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MORE THAN CORE
Intel's new processors

DIY: TRICKS FOR YOUR IPOD

WIN WIN WIN
3x Battlefield: Bad Company 2
Lexmark printer

ASUS Eee PC 1008P KR | God of War III | Grandstream IP phone

THE HOW TO/DIY ISSUE

SA's LARGEST TECH MAGAZINE

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The pursuit of happiness

I grew up without the internet. When I liked a band I spent my time in CNA paging through music mags in the hope of finding any scrap of information on them, instead of doing a simple Google search. Rather than streaming albums via Pandora.com or downloading them via iTunes, I actually had to buy the cassette or vinyl (if I could find it). If money was a problem, I would (unapologetically) pirate the tunes from my mates, recording them on a fleamarket TDK cassette via high speed dubbing, not by simply opening up a good torrent site or copying the MP3s. If I wanted to join their fan club I had to post a letter, not click "Become a Fan" on Facebook. I would like to believe that my doggedness made me the more committed fan, fact is I wish I grew up with the luxury of the internet.

Mike Joubert <michael@techsmart.co.za>
I am holding HP's long battery life Pavilion DM1 netbook and Sony's ultra hot VAIO VPCCW25FG 14" notebook.

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WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!!! Comment on the news and reviews on **TechSmart.co.za** and you might win the incredible Lexmark INTERACT 3-in-1 printer, scanner and copier with touch-screen. It includes Eco Mode and a three-year guarantee with lifetime phone support.

Feedback of the month

Hi TechSmart,
Google's latest acquisition pattern leaves one wondering. Whilst I'm enthusiastic about its numerous projects, most notably the OS and the Nexus, I hope in the development process of these products the focus will not merely fall on consumer base but rather a divergence to cost effective yet highly functional concepts. Already reviews of their Chrome OS leaves a lot to be desired. Microsoft's Vista also is off course arguably a true example of an ill-conceived product at the expense of the consumer. Whilst I applaud Google for their drive in the expansion and development of technology as depicted by their shopping spree I hope the same zeal will be invested in product development.

Bruce Dube on our Facebook fan page (FBFP) regarding Google buying DocVerse, an online collaboration plugin tool for Microsoft Office. Bruce wins the Lexmark INTERACT 3-in-1.

Hi Bruce. A valid point, personally I was underwhelmed by Google Wave and surprised at how they forced Buzz onto consumers. Still, I think Google is an amazing company and they are directly linked to how we will experience the future. –Mike.

Feedback from our sites

Is it true that the iPad cannot multitask?
Mthokozisi Malaza on Facebook regarding the Apple iPad's Oscar Ad launch

Yes, to the dismay of Apple fan boys everywhere. But of course they need something to hype the 2nd generation don't they? –Mike.

Beautiful piece of technology, pity it's a Nokia not Sony Ericsson..eH. *Chillas Ntuli on Facebook regarding the Nokia N97 mini*

I just went through the whole TechSmart book and I love everything. Everything is straight to the point. Thanks... Well Done
Joleen Links via email on TechSmart 78

Write to us at **info@techsmart.co.za**

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The Feedback of the Month wins the incredible Lexmark INTERACT 3-in-1 printer, scanner and copier with touch-screen. It includes paper saving Eco Mode and a three-year guarantee with lifetime phone support.

Reasons to visit TechSmart.co.za

- Daily tech news & interviews with industry players.
- Full and in-depth reviews of all products featured in the magazine.
- Compare products spec for spec.
- Competitions!

Look out for the following reviews:

- Sony's ultra hot VAIO VPCCW25FG 14" notebook
- HP's long battery life Pavilion DM1 netbook
- Sony Ericsson's Android powered X10
- Nokia's music munching X6

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Congratulations to the following readers:

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- Rodney Downey, South Crest
- Winston Bourbon-Leftley, Laingsburg
- Kevin Ryan, Northlands

TomTom One GPS
- Johnny Malan, Florida

TomTom Safety Bundle
- Mojalefa Tsotetsi, Northriding
- Buyani Khubalo

Nova AVR UPS units
- Bulelani Balabala, Tembisa North
- Riaz Adamjee, Crown Mines

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- Arvind Chhagan, Laudium

Ergo-Tilt laptop stand and MyClip Bundles
- Hendrick Ntuli, Rosslyn • Ruan Haese
- Jeff Wolfson, Faerie Glen • Rachelle Alheit, Menlo Park • AJ Greyling, Lyttleton

$2. The price of the NLP-5X chip that provides gadgets with improved speech recognition capabilities.

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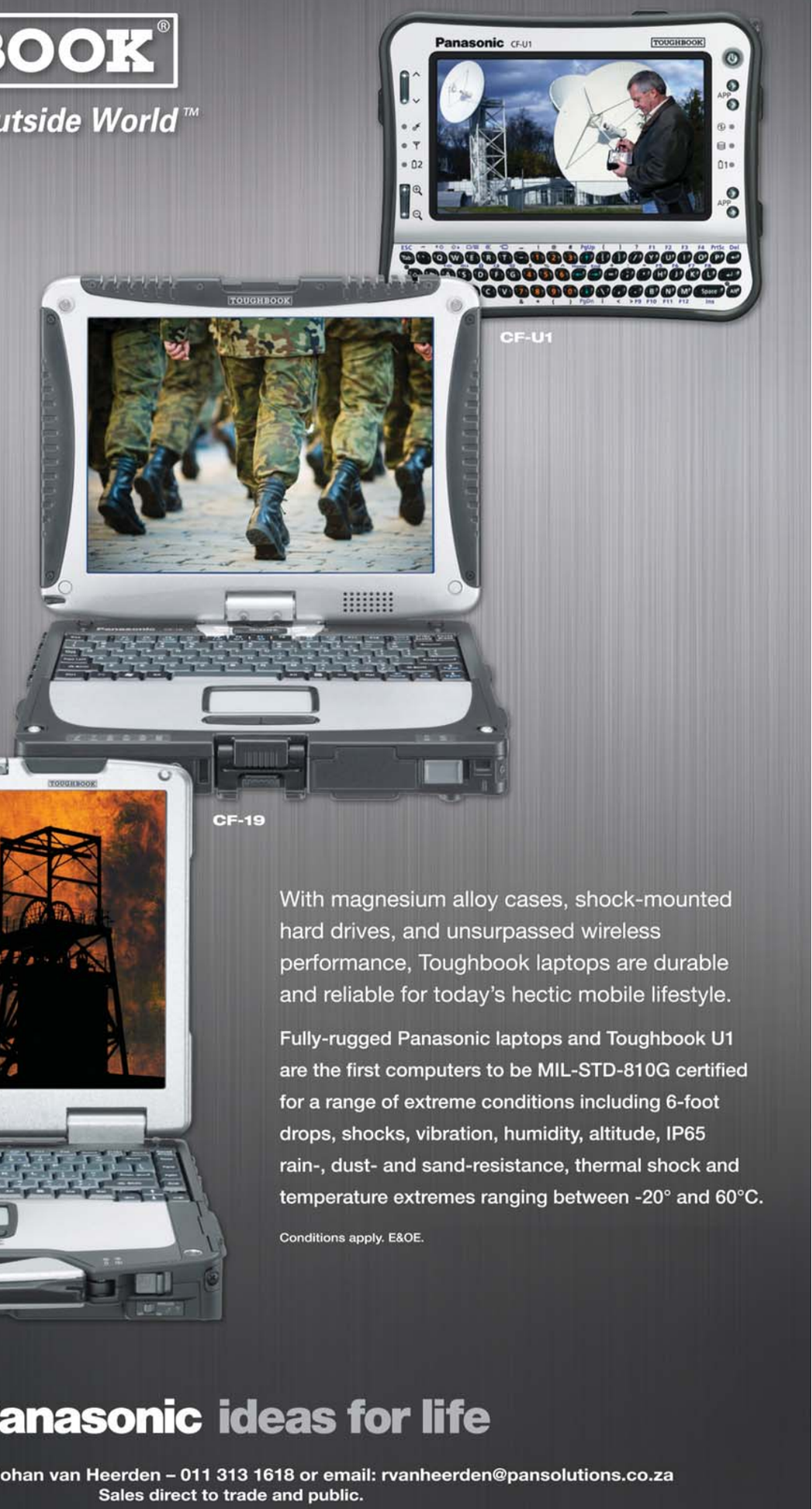

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MWEB uncap ADSL price bottle

MWEB did the whole of SA a favour when they announced a major price cut to their uncapped ADSL packages. With consumer all-inclusive packages (ADSL line rental included) offered for **R349**, **R599** and **R899** per month for line speeds of 384 Kbps, 512 Kbps and 4 Mbps respectively, it was for a short while the cheapest prices available. A number of Internet Service Providers have in the meantime picked up the gauntlet, and we'll be happily following the upcoming broadband price slugfest. Now if only someone can persuade Telkom to lower their line-rental.

FNB 'friends' PayPal

The rumours have proved true, with First National Bank announcing that they have joined forces with PayPal. For the first time South Africans with a PayPal account can transfer funds back into South Africa. See p29 for our Big Issue.

All roads lead to Loftus

Die Blou Bul weet nie van verdwaal af nie, now that TomTom has released a special edition Blue Bulls Go GPS. It features the voices of Victor Matfield, Morné Steyn and Pierre Spies, amongst other Bulls, guiding you on a winning way. In related GPS voice news, *romantiese Afrikaans* superstar rapper Jack Parow's voice will soon be available to download for all Garmin GPS devices at **www.gps-creative.com**.

The Times they are a charging

After hinting at it previously, The Times as well as The Sunday Times (in the UK, not SA) will be charging users to access their websites from June. For a day's access readers will have to cough up £1, or £2 for the week's. It's either a bold move or stupid gamble, since other UK newspaper websites remain free and open to anyone.

News in very short

- The internet is one of the 237 final nominees for the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize. Seriously.
- **Translate.org.za** has released local language versions of **OpenOffice.org**, offering users the opportunity to use a word processor, spreadsheet, presentation tool as well as a drawing application in South African English, Afrikaans or Northern Sotho.
- Skype is now available to download for all Nokia phones running on Symbian Series 60. It allows you to make VoIP calls to and from other Skype users and send and receive IM messages, using the cellular data network. Go to **http://www.skype.com/go/symbian** to download.

Hot new Products

- Intel has officially launched their new range of processors in SA. The Intel **Core i3, i5 and i7** will feature in new PCs and notebooks entering the SA market. See our feature with Intel's Kamal Vasram on p8.

- Sony has revealed their motion-based controller for the PS3 in response to the Xbox 360's upcoming Project Natal and the Wii. Dubbed the **Move**, this wand-like device uses motion sensors and the PlayStation Eye camera to track your body movements. Pricing and availability for South Africa hasn't been released yet.

- Nokia's mini-me of the popular N97 has landed on SA shores. The only slightly more compact **N97 mini** features a 3.2" resistive touch-screen and slide-out QWERTY keyboard.

- HP has introduced the cool looking **EliteBook 2740p**, a multi-touch-enabled convertible tablet for business users, featuring a 12.1" diagonal LED-backlit display and long life battery options.

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$25 000. Price per week for renting Virgin's "Necker Nymph", a deep sea submarine.

Spotlight on spinach

Popeye's secret weapon just got another thumbs up. Scientists write in a recent issue of the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, that light in store fridges can increase the nutritional value of fresh spinach. During the study, the research team exposed fresh spinach leaves to continuous light or darkness in simulated retail storage conditions. After just three days, the light-exposed veggies had significantly higher levels of vitamins C, K, E and B9; after nine days vitamin K levels had increased between 50 and 100 per cent, depending on the variety tested, and vitamin B9 levels were up more than 80 per cent. Slightly decreased or unchanged vitamin levels were found for spinach left in the dark.

Ape talk

Seems orangutans have lots to say – if you know what to listen for. According to a recent study published in the journal *Ethology*, sexually mature orangutans use a repertoire of long-distance calls to communicate with others in the jungle. Calls uttered spontaneously while trudging through the forest consist of strings of long, booming pulses and grumbles that can be heard over more than a kilometre. But when an individual needs to show another who's boss or call out to a female, his calls become faster, with more and shorter pulses than the spontaneous calls. The study also showed that female orangutans use the acoustical properties to determine the caller's identity and the context of the call – and then adjust their response accordingly. It's nature's take on "call screening".

Surprise finding

It's surprising how easily we miss things right before our eyes. According to a study recently published in *Nature Neuroscience*, this may come down to how the brain directs its attention. Scientists monitored the brain activity of a group of volunteers who looked at a stream of letters running across a screen. They were asked to look out for the letter 'X', but every now and again an image of a face popped up unexpectedly. The participants repeatedly missed the 'X' shown on the screen soon after the face had disappeared, even though it was right in front of them. Brain images showed that the same brain area handles goal-directed attention and stimulus-driven attention, which suggests that a surprise event temporarily drains all attention capacity and so blinds us to other stimuli. Information overload, right? [LP]

Must visit Sci links:

- How to erase fear in humans. **http://tinyurl.com/feareraser**
- What if everything you've been told about evolution is wrong? **http://tinyurl.com/evolutionbeagle**
- What's out there? New cooler exoplanet found. **http://tinyurl.com/exoplanetx**

Intel's new Core i processor range

There is more to Core

Intel is allowing for Moore's law to tick along nicely with the introduction of the 2010 Intel Core family of processors. TechSmart digs into the latest processors, including the Intel Core i3, i5 and i7 chips, based on Intel's latest 32 nanometer manufacturing process.

Although the Core range of processors has been available in desktop machines for a while now, notebooks carrying these processors are now hitting the market (the two notebooks we're reviewing this month both carry Core processors). Consumers can expect a whole array of the cheaper Core i3, the mid-range Core i5 and top-end Core i7 machines at the nearest PC store.

Integrated HD graphics

Playing games on notebooks is usually a disastrous affair, but there is hope thanks to full HD graphics integrated in the Core i range. This might not satisfy hardcore gamers but it is a solution for casual gamers, since it promises 40% better 3D performance and a 58% better frame rate than previous processors. Of course this also helps with playing full HD video, while the new range is the first integrated solution to deliver multi-channel Dolby TrueHD and DTS Premium Suite home theater audio.

Multi-tasking

Another key strength of the processors is the improved multi-tasking capabilities, with Intel's Hyper-Threading Technology allowing each processing core to run multiple "threads". For the consumer this means the ability to run system intensive programs, while at the same time being able to do even more, for example run a virus check in the background or play music.

Turbo Boost like Knight Rider

The Core i5 and i7 processors feature Intel Turbo Boost Technology, which regulates your PC's power consumption – giving a computer an extra boost of power when needed for resource intensive tasks or scaling back when less power is required. At the launch of the new Core range Intel demonstrated their Turbo Boost Technology with the Cinebench rendering benchmark, where the Intel processor showed a marked spike in activity when rendering, while falling back into a more power friendly mode once done. Commenting on this new Turbo Boost function, Videsha Proothveerajh, country manager of Intel South Africa said: "They [the processors] become energy efficient to the point of shutting down processing cores or reducing power consumption to provide performance when people need it, and energy efficient when they don't."

The new Core range from Intel simplifies the process of choosing a processor for your PC, plus, the move to include the management of HD video bodes well for a future filled with HD content. For Intel the new processors aren't just another processing range, since Proothveerajh called the Core family of processors "the biggest invention since the Pentium". High praise indeed.

INTERVIEW

Kamal Vasram, Intel

Intel's new range of processors has hit the market. We talk to Kamal Vasram, channel field sales engineer at Intel South Africa, to get some clarity on what the new Core i range might mean for you.

The new Core processor range has been described as "the biggest invention since the Pentium". Why is this?

Since the Pentium days we have had the competition trying to beat us on Gigahertz and Front Side Bus. We beat them then and now we have even better performance with our discrete memory controller, onboard graphics controller and QPI (Quick Path Interconnect).

We now have an all integrated processor, Smart Cache, Integrated memory controller and graphics giving us better performance by at least 40 – 60% depending on usage case. Intel now also boasts the best performance per Watt.

With a choice between three PCs, one with an i3, one with an i5 and one with an i7, apart from price difference, what should regulate choice?

The processor is your best investment when buying any PC system – desktop or notebook. Try and buy whatever your pocket allows you to get. The simplification of i3, i5 and i7 means that it will be easier for you to make the choice. An i5 will be faster than an i3, and i7 will be faster than an i5.

On the new Core i range you have full HD graphics integrated in the processor. What type of games will one be able to play without the need for a graphics card, and can one actually expect the game to look good and not lag?

Yes – mainstream games like Trackmania are perfectly fine. Any game that runs at more than 24 frames per second on any system will be running well on a system with integrated graphics. Most mainstream games will do this.

The i5 and i7 come with turbo boost functionality? Why would one need this?

This is a built in functionality that is managed by the processor. It will give an approximate 10% increase in performance when certain conditions are met. So – if you have a system running at full 100% and conditions like temperature are met – (this is checked several times a minute in order to protect the CPU against overheating) – then you will be given a boost that will give extra performance. So now you have a controlled performance boost that will not damage the processor. If you overclock a CPU – you also get the extra performance but you lose the warranty if the CPU were to overheat.

50% Growth of the number of South Africans accessing the net via broadband in the past year.

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- 2560 * 2048 15 frames/ second
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RIM BlackBerry Bold 9700

Business it is

Holding the Bold 9700 in the palm of your hand, you know that BlackBerry has created a quality device. It looks classy and ready for business, with the chrome edges adding an elegant touch to the black body. As a messaging device, the Bold performs as well as you expect from a BlackBerry.

One handed operation is not a problem and it's a very pocketable device. We found the QWERTY keyboard a bit cramped but effective. While the slanted keys might work for some, our stocky thumbs are just too big to pick out the correct keys. That said, going with the flow and trusting that we were pressing the right key worked almost 95% of the time.

Browsing problems

The downside to the Bold's pocketableness is a smallish screen. Measuring just 2.44" it's actually a bit smaller than the previous Bold 9000.

While the small screen isn't a problem on the messaging side, it is an irritation on the browsing front. Many websites simply don't open up large enough, requiring you to zoom in, which at times creates a display problem with the webpage too wide for the screen.

Trackpad and UI

Operation via the touch sensitive trackpad is a breeze once you've turned down the sensitivity a couple of notches. The BlackBerry's user interface (UI) is very conservative, and although you can personalise your home screen, our critique of the UI remains the same as with the Storm2 – you just don't have the versatility you get with say Android devices for instance.

But what about the Storm2?

The Storm2 brings up an interesting question, one we've been asked by more than one person. Which BlackBerry should I get – the Bold 9700 or the Storm2? Available on both are a so-so 3.2 megapixel camera, GPS, HSDPA and Wi-Fi. If you're more comfortable with the hardware keyboard and one-handed operation then the Bold is your phone. It also has a better battery life than the Storm2, standing at almost two full days. The browsing experience is much less frustrating on the Storm2's bigger screen, so if you're planning to surf a lot, the Storm2 is a much better bet.

Conclusion

The BlackBerry Bold 9700 carries all the features you want from a respectable smartphone. Build quality is up there with the best of them, while the ease of email set-up and messaging capabilities of this BlackBerry are just top-notch. Unfortunately there's just nothing about the device that gets us truly excited and jumpy, since it's almost all work and no play. [MJ]

R1 per MB. Cost to surf the internet via satellite on Mango flights if the CAA accepts their proposal. 10 and 5. The respective age of the PS2 and PSP.

LG GM750

The good and bad life

The GM750 is LG's entry level smartphone, running on WinMo 6.5 with the addition of LG's S-class user interface. Navigating the phone's features via the 3" LCD touch-screen is simple enough when you employ the stylus (irritatingly hanging on the device), but not when you use your finger, as the screen could have been more responsive.

What is easy though is taking decent pics thanks to the GM750's five megapixel camera. Setting up an email account is also simple and Office Mobile allows you to create your own Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint documents.

HSDPA means browsing is quick and connecting to a Wi-Fi network is simple using the phone's Wi-Fi manager. There is also a GPS and a microSD slot with a 2 GB card included with the phone.

LG's GM750 boasts useful functions like Office Mobile, but the BlackBerry Curve 8520 still takes our vote as best entry level smartphone. The GM750 has a RRP of **R4599**.

Sony Ericsson Yari

Spear for the mobile nation

Just like Sony Ericsson's F305, their Yari (meaning spear in Japanese) is aimed at people that aren't just looking for a phone, but want their mobile to be a portable gaming device as well.

SE's Yari gesture controlled gaming phone sports nine pre-loaded games to choose from, four of which feature Wii-inspired player gestures. LocoRoco, Bowling, Tennis and Fitness all support the gesture controls, with Bowling and LocoRoco doing the best job of integrating them. When playing bowling for example, you must hold in the central menu button and perform a bowling motion with your arm in order to bowl.

The Yari displays games on its 2.4" screen and sports a five megapixel camera with auto focus, taking decent quality pics. It also packs HSDPA as well as on-board GPS. You get a 1 GB microSD card with the phone, but the lack of a 3.5mm headphone jack is a bummer.

The Yari is available with a RRP of **R3999**.

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NOTEBOOKS

DELL VOSTRO 1520 (15" work notebook) T714J/2
Intel Core 2 Duo T6570 (2.1 Ghz, 800Mhz, 2MB) • 3072 MB (1x 2048 + 1x 1024) 800Mhz DDR2 Dual Channel RAM • 320GB (1x320GB)Serial ATA FFS (7200 RPM) • 8x DVD +/-RW • Intel Integrated GMA 4500MHD • 6-cell Battery for extended battery life • 1.3MP Webcam • 802.11n fast wireless networking • Bluetooth • Microsoft Works 9.0 • 15.4 Widescreen WXGA LED (1280X800) • WINDOWS XP PRO WITH VISTA BUSINESS EMRP SP1 UPGRADE MEDIA
R7049

DELL VOSTRO 1520 (15" work notebook) T714J/3-3G
Intel Core 2 Duo T6670 (2.2 Ghz, 800Mhz, 2MB) 3072mb (1x2048+1x1024) 800Mhz DDR2 Dual Channel RAM • 320GB(1x320GB)Serial ATA FFS (7200 RPM) • HDD with free-fall protection • 8x DVD+/- RW • 256 MB nVidia GeForce 9300m dedicated gfx • Integrated 3G • 802.11b/g wireless networking • Fingerprint reader • 1.3 MP Webcam • 6-cell battery for extended battery life • 15.4" widescreen WXGA LED display (1280 x 800) • Windows Vista Business (32-bit) with recovery DVD
R8380

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DELL VOSTRO 1720 (17" work notebook) T712J/3
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R8850

NOTEBOOKS

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SL510 T4400 (2.2 Ghz) • 4GB (2X2GB) • 250GB/5400rpm • DVD +/-RW DL • MOBILE INTEL GMA 4500M (GL40) • 15.6" HD LED GLOSSY (1366*768) • GB ETHERNET • BLUETOOTH • CAMERA • NO FPR 6-CELL • 7-IN-1 (MMC/ MS/ MS Pro/ SD/ SDHC/ XD/ XD Type H) EXPRESS CARD
• WINDOWS 7 HOME PREMIUM 64-BIT
R5980

LENOVO THINKPAD SL510 2847-Q4G
SL510 CORE 2 DUO T6670 (2.2Ghz) • 3GB (1X2GB + 1X1GB) • 320GB/5400rpm DVD +/-RW DL • MOBILE INTEL GMA 4500MHD (GM45, 384MB) • 15.6" HD LED (1366*768) • CAMERA • GB ETHERNET • BLUETOOTH • FPR INTEL 1000BGN (1X2) • 7-IN-1 (MMC/ MS/MS Pro/ SD/ SDHC/ XD/ XD Type H) EXPRESS CARD • 3G ENABLED • WINDOWS 7 PRO WITH NO XP RDVD
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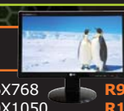

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Mecer M770CUH notebook

Big and bold

R13 800 gets you not only a 17" desktop replacement laptop, but also the latest Intel Core i7 processor – a feat that will not be easily matched by any of Mecer's international competition.

Make no mistake, Mecer's flagship is a big machine. The M770CUH weighs about three kilos and with dimensions of 397 x 282 x 40 mm you don't really want to move it from your desk very often.

Working surface

As one would expect of such a machine, it comes with a full keyboard that includes a keypad. We found the keyboard easy to work on, but the delete key was undersized, as with the F-keys. The slight slant that the battery underneath provides, makes it that much easier to work on, plus it lifts the laptop from the desk, helping with ventilation.

The trackpad didn't impress us much. It's too small for such a big PC and the buttons were difficult to press. We don't think it matters too much, because as a desktop replacement you're likely to just hook up with a wireless mouse anyway.

Connections

On the side of the machine you'll find an array of connections, including three USB ports (one extra wouldn't have gone unappreciated), an e-Sata port and an HDMI connector for transferring your HD content (although the machine itself isn't HD – only HD ready with a screen resolution of 1440 x 900). Mecer also included a mini-PCI slot, a 7-in-1 card reader and of course a DVD writer.

Specs

The real star of the show is of course the new Intel Core i7 processor. It is extremely powerful and it almost feels like overkill to use this machine for only spreadsheets and documents. We were running more than one movie, spreadsheets and documents all while browsing and the Mecer still managed to do its thing.

With a 500 GB hard-drive along with 4 GB worth of DDR3 RAM, you are set for a very impressive computing experience, with Windows 7 Professional rounding off the package nicely.

If you are up for it, the new Mecer laptop range makes it dead easy to mix and match components on your own, thanks to an easy to detach base.

Battery life of about 2½ hours is not the best , but about as much as we expected from such big machine.

Conclusion

While the Mecer's 17" screen might be big enough to be intimidating, its price isn't. R13 800 we feel is a very decent price to pay for a machine with these specs. Contact Mecer on 011-237-1999 for more info.

Q4 2010. The rumoured availability date for the first service pack for Windows 7

Asus 1008P KR Seashell Karim Rashid Collection

The new Wave

The next generation of netbooks is now seeing the light of day, with Asus once again one of the leaders of the pack.

We must say that the work that designer Karim "the Poet of Plastic" Rashid did on the Asus 1008P KR Seashell looks smashing. The textured wave finish, available in coffee brown and hot pink, creates a fantastic look and feel. And since it is applied not only to the top cover but also to the bottom of the netbook, the Seashell closed looks like one unified piece of cool.

Specs

It's good to see the Eee PC progressing beyond Windows XP since it now runs on Windows 7 Starter edition, quite efficiently we might add, since the 2 GB of RAM gives the machine very capable performance. Also onboard is a decent dollop of 250 GB hard disk space, with the Seashell is powered by the next generation Intel Atom N450 processor, running at 1.66 GHz.

On the sides you'll find two USB ports, plus a SD card slot to help with the transfer of your pictures. The VGA port is cleverly tucked away underneath the machine, to be taken out when needed.

Keyboard

One of the downsides to these little machines is that keyboard layout usually takes some kind of knock in the miniaturisation process, with the Seashell no exception. But apart from a few keys being smaller than we wanted, we found the keyboard remarkably nice to type on with good tactile feedback.

Gesture control

The gesture control on the trackpad was another interesting inclusion. Granted you don't have much space to work with, but the pinch and zoom capabilities came in handy when zooming into pics or documents. That said, some of the gestures, like rotating pictures, are hard to master.

Also onboard

Running movies on the Eee PC worked just fine and we were actually surprised at the quality of the sound which was better than we've experienced on some full sized machines. Microsoft Works also comes standard so you don't have to worry about purchasing Office extra. Battery life was a bit disappointing since we only got in the range of three hours life on the machine.

Conclusion

When lining the Asus 1008P KR Seashell next to the first generation Eee PCs there is just no comparison – not just on looks but also on specs, since the 2 GB of RAM and 250 GB hard disk space makes for a very effective system. **R4999** from PC Pro Shop on 012-348-4000. [MJ]

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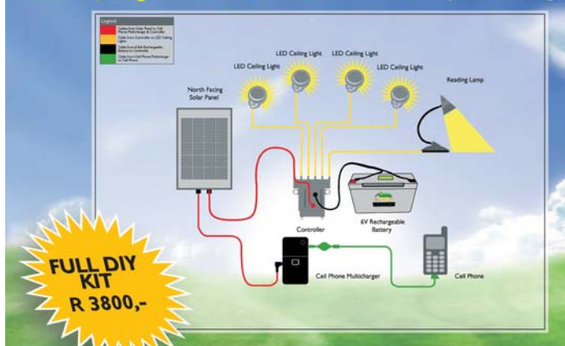

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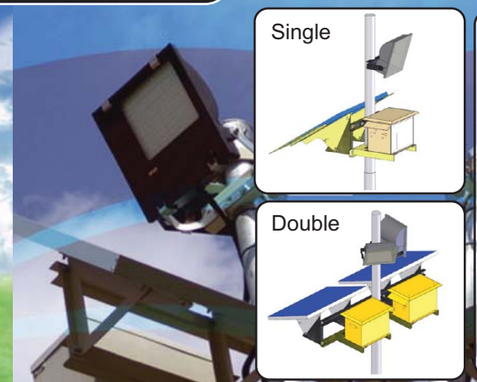

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Double

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Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX5V

Your photos on the map

Onboard GPS for cameras look set to become a cool new feature, with Sony leading the charge here in SA with their latest Cyber-shot, the DSC-HX5V. And what a camera it is.

This 10.2 megapixel shooter sports not only GPS, but also HD video shooting capabilities featuring AVCHD compression technology (more about that later), with the cherry on top a very cool G-series lens with 10x optical zooming capabilities.

GPS for geo-tagging

Geo-tagging is nice for those trips down the coast or weekend break-aways, since photos can be pulled very easily into Google Maps, or Google Earth via Picasa to show exactly where they were taken. The PMB (Picture Motion Browser) software that comes with the Sony is also quite grand, with it being able to sort your photos via a cool calendar interface, while incorporating Google Maps to show the location of the picture. We can definitely see the benefits of geo-tagging for estate agents or civil engineers, so as an added extra onboard GPS is a welcome addition.

The GPS can take its time to get going though. We had to wait outside for awhile for the GPS to find the appropriate satellites, with no way to see how far the camera has progressed connecting.

HD video

Sony, thanks to the use of their BIONZ processor and Exmor R Sensor, is capable of 1920 x 1080i video recording in the AVCHD (Advanced Video Coding High Definition) format. It allows for very good compression of data while retaining image quality, using the same MPEG-4 AVC/H.264 compression as Blu-ray disks. Enough about the technical though, what needs to be said is that the Sony's HD videos look smashing. We also loved Sony's inclusion of a one-press video recording button at the back, allowing you to instantly record video without having to struggle to first find the video mode on the top dial.

What a lens

The HX5V's G-series lens needs a special mention for two reasons. Firstly because of its 10x optical zoom capabilities (also available in video mode with the zoom not picked up on the microphone), and secondly because it has an excellent 25 mm wide-angle which works brilliantly for landscapes. The lens' speed of F3.5 isn't the best we've seen (the Canon's S90's f2 takes the cake) but also not the worst.

Conclusion

There is an incredible number of cool features to discover on Sony's HX5V, not the least of which being its GPS geo-tagging capabilities, a cool lens and its HD video recording. For a compact with a lot of extra on the side, we think that the RRP of **R3999** seems a fair asking price. Visit **www.sony.co.za** for more info.

All three. Academy Award nominees for Best Visual Effects with their effects powered by Nvidia Quadro professional graphics solutions.

Sony bloggie camcorder

Tilt and go

Sony has joined other manufacturers like Toshiba on the compact camcorder techwagon. Their bloggie camcorder looks snazzy, but its trump card is the ability to record Full HD at 1920 x 1080.

Tilting the bloggie's 270 degrees tilt-able lens activates the camera, and from there it's easy to capture video thanks to its intuitive controls. The 2.5" LCD screen is fine for playback, but while recording it only displays your view on a 1.7" block on the screen. Video quality is good, and the quality of the photos (five megapixels) is great. There's no flash, so the quality during bad light is a bit poor.

The bloggie features a useful onboard USB connector and comes with a 4 GB Memory Stick PRO Duo card out of the box. Using the Picture Motion Browser (PMB) software that comes with, it's easy to upload videos to YouTube and pics directly on to your Picasa online album. You can connect the bloggie via the included A/V cables to your TV, but an HDMI connection is sorely missed.

You can get it for a recommended retail price of **R1999**.

Grandstream GXV3140 IP multimedia phone

More than just an IP phone

The GXV3140 IP multimedia phone is one of the most tech intensive IP phones we've ever had in the office.

It allows you to connect with clients or friends via video and voice calls, but it also contains a built-in HTML web browser, enabling you to surf the web or listen to your favourite radio station's broadcast over the net.

The Grandstream sports a 1.3 megapixel camera with which the video calls are made, as well as a massive 4.3" colour LCD screen that features an intuitive icon-based graphical user interface. Using this you can chat using Yahoo/ MSN or Google chat, or view RSS feeds for news or weather. Other notable features are the alarm clock, calendar, games and a full duplex speakerphone, on top of a plethora of connectivity options including a SD slot, a USB port and a 3.5 mm jack.

You can get this super phone from Miro (086-123-6476) for an RRP of **R4297**.

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Genius SW-2.1 355 speakers

Smart sounds

The Genius SW-2.1 355 speaker set provides you with clear sound while you're playing computer games, listening to music or watching a DVD. Each of the satellite speakers sports a good 2.5 watt bite, while the 4" subwoofer adds another 5 watts to the equation.

The speaker set is easy to set up and the 3.5 mm jack it uses means you can also hook it up to your MP3 or cellphone. All of the speakers have a quality look and feel about them, though the design is rather average, unlike some of the more stylish speakers we've tested recently like the Divoom IRIS-02 USB-powered speakers. There are separate controls for adjusting the volume and bass levels, making it easy to find the levels that suit you, but no handy volume control unit that can be placed on your desk. You have to find an open socket for the speaker set though, as it isn't USB-powered, but uses a two point power plug.

You can get it from Computer Corporation (08616-08616) for a recommended retail price of **R300**.

Shi Tsang 21 and 25 piece PC toolkit

Tools that love your PC

For the hardcore PC enthusiasts and modders among us, make your DIY life a whole lot easier with the Shi Tshang 21 or 25 piece PC toolkit from Matrix Warehouse. The 21 piece toolkit cheats a bit since there are 11 tools and 10 cable ties collected in the case. We would rather recommend going for the whole shebang on offer in the 25 piece kit (no cable ties counted this time). Inside you'll find all the tools you need to keep your PC hardware (or network) in tip-top shape. Included is, amongst others, a soldering iron, a desoldering pump, needle nose pliers, a chip extractor, a three claw parts retriever, and lots of screwdrivers – all nicely collected in a zipper case. The tools used in the kit are demagnetised, so you don't have to worry about data loss.

The 21 piece toolkit costs **R129**, while the 25 piece toolkit will set you back **R299**. Visit **www.matrixwarehouse.co.za** for more info.

Radiant Tricklesaver ES200

Radiant measures to save on your electricity bill

Seeing that Eskom's tariffs will be increasing by about 25% annually over the next three years, we all could do with help in lowering our power usage. Enter Radiant Lighting and Electrical's Tricklesaver ES200.

The Tricklesaver ES200 will automatically switch off all devices that are plugged in to your TV, the moment you switch the TV off. This'll help to cut down on your electricity bill, as studies have indicated that between 5–10% of power usage in the average home is attributable to devices that are on standby.

All you have to do is to connect your TV to the master adaptor and other peripheral devices such as your DVD player and 5.1 surround sound system to the slave adaptor. When you switch your TV off, the peripheral devices will do the same, switching on again once you turn your TV on. It comes with an RRP of **R682**, call Radiant for more info on 011-386-0000.

LG Home Bakery HB205CJ

The baker man can

LG's Home Bakery requires no baking skills from your side whatsoever. All you need to do is measure your ingredients, throw them into the baking tray, press a few buttons and wait. The machine takes care of the rest, meaning it mixes all the ingredients together, kneads the dough, and bakes it to perfection in about 3½ hours. There is also a delay timer present if you want to wake up to the sweet aroma of freshly baked bread.

As the name states, LG's Home Bakery can do more than just bread. It is also up for helping you prepare dough for pizzas, baking cakes (although a bit more work on your side is required), and preparing jam. What the LG Home Bakery of course also provides is bragging rights, since there is nothing better than being able to say "I baked it myself" – well, sort of anyway.

LG kindly provides an instruction manual/ recipe book with about 25 different bread (and other) recipes. The LG Home Bakery retails at a recommended **R1699**, visit **www.lge.co.za** for more info.

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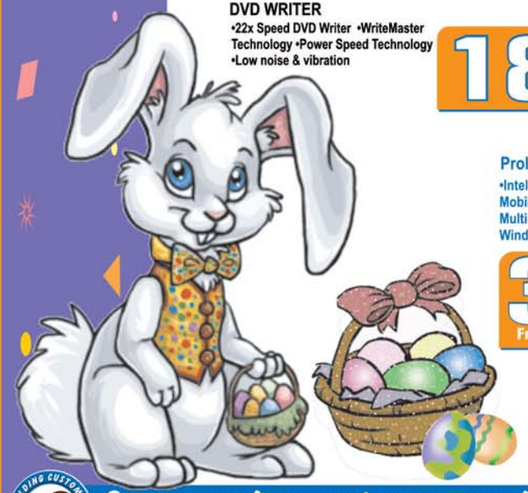

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Phantom Technologies iBoss Internet Filter Devices

Getting back to work with an internet filter

For many people the internet is a vast source of both information and entertainment. Whether the latter should happen at work is a valid question.

User group defined

The iBoss Pro for Business is a pure hardware only solution that can take the sting out of internet monitoring and content filtering. With the iBoss one is able to create user groups and define which sites and services can and cannot be visited by each group.

Content Filtering

While the option is there to block social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook straight off the bat, the iBoss allows one to allocate a set amount of time per day for employees to browse these sites, or configure it to only become unblocked during lunchtime for example. Access to sites can furthermore be filtered via categories such as shopping, forums, gambling, video and audio, adult and dating; while peer-2-peer (P2P) networking and internet messaging site (such as Skype and Internet Messenger) can also be blocked. File extensions, such as .mp3, can also be put on the hitlist, but not email content. The iBoss also has a stealth mode, in which it doesn't block websites but simply monitors users to see who is accessing sites on the restricted list.

A record of any rule violations, as well a unit tamper log are kept, and can be exported as a .csv file or to Excel.

Network knowledge

While the iBoss is a very comprehensive system for filtering and blocking content, a bit of networking knowledge is required to install the system (if you have installed a router before you should be ok). It's best to remember that the process of finding the right content to filter is an organic one since feedback from employees is needed to find the appropriate sites, keywords and programs not to filter.

Feedback

Feedback received from iMvula, the company distributing the system in SA, is that some companies are seeing as much as a 30–35% decrease in monthly bandwidth cost since they started using the unit, not to mention the recovery of productive staff hours.

Cost

The iBoss Pro is ideally recommended for networks with up to 50 users. The unit itself costs **R1995**, with either a monthly subscription of **R285** or annual subscription of **R3095**. There are no per user licenses needed. There is also a Home unit available which allows for less groups to be created and is permanently firewalled, recommended for use at home or on networks with up to 15 users. The home unit costs **R945**, with a **R849** annual subscription.

Get hold of iMvula for more information at iboss@icdsa.co.za or on 012-348-0336. Alternatively visit their website **www.icdsa.co.za**.

$250 billion. Predicted amount generated by online retail sales in the US by 2014.

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How to: Supercharge your iPod

This How To works with many media players but we'll be focusing on the iPod. Let's face it, Apple's software for running your iPod is kinda boring, it plays a couple of media types and does pretty much nothing else. So how about taking on some completely new firmware?

There are a couple of alternative firmware mods you can try out, the big players being iPodLinux and Rockbox. The latter is incredibly easy to install so it's the one we'll be using. It supports more than 20 audio and video formats and has lots of different themes. It also comes with more than 30 standard games and can even handle that classic Doom and all the old Game Boy games.

Installations

You can get Rockbox at **www.rockbox.org/download**, and works with the iPod 1g through 5.5g, iPod Mini and iPod Nano 1g. The installer is about 3 MB but you'll need to be online to finish the installation. Plug in your iPod and restart it by holding down the Menu and Select buttons until it reboots, then hold down Play and Select to enter disk mode, this effectively makes it a portable hard drive. Run the config utility and select "Change", choose "Autodetect" in the pop up and select "Ok". You can now select "Complete Installation" and Rockbox will take care of the rest, the final step is to choose additional themes so look them through and pick the ones you like. Please note that obviously your iPod's warranty just flew out the window. For further info and FAQ visit **http://tinyurl.com/ipodrockbox**.

Changes

To boot the new firmware simply restart the device. The interface is a lot different than the old one so feel free to play around with it a bit. A worthy mention is the additional power settings available – with a good battery and the optimisation of the settings you'll be able to get more than 20 hours of play time, more than double that of the old firmware. To be able to use the music on your device you need to import the old database, select the "Database" menu and when prompted to import press Select, the process takes a minute or two. When done restart the device to finalise the setup procedure.

Doom and Game Boy games

The version of Doom installed is a free port, if you prefer playing the one you had as a kid copy over the .wad files from the original to the doom sub folder on your iPod, you can now select the version you prefer. To be able to play old Game Boy games create a new folder and populate it with a couple of roms, a quick Google search for "Game Boy roms" returns hundreds of games to try out. You can launch the games under the "Files" menu.

If at any time you wish to revert to the original firmware you can remove Rockbox using the setup utility, remove both Rockbox and the bootloader and restart the device. Alternatively, hold the Menu button while booting and it'll load the original firmware without having to remove Rockbox first. [MS]

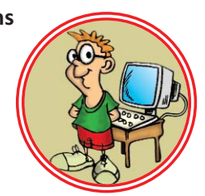
Image: CC Devo in Regress on Flickr

Five million. iPad units speculated to be built by Apple during the first half of 2010.

55. Channels on offer from TopTV, competition to DSTV, which will launch in May.

How to: Fix your iPod

The three most common breakdowns of portable media players are battery, earphone and earphone plug failures. If you're using an iPod you're in luck though, parts are available locally and pretty easy to get a hold of.



We'll be showing you how to fix an earphone plug, and then replace an iPod Video earphone jack and battery (but it should work for most of the other iPods too). You can get a matching plug from any electronics store. An earphone jack and battery will set you back about R600 for both, still cheaper than buying a new one.

To find the replacement part you're looking for have a look at either **www.ifixipods.co.za** or **www.igear.co.za**. For the less adventurous both sites offer a repair service if you're willing to mail your iPod to far far away for a couple of days.

You'll need the following

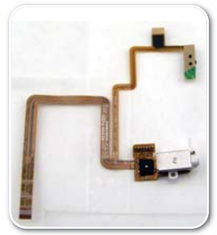
- A blunt knife or plastic object to pry the case open.
- A small screw driver set, pliers and a tweezer.
- A soldering iron and small blade.

Fixing the earphone plug

We'll be fixing the earphones first. Determine where your cable is broken by playing some music and jiggling the cable at different locations until you hear the music playing, cut the cable at about an inch away from this spot up the cable. Stripping a centimeter of plastic from the cord will expose two really tiny wires, these are normally enamel coated. Solder one wire to each of the earphone plug connectors, you might need a bit of heat to get through the enamel coating so be patient, cramp the plug around the cable and close it up.

Opening the iPod

To open your iPod insert the knife between the top and bottom covers starting at the lower corners, work your way up wedging the two apart. Be carefull not to let the knife extend too far into the device or hurt your casing. Congratulations on now voiding your warranty. Carefully take the covers apart noting that two wires hold them together, use the tweezer to disconnect the latches holding the wires in place on the main board. You can now completely detach the back cover.



Replacement headphone jack

Back cover attached

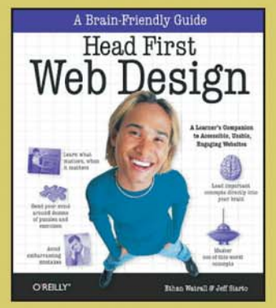
Back cover semi attached

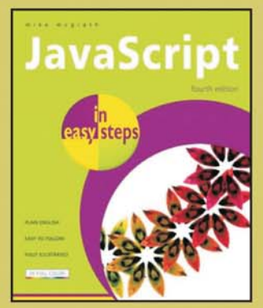
Replace

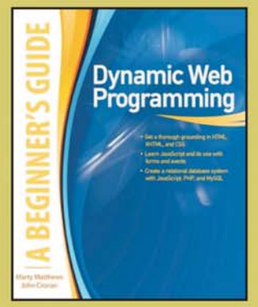
Pry the battery off with the knife being careful not to damage the ribbon cable attaching the earphone plug. Unscrew the old earphone jack and replace it with the new one, replace the battery and make sure the glue strip is holding it in place. Closing everything up is a bit tricky, the ribbon connectors on the main board have a little brown latch that you need to open, insert the cables and push the hinges shut ensuring that they're making contact by pulling on the cables slightly. Close the covers by snapping them into place and you're ready to go. [MS]

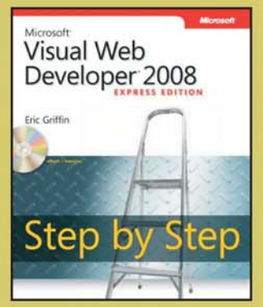
Back cover and battery

Do It Yourself Web Design









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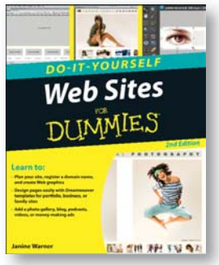
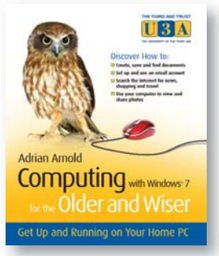


Web Sites Do-It-Yourself For Dummies

2nd Edition, Janine Warner

Website design needn't be a problem with *Web Sites Do-It-Yourself For Dummies*. Janine Warner takes a very practical approach to website design, giving an entry level guide for anyone who has never built a website before.

The book helps you get to grips with common website creation software such as Dreamweaver, Photoshop Elements, Flash, and WordPress. It guides you to the end of the process, helping with the testing and publishing of your final creation. **R315**



Computing with Windows 7 for the Older and Wiser

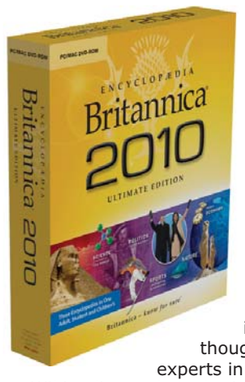
Adrian Arnold

This book isn't just about getting to grips with the new Windows 7 operating system, it's also about how to use a PC. It starts with a tutorial on how to use the keyboard and mouse, and progresses through to working with files, word processing, surfing the web and using email. **R285**

Both books are available from leading book stores and Intersoft on **www.intersoft.co.za** or 08600-BOOKS.

Encyclopaedia Britannica 2010 Ultimate Edition

Still flying the flag



With Encarta gone, Encyclopaedia Britannica still finds itself up against two formidable opponents, with Google in the one tab and Wikipedia in another.

If you are looking for info on say Henry VIII, *Britannica* offers a wealth of information and pictures. This isn't the case with info on more current topics, whereas Wikipedia or a search on Google would give you such info immediately. *Britannica 2010*'s info though, was assembled by leading experts in their respective fields, whilst info on Wikipedia can be submitted by anyone, although a strict editing process is in place.

Britannica 2010's interface consists of three libraries, one for children (6–10 years), another for students (10–14 years) and one featuring the full *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Library. Each library is customised, making it easier for children and teens to use the software themselves.

Encyclopaedia Britannica 2010 Ultimate Edition is available for a RRP of **R499**. You could also look at the *Student Edition* at **R199** or the **Deluxe Edition** at **R299**. For more info visit **www.phoenixsoftware.co.za**.

$13.1 billion. Total amount for PC gaming software sales in 2009.

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Look up in the cloud... Is it a bird or a plane? No it's PC Medic swooping in to answer some of your PC related questions.

Q Dear PC Medic. I have heard of a secret "God Mode" in Windows 7. Does it actually exist, are there any benefits and how do you activate it? –Jacques Rayners

A *Hi Jacques. God Mode does indeed exist. In Windows 7 it creates a rendezvous folder for all your PC settings, and it's useful if you want to customise any aspect of the look and feel of your Windows 7 experience. All you have to do is to create a new folder and name it "GodMode.{ED7BA470-8E54-465E-825C-99712043E01C}". Windows will do the rest to make it a clickable icon.*

Q Yo PC Medic, I surf the net a lot and struggle to remember all my stupid passwords for personal- and work email accounts, work and home PC login passwords, Facebook and Twitter passwords, etc, etc, etc. Are there any tools or sites that can help you in this regard? –JP

A *Hallo JP. Unlike Charlie, the girl with the super memory from the Heroes TV-series, I also need help remembering my passwords. There are many password managers available but I find KeePass the most useful. It's a free, open-source password manager, which keeps all your passwords in one database. KeePass is locked with one master key or key file, meaning you only need to remember the one master password. When you click on one of your stored passwords it can actually log you into that particular page. Download it from* ***www.keepass.info*** *(it's about 2 MB), and its also available as a download to carry on a USB stick or as an iPod and BlackBerry App.*

Q Hello PC Medic. I am a bit in love with YouTube checking out all the latest video games, movie previews and of course music videos. I was wondering if there's any way for me to download some of these clips from the site, so that I can watch them on my PC, rather than wait for them to finish buffering? –Sydney Barnard

A *Hi Sydney. There's a reason why YouTube doesn't allow you to download the videos, and it's called copyright. So legally you're not really in the clear in doing this, but in order to solve your problem you might want to check out the aptly named YouTube Downloader here* ***http://youtubedownload.altervista.org/*** *(about 3 MB). It's straightforward to use and allows you to save the clips in a variety of different formats.*

PayPal and FNB team up

It all started as a rumour on Twitter back in February. A post was made stating that First National Bank was in talks with PayPal to bring the service to SA. The news spread like wildfire among SA's digirati – to such an extent that FNB was forced to make a rushed and rather uninformative statement on the matter.

Last month the rumours were confirmed. FNB's exclusive Top Up and Withdraw service with PayPal allows FNB customers to top up and withdraw funds from a PayPal account via a qualifying FNB account.

The problem with PayPal

Why is this significant? Well let's first look at what PayPal is. As one of the biggest players in the online payment market, with 81 million active accounts, PayPal carries a lot of clout. Instead of having to enter your credit card details for every transaction you make on the net, you simply open an account with PayPal. This account can then be securely linked to your credit card, and you can use PayPal for your purchases. Thanks to a number of security features people also feel at ease paying money into a PayPal account.

Although South Africans could easily open a PayPal account, the problem was that the Reserve Bank didn't allow for those payments to be transferred back into a SA bank account. So if you had an online shop selling vuvuzelas, money transferred to your PayPal account had to stay there. Until FNB's deal with PayPal, that is.

Payment now transferable

FNB customers can open a PayPal account and link it to a qualified FNB account to receive PayPal payments in 21 different currencies. FNB will then convert the currency to South African Rands when the money is transferred into their account, with a transaction commission of 1.5% per transaction. All this approved by the Exchange Control Department of the South African Reserve Bank.

Some problems

But the service isn't hitch free. Receiving payments in any of 21 currencies is fantastic, but the fact that none of those currencies is the Rand is rather odd. So, selling goods via PayPal to fellow countrymen requires that you deal in foreign currency. The other issue is the fact that you are tied to FNB if you want to receive payments via PayPal.

Despite this, the FNB-PayPal agreement is yet another necessary step for SA to become more connected in a globalised world. It just makes us wish that we actually had something to sell online.

The South African PayPal site is up and running on **https://www.paypal.com/za**. Visit **www.fnb.co.za** for more info. [MJ]

> 20 000. Employees working for Google worldwide.

$4 billion. Estimated size of the mobile app market by 2012.

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Virus Safe and Secure

Jonathan Holton, general manager of Holton and Associates, distributors of BitDefender, is starting his new monthly column by warning about rogue antivirus software and social network phising.

Rogue Viruses

Recently we saw a new wave of fake virus alerts being released online. The aim of these is to trick the public into panicking so that they'll buy worthless or malign rogue antivirus software.

A recent example of this happened when users searched Google for "Super Bowl 2010" information. When they clicked on a certain link, a message appeared saying: "Warning!!! Your PC needs to install antivirus software! Personal Security can perform fast and free scan of your computer." Various popup windows appeared on the screen, demonstrating an ongoing scanning process that of course detected oodles of malware in the system. The rogue antivirus then kicked in and calmly asked you to buy their antivirus software. Most of the time there is no virus present on your PC, the scam is set to buy and install this rogue software that can do even bigger harm to your security.

What to do?

Always check with your current antivirus software supplier before you download any other antivirus software. Remember that you can never run two antivirus systems together – one would always have to be removed before another one can function properly.

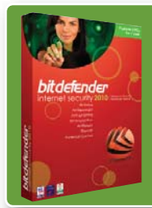
Social Networking under attack

Facebook with their more than 350 million users, and others social networking sites such as MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Ning, Friendster, Badoo, are the new target of cyber-criminals. Hackers are using these sites to gain users' trust by creating false groups, profiles and causes.

To do this hackers first gain access to a Facebook user's account by stealing their passwords through what is known as a phishing attack. Hackers then use this account to send email to the user's friends, urging them to click on links to fake websites. Sending websites through a trusted network of friends is a sure way to dupe users into clicking on fake websites. The fake sites are designed to look just like the original Facebook home page and unsuspecting victims proceed to log into the site and of course unwittingly give away their passwords. Friends are also tricked into responding to a false claim of immediate monetary help needed by their "friend", with the money going into the criminal's accounts.

What to do?

Exercise caution and be on your guard when using social networks and only accept known friends and relatives. The hackers and fraudsters are out there and use multiple ways to trick you.



Send your Security related questions to info@techsmart.co.za. The best question will win BitDefender Internet Security 2010 for one year, courtesy of Holton & Associates.

Tech Jargon Busters

Struggling to come to grips with techy terms? Our Jargon Busters will sort you out.

Apps

App is short for application, a small piece of software usually with just a single function, for instance a videogame or electronic cookbook. These days apps for smartphones are very popular. You can download apps for you iPhone and iPod at the App Store. For devices that run on Android, check out the Android Market and for Windows Mobile devices you can go to the Windows Mobile Market. BlackBerry owners should visit the BlackBerry App World.

HD

High-definition. High-definition video has a higher degree of visual detail and needs a HDTV to display in its full glory. HDTVs comes with 720p, 1080i and 1080p (also known as Full HD) picture resolution.

GPU

Stands for graphics processing unit, also referred to as a visual processing unit or VPU. It is a specialised processor that handles all the 3D graphics rendering for example when playing games, that your computer or video games console does.

AVCHD

Advanced Video Coding High Definition is a system for recording and the playing back of HD video, jointly developed by Japanese tech giants Sony and Panasonic. It is mainly utilised for video recording in HD camcorders, such as the new Handycam HDR-CX7 by Sony, the world's smallest AVCHD camcorder. AVCHD can be used to record onto DVD, hard-drives, memory stick as well as SD memory cards.

Geo-tagging

With geo-tagging your photos are labelled with the geographic location of where they were taken via GPS. If you look through your pics later and can't remember where you took a pic, you can view this location on mapping software such as Google Maps.

HDMI

High-Definition Multimedia Interface is a compact audio/video interface for transmitting uncompressed digital data. More than just a port at the back of your TV or PC monitor, HDMI is a set of rules that allow high-definition electronic devices, such as HDTV and home theatre systems, to communicate. A special HDMI cable is needed to connect HD devices.

DVI

Acronym for Digital Visual Interface, a predecessor technology to HDMI. DVI is based on the same technology as HDMI, so the two connections are totally compatible, but a different set of connections is needed to transmit the audio signal, as DVI only transmits video. DVI ports usually connects PCs to monitors.

2nd. Bill Gates' position on Forbes' 2010 rich list, slipping one place from 09. 136th. Ranking of Apple boss Steve Jobs.

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April 2010 Web Time Wasters

Videora
www.videora.com

After downloading Videora's free file converter you are able to convert your video files in order to be playable on your iPod, PSP, BlackBerry smartphone or any other supported devices on the site.

The software can convert a plethora of movie files including avi, divx, xvid, x264, vob, mpeg, DVDs as well as YouTube videos into suitable video formats for your device, for example movies are converted to MPEG-4 or H.264 formats so that they can be viewed on your PSP Go.

Can you run it?
www.canyourunit.com

Canyourunit.com allows you to see whether your PC is able to run certain games or whether you need to upgrade certain components such as your graphics card or RAM. All you need to do is select a game from among the sites' default list or type in the name of the game you wish to find requirements for, like Star Trek Online for example. When you hit the 'Can you run it?' button, the online tool will tell you whether your PC makes the minimum – as well as the recommended requirements for the game.

100 People: A World Portrait
www.100people.org

Ever feel overwhelmed by the sheer complexity of interesting facts and figures available on the human population? The site features a condensed account of research which was done by the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay on the human population. This condensed version scales down the normal stats to be representative of a 100 people. For example, if the world were 100 people, 82 of them would be literate, while 18 would not. You can really get immersed in this fascinating site, and it can be a catalyst for creative research project and assignment ideas.

The Quote Blog
www.thequoteblog.com

If you want to dazzle your fellow varsity classmates by quoting some famous people from the past or just want to brush up on your general knowledge, then take a look at TheQuoteBlog for some historical inspiration. It provides you with a quote of the day and you can browse through the list of quotes by famous figures from entertainers like Frank Sinatra and Michael Jackson to political figures such as Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama.

FirstPersonTetris
http://firstpersontetris.com

Old-school gamers this is for you. If you are a fan of the original Tetris and long for a return to the days playing it on your 8-bit TV game system, then First-Person Tetris is the remedy.

The online First-Person Tetris version of the site remains true to the classic game in all but one respect – screen orientation. Every time you rotate a tetromino (one of the puzzle pieces in the game), the screen will follow suit by also rotating, adding an extra dimension of complexity, upping its original challenge.

The design of the site incorporates appropriate background features such as an old TV, with a VCR and Nintendo ntertainment System (NES) to set the appropriate reminiscent mood. Be warned though, this online game isn't for vertigo or motion sickness sufferers.

Urban Dictionary
www.urbandictionary.com

The Urban Dictionary is an online dictionary of terms you won't find in your Cambridge – or Oxford dictionary. These are terms and phrases that are employed in pop culture for instance in hip hop music videos or have recently come into prominence over the web. Examples of these can be "mfeo", which is an acrynom for made for each other and "crib" which is slang for house. You can check out the word of the day, browse alphabetically for terms or type a word to get its definition. Be warned this dictionary contains explicit language.

3 copies of Battlefield: Bad Company 2 up for grabs courtesy of EA Games!

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We said: "One of the best FPS games we've played thus far. Highly recommended." (p38)

To enter visit **www.techsmart.co.za**, where you can also read our full review on Bad Company 2.

13. Number of groups that the average Facebook user belongs to. 3.5 million. Events created on Facebook each month.

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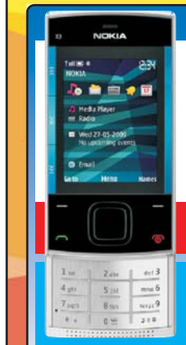

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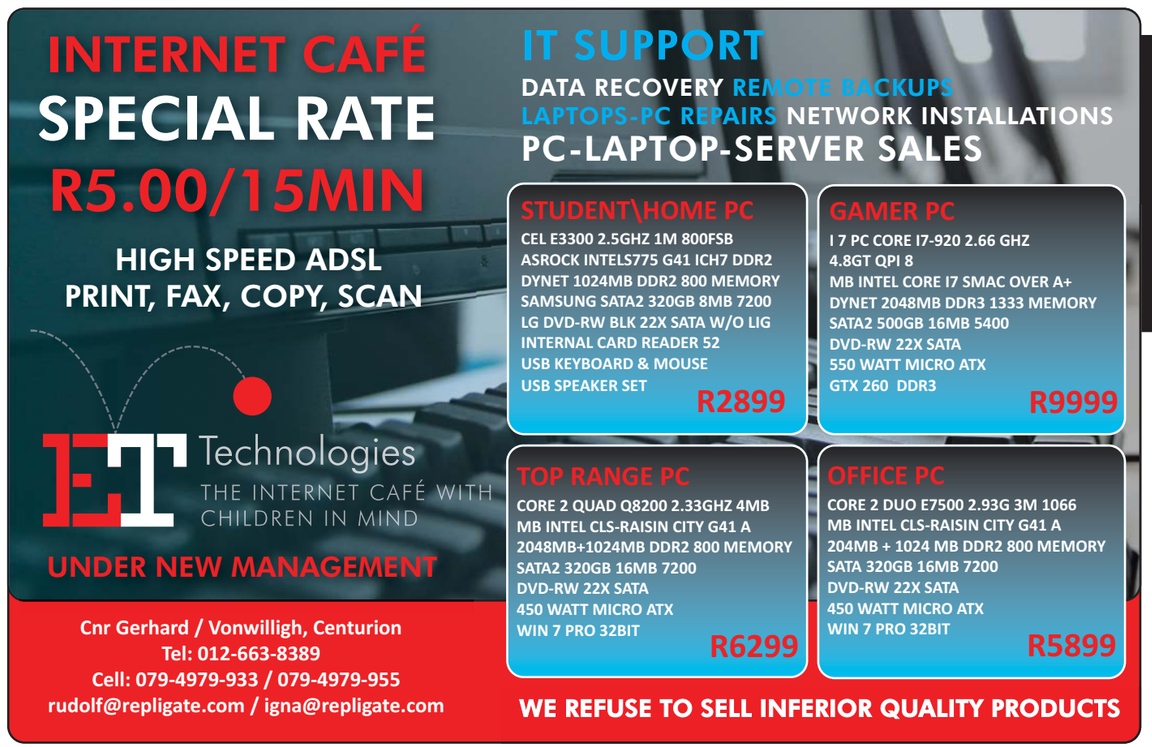

15 000. 3D TVs supplied by LG in a deal with Sky, to be installed in venues across the UK.

>218 million. Downloads of Firefox 3.6.

Guitar Hero: Van Halen

More like Van Failen

We're huge Guitar Hero Fans. We've played and loved every single one, including the "80's" one where it looked like it had been quickly slapped together and released to meet the holiday deadlines.

So when we unwrapped the plastic from around Guitar Hero: Van Halen (GHVH), we could barely contain ourselves. And then... disappointment. Don't get us wrong, it's a Guitar Hero game, and we played it right through to the end, but we didn't get that warm fuzzy feeling we normally get. In all honesty GHVH felt a bit like the "Rocks the 80's" game, and after playing GH5 religiously, we honestly expected a little better.

Included are all the famous Van Halen tracks, plus songs that have inspired the band at every second gig location in career mode.

Awkward and Strange

We were used to the new design and feel of Guitar Hero 5 and loved it, so GHVH just felt awkward and strange. You start looking for options and edits that aren't in the right place, or not there at all. It's all very Guitar Hero 1, and it took a while to get into it. The game still supports four band members – lead guitar, bass guitar, drums and vocals, but they have removed the feature where you can just drop into a game and play. They have also removed the option to play with your Xbox 360 Avatar.

While GHVH is by no means a terrible game, Activision haven't done anything new to keep the fans enthralled. Guitar Hero: Aerosmith was epic, and Metallica was monumental in working in the bands history and stories. By comparison, the Van Halen installment is a bit insipid.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, if you want to play a little Guitar Hero and you haven't played any of the others, this one will satisfy. But if you jammed and loved all the previous ones, it'll leave you feeling like someone (Activision) just stole your last R500 bucks and is now laughing at you. If you want to have the whole GH collection buy it and play it through for achievements, otherwise keep playing the previous versions and wait for Activision to release something more mind blowing. [B]

The Good	The Bad
Well, it's a new Guitar Hero.	The game feels a bit like it's been rushed through the production stages.

God of War III

Bloodlust appeased

Kratos is back one-last time to resolve his daddy issues with Zeus.

Tearing his way through Mount Olympus, the underworld, earth and the flesh of all who oppose him, Kratos returns in God of War III. This time round it's more than unrestrained bloodlust, since GoW III is balanced in a way the previous ones weren't, mixing exploration, puzzle solving and combat extremely well.

Scale

The first thing that grabs you in the game is its scale. You'll feel as if Kratos jumped out the screen and ripped your jaw off your face, it's so unbelievable. The use of camera angles also adds to the scale, zooming out to wow you with the size of levels, while moving in tight for combat, highlighting some amazing attention to detail.

Storyline

GoW III might be epic in scale, but the game's theme is rather one-dimensional. Vengeance is Kratos' sole focus. Like part two, he's out to kill his father Zeus – since Zeus killed him first. Almost all interactions you have with characters in the game are about whether they're helping or hindering you in your quest.

Gameplay

Like the storyline, the gameplay formula is unchanged. You run about various environments figuring out how to get to the next one, ripping the heads off mythical creatures who oppose you, all with an unchanging scowl on Kratos' face.

Combat has been tweaked to make it a little tougher to pull off crazy combos, but the new weapons on offer more than compensate. Importantly, your magic has now been tied to your weapons, so your powers change according to which weapons you are using, which make far more sense that the system used in GoW II.

`Puzzles and exploration are equally polished. Never so tough as to turn you off, the puzzles you need to solve to get to your next objective can be intricate and often involve objects collected from multiple environments.

Conclusion

GoW III is just more of the same; and that's exactly what we've spent the last three years waiting for. This time round it's just better looking, more brutal and more enjoyable – which is really saying something. It quite simply is one of the best action/ adventure titles ever made. [TM]

The Good	The Bad
Combat is very satisfying and the overall look of the game jaw-dropping.	It's the final instalment.

Battlefield: Bad Company 2

Blasting its way to the top

Battlefield: Bad Company 2 takes you on an adrenaline fuelled ride to some awesome locations, blowing up everyone and everything in your path.

In Bad Company 2 you get to fill the boots of Preston Marlowe, member of the 'B' company squad. They are searching for a weapon of mass destruction (WMD), which- must under no circumstances fall into the hands of your enemy, in this case the Russians.

Total Destruction

Most elements within the game's environments are destructible and your enemies can, and frequently will, destroy your cover to get to you. Obviously you can do the same and half of the fun is cutting away walls with a spray of bullets before taking out the adversaries that were hiding behind it.

Engrossing experience

The game features some beautifully designed environments. Whether it's a frozen mountaintop or a flourishing jungle, the shear detail of it all left us breathless. Fireflies buzzing around, reflections in the water and the realistic smoke effect all add to the game's atmosphere. There are a few environmental niggles though as it's possible to get stuck in certain places, like in the jungle if you move beneath the wooden huts.

Team

Between all the shooting fury, the storyline is presented to you via cinematic styled cut sequences. There isn't an overwhelming amount of dialogue taking place between the main characters, but the elite unit does seem to have a knack for delivering some tension-cutting one liners that Arnie and Stallone would be proud of.

Although in the beginning of the game your squad mates are quite lethal with their chosen tools, later on they'll tend to keep the approaching enemy soldiers bogged down, killing only a few foes, leaving you with the lion's share of the work. This isn't an issue for the most part, but in certain sections it can be rather annoying, as you'll be occupied with having to stop enemy soldiers from destroying a target with their RPGs and some extra help from the squad in taking out the supporting enemies sure would be appreciated. Since your squad members are crucial to the progression of the story they cannot die.

Conclusion

Battlefield: Bad Company 2 is visually stunning and its immersive gameplay experience really rocks. It's going to be a very tight race between Bad Company 2 and MW2 for the title of Best FPS Ever. [HD]

The Good	The Bad
The graphics are top notch, especially the environments and the destructible elements.	A couple of flaws such as getting stuck in one or two of the environmental elements within the game still managed to creep into the final version.

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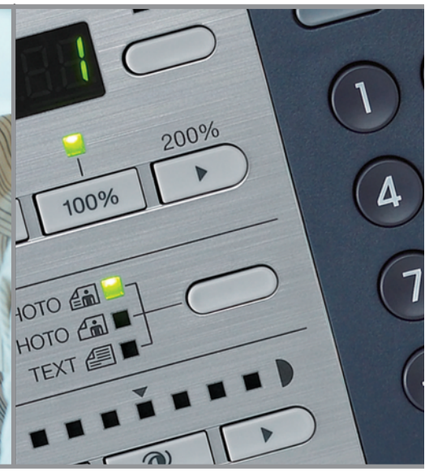

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