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TECH OUTDOORS



This September we have a lot to celebrate at *TechSmart*. Not only is spring here but we've also been certified for distributing 99 091 copies per month by the Audit Bureau of Circulation, making us officially the largest Consumer SciTech publication in the country by far. **TechSmart.co.za** is also growing at a searing pace, receiving more than a 1000 visitors a day. Thanks for your support, and we

must say we're having a blast bringing you all the top tech.

Seeing as it's our outdoor issue we interview adventurer and all round nice guy Riaan Manser, who just returned from kayaking round Madagascar. There's also our review of the beautiful Apple iPhone 3G S and we talk to 702's Aki Anastasiou, our Top Tech Tweeter, about life in the social media fast lane.

Mike Joubert <michael@techsmart.co.za>
I'm holding HP's multi-touch tx2 tablet PC (review on p18).

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Editor
Mike Joubert > 083-290-2889
michael@techsmart.co.za
Executive Editor
Suzanne Grobler > 083-742-6370
suzanne@smartpublishing.co.za
Business Manager
George Grobler > 083-460-0402
george@smartpublishing.co.za
Advertising
Suzanne Grobler > 083-742-6370
suzanne@smartpublishing.co.za
Hein Slabbert > 082-442-8607
hein@smartpublishing.co.za
Anelda Strauss > 083-748-3413
anelda@smartpublishing.co.za
Designer & Layout Brett Wilson
Contributors Mike Joubert [MJ], Thomas McKinnon [TM], Linda Pretorius [LP], Zombie Kitty [ZK], Johan Bouwer [JB], Andrew Gould [AG]
Accounts & Subscriptions
Ronel Keet > 012-362-2732
Online Editor
Thomas McKinnon
thomas@techsmart.co.za

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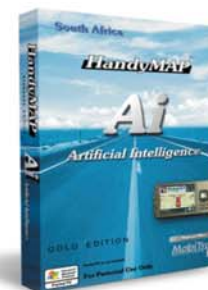
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Last month we asked: **What are your concerns about the Rica Act? We received some interesting replies.**

Letter of the Month

Dear TechSmart,

In principal I don't have a problem with Rica – a set of laws to make South Africa safer. The problem, as always, is enforcement. In South Africa, we don't have a culture of obeying laws. We don't have a culture of enforcing them either.

I see a similar thing happening with Rica. The timelines are too short. The number of SIM cards too many. The procedures too cumbersome. The penalties too harsh... And the number of law abiding cellphone users are multi-tudinous! If I sell or lose my phone, there ain't no ways in Hades I'll be able to comply with the exact requirements of Rica. By extension, this will eventually make a felon of every South African with a cellphone.

The sole purpose of government is to provide an environment in which good business can take place. Under this definition, Rica is a bonehead of a plan. Our government should be spending their time, energy, and finances enforcing the laws we already have, instead of making new laws that are impossible to implement.

Adam Phillips



*Hi Adam,
The amount of letters we received on Rica was astounding, all of them fairly pessimistic. We have to see what president the courts create when ordinary citizens start facing criminal prosecution thanks to not reporting stolen or lost SIM cards. Congrats with winning the Lexmark X6675 wireless 4-in-1 (with a 5-year guarantee), sponsored by Lexmark. –Mike*

Hi TS,

There are many positives that could've come from this, but for now the only people who will not be affected by this new Act are the actual criminals! I mean, now I lose my phone or it's stolen and I don't report it, then suddenly I'm a criminal! What's the point of reporting it? So now the cops know that my phone has been stolen and been used, then what? To my knowledge, SIM cards stay active for a long time after having been blacklisted even. So the only result of this whole Act is innocent people being inconvenienced and possibly fined or jailed, while the criminals still run riot! It is a noble idea and obviously there will be some speed bumps, but this Act should have been refined far more before being made public like this.

Denzil van der Merwe

LEXMARK

Fast Fact

What does AIO or MFP mean?
All-in-One or multi-function refers to the additional functions like fax, photo, scan and copy, these printers offer.



Question:

What can we change on www.techsmart.co.za to make it better? Share your thoughts by emailing us on info@techsmart.co.za.

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Real men don't drink pink drinks, they take a kayak and paddle 5000 km round Madagascar. Riaan Manser rose to fame when he trekked around Africa on a bike, and his latest adventure in Madagascar proved just as challenging. He talks to us about finding your way in a storm, grannies in Simon's Town and manual tooth extraction.



What piece of technology was vital to the success of your journey?

My Garmin GPS. Geez, it still amazes me how they work so effectively in even the harshest conditions. Many times I'd be 10 km out in open sea; on the little 5 m kayak of course; during vicious storms and all I could rely on with accuracy was my Garmin to tell me where I was and what direction I should be paddling in!

What video camera did you use?

Sony South Africa came onboard in a grand way and made sure I had the best HD handycams available. The quality of the footage speaks for itself. The waterproof housings though were what Sony really wanted tested. And trust me, they were tested properly. I can break anything! National Geographic are putting together the three part series. HD quality still amazes me. How can things just keep getting more and more real?

On your trip you extracted one of your teeth using your Leatherman. Any tips on doing this?

Leathermans don't get used properly in my opinion. Stop reading the brochure on where they are best applied. They should be creatively employed in solving the most technical of dilemmas, even if that means pulling a tooth!

You have an excellent web presence – you're on Twitter, YouTube and you have your own Facebook group. Do you take care of this yourself?

My manager Seamus Reynolds sometimes gets me to dictate a quick update to him. He's shown me the power of keeping your audience close to you and then how almost accidentally your target market can expand. Grannies in Simon's Town to Grade 1 kids in New York now follow what I'm up to in my life.

We see Windhoek Lager is one of your sponsors. Did they at least stock you up on beer along the route?

No such luck, Windhoek Lager promote responsible consumption; a guy on kayak, alone out at sea, should not be encouraged to drink!

Seriously though Windhoek Lager has been good to me. Our relationship has developed over the last eight years and we'll still do lots more work together in the future. I just love the new Draught in the bottle. That's definitely my style.

Read Riaan's full interview on www.techsmart.co.za or follow him on Twitter @riaanmanser.

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\$21 billion. The cost of a Japanese project to build a giant solar-power generator in space. <http://tinyurl.com/techsept>

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*Conditions apply. Panasonic recommends Windows Vista™ Business

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Google snapping SA streets



Smile if you see a Toyota Prius snapping pictures in your street, since they're most probably collecting imagery for

Google Street View. Google has started street-level photography in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth and Durban and will make these images available at a later date in Street View on Google Maps for South Africa.

Free Music for a Year

How does free, legal, music for a year sound? Buy any of Nokia's Comes with Music phones (XpressMusic 5130, 5530 and 5630) and you get unlimited downloads from the Nokia Music Store with its selection of over 5 million tracks, for one year. Yours to keep on your phone and one dedicated PC. There goes the monthly bandwidth cap then.

"Epidural, yes please."

Technology has completely and utterly taken over our lives. As confirmation of this Sara Morishige Williams, wife of Twitter CEO Evan Williams, kept her followers updated during the birth of her son by tweeting the event on her iPhone, all while timing her contractions using an iPhone app. Her most memorable tweet? "Epidural, yes please." Fortunately no YouTube video was posted.

News in Very Short

- A judge in Eastern Texas ruled that Microsoft violated an XML patent held by Canadian company i4i and ordered a stop to shipments of their popular Word.
- If you buy a qualifying Windows Vista-based Acer desktop or notebook between now and January 31st 2010, you will be able to get a free licence for Windows 7 once it is released.

- Google has opened a developer's preview to an upgraded version of its search code named "Caffeine". Check it out here www2.sandbox.google.com/.

Hot New Tech

Nokia Booklet 3G netbook

As if the world of cellphones wasn't enough, Nokia is now branching off into PCs. The Nokia Booklet 3G is a sweet looking aluminium netbook with a 10" HD ready display, A-GPS and an HDMI port. It also boasts impressive connectivity options including Wi-Fi and 3G/ HSDPA.



Nikon COOLPIX S1000pj

Just another compact camera? Think again. The 12 megapixel COOLPIX S1000pj comes with built-in projector that can project images of up to 40".

Sony PS3 Slim

"Bulky" cannot be levelled as criticism against the PS3 anymore since Sony announced the PS3 Slim. It is 32% smaller, 36% lighter and consumes 34% less power.



The Beatles: Rock Band

By the time you read this *The Beatles: Rock Band* should have been released. We can't wait to play along with Ringo and the three others on remakes of their original instruments. There is no truth in the rumours that a life-size Yoko Ono doll will be sold separately.

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African Engineers

Here's yet more reason to be proudly South African. According to a report in an August issue of the journal *Science*, humans in southern Africa have ingeniously been using fire during tool making from as early as 72 000 years

ago. Evidence from an archeological excavation just off the coast of Mossel Bay shows that controlled fire was used to induce structural changes in a stone, called silcrete, to make better stone tools. In its natural state silcrete does not flake easily and so is a poor raw material for tools. After heating, however, it can be easily chipped to create a thin, sharp tool blade. It was previously thought that humans only made the link between fire and the tool making benefits, that came with heat-induced structural changes, to stone around 25 000 years ago. The researchers think that this engineering skill may have helped humans to conquer the colder Eurasian environment when they moved out of Africa. Seems South African engineers have long had sought-after skills.



Gassy Days

If you think there just isn't enough time in your day, be thankful that you're not on Saturn. According to an article recently published in the journal *Nature*, a day on Saturn is even shorter than previously thought – by a whole five minutes.

Because Saturn is a gassy planet (as opposed to a solid planet like Earth) it's difficult to measure the planet's rotation around its axis. Scientists previously tracked the movement of ammonia clouds in Saturn's atmosphere to estimate the length of a Saturn day at just over 10-and-a-half hours. However, with new infrared data of gas movement deep inside

1.1%: IE's loss of market share this year: <http://tinyurl.com/techsept>

the planet, they built a 3-D map of Saturn's winds. This showed large waves and eddies that develop in the planet's atmosphere according to its rotation. Although a five-minute shortening doesn't sound like much, it means that wind speed estimates may be out by more than 270 km/h! A gassy planet is a windy place...



Gecko Grip

I'm sure James Bond would love to have his car fitted with a traction control system that automatically knows when to deploy. Yet it seems nature is one step ahead of Q. Scientists write in a recent issue of the journal *Proceedings of the*

Royal Society B, that they now know why geckos can run up a wall so sure-footedly. The team studied geckos' movement behaviour at various inclines. At angles of more than 30 degrees all the animals in the study group used tiny bristle-like hairs beneath their toes to anchor them to the surface. But there's more: some animals already activated the system at a 10 degree incline, despite losing quite a bit of speed. It seems that the combination of body orientation and need for speed determine whether the traction control system will deploy. The team hopes to use these insights for commercial applications in space exploration or medical procedures. Take that James Bond!

For a cool TED video exploring the movement of geckos visit: <http://tinyurl.com/nbd8rs> [LP]

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A Gadget Guide for Bear's Crew

If you've ever watched *Ultimate Survival* on Discovery you'll know that Bear Grylls is the world's hardest man. But, while he may often be stranded in some inhospitable environment with little choice but to live off the land, his crew still need a few luxuries to keep themselves fed and occupied. We've got a few suggestions for their next shoot.

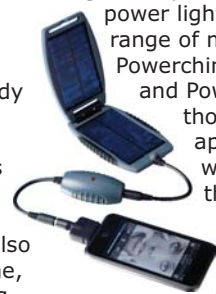


Iridium 9555 Satellite Phone

While Bear never needs to phone home, his crew would be in a spot of trouble if they failed to check in with the old lady once or twice a day. Iridium's 9555 can make calls from "anywhere to everywhere," which is pretty handy when stuck in the world's sweatiest orifices. Compact as far as sat phones go, the 9555 also features an integrated speakerphone, improved SMS and email messaging. **R12 799** (excl VAT) from Satellite Communication on 011-402-1166.

Ape Chargers

A gaggle of gadgets generally needs a little juice to keep the power lights glowing. The G.A.D.G.E.T. Shop's range of mobile chargers, including the Powerchimp (**R399**), Solarmonkey (**R599**) and Powergorilla (**R2399**), are ideal for those power emergencies. When not aping about on location the crew would be best served by keeping their portable chargers juiced for a shoot since all of these products can work in tandem to recharge each other. God forbid the sat phone dies and the missus tries to call. Phone them on 012-346-2726 or visit www.thegadgetshop.co.za.



Panasonic Toughbook U1

What better place to update your Facebook out in the wild than on the ultra-portable Panasonic Toughbook U1? Extremely rugged, there is no other PC able to withstand the bumps and bruises associated with Bear's hard-knock life. If the going gets tough the Toughbook can even be used as a weapon, since it is certified to withstand knocks associated with a 2 m drop. From **R21 800**, call Kirsten Rossouw from Panasonic on 011-313-1618.



Canon PowerShot G11 and Pentax Optio W80

A few pics for the family never goes amiss when travelling on business. So Bear's crew would need a rugged camera or two. Canon's G11 will do the trick for those landscape shots, while the Pentax's shock-, dust- and water-proof Optio W80 is ideal for those more awkward submerged-in-water/ hanging-from-a-tree shots. Get the G11 for **R6227** and Optio W80 for **R3949** from Have2have.co.za.



CADAC Patio Lifestyler Optio W80

If you can cart about camera equipment you can cart about a decent braai. Our recommendation is the 2-in-1 CADAC Patio Lifestyler. Part gas BBQ, part charcoal kettle braai, this behemoth is big enough and versatile enough to cook any dead animal Bear finds. **R6999** to **R7499** from Makro.



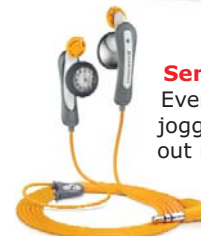
Tech we Talk about when we Talk about Running

Spring is here and its time to hit the road to shed those winter kilos. This is the gear to do it in.



Nike LunarGlide+ running shoes

Nike reckons choosing between stability or cushioning is a thing of the past with their impressive LunarGlide+ shoes. Thanks to the Dynamic Support mid-sole architecture, runners get the best of both. This doesn't mean you can skip Tuesday's fartlek, though.



Sennheiser MX 85 Sport II earphones

Ever tried wearing in-ear earphones while jogging? You ran about 40 m before they dropped out right? Try the sweat-resistant Sennheiser MX 85 Sport II earphones with their excellent twist-to-fit system. **R555** from www.igear.co.za.



Garmin Forerunner 405CX GPS watch

Garmin makes it dead easy to keep up do date with your training stats with the 405CX. It not only tracks your distance, pace and heart rate, but also sends it wirelessly to your PC. If you know any other Forerunner 405 users you can share advanced workouts and courses with them wirelessly. **R3769** from www.shopmania.co.za.



Nokia Sport Tracker

If you have a Nokia cellphone with GPS you'll most probably be able to download Nokia Sport Tracker to your handset. It is the best thing that happened to our training since getting a Wii. This app is an excellent way to keep track of your training as it records your route and laps, plus you're able to keep an online training diary on the Sport Tracker website. Check it out at <http://sportstracker.nokia.com>.



Salomon XT Wings trail-running shoes

It got the *Runner's World* magazine Editor's Pick in a recent trail running shoe round-up, and with big words like Sensifit, Ortholite, Kevlar, thermoplastic, Contagrip and Agile Chassis System making up the product description, it must be good. **R1350** from www.capeunionmart.co.za.

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Samsung's rugged B2100 is both dust and shock resistant, contains a flashlight, has good noise cancellation, and is submersible up to 1 m for 30 minutes.

So it ticks all the correct boxes for outdoor usage, but what else?

Well not much unfortunately, not even GPS. At least the old dependable Nokia 5140 had a digital compass, a small spirit level, thermometer and a sound meter, and that was five years ago. The Samsung contains none of these nifty little features. In its defense it does have excellent battery life, an MP3 player with good external speakers (although no 3.5mm jack for your own earphones) and a microSD card expansion slot. But its 1.3 megapixel camera is nothing to write home about, and that doubles for the small, pixelated TFT screen.

If we were given a choice between the five year old Nokia 5140 and the new Samsung B2100, we might just stick with the Nokia. That said the B2100 does exactly what it was designed to do, and yes, we did submerge it in water and it worked fine afterwards. RRP: **R1399**



HTC Snap Playing their cards right

A new iPhone 3Gs or Nokia N97 is nice; but let's face it these phones are in a specific price bracket, namely expensive. HTC's new Snap is their entry level Windows Mobile based smartphone, and as far as we're concerned it's a pretty decent piece of work.

On the connectivity side the Snap delivers both HSDPA and Wi-Fi, a feature some pricier phones don't even include. A-GPS is included, but there is unfortunately no navigation software loaded except for Google Maps. If you want to edit documents Office Mobile allows you to, but you can't create documents from scratch.

Compared to other recently tested Windows Mobile 6.1 phones we enjoyed the HTC Snap a lot more. Firstly because of its excellent battery life, but it's also a smarter looking phone and includes Wi-Fi, although it was a struggle to connect it. One thing though remains the same: we just can't take a liking to Windows 6.1.

We can't wait for Windows Mobile 6.5, which with a bit of luck will be here in October according to the folks at Leaf, and better still with a Windows Mobile app market in tow. RRP: **R5347**



2 million. The number of N97's Nokia has already shipped worldwide. <http://tinyurl.com/techsept>

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iPhone

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iPhone 3G S

The new best device ever made

Many celebrated last year's iPhone 3G as the single greatest multimedia device ever created. Applause for the App Store was emphatic, 3G connectivity was received with cheers and multi-touch was trumpeted.

For all the fanfare the 3G did have its shortcomings, especially with simple things like cutting, copying and pasting text, sending MMSs and taking anything resembling a decent photo. Hence the release of the 3G S.

While there is little or no cosmetic difference between the two devices, Apple has done a lot of work on the hardware and OS, with the "S" in iPhone 3G S standing for speed.

Hardware

The first thing you'll notice is the larger storage options as you now have the option of 16 GB and 32 GB. The other bit of news is that the RAM and processor have been seriously upgraded. The 3G S features 256 MB of RAM and a 600 MHz CPU. These additions, along with the OS update, mean that it is considerably quicker at opening apps and performing tasks than the 3G, twice as fast if Apple is to be believed.

In terms of browsing and download speeds the 3G S offers HSDPA 7.2 Mbps transfer speeds and Wi-Fi 802.11b/g, so its HSDPA speed is an improvement over the 3G while the wireless is exactly the same. Consequently your browsing and download speeds are also significantly improved. [cont p17](#)



Camera

The 3G S features a 3 megapixel camera as opposed to the 3G's paltry 2 megapixel offering. While this is an improvement, especially the ability to capture video, it still isn't particularly impressive. There is still no flash or zoom functionality.

Other hardware features include the addition of a digital compass and better battery life. While the compass is very nifty, integrating well with Google Maps, the battery life is nothing to write home about as we hardly got a full days use out of it.

iPhone 3.0 OS

The iPhone 3.0 OS makes good on a number of the 3G's shortcomings. You can now MMS, although we agree with Mr. Jobs that emailing is a better application for sending images. Cutting, copying and pasting text, as well as images, is also incredibly simple to do. We actually had more fun playing with the "shake to undo" function which literally sees you shaking the phone to deselect what you wanted to cut or copy in the first place.

Another feature that caught our attention was Voice Control, which you activate by holding the home button and vocalising your desire. You can use Voice Control to select music and call contacts or dial numbers.



10 + 1 Things We Hate About i

- We hate that you can't multi-task.
- We hate its poor battery life and that you can't remove it.
- We hate the way the SIM card is inserted.
- We hate that it doesn't support Flash Lite.
- We hate its price tag.
- We hate that it doesn't have USB transfer.
- We hate its flash-less, zoom-less 3 megapixel camera.
- We hate that there is still no SA iTunes store.
- We hate that credit card details are a must for the App Store, even for free apps.
- We hate it that it doesn't include GPS navigation software.
- We hate that none of this matter, it's still an awesome phone.

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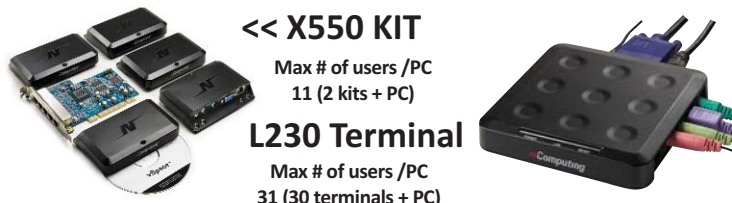
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HP TouchSmart tx2 Tablet PC All in the Touch



Since their inception tablet PCs have been given a bit of a bad wrap. Can HP change their fortune with the multi-touch capable tx2?

Up till now tablets have had very limited appeal in the marketplace. HP is trying to change all this with their TouchSmart tx2 notebook (yes they call it a notebook, but trust us it's a tablet). The ace up their sleeve is the 12.1" TouchSmart multi-touch screen, in fact, HP is marketing the tx2 as the world's first multi-touch consumer notebook. What HP's multi-touch affords you is the ability to use two fingers to for example stretch a photo, turn it around and zoom into it. We've seen this technology before on the iPhone, BlackBerry Storm and MacBook, and it was good to experience this on a Windows based notebook. It really shines in MediaSmart Photo and MediaSmart World, two exclusive HP creations where you can play around with your pics, and a Google World like globe respectively. Apart from this though the practical usage of multi-touch is very limited.

Specs

The tx2 isn't cheap, it retails at a hefty **R14 999**, so we were glad to see HP didn't skimp on specs and added extras. Ours came with a spacious 320 GB hard disk, a solid 3072 MB of DDR2 RAM, and ran on the commendable AMD Turion X2 2.2 GHz dual-core processor. Of course it has Wi-Fi and a bunch of multimedia extras such as a webcam, a mini remote and 5-in-1 media reader. We appreciated the inclusion of an extra 4-cell battery with the regular 8-cell one, and the ATI Mobility Radeon HD 3200 graphics card came in very handy. What we missed though was an HDMI port to connect it to HD equipment.

The machine HP sent us came with Windows 7 nopal, but it's expected that it will run on Vista Home Premium.

Battery

The tx2's build quality is really solid and it comes across as a very robust machine with a nicely designed skin. The tx2 though is not a netbook in weight, and at more than 2 kg it gets a bit hefty carrying around.

Overall

If rumours of an Apple tablet are true we can expect a rise in the popularity of tablets soon. When this happens the HP is set up nicely to become the leaders of the Windows tablet pack. With the tx2's multi-touch, HP is giving us a glimpse into the future and we suspect that this technology will become ubiquitous on tablets. The tx2 is a very good notebook, but if you buy it for its multi-touch experience it will leave you disappointed. **R14 999** at the HP Experience Store in Sandton on 0861-746-747. [MJ]

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Acer Veriton N260G Rethinking the Desktop

The Acer Veriton N260G ultra light PC is what some are calling a nettop, basically a small form factor desktop doing for PCs what the netbook did for notebooks, well sort of. With dimensions of just 192 x 192 x 36 mm the N260G is a revelation in desktop computing.

The N260G has an Intel N280 1.66 GHz Atom processor, an Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 4500M, 1 GB of RAM and a 160 GB hard drive. This is on par with what is currently being fitted in netbooks.

The one feature that Acer is pushing is the N260G's VESA Mounting Interface Standard (MIS) which allows you to snap the neat diamond shaped case onto the back of an LCD display. Notably the machine offer an HDMI output (although it struggled with HD video), and also six USB 2.0 ports and a 4-in-1 multi-card reader.

While all this may sound a little underwhelming, it isn't. Put all of those specs together and you have yourself a rather versatile machine. The Veriton N260G has an RRP of **R4999**. Call Tarsus on 011-531-1000 for more information.



Evtech Intel Core i7 Custom Built Power PC Punch Packer

The Intel Core i7 processor is the go-to CPU for multi-tasking, thanks not only to its vicious processing power but also its intelligent threading.

The i7 920 (2.66 GHz, 8 MB L3 Cache) CPU is at the core of Evtech's Custom Built Power PC, available for **R9499** (incl VAT). The i7 PC is the cheapest in Evtech's line, and it's ideal for graphic intensive work such as 3D rendering, movie editing and graphic design. Onboard is an impressive array of tech, including Kingston 4 GB 1333 Mhz DDR3 RAM, a Seagate 500 GB SATA 2 7200 rpm hard drive, an X58 chipset motherboard and the NVIDIA Geforce 9600GT 512 MB graphics card (you would have to pay extra for the OS).

During our tests we found the system to be very stable, with a rock-solid board offering good expansion options. Gamers might find the Geforce 9600GT a bit lacking (you can upgrade the graphics card before ordering) but for graphic intensive work that requires a lot of processing power, this PC is ideal. It comes with a decent 24-month warranty, and is available from www.evtech.co.za or on 012-326-6547.



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The Edimax 802.11b/g 3G Broadband Router and Print Server offers a trifecta of benefits.



It can be used as a conventional DSL wired or wireless router, it can be used to share a 3G connection and/or used as a print server. [Note the device is purely a router: there is not telephone line port so you still need a DSL modem].

We found the setup process straight forward and further management of the device an easy affair. Its EZView interface allows you to manage its settings locally or remotely.

Perhaps its most interesting application is its use as a 3G router. By connecting a 3G modem via USB you are able to share the connection via a network. This makes it incredibly handy to cart about with you to trade shows or other locations where a number of colleagues need to connect in a make-shift manner.

In terms of office use it is also possible to configure automatic fail-over on the device whereby a 3G connection can be used to back-up a DSL connection or vice versa should either go down. The router also lets network users share a printer by connecting a printer via USB.

Its versatility and build quality make it a commendable device, get it from Miro on 086-123-6476 for **R523** (excl VAT).

Billion BiPAC 2073N Wireless-N HomePlug

To the Nth

Last year we reviewed the BiPAC 2072 HomePlug AV 200. As an Ethernet Bridge it's used it to create a network through your power lines which is handy since you no longer need to trail cables all over the place or setup a wireless connection.



We just got our hands on Billion's Wireless-N HomePlug AV200 which combines a high-speed wireless 'N' access point with a Homeplug AV adapter. When used in conjunction with an existing home network like the one we created, you can create a mini-wireless 'N' hotspot.

This proves useful if you want to extend your wireless coverage, for instance to an outbuilding, or remove dead zones in your office or home that may be created by thick walls.

The first thing we noticed about the device is its intelligent design. With accessible buttons on its face you can sync the device with the network and even set up encrypted networks. This negates the need for loading software on your PC to achieve the same result. In all we were pleased with its performance especially its noise-immune data transmission which prevents transmission interruptions even if someone is using the power lines for what they were meant in the first place. Available from Nology on 012-657-1317 for **R1266** (excl VAT).

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Plustek OpticBook A300 Book Scanner By Book or by Crook

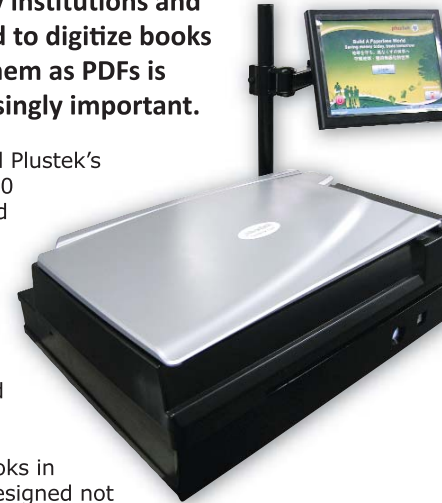
For many tertiary institutions and libraries the need to digitize books and to provide them as PDFs is becoming increasingly important.

With this in mind Plustek's OpticBook A300 book scanner should provide a much needed solution. This stand alone 24-bit colour scanner can scan pages up to A3 in size at a very decent speed of 2.4 seconds per page.

To keep thick books in tact it is specially designed not to put pressure on the spine thanks to a "book edge" that makes scanning one page at a time easy. Nobody said that scanning a 500 page book would be an easy task, but at least the large 11" LCD touch-panel provides a decent interface to help with scanning, cropping and watermarking documents.

The unit comes with an onboard PC which enables you to scan to email, USB flash memory, directly to the onboard memory or to a connected printer.

For more info on the Plustek OpticBook A300 book scanner contact ImageTEK on 011-608-1964.



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Easy LAN

The story that gamers don't get any exercise is an urban legend. Have you ever lugged around a computer from LAN party to LAN party? Sunbeam's LAN party bag is an easy solution to PC carrying problems. It comes in two parts and basically folds round a PC. While it doesn't really provide any protection for a PC, it does make the job of hauling it around easier. There are also pockets for your keyboard, cables, mouse and CDs. Available from PC Pro Shop for **R299** on 012-348-4000.



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SANYO Xacti HD2000 Dual Camera A Good Bit of Both

We started taking serious notice of the SANYO range of video cameras when they first introduced their neat underwater range.

They've made the news again with the world's first range of dual cameras capable of capturing both HD video and 8 megapixel still pictures. The FH1, is a more traditional horizontal cam-corder and also the world's smallest unit capable of this. We received the pistol gripped HD2000 for review, and it is capable of full HD video at a grand 60 fps and 1080i. SANYO calls it a dual camera since you're also capable of quickly and easily taking 8 megapixel pictures with the unit. Having said that the HD2000 is first and foremost a videocamera, and one that seriously impressed us with its HD video quality, playback options and a solid 10x optical zoom.

You're not going to get the still picture quality, or functionality, you would off a SLR, but the camera can stand its ground against most compact cameras, and can even be fitted with a conversion lens.

The HD2000 has an RRP of **R9500**. Call SANYO 011-304-6000 for more info.

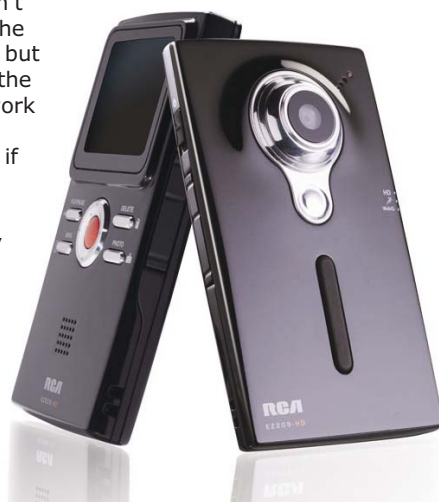


RCA Small Wonder EZ209HD Video Camera Video on the Trot

YouTube has led to the creation of a whole new class of video cameras. Lightweight and not too expensive, cameras like the Flip and Creative's Vado make shooting video for the Net easy.

RCA's Small Wonder range also falls into this category and the latest one in their stable is the EZ209HD. The EZ209HD is dead easy to use and it fits easily in the back pocket of your jeans. There are three shooting modes including HD which records video up to 1280 x 720 resolution in H.264 format. The Small Wonder's video quality isn't overly impressive, even the HD quality is a bit jittery, but if you're going to upload the videos to the Net it will work just fine.

We would have liked it if the Small Wonder came with a tripod mount to enable recording yourself, and the included Memory Manager software left us less than impressed. The RCA Small Wonder EZ209HD retails **R1499** from Computer Corporation on 08616-08616.



Mecer BT-135L Universal Battery A Friend in Need



Mecer's BT-135L universal battery is one handy piece of equipment, since it can provide your laptop with in excess of seven hours of extra power, while at the same time recharging the battery.

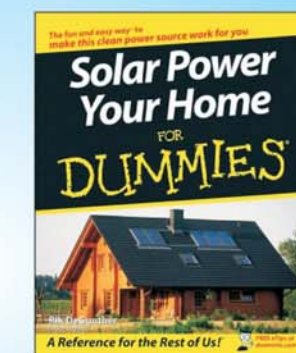
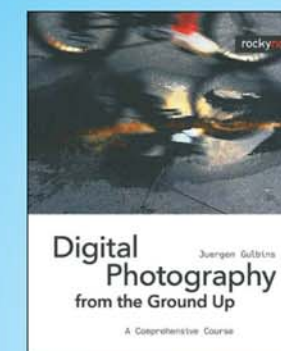
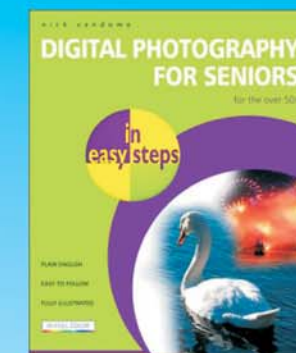
The BT-135L can also be used to charge other electronic equipment, such as video cameras, and it also comes with a USB out which will juice up all your gadgets that can be charged that way. Mecer included a range of connectors, although not ones that fit certain Lenovos. We liked the LCD indicator that displays the power remaining and voltage selected.

While the Mecer universal battery left us generally impressed the chord inputs and outputs are flimsy and easily disturbed leading to a disruption of power.

The value of the Mecer's Universal Battery should not be underestimated, and if you use a laptop a lot it can be that friend indeed.

From Computer Corporation on 08616-08616 for **R1099**.

Outdoor Know-How



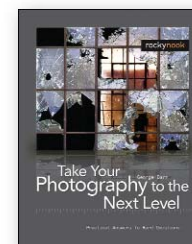
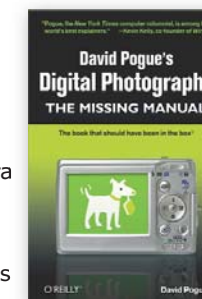
Digital Photography

BOOKS

Digital Photography: The Missing Manual

David Pogue, O'Reilly

When buying a new digital camera remember to also budget for a camera case, rechargeable batteries, at least 2GB worth of memory and David Pogue's excellent *Digital Photography: The Missing Manual*. As it rightly says on the cover: this is the book that should have been in the box. Funny, never boring and crammed with practical know-how, it will take your pics from ho-hum to Wow! Pogue explains away jargon and we especially liked all the useful tips liberally spread throughout. **R349**



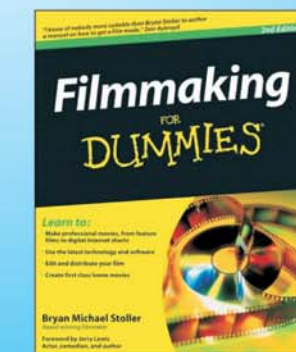
Take your Photography to the Next Level

George Barr, Rocky Nook Inc

If you are tired of all the technical jargon that is part and parcel of photography, *Take your Photography to the Next Level* should provide a welcome relief from f-stops, ISO or post-processing. George Barr explores the route to better pictures by going back to basics, discussing elements such as composition, finding interesting images and how to read photographs. **R549**

Both these titles and many more are available from Intersoft on 08600-BOOKS or www.intersoft.co.za.

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Augmented Reality

Between the real world and the virtual there exists a reality that sees the merging of the two; a world in which human experience is enhanced by graphics, sounds and haptics that are only accessible in the virtual world. Think information appearing before your eyes about whatever you're looking at, a bit like the Terminator.

This "between" world is what is being called augmented reality or AR and it's technology that's within reach. AR is going to change the way we hear, see and feel our world and dramatically alter the way we search, browse and learn in the virtual world.

Applications

Last month our DIY Dude showed you How to augment your reality by using Metaio software, a web cam and your PC to see a T-Rex stalking about on your desk. While this was a great introduction to the technology it is in the commercial space that we will see some of its most interesting applications.

It is already being utilised to enhance kid's toys. Collectable cards from the eagerly anticipated feature film *Avatar* will feature Mattel i-Tags that will display 3D digital images that kids can see on a PC screen when the toys are held up to a web cam.

AR has even snuck into a few mobile apps like **Layar**, TwitARound, and Yelp, and is seriously altering the way we interact with our environments. Using your handset's camera view as a window to the augmented world, location data apps like these can provide you with information about businesses (like restaurants) you are looking at, locate the closet tube station to you and identify Twitter users in close proximity.



What you need

While all of this is very exciting there are a number of barriers to AR becoming our default reality. To enjoy AR you need a display (window) that integrates your view of the two worlds, preferably a head mounted display so you won't have to pull out your phone or notebook every time you want to merge the two worlds.

More than this you need a perspective sensitive tracking system including a camera to capture the real world and location data like GPS co-ordinates and digital compass to capture your orientation. Lastly computing power is indispensable. Some sort of computing device and an AR browser is necessary to correspond data from the virtual world with what is captured in real-time from the real world. [TM]

techsmart.co.za | September 09

98th. SA's worldwide broadband speed rating with an average download speed of 1.68 Mbps. <http://tinyurl.com/techsept>

Top Tech Tweeter – Aki Anastasiou



If there is one guy to follow on Twitter to keep you up to date with tech it's Aki Anastasiou. Resident trafficologist and presenter of Technobyte on 702, Aki has embraced social media and ran with it. TechSmart eventually managed to catch up with him.

Do you use Twitter mainly to communicate or to source news?

I use Twitter for both. It is a great tool to stay in touch with the latest news, tech stories and also at the same time get a feel of what everyone is talking about plus Twitter is a great tool to send short messages to people directly.

How many tweets per day do you average?

It all depends if I have something of interest to say and if I

find something interesting enough to share with the people who follow me. On average I would say I send out about 10 tweets a day, but on a busy day it could be 20.

How long did it take for you to gather your 1800+ followers?

I joined Twitter in 2008 but only became really active in 2009, and it has taken me a few months to get to that number.

What app do you use to send tweets from your phone?

I am currently using a Nokia N97 and I use Gravity. There are tons of other Twitter apps depending on the handset you use.

Do you have any tips for people who want to expand their followers?

What you put in is what you get out. So if you are active and share interesting information and thoughts then people will follow you, but if you send out rubbish and use Twitter as IRC tool on steroids and tweet irrelevant stuff, that is when people will stop following you. Add value to your tweets and the people will follow you.

How do you think Twitter will eventually make some money?

I think that eventually they will offer different accounts on different levels and perhaps one will pay for certain services. I think the core Twitter functionality will always remain free.

Find out more about Aki Anastasiou at the following links:

- [@akianastasiou on Twitter](https://twitter.com/akianastasiou)
- www.facebook.com/anastasiou
- www.facebook.com/technobyte

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Loving your Laptop

Notebook maintenance is not the first thing on your mind when you unpack your brand spanking new machine. But by doing just a few things right you can save years on your notebook. The friendly folks over at Laptop City helped with some tips to get the best out of your machine.

Don't drink and drive

There's a reason why notebooks don't have cup holders – liquids and PCs just don't mix. Laptop City says spillage on the keyboard is the number one reason people bring laptops in for repair.

A good shut

Be kind to your laptop's hinges by closing the screen in the middle instead of from the sides (see pic right). Also be on the look-out for any small objects left on the keyboard. A forgotten USB stick or pen can quickly scratch your screen, even worse crack it on impact. A cracked LCD screen looks about as good as a come from behind Kiwi try in the dying minutes. Horrible.

Dirty screens

When the screen gets dirty don't use window cleaner to clean it as it can dull your screen. Use

the spray cleaner sold for TV screens or ask your PC store what cleaner they would recommend. Laptop City for example stocks "Foam It" for R30.

Move right

When moving your notebook, lift it with both hands on the base instead of on the monitor (see pic right). Not only will you avoid a thumb accidentally hurting the screen, but it also prevents components inside coming loose. Also be careful when putting it down since Laptop City replaces many laptop hard disks due to bumps.



Fresh air

Aah, fresh air. Your notebook loves it, so make sure it gets enough.

Check that nothing blocks the ventilation passages since it can lead to overheating. In the TechSmart office we use Ergo-tilts and Griffin's Elevator to tilt and lift laptops to ensure good heat displacement. It's not recommended to work on your laptop directly in the carry case.

Careful with the cord

The much overlooked power cord often breaks round the head area that plugs into the laptop, so always unplug it at the head and don't yank it. Roll up the chord in a figure eight or loop and don't fasten it too tightly.



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How to: Print a wooden "I Care about the Environment" Bumper-sticker



If you've thought about doing your bit for the environment, but haven't got around to it quite yet, then why don't you pretend that you really do care? What better way to act like you care than by driving a hybrid. But if you haven't got the money or you just don't like them I have a solution: make a wooden bumper-sticker to show just how "green" you are.

This bumper-sticker is unique in that it's made from 100% wood. Very green indeed. It is also made using a very cunning printing method that I, myself, have pioneered.

You'll need:

- a laser printer
- printer paper
- a bumper-sticker sized scrap of veneer
- white spirits
- an iron
- 220 grit sandpaper
- thin double-sided tape

The most tricky-to-get items here will be white spirits, but you could use mineral turpentine, and the veneer. Veneer is just very thinly sliced wood, used for table-tops and other furniture. Have a look in the Yellow Pages for veneer manufacturers and cabinet makers. Most

will be more than willing to give you some scraps for free.

First you need to create your bumper-sticker. I'm going for the: "My Other Car's a..." theme. But you can use anything suitably "green".

1. Type the wording of your sticker out back-to-front. Print the wording out on the plain paper using a laser printer. Note: as you are going to transfer your design from the paper to the veneer, you'll have to put whatever writing you use back-to-front, so it will show up the right way on the wood.
2. Prepare the veneer by sanding it smooth using the 220 grit sandpaper.
3. Now here comes the clever bit. Put some white spirits in a container and soak your design in it for about 5 minutes. The spirits is a solvent and will soften, but not dissolve the toner



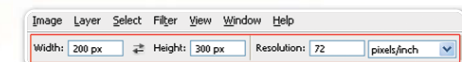
on the paper. Carefully take your design out, using tweezers, and lay it on a piece of paper to absorb the excess white spirits.

4. Carefully position the design, face down, on the veneer and press down with a heated iron (set the temperature to maximum). Move the iron over the design, using quite a lot of pressure and being careful not to move the design on the veneer.
5. If all goes well your design will be transferred onto the veneer and you can stick it onto your car's bumper using very thin double-sided tape. Do not despair if you fail on the first try. I did, many times, before I got one I really liked. [AG]

The Photoshop Teacher How to: Prepare a photo for Facebook

This month we are going back to basics.

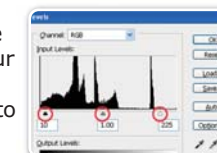
1. First, select the photograph which you want to use to create your profile picture.
2. Now, select the Crop Tool from the tools palette, and apply the following settings in the top options bar.



3. Setting the width to 200 pixels and the height to 300 pixels before cropping will allow your final crop to be exactly 200 by 300 pixels (remember to type in "px" after the numbers), the correct size for Facebook - meaning that we won't have to resize afterwards. If you want a landscape image, type in 200px by 134px
4. Now, drag a frame around your face inside the image. You will notice a selection (marching ants) and corner control points at the edges of the box. You will also notice that the area outside the box will be shaded. The

area inside the box is what will remain after cropping.

5. You can now easily drag the corner points around so as to resize the area that will be cropped. You can even rotate the cropping box if you want to (the final result will be straightened). Also note that the cropping frame will be constrained to a 2:3 ratio due to the values we types in earlier.
6. Once you are happy with your cropping selection, press [ENTER], and the image will be cropped.
7. Next you may want to enhance the colour of your image just a bit. Press CTRL + L to open the Levels Editor.



8. Below the histogram (the thingy that looks like a mountain range) you will notice three sliders. Move the left slider a bit to the right, the right slider a bit to the left, and the middle one to either side. Play around with these, as the values change for each image. "Hugging" the levels like this usually enhances the colours just a bit. When you are happy, click OK.
9. Lastly, we want to apply some sharpening before we save. Select

Filter > Sharpen > Unsharp Mask. Apply the following values for a start:

- Amount: 110%
 - Radius: 0.9 pixels
 - Threshold: 3 levels
10. Once again, play around with the values. Amount you can play with a lot, but keep Radius to the lower spectrum. Threshold is usually best left between 1 and 5. (There are much better sharpening techniques, but this is the easiest one). Have a look at your preview window to see the result of your values. Make sure that the Preview tab is on.
 11. Once you are happy, and have clicked on OK, we can save the image.
 12. Select File > Save As. Make sure that you do not save over your original image! Give your file a name, and select JPEG from the Format dropdown (about 7th from the top), and click on Save.
 13. On the next popup, select Quality = 7. You do not really need quality of 12. On 7 most people will not notice the quality loss, and you save a lot of upload time. Also select Baseline Optimized from the format option, and click OK.
- Please let us know what you would like to learn to do in Photoshop by emailing info@techsmart.co.za. For easy to follow Photoshop courses call Teach Me Photoshop on 084-88-000-55 or visit www.teachmephotoshop.co.za. [JB]

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IF	Internally Flawless: no internal flaws, but some surface flaws. Very rare.	E	Exceptional White
VVS1-VVS2	Very Very Slightly Included (two grades). Minute inclusions very difficult to detect under 10x magnification by a trained gemmologist.	F	Rare White +
VS1-VS2	Very Slightly Included (two grades). Minute inclusions seen only with difficulty under 10x magnification.	G	Rare White
S11-S12	Slightly Included (two grades). Minute inclusions more easily detected under 10x magnification.	H	White
I1-I2-I3	Included (three grades). Inclusions visible under 10x magnification AS WELL AS to the human eye. We do not recommend buying diamonds in any of these grades.	I	Slightly Tinted White
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DIY VPN – Connecting computers over the Internet



Written by Lance Turner, 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.

Since writing NetSmart I've been asked variations of the following question many times: "Is there a way to set up a private connection to access my main PC at home (or work) if I am on the road with my laptop, since I don't always have the files I need?"

The answer to this is a definite yes, and the way to do this is to make use of a Virtual Private Network, or VPN. A VPN is a secure, private network connection or "tunnel" that runs between two or more PC, across the Internet. In my opinion the home or SME VPN is one of the greatest enabling tools made possible by the growth of consumer broadband. Even though a VPN's data travels across a public network like the Internet, it is secure because generally VPN products will make use of very strong encryption.

There are several ways of setting up such a VPN. You can either make use of a specialised consumer VPN router, or install VPN software, which is the more widely used method. There have been some outstanding advances in DIY VPN software over the years, with the entire process being greatly simplified. Here are some examples for you to try.

- **Hamachi** – <http://tinyurl.com/2ef68p>
LogMeIn Hamachi is one of the better VPN clients I've seen. You can get up and running very quickly with almost no configuration needed. This product will let you connect to



an entire network and share network drives. Free for non-commercial use.

- **Leaf Networks** – <http://tinyurl.com/ntxyhl>
This product is excellent for home users or friends who want to connect. It is a lightweight, simple to use product and will let you share all of your network devices including gaming consoles (Xbox, PlayStation) and media servers with their playlists.
- **Trispen @TheOffice** – <http://attheoffice.trispen.com/>
Trispen are a South African company with a great product. The @TheOffice product set is focused more on the SME market than on home users. Not only are these excellent products, but you also have the advantage of getting local support if needed.
- **OpenVPN** – <http://openvpn.net/>
OpenVPN is an open source product, and as such is free. This product is very powerful and you can do quite a lot with it, but it can be a little intimidating to set-up. This is definitely better suited to the more technically knowledgeable.
- **WallCooler VPN** – www.vedivi.com/
The Personal Edition of WallCooler is great for home users. While you can't use it to connect to an entire network, and only to a single PC, it also has a remote desktop facility. In this way you can choose to access your files remotely, or actually work on your home computer remotely as if you were sitting in front of it.

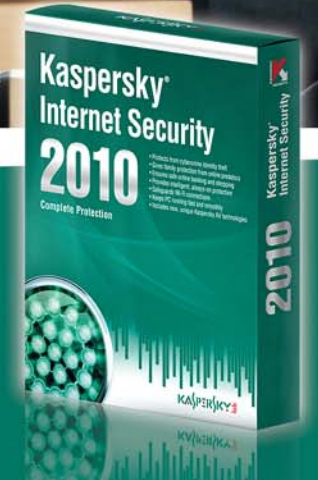


If you have any questions or queries drop me a mail, talk@brandedinternet.co.za.

1 atom. The thickness of sheets of carbon known as graphene. <http://tinyurl.com/techsept>

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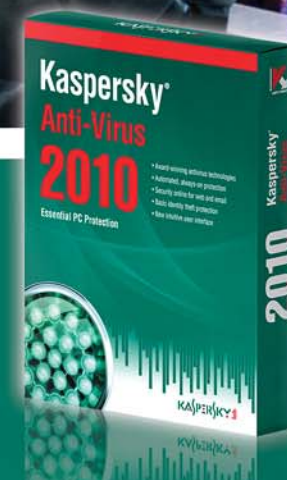
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Microsoft Photosynth –
<http://photosynth.net>



With Photosynth you can take a number of pictures and stitch them together online. Not that impressive you say? Photosynth, developed by Microsoft, actually allows you to explore your creations in 3D. Sounds strange? Well it has to be seen to be believed, so go and have a look at some of the collages. A quick download and installation of Microsoft Silverlight is required, and you'll need a pretty decent connection to view images properly.

TestFreaks – www.testfreaks.co.za



The world's largest tech review aggregator, TestFreaks, launched a .co.za version a few weeks ago. With basic product information, user ratings and links to expert reviews it's a good resource for doing that all essential research before making that next big tech purchase, naturally TechSmart has been added as one of their expert reviewers.

MyByte – www.mybyte.co.za



ICT community site MyByte.co.za has been going strong for a few months now, building up a decent following with around 1652 members. The whole point of the network is to connect ICT professionals, a function it performs well. Naturally our reviews feature here too, so take a look.

5 Awesome Science Magazines



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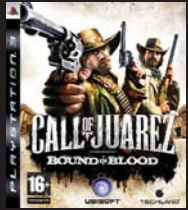


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Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood Bullets, need bullets!

The last memory I have of a fun dirty romp on the back of a horse is of some old arcade rail shooter whose name I can't even recall.

Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood will definitely be remembered, as it undoubtedly stands proud as the most authentically Western game yet on a console. It captures the rugged mood, dirty history, and gritty action of the film genre and translates it into a compelling video game experience. However you need to keep two things in mind. Firstly that deep down, after you strip away all the prairie dogs and the dusty hats, you still have yourself another first person shooter (FPS). Secondly, as Juarez is inspired by a genre that's had a less than inspiring history on any console, it mixes up the experience well enough that any future FPS referencing a similar source material will have a new memorable benchmark to measure up to.

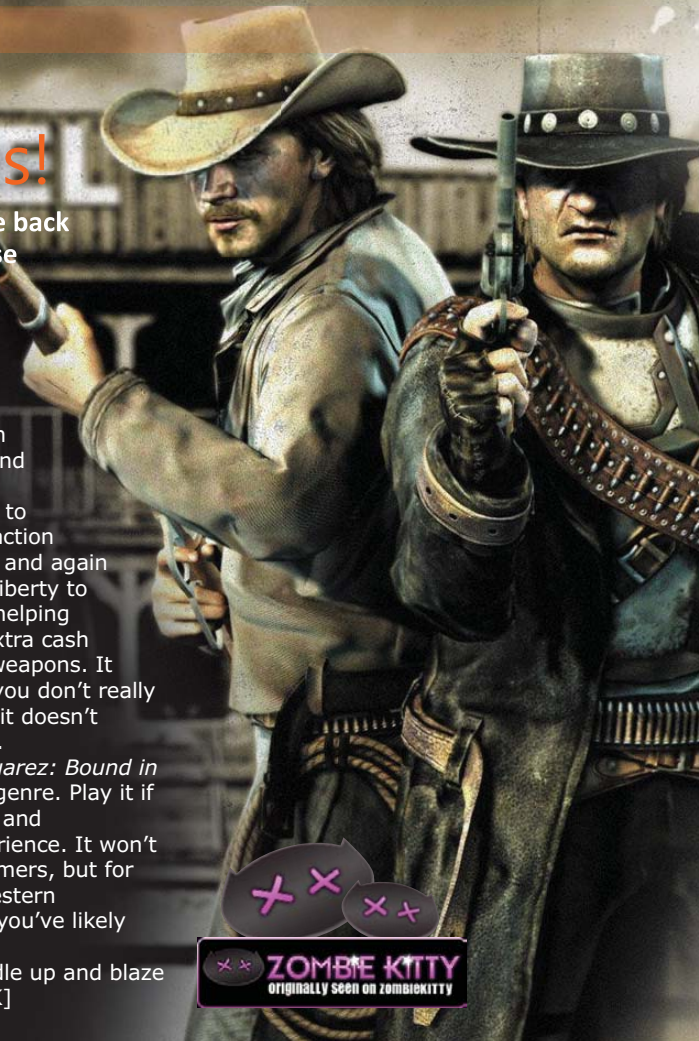
Now I don't know if it's my own fault for playing far too much *Call Of Duty*, but I couldn't help but find the gameplay a little similar every time I loaded up my six shooter and rode into authentic dusty old ghost towns, open desert areas and rickety gold mines. But when I said authentic, I mean authentic. It's quite easy to get lost in the environment and the whole experience

of an old Western when a hail of bullets rains down on you. Plus there aren't a whole lot of other FPS out there that can have you proudly say "Me and my trusty steed".

Call of Juarez doesn't try to break any boundaries, the action changes up a bit every now and again as the game gives you the liberty to casually roam about town, helping people out and using any extra cash that you make to upgrade weapons. It doesn't feel tacked on and you don't really have to do it a whole lot so it doesn't detract from the main story.

Ultimately, play *Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood* if you're a fan of the genre. Play it if you're up for a truly unique and comfortably satisfying experience. It won't satisfy any die-hard FPS gamers, but for those seeking a genuine Western experience on the console, you've likely already bought it.

Exit that old saloon, saddle up and blaze those twin six shooters. [ZK]



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