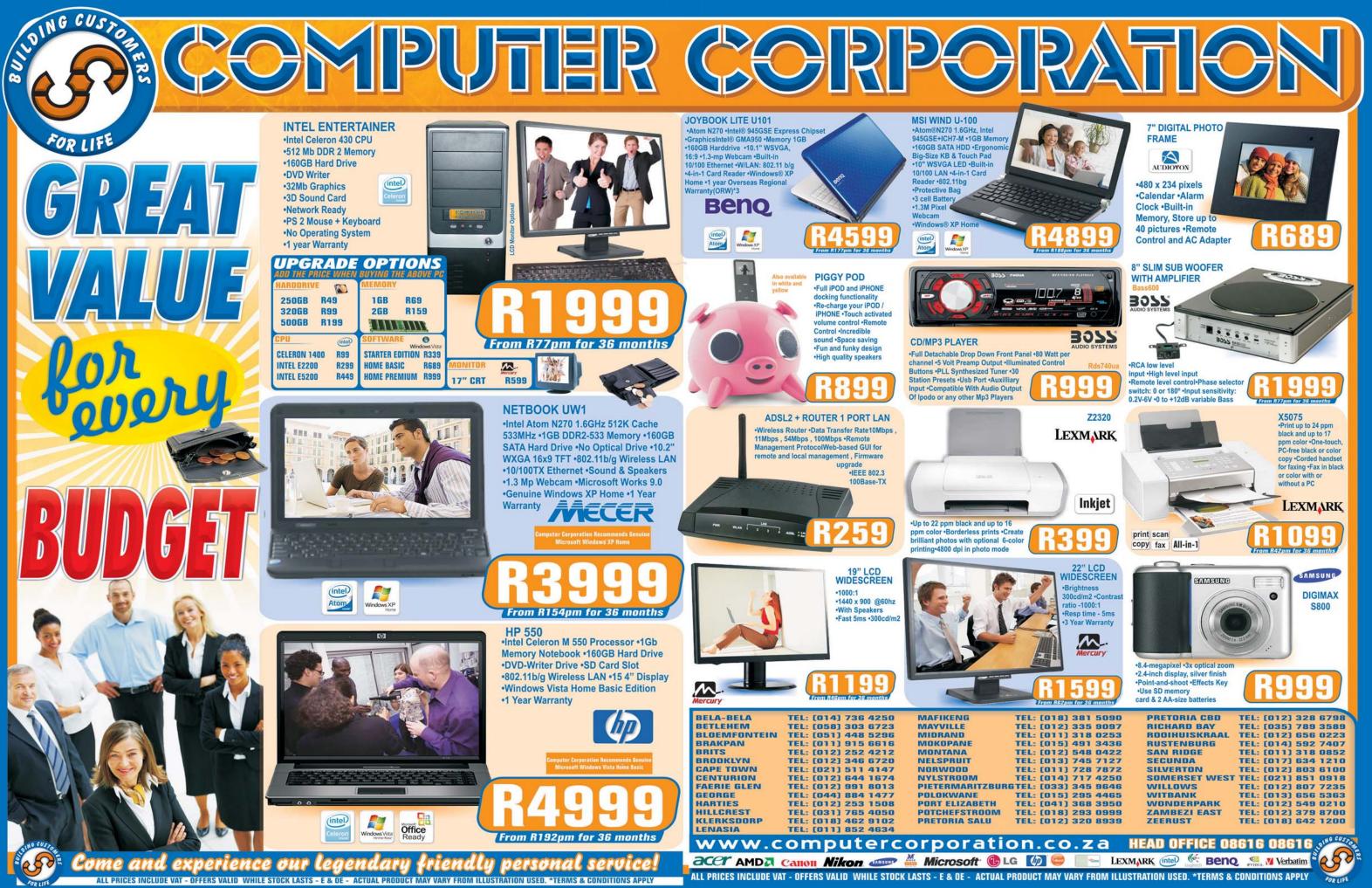
The big news about the launch of the Magic was its firmware update; Version 1.5 of the Android OS, aptly named "Cupcake". Cupcake brings with it a number of new features, like an on-screen keyboard, video recording and a much improved web browser. These updates have enhanced the Android offering tremendously - although we were disappointed that its web browser doesn't support Flash.

Our issues

The phone did, however, have issues that irked us. Firstly, applications can only be stored on the phone's internal memory. This means that you have to manage your applications wisely. Secondly it lacks a 3.5 mm jack, which seriously affects its multimedia appeal. Lastly, we found its accelerometer to be a bit of a frustration as it offered mixed performance in different applications.

Conclusion

The Magic is without doubt a fantastic device. Its powerful communications features and Google integration make it the ideal device for any Googlephile. The fact that it was released with the Cupcake firmware update also makes it more appealing than the Dream. [TM]



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INTERVIEW Industry Expe

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Microsoft's Arc mouse raised a

few eyebrows with its rather odd

design. Somehow its hinge design makes it both ultraportable and really comfortable.

We chatted to Monique Chatterjee, Microsoft's User Experience Designer, about what went into designing this strange mouse.

What lead to the hinge idea behind the Arc Mouse?

When designing Arc, we were trying to find a form that provided comfort in the hand, but was light and pure in form language. The Arc form came about naturally through the process of finding something that just worked; there wasn't a moment where we looked at another object and thought that we should translate it into a mouse. The inspiration was more around creating something simple and light in form something that captured the spirit of portability. There is always a balancing act when we try to design a mouse that is very comfortable and also very portable, and our team is very sensitive to this issue. To achieve comfort, we need to provide enough volume in the product to fill the palm, but it is the same volume that makes it hard to slip a standard mouse into a bag or pocket. We created the Arc Mouse to be a light form by using the negative space that an arch naturally creates. It was just a natural progression of thinking to leverage that negative space even further by allowing it to collapse with Arc's hinge.

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In mouse design, does form follow function or function form?

Functionality is always the key to our mouse designs. For instance, the Arc Mouse is elegant and modern in form, but the magic of the form is the functionality that it enables – comfort when open by providing palm support and compact portability when collapsed. Design isn't about drawing a pretty picture or simply wrapping a surface over some mechanics; it is about finding the right balance between many important elements. Functionality, comfort and aesthetics are all at work together to make a strong product.

When you design, where do you draw your inspiration from?

Our design inspiration comes from many places – the fashion runway, technology trends, research on consumer needs, etc. We have a very diverse design team of ten designers. We all have very different cultural backgrounds, educations, experiences, and interests. We use our design group meetings to share influences coming from so many different origins. Fashion (runway, sport and street), furniture, automotive, and consumer electronics are definitely among our favorites. We also love to look to graphics, interactions, art and architecture and really enjoy looking at the world to find bits of raw inspiration and put them together in different ways to create something completely new.

techsmart.co.za | July 09

Practical Security Tips 10 Steps to Better Data Security and Protection

Henk Smit of Tecleo Data Recovery Lab gives us some practical tips on better data security.

- 1. Install a reliable anti-virus package, update the package and scan your PC regularly.
- 2. Update your operating system and applications regularly.
- 3. No bank will request that you change or verify your details online or via e-mail.
- 4 Do not disclose your personal information on social networking sites.
- Ensure that you have at least a software firewall installed. 5. Make daily backups and remember to test these backups 6. on a regular basis – a backup is only as good as its restorability.
- 7. Have two copies of your current critical data in separate locations.
- 8. Install power and data surge protectors on all externally connected cables.
- 9. Do not move or bump your PC while it's switched on.
- 10. Ensure adequate ventilation in and around your PC.

Do not hesitate to contact them on 0860-600-800 or visit www.datarecovery.co.za should you be a victim of any potential data loss situation.

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through the mains power from destroying your notebook. A nice feature of the SurgeArrest is that it will also protect from surges through two fax or modem lines as well as through your Ethernet connection. R299 from Computer Corporation on 08616-08616.

Asus U3000 Hybrid TV tuner Easy TV for your PC

Tf you want a fast and easy solution for watching TV on your laptop or PC the Asus U3000 Hybrid TV tuner is the ticket. There is no elaborate set-up involved and the device also enables you to record onto hard disk and handle TimeShift recording. In addition it includes an FM tuner and is ready for the digital switch-over expected in 2011. You may just want to plug it into a better antenna than the one provided.

Available from PC Pro Shop on 012-348-4000 for R1150









Industry Expert

Threats to your Smartphone are Real

Victor Dronov is the Product Manager for Kaspersky Lab's Mobile Solutions Unit. We chatted to him about the mobile threats users face and the launch of Kaspersky's Mobile Security 8.0. (Read our review on p 30.)

What are the biggest threats mobile users face today?

a. Device loss or theft. People are storing more and more private and confidential information on their smartphones: documents, photos, files, banking account details. But, being human, we sometimes lose our phones or it gets stolen. Very often

the risk of getting this data into the wrong hands is even worse than your expensive device being stolen

- b. SMS spam and ad calls. Not actually a "threat" in its initial meaning, but a great annoyance.
- c. Mobile cybercrime and fraud. Since smartphones are becoming more common – cybercriminals and fraudsters are starting to target mobile users. The latest trend here is Trojan software secretly sending SMSs from your cellphone to a premium cost numbers.

What is the difference between the threats faced by PC users and those faced by smartphone users?

The main difference here is a complete unawareness of mobile threats. Everybody knows that it's dangerous to open

suspicious attachments in emails or visit inappropriate websites when using your PC. But all this changes when people switch to smartphones, which are essentially computers, just smaller.

Mobile banking is growing in popularity. Do you have any practical tips for users to avoid threats associated with mobile banking?

We don't know of examples of malware targeting mobile banking yet. But unfortunately all the technological preconditions are in place for it to happen. Therefore we can recommend either don't access your accounts with some considerable amount of funds from your smartphone, or to use one of the time-proven anti-virus products.

How often is the software updated and how large is an average update?

Kaspersky Mobile Security updates its AV database on a regular basis. But the volume of updates is not that big – less than 50Kb a week.

How does Mobile Security protect users against these threats?

When protected by Kaspersky Mobile Security, smartphone user is able of doing a lot of amazing things. For example if a user cannot find his phone it is possible to locate it. Just send an SMS with a special command to your number and get smartphones location sent to your email as a Google Maps link. If it's clear that your it was stolen it is possible to remotely block it or even wipe out all sensitive data on it. For the full interview visit www.techsmart.co.za

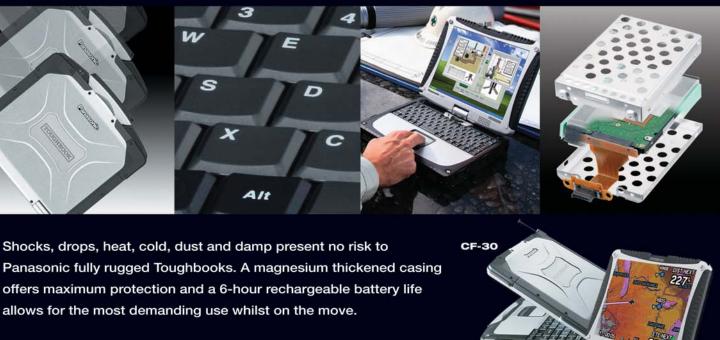
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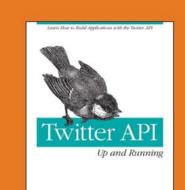
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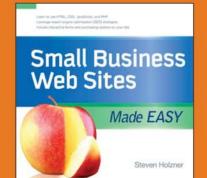


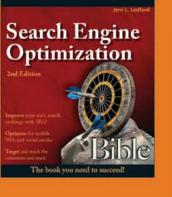


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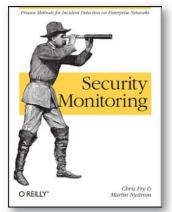
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Risk Management

Security Monitoring – Managing Risks on Your Network

Bells and whistles you don't appreciate

Let's face it, network security is boring. It costs a fortune and there is nothing really inspiring about it. Yes it's got bells and whistles, but you don't generally want those to go off - ever.



hat is, it's boring unless security is your thing or you realise just how important it is. If it is, and you do, then Security Monitoring – Managing Risks on Your Network (2009) should be on your must read list.

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Managing your network's security is more a science than an art. That's why the authors of the book, security experts from Cisco Systems prescribe a six step approach to managing security risks to your network. The steps include: 1) Develop Policies; 2) Know Your

Network; 3) Select Your Targets; 4) Choose Event Sources; 5) Feed and Tune; and 6) Maintain Dependable Event Sources.

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The Photoshop Teacher

How to: Selective Desaturation in Photoshop CS3

In this new segment the Photoshop **Teacher will help** you improve your Photoshop skills. First lesson: Selective Desaturation.



Although there are many ways to do this task in Photoshop, We have chosen a technique which is beginner friendly.

- 1. Open an image and create a duplicate laver: CTRL + J. You now have two identical layers. If you can't see the layers palette, press F7 on your keyboard.
- 2. Select Layer 1 and then go to "Image > Adjustments > Black & White". Play around with the sliders until you are happy with the result (make sure that the Preview box is checked), and then click on OK.
- 3. Layer 1 will now be B&W, but in your Layers palette window, the Background layer should still be in colour.
- 4. Select the eraser tool from the left hand tools column.
- 5. Select an eraser brush tip of appropriate

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Eraser Tool
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Background Eraser Too

Magic Eraser Tool

size from the top drop-down options. The size needed will vary from image to image - use your judgement here. Soft brushes work better than hard brushes for these kind of jobs. You can see a preview of your eraser tip size if you move your mouse cursor over the image (make sure that Caps Lock is off). I have selected soft brushes of sizes ranging from 21 to 70 for this job.

6. Eraser tool's top bar options: Mode: Brush Opacity: 100% Flow: 100% Erase to History = Off

ile E	Edit	Image	Layer	Select	Filter	View	₩indow	Help						
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- 7. Erase the parts where you want the colour to shine through. Don't do it all in one brush stroke. Using multiple strokes (releasing the mouse button after each stroke) will allow you to Undo the last stroke when you have made a mistake.
- 8. To undo the last action, simply press CTRL + Z. This will toggle between the last two states. To undo further back, press CTRL + ALT + Z. To redo, CTRL + SHIFT + Z.
- 9. To save, select File > Save As.... Select a new filename - never replace the original file - it's safer that way.

You can only learn Photoshop by practice and experimentation. If at first you do not succeed, try, and try again. The Photoshop Teacher will be appearing regularly on www.techsmart.co.za. For easy to follow Photoshop courses call him today on 084-88-000-55 or visit www.teachmephotoshop.co.za. [JB]



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How to: Make a Teddy Bear Nanny-Cam



Leaving your child or other prized possessions in the hands of others is always something you do with reluctance. Well it's just that sort of paranoia that might make you think that you need some form of

surveillance to ensure that your house, and those in it, are being well cared for.

You can't just put a camera in plain view though. What you really need is a clandestine agent, something

that no one will ever expect. Enter the cute teddy. That's right, who would ever suspect that a cute little teddy has inside it a camera and microphone,

strategically placed to catch would-be house- and baby neglecters unawares.



What you need :

- 1 cute teddy (mine has a pleasant vanilla scent)
- 1 infrared enabled (modified) webcam (see TechSmart 68,
- http://tinyurl.com/diycamera) • 1 stitch unpicker
- stapler
- hobby knife
- notebook and long USB cable

You have to ensure that your teddy-cam does not look out of place; this means that you must very carefully unpick the stitching at the back of the teddy's head. I found this quite easy to do. Then remove the stuffing out of the head and set it aside.

Now, using your hobby knife, cut away whatever it is that's holding the teddy's one eye in place. Remove the eye, it is your choice as to which eye you will blind. Once you have removed he camera.

Now get out your infrared camera, see TechSmart 68, or make one of these first. The reason we're using an infrared camera is because it has a very good low-light response, ideal for catching your baby-sitter canoodling with a boy/ girlfriend, when he/ she should be watching the baby.

Strip down the webcam so that all you are left with is the lens attached to the circuit board. Now insert the camera lens into the teddy's eyesocket and stuff the head with the stuffing you removed earlier. Make sure that the teddy resembles the teddy you started off with, otherwise you may rouse suspicions. You can then either sew the teddy back up again or, like me, just staple the back shut.

It is up to you at this point as to how you will survey your prey, I mean suspicious nanny or house-sitter. You will obviously need to carefully hide the teddy-cam's USB cable so that it cannot be seen. A good way of doing this is by placing the bear on a bookshelf and feeding the cable down the back of the shelf. You'll need quite a long extension cable, so you can attach the USB cable to a well hidden notebook.

You can either record the goings on by using some sort of screen capture software like Camtasia, available from www.holton.co.za for R3579 (incl VAT) read our review at http://tinyurl.com/lnuy5m, or you can stream the video live over the Internet. The simplest way is to sign up to a service like stickam (**www.stickam.com**), where you can make your own channel and keep an eagle eye out. [AG]



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fingerprint terminal for time and attendance and access control.

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Suprema's award-winning powerful algorithm and its expertise in IP based distributed access control systems are the key genetic features of the BioLite Net.

The BioLite Net provides for easy installation and network connectivity through a TCP/IP (or RS485) interface, Wiegand, as well as an internal relay for direct lock interface.

The device also offers easier operation and control through its built-in keypad, LCD and RF card (13.56 MHz Mifare) reader.

Depending on the user's needs, the authentication mode can easily be set, allowing you to switch between a combination of fingerprint, PIN and/or RF card.

In addition, BioLite Net is fully compatible with BioStar, Suprema's time and attendance and access control software.

The BioStar SDK is also available, enabling direct communication with the BioLite Net, BioStation and BioEntry Plus, allowing for seemless integration into new and current access control and time and attendance applications.



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Kaspersky Mobile Security 8.0 Don't be Dumb with your Smartphone



So how much personal data do you have stored on your smartphone? These days it might include your email, phonebook, SMS history, personal documents, browsing history, Facebook and those photos taken at last year's Xmas party. What happens if it falls into the wrong hands?

aspersky identified this problem and came up with Mobile Security 8.0. It is an extremely powerful package which left us both relaxed and relieved after installation.

With SMS-Block for example you can send a SMS to your stolen phone that immediately blocks the device from usage SMS-Find sends the coordinates of your phone (if the GPS is active) to both your email and the phone you sent the SMS from. It also includes SMS-Clean to erase data off the phone, and SIM-Watch to notify you if a new SIM was inserted by sending you the number and blocking the device. Kaspersky Mobile Security 8.0 has a RRP of R275 for a year license. For more info contact Sales at Biodata on 011-234-3650. (Also see our interview with Victor Dronov on p 24.)



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Advertorial AxxessDSL Internet Service Provider The ISP with a Difference



An Internet Service Provider (ISP) is an ISP is an ISP, right?

his may be true of the average South African ISP, but with an innovative product line-up, award-winning service standards and the most aggressive pricing structure in the business, there is good reason for AxxessDSL's position as one of SA's four leading independent ISPs.

At its core, AxxessDSL sells and supports bandwidth products nationwide to its growing customer network; offering shaped and semi-shaped ADSL packages. Their ADSL bandwidth prices start from as little as R10 per GB, while they offer several month-to-month accounts and innovative Prepaid Vouchers for home users on a budget.

AxxessDSL continuously strives to offer their customers value-for-money service while exceeding their needs and expectations with faster Internet connectivity. Their list of services also includes website design and hosting, Wi-Fi Hotspots, and bulk SMS services.

AxxessDSL sales and support centres are open 24/7 and can be reached on 0861-300-900. Find them online at www.internet.co.za.



creative 🏵

Thanks to the PC and the Net many people are turning their backs on the old "all rights reserved" paradigm and embracing Creative Commons.

T n the past there was a small group of people that I monopolised the primary channels that information was distributed through. The people in charge of the newspapers, television channels, movie production houses and record companies had the power to decide what was broadcasted and when.

This power is quickly becoming diluted, as it is far easier now for anyone with a PC to become a content producer. Thanks to the Internet these producers have new and varied platforms on which to publish and distribute their content. Web services, such as YouTube, Flickr, Blogger and MySpace, have created channels through which user generated content can be disseminated and freely consumed. These services really do point the way forward to a new kind of publishing.

© too Restrictive

What the Internet has exposed is that the old, "all rights reserved" copyright paradigm, is too restrictive. It does not legally allow others to use, rebuild, remix and add on to copyrighted works (not that it is really a deterrent if you look at what's available on YouTube). According to Tobias Schoenwetter, Legal Lead of Creative Commons South Africa, "all-rightsreserved"-copyright often prevents gaining exposure and widespread distribution since it is simply too complicated. "For many



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Creative Commons THE BIG ISSUE 33

creators, sharing their works and thereby contributing to and participating in an intellectual commons to learn, get recognition and help others, are the main incentives for their creative activities - not a potential financial gain," says Schoenwetter

What CC offers

Because of this many people are turning to Creative Commons (CC). CC sets out to bridge the restrictive usage of copyright by providing an alternative in the way creative work can be licensed. According to Schoenwetter, 2008 saw an estimated 130 million works worldwide licensed under Creative Commons. By releasing work under a CC license you define the copyright on your creation by setting certain limits on how your work can be used.

There are 6 types of licenses available which can be viewed at http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses. The licenses available allow for commercial use of your work or restrict it. They allow for any form of modification to your work by third parties and the terms under which such modifications can be made. It may sound complicated but it is really as simple as going to creativecommons.org/license/ and answering a few questions to see which license suits your needs. One of the most accommodating licenses is the

"Attribution Share Alike" license; this allows anyone to use and build upon or your work, even for commercial purposes, as long as you are credited, and the resulting work is released under the same license.

If you want to learn more about CC or want to find CC licensed work, check out www.creativecommons.org. [This article is published under the CC Attribution Share Alike License.]

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Reduce your Spam



Written by Lance Terner, a 12-year Internet industry veteran and Chief Executive of Branded Internet – listed as one of SA's Top 50 ICTe Companies 2005/6 + 2006/7.

You must at some point or another have received spam and know the frustration

and annoyance associated with it. Is it possible to stop spam entirely? Probably not, but with some simple precautions and software available online you can significantly reduce it.

An important step to take is to install Anti-Spam software, Awhich will automatically "junk" suspect email. There are mainly two main types – some delete mail on the server and some delete mail on your home computer. The nice thing about programs which delete mail directly on the server is that it is done before you have to wait (and pay) to download spam. These are my recommendations for Anti-Spam programs:

• MailWasher -

http://www.mailwasher.net/

Like with many software tools on the net, MailWasher comes in a free version and a paid-for pro version. The great thing about the free version is it is completely free, never expires and will work with



almost any email program. MailWasher works by deleting spam before it is downloaded to your computer.

• MailFrontier Desktop – http://tinyurl.com/55o5y MailFrontier automatically learns what email you like and dislike. In this way its performance improves the more you use it. This program is really easy to install and use as a 30-day free trial.

Spam Bully -

http://www.spambully.com/ Spam Bully has a range of automated spam identification tools, and generally gets good results. One of the features I like most is the toolbar which integrates into your mail program, so you can

classify and manage your emails quickly and easily. 14-day free trial.

• Cloudmark Desktop –

http://tinyurl.com/y98obj Cloudmark pioneered community-based spam filtering; its community now over a million strong. This feature is very powerful as PC users are themselves

identifying potential spam. There are versions for Outlook, Outlook Express, Thunderbird and Windows Mail. 15-day free trial.

You can also reduce spam by simply following these Golden Rules:

- Don't reply, EVER! Don't even click on a link! If you do then the spammer knows you exist and that they get your attention, in which case your address is on the spam list.
- NEVER buy anything from a spammer. Firstly, don't make it worth their efforts, and secondly you'll only end up getting even more spam once they know that you buy.
- Make use of a secondary email address that you won't mind getting spammed when signing on for services on the

If you have any questions or queries drop me a mail, lance@brandedinternet.co.za.

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Tilt Shift Maker ilt-shift photography is the art of making the people and objects in a landscape photo look like little toy figures (visit the Flickr tilt-shift

35

group here http://tinyurl.com/yohrfn).

You're able to do this with either a very expensive tilt-shift lens, or a

fair amount of Photoshop skills. Or not. Tilt Shift Maker is a little Java applet that will give your images the exact tilt-shift look it takes other hours, or a lot of bucks, to perfect. Simply select the photo you want and within a few minutes Tilt Shift goodness awaits. http://tiltshiftmaker.com/

Stripgenerator



▲ Iways wanted to make your own Hcomic strip, but did not quite possess the Drawing 101 skills necessary to get past the first panel? Stripgenerator takes away all this drawing non-sense to give you a quick and easy way to make your own comic strip. Choose from

the different pre-designed characters, grab some speech bubbles, put in the text and voila - you are one step closer to being the next Charles M. Schulz. http://stripgenerator.com/



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Wikipedia Weird and Wonderful

The strange world of MC Escher http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M._C._Escher



Fractals within fractals within fractals http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fractals

The Swedish UFO memorial http://tinyurl.com/mtg69k

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GAMES

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Wii MotionPlus Delivering on Promises

Many were disappointed by the Wii. It promised motion-sensitive gaming when it was released but didn't guite live up to expectations regarding sensitivity.

Nintendo finally delivered on the motion-sensitive promise last month with the launch of the Wii MotionPlus (WMP).

We got the add-on bundled with EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis. While we weren't overly impressed with the game, the add-on breathed new life into the Wiimote.

The accessory actually delivers on 1:1 response. You can spin, slice or flat hit shots and accurately direct them. However, the accessory doesn't really receive a proper testimonial based on its integration with

Red Faction: Guerrilla

nning Hearts and Minds



36

The art of revolution rests at the heart of Volition's **Red Faction: Guerrilla** (RFG). You are Alec Mason, a miner on Mars whose

rebel brother is killed by the oppressive Earth Defense Force (EDF). For obvious reasons you join the freedom fighters/ terrorists with which your brother was affiliated.

RFG captures the dichotomy of asymmetric warfare convincingly; the use of guerrilla tactics and winning the support of the common folk being essential to your success.

The game is an open world, third-person shooter. Consequently you roam a large map picking up missions and side-missions – your over-riding objective to destroy EDF property and gain support for your cause.

While completing various missions you need to collect Salvage, the game's currency, found in the ruins of destroyed buildings. Salvage lets you purchase or unlock weapons and tools which ultimately allow you to destroy more strategic, and therefore more heavily guarded, targets. While the game's Martian landscape is rather

dull, as is to be expected, its Geo Mod 2.0 engine makes destruction sequences look and feel amazing. The engine allows for the near total destruction of any structure, in a realistic manner. To demolish a building you need to destroy its essential support structures. Just remember this when you decide to take cover from the EDF behind walls and other objects, as it works both ways.

I found little fault with the game. Frame-rates were solid, gameplay immersive and the control scheme logical. While missions can become repetitive they are always fun. Add to this a decent multiplayer offering and the game is a winner. [TM]



Grand Slam Tennis. So we'll just have to wait for next month's launch of Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10 and Wii Sports Resort to make a more informed judgement.

What we can say is that the WMP is easy to attach to the Wiimote, doesn't add too much bulk and generally feels comfortable. The bad news is that the WMP is more like a patch than an accessory. This means that buying it will basically become obligatory if you want to play future Wii titles. R350 (incl VAT).

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> **Competition runs from** 1 - 31 July 2009

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Prototype Shapeshifting Bio-weirdness

Some people have said that Prototype is too easy a game. What a total lie.

 ${f I}$ found it the perfect level of difficulty. It's hard enough to challenge you just the right amount so that you don't get bored, but not so difficult that you throw the wireless controller through the 40" Bravia. And it's entertaining. In fact, it's so entertaining I played for 20 hours straight and was still keen for more.

I suspect it's because Alex Mercer, the main character, is a fox and is on Parkour steroids. He can literally jump over buildings and fences and can morph into all sort of weird, albeit creepy stuff. Even other people, consuming them in the street while running. Seriously, you can literally grab onto a person, yank them to you, run up a building while holding onto them, and then consume them on top of the highest skyscraper. It's pretty hectic. Alex has to find out what caused an

outbreak of a virus that's infecting people and making them stumble around like zombies, attacking others. I'm no conspiracy theorist, but I don't think it

was an accident, since the government and military are all over the place. His sister is his anchor, and she tells him where to go next and who to talk to. On top of all this investigating, you have to beat down a whole host of freaky adversaries, such as hunters. They are ugly weird creatures, and difficult to kill, since they follow you everywhere once they've caught sight of you. Importantly though, you get to upgrade your bio-weapons; the more things you do, missions finished, tanks exploded, the more credit you get to

make your ultra-powers more lethal, your hammerfists more deadly, and extend your ground spike's range. The only weirdish thing is the timeline. I got a bit confused as you start at day 18, then pop all the way back to the beginning and then flip back to 18 to talk to a mystery character. I guess it could be the blonde showing through, but it's still a fantastic, awesome game worth hitting if you get chance.

Prototype is kind of like playing a thriller-horror movie, but better. Less horror-ey though, more action and shool ing and eating and flying helicopters and driving tanks over civilians. That's what it's all about essentially. Prototype SO much fun. Buy it. Play it. You'll see. [ZK]

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38

E3 2009 Round-up Your Gaming Shopping List... **Just got Longer!**

Conventions

Held every year in LA, E3 is the world's best known gaming expo. Attracting the industry's leading game developers, platform developers and tens-of-thousands of gamers, E3 is arguably also the industries most spectacular event. This is what gamers can look forward to in the next year.

Project Natal

E3 got off to a bang with Microsoft announcing Project Natal, a motion sensing camera and voice activated controller for the Xbox 360. Film director Steven Spielberg, who attended the launch, said the demonstration of the control system was "a pivotal moment that will carry with it a wave of change, the ripples of which will reach far beyond video games", the Hollywood veteran being just vague enough to sound credible. On the games front Microsoft announced the upcoming release of Metal Gear Solid: Rising, Left 4 Dead 2, Crackdown 2, Halo Reach, and Forza 3.

PSP Go is go

Sony had much of its thunder stolen by Microsoft's motion-sensing camera, and the early news leak of its DS-Lite competitor the PSP Go. It still managed to put in a good showing, and unveiled its own motionsensing controller and announced the impending release of Final Fantasy XIV Online, Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker, and The Last Guardian.

Mario Everywhere

Nintendo, having announced their motionsensing offering last year, made a number of game announcements. Predictably, most of these were **Mario** titles, including *Super Mario* Galaxy 2, Mario vs. Donkey Kong, Mario and Luigi RPG: Bowser's Inside Story and New Super Mario Bros. 2. Their most exciting announcement, however, was *Metroid*: Other M, a third person action adventure.

The Best of the Best

The other big title announcements were God of War III - the first run the GoW franchise will get on the PS3, and The Beatles: Rock Band (check out the amazing preview video here - www.thebeatlesrockband.com). The number of title announcements this year was mind boggling, and you can be sure that it will make up the bulk of the gaming gear you'll want to get your hands on.

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