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Our first Sandy Bridge machine tested!



Porsche 918 RSR

Lean, mean, green machine



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Is that really an AIO?



THE GREEN ISSUE

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The Green Issue » February 2011



Jan the month of gadgets

January was indeed a month for gadget lovers to get excited about. A large amount of new devices were introduced, the bulk of which came from the Consumer Electronics Show, held in Las Vegas. As we do each year we cover the major trends of the event as well as look at some of the hot products on show on p7. A mini battle is also brewing with both Nintendo and Sony revealing their next generation portable gaming devices. The Nintendo 3DS' big benefit is being 3D enabled without the need for glasses (see p17). On the other hand Sony's device, codenamed Next Generation Portable, carries massive onboard processing power while also being 3G capable, opening up the road for online gaming.

South Africans are of course now also officially privy to Apple's magical iPad. But with talk of the iPad 2 being announced later this year, how desirable will this first version be locally? One thing is for sure, we can brace ourselves for a number of tablets up for sale soon.

Starting this month, we are distributing our magazine nationally – so welcome onboard Cape Town and Durban.

Enjoy the issue, Mike

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This weird little rectangular phone looks like a distant relative of SpongeBob SquarePants, just way smarter.

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All the latest tech jargon from the floors of CES explained

TechSmart exclusively uses the
LG W2794V monitor for all reviews.



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TOP TECH TITBITS

SA gets going with digital



Communications Minister Roy Padayahchie has announced that South Africa will adopt the DVB-T2 digital television standard, with all analogue terrestrial broadcasts to be switched off by December 2013. This concludes a process that has dragged on for five years, allowing the country to finally prepare itself for the move towards digital. Digital broadcasting would require set-top boxes for older televisions in order to receive the signal, with Government initially earmarking R2.45 billion to subsidise these to poorer households. The switching off of the analogue signal also frees up spectrum for wireless broadband connectivity.

Sony's root key hacked



Sony is sitting with a major headache after the root key for the PS3 was hacked. With the root key exposed users can theoretically run any custom program, be it software or games, on the PS3 while tricking the console into thinking it's authentic. The electronics giant has hit back with a restraining order against the parties involved – famous hacker George "geohot" Hotz and hacker group fail0verflow. Sony also claimed that they violated both the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, while also knowingly opening up the console to piracy. The root key hack cannot be corrected by a software update to the system, furthering Sony's headache.

Kinect on your PC



Is *Minority Report* gesture based control for Windows on its way? According to technology site WinRumours, Microsoft is preparing an official Kinect Software Development Kit (SDK) and driver support for Windows based PCs. The Kinect is a device built for the Xbox 360 that allows for manipulation of games via body motion instead of regular controls. The release of the SDK will allow programmers to create software and games for Windows PC, paving the way to fully control the next Windows interface using gesture based input and voice commands alone. The Kinect sold eight million units in its first 60 days on market. Microsoft has also welcomed hackers to create new uses for the device. 🌟

» Jan tech recap

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>For all this and other daily news, visit www.techsmart.co.za.</p>					
3 Facebook gets valued at \$50 billion dollars after new funding from Goldman Sachs and DST.	4 AMD reveals new HD 6000M GPU series. 	5 BMW teams up with Nvidia to better vehicle-information systems.	6 The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) kicks off in Las Vegas (see p9). 	1 FIFA 11 starts the year on top of the UK video chart	2
10 Chinese website posts pictures of the mythical Sony PlayStation phone.	11 Blizzard announces WoW: Cataclysm sold 4.7 million copies in first month.	12 MySpace fires 500 employees. 	13 LG Electronics South Africa appoints new CEO, JM Lee.	7 Apple launches Mac App Store with 1 million apps downloaded in first day.	8
17 MTN South Africa appoints Lambo Kanagaratnam as its new chief technology officer.	18 Apple CEO Steve Jobs goes on medical leave. Tim Cook takes over.	19 Hugh Hefner tweets that old and new <i>Playboy</i> issues will be making it to the iPad.	20 Nintendo spills the beans on the 3DS (See p18). 	14 South Africa adopts the DVB-T2 digital television standard.	15 Wikipedia celebrates its 10th birthday.
24 LG to bring three new notebooks to SA, including a 3D one.	25 OpenGL 4.1 now supported on certain AMD GPUs.	26 Black Eyed Peas member will.i.am becomes Intel's director of creative innovation.	27 Sony reveals the PSP successor, codenamed Next Generation Portable.	21 Google announces that co-founder Larry Page will become CEO in April.	22 10 billionth app downloaded from Apple App Store.
				28 Apple iPad available in SA.	29

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Electricity in the wind

Darling Wind Farm, situated 70 km north of Cape Town, is one of only a few renewable energy projects operating in SA. TechSmart talked to Nicolas Rolland, director of wind farm management company G7 renewable energies, about this green initiative.

TechSmart: Darling Wind Farm has four wind turbines generating power right now, with plans for a further six. When will they be ready to go?

Nicolas Rolland: The plan to extend the wind farm with another six turbines are still at study level; before implementing such a plan various outstanding points need clarification such as the type of turbines to be used, the electricity tariff applicable and the extent to which it applies.

TS: Is the wind power industry growing?

NR: Wind energy has been showing double digit growth over the last two decades and is expected to keep the same pace for the years to come. Climate change mitigation is on the agenda of most nations, including South Africa, with

wind power remaining the most reliable and cost effective renewable energy source for the time being.

TS: What is the wind energy potential in SA?

NR: Wind energy in South Africa has a great potential thanks to the size of the country but also some exceptionally windy areas securing consistent wind energy resources at any time transformed and supplied to the national grid. The industry can also be increasingly localised in SA as we have the skills and means available in the country to manufacture such equipment locally.

TS: From your perspective – what are the best solutions for SA's energy crisis?

NR: More wind parks is what I see as

optimal in assisting to solve the current crisis. We have nothing to lose, all to gain! Wind power projects can be implemented way quicker than any other power plants – it took only 104 days for a wind turbine to be commissioned from a green field near Port Elizabeth last year. It also has the long-term potential to allow the localisation of an entire industry, instead of relying on overseas supply and sometimes extremely specialised engineering. ♣

Darling Wind Farm – Quick Facts

- In one year the four wind turbines produce the yearly electricity consumption of 700 average SA households.
- Length of the blades = 32 m, slightly more than the length of a tennis court.
- The turbines start producing power at a wind speed of 8 km/h, reaching full

- potential at 54 km/h, and starts shutting down at 97 km/h.
- The blades rotate slowly at a constant speed of 32 revolutions per minute regardless of the wind speed.



OPTIMAL ENERGY
imagineering mobility



Lean and mean, SA's very own electric machine

Conceived by Cape Town-based Optimal Energy and originally designed by South African-born Keith Helfet, South Africa's very own all-electric car, Joule, has been drawing all the right attention overseas.



TechSmart talked to Jaco van Loggerenberg, media & events manager at Optimal Energy, about what Joule's been up to.

TechSmart: What's the international response been like for Joule? Any big orders?

Jaco van Loggerenberg: Joule has been very well received internationally. Our display at the Geneva Motor Show was a major success and there has been plenty of interest generated from there.

As we only start production in 2014 we are not currently taking orders, but we have had numerous requests, not only from buyers but also from partners and distributors who would like to be involved.

TS: Have you made any improvements to the vehicle?

JvL: The Joule prototype and marketing fleet is now completed and these four vehicles will be used to engage with customers and to collect valuable test data. These prototype vehicles represent the third iteration of our motor, battery and drive system, each with considerable improvements. The test

data to be collected from these vehicles will again provide the opportunity to improve on the current design, and this will be implemented in the production version.

TS: When will South Africans be able to buy one?

JvL: Joule will be available for purchase from 2014.

TS: Any cool new projects in the pipeline?

JvL: Our focus is currently on the successful commercialisation of Joule, but we do have some great ideas on the drawing boards. ♣

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International
CES

THE MOST AMAZING (ELECTRONICS) SHOW!

CES 2011, LAS VEGAS

As the biggest consumer electronics show in the world, CES is the go-to event for gadget lovers. Held each year in Las Vegas, CES does much to highlight big developments on the tech front, basically forecasting what is laying ahead for consumers in the next few years. So what were CES 2011's hot topics? Read here to find out.



TABLETS FOR ALL

If we did not know better we would have thought the CES show halls were constructed of tablets – there were just that many. The vast majority featured Google's Android operating system, and certainly one of the most impressive was Motorola's flagship, Xoom. It's the world's first tablet running on the dual-core Tegra 2 processor (see right), while also sporting Android Honeycomb (see p25), Google's operating system built from the ground up for tablets.

When it comes to most powerful, the prize must go to Asus' EP121. It features an Intel Core i5 CPU plus a lofty 4 GB of RAM and 64 GB SSD (solid-state drive), giving it the horsepower of a good mid-range notebook rather than a tablet. It runs on Windows 7, as did a good number of other tablets on show, which led to questions being asked about Windows 7's suitability for tablets, seeing that Windows 7 was not built with touch-screens in mind. Microsoft is confident enough with the current OS since they did not say a word about an upcoming tablet OS release.

With such a large number of tablets on show, and a lot heading to SA, one thing is certain – very few will have major commercial success.



NVIDIA'S TEGRA 2 SYSTEM-ON-A-CHIP

Qualcomm's 1 GHz Snapdragon processor was the star of CES last year, and this year the title belongs to the aggressive Nvidia Tegra 2 system-on-a-chip (SoC). It's the world's first mobile dual core processor, featuring the ARM Cortex-A9 MPCore CPU (see right) with 1 GHz of processing power per core. The interesting thing though is that Tegra 2 includes a graphics processor too, allowing devices sporting the chip the ability to run 1080p video without the need for a separate GPU, all with very low power consumption.

We first got sniff of the Tegra 2 when LG announced their Optimus 2X, the world's first dual core smartphone, last year. At CES the Tegra 2 chip sprouted like mushrooms, also making an appearance on Motorola's Atrix 4G and Droid Bionic smartphones, plus on a number of tablets, including Acer's Iconia Tab A500, Motorola's Xoom, Dell's Streak 7, LG's G-Slate and others. Interestingly enough it's also making the move to in-car infotainment systems from Audi, BMW and Tesla.

Best of the rest of the tablets:

- Acer's dual core Iconia Tab A500 with Clear.fi media sharing system
- Kno dual-screen tablet/reader aiming to become the textbook of the future
- Azpen X1 tablet giving you the best of both worlds, dual-booting Windows and Android

ARM

THE RISE OF ARM

One of the most important happenings at CES this year was the amazing ground covered by a chip manufacturer from the UK, known as ARM. The ARM chip architecture seems ripe for the picking as Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's CEO, announced in his keynote speech at CES that the next major Windows release, Windows 8, will also run on ARM architecture. This is a very important move for Microsoft, since in the consumer space Windows runs on x86 processors coming from Intel and AMD. With this move Microsoft is acknowledging the importance of ARM architecture (usually licenced to be produced by third-party companies such as Nvidia and Qualcomm) in smaller devices such as tablets, smartphones and netbooks.

ARM CEO, Warren East, said the technology is scalable up to the desktop and even supercomputer ranges, and with Nvidia announcing their Project Denver plans to develop new premium processors based on ARM, the big Intel vs AMD debate might just get a new player to deal with. ☺

See page 9 for all the hot products!

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CES 2011: WE WANT THIS NOW!

THERE WERE A BUNCH OF STAND-OUT PRODUCTS ON DISPLAY IN LAS VEGAS THIS YEAR. HERE ARE OUR TOP PICKS:

1. MOTOROLA XOOM

It would seem like Motorola is back with a vengeance judging by the killer products they had on show. With a delicious 10.1" screen (bigger than the iPad) and some killer looks, the Xoom tablet was many show goers' overall best in show device, mainly thanks to it being the only tablet that ran Android 3.0 dubbed Honeycomb. Honeycomb was designed by Google specifically for larger screen devices, making the Xoom feel like a tablet instead of an overgrown smartphone. It also includes 32 GB of onboard storage, a front and back facing camera, Flash support and HDMI out. We're also holding thumbs for a killer price.

4. SAMSUNG 9 SERIES NOTEBOOK

We've not really seen any response from PC manufacturers that comes close to Apple's wafer-thin MacBook Air, but at least Samsung is pushing things in the right direction with their delightful 9 series thin and light notebook. With a second generation 1.4 GHz Core i5 Processor and 128 GB SSD storage, it weighs in at just over 1.3 kg thanks in part to its Duralumin body. Yummy.

5. GM EN-V ELECTRIC CAR

GM showcased their EN-V, short for Electric Networked-Vehicle, at CES, pointing towards concerns about traffic congestion, parking availability, air quality and affordability as reasons why this petite vehicle might just be the future of inner-city travel. We can't imagine that Victor Matfield or Bakkies Botha will be driving one of these soon.

6. RAZER SWITCHBLADE

The Razer Switchblade tablet/netbook hybrid is basically a mini netbook designed for one thing, playing PC games on the go. It runs Windows 7 and sports a 7" capacitive touch-screen with a 1024 x 600 pixel resolution, but the killer feature is its "magical" keyboard. When a game is launched the keys transition to fit with the game you're playing, in other words, instead of display the usual letters, your keys can now accommodate spell or weapon slots, making WoW for example that much easier.

2. MOTOROLA ATRIX 4G

One of the stars of the show was Motorola's Atrix 4G smartphone, ticking off all the best features including next generation 4G connectivity, 16 GB of onboard storage, 1 GB of RAM and of course the powerful Nvidia Tegra 2 1 GHz dual core processor running the show. Enough to power a regular computer you might say? Well yes indeed, since when connected with the Atrix's notebook dock, it launches Motorola's Webtop app to power this notebook/netbook. Does this pave the way for future smartphones to do the same? If processing power is anything to go by, yes, but costs involved in producing the docking stations might be the deciding factor.

3. MICROSOFT TOUCH MOUSE

A mouse is a mouse is a mouse right? Well not exactly, seeing that Microsoft's Touch Mouse has a matrix of capacitive touch-sensing electrodes covering it, thereby making it accessible to multi-touch gestures. By for example flicking a thumb over the side you can scroll through pictures or tabs in a web browser, while more gestures, including flicks, pinch-to-zoom and panning are supported as well. Gently petting it will result in the mouse following you everywhere. Not.



7. SONY BLOGGIE 3D

Sony went big on 3D this year, showcasing it on not only their TVs and notebooks but also on the Bloggie 3D camera. This compact handheld 3D recorder can capture high definition (1080p) MP4 video and 5 megapixel still photos in 2D or 3D, paving the way for anyone with blue paint to make an Avatar sequel. Captured content can be played back in 3D without glasses on the camera's 2.4" LCD display - without the need for silly glasses.

8. NVIDIA KEGPUTER

The Nvidia KEGputer is a joint venture between Nvidia and Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. and melds together a monster gaming rig with a fully functional 58 litre beer keg. Liquid cooling and refrigeration ensures both cold beers and smooth performance, while the rig is outfitted with two EVGA GeForce GTX 580 GPUs and a ton of other insane specs. Unfortunately the chances of seeing this gem in a store is about the same as completing Black Ops smashed on the kegputer's fine draft. 🍺

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\$50 billion. Recent record valuation of Facebook. Seems like a billion dollars isn't cool anymore.



Green Vehicles

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machines

It seems like Green does not equate to slow and pokey anymore, if looking at the latest eco-friendly technology powering some of today's most advanced boats, planes and cars.

Green cars

While solar-powered boats and planes are undoubtedly amazing pieces of technology, it's not exactly something that the average Joe is going to take a ride in. That doesn't mean that the average person can't benefit from green technology, as we saw from the number of green cars spotted at the recent Detroit Auto Show.

Definitely capturing the prize as the best-looking was the new 918 RSR hybrid supercar from Porsche, pictured above. Underneath its ultra-light carbon fibre body hides a 563 horsepower (hp) 10 300 rpm V8 motor coupled to two front-wheel drive electric motors for a monstrous total of 767 hp. A flywheel booster system which stores energy when the vehicle brakes also makes an appearance, releasing 160 hp bursts at the push of a button.



Türanor solar boat

Solar energy is nothing new, but later this year it's going to be employed in an unprecedented demonstration – fuelling a boat on a round-the-world trip. The 85 ton Türanor, with its Tolkien inspired name meaning "power of the sun", was recently launched in Germany. The 31 metre long vessel is the largest solar-powered boat in the world and is covered by rows of photovoltaic solar panels, encompassing more than 600 sq metres. The vessel will attempt to circumnavigate the globe this year at an average speed of 7.5 knots, guided by a team of meteorologists to ensure it gets as much sunlight as possible. The 54 717 km journey will be conducted across the equator and if successful will prove the true potential of solar energy.



Wanting to prove that Porsche isn't the only German car maker with a green touch of insanity, Mercedes-Benz unveiled its new SLS AMG E-Cell prototype. This new supercar brags with four electric motors equating in a pretty crazy 526 hp. It enables the Benz to go from 0-100 km/h

in a blistering four seconds flat. Mercedes gives drivers three distinct driving options, Comfort, Sport and Sport+. In Comfort mode the car only uses 40% of its capabilities, making this the preferred everyday (for whoever drives something like this everyday) setting. In Sport mode 60% of the E-Cell's power can be tapped while Sport+ makes the full extent of its power available to the driver. Regenerative braking and touch-screen controls also make an appearance, making this prototype look pretty complete in our eyes.

Solar Impulse solar aircraft



Taking to the skies, the Solar Impulse (HB-SIA) is the largest and most successful solar-powered aircraft in existence. The plane weighs a mere 1 600 kg (think medium-sized car) but sports a wingspan larger than that of the mammoth Boeing 747. Constructed of lightweight carbon-fiber, the plane has 12 000 solar cells adorning its 64.3 metre wingspan. These cells absorb energy from the sun, saves it in high-performance batteries, and then uses this energy to power its four electric motors. Last year the Solar Impulse became the first sun sponsored aircraft to sustain flight for more than 24 hours, flying for 26 hours and 9 minutes and reaching a maximum altitude of 8 564 metres. A circumnavigation of the globe is planned for 2012.



Moving on to something a little more realistic to the average wallet, Ford unveiled its new zero-emission, all-electric Ford Focus Electric. According to Ford the car will "cover enough range to meet the daily driving requirements for most Americans" and will reach a top speed of 135 km/h. The vehicle can be charged at home via its 240 volt charging station, and is expected to take only three to four hours to charge. Eco-friendly materials were used in the interior of the vehicle while an EcoGuide system advises drivers on the most efficient uses of their new electric plaything. A MyFord Touch mobile app is also on the way, allowing drivers to charge the vehicle remotely, receive alerts or even warm up the air conditioning beforehand on a cold morning. [JK] 🌱

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MasterPad

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

As the tablet arms race heats up, the MasterPad finally makes its appearance on local shores. The company calls it "the world's most advanced tablet PC." Here's a rundown of the Windows 7 tablet.

Display

The MasterPad features quite a large display, measuring in at 11.6", it's larger than that of the iPad and Samsung's Galaxy Tab. The multi-touch display has a native resolution of 1366 x 786 pixels, which is comparable to that of most new notebooks.

Under the hood

This tablet is quite the powerful beast as far as tablets are concerned. The device is equipped with a 1.6 GHz Intel Atom N450 CPU, the same processor that is found on many of today's leading netbooks, as well as 2 GB of RAM. The Windows 7 OS though can be resource intensive. Also onboard is a 32 GB solid state drive (SSD).

Ports and connectivity

Featuring two USB ports, an HDMI port and SD card reader, the Masterpad is quite generous when it comes to connections. It also includes wireless connectivity in the form of wireless LAN, 3G and Bluetooth support – a solid range of features.

Extra's

A built-in webcam (photo and video) as well as a mic is also present on the device, perfect for some Skyping on the go.

Operating system

The MasterPad runs a full version of Windows 7 Home edition (64-bit) and comes with the tablet-friendly Bossa

Nova 2 graphical user interface. Bossa Nova 2 offers a touch friendly web browser and features such as a dedicated Facebook option and touch-based music browsing managed to impress, while apps for popular websites are also supported.

Microsoft friendly

While Windows 7 on a tablet can have its challenges, users don't have to get used to another OS, while programs such as Outlook, Excel and Word functioned correctly.

Available from Planet Electronics on www.masterpad.co.za or 012-348-0650 from **R7299** (incl VAT). Available from March 2011. 🌱



Asus N43SL » (Sandy) Bridging the gap



The Asus N43SL is the first notebook we've tested that runs on Intel's advanced new Sandy Bridge architecture. Sporting a blazingly fast second generation Core i7 processor. Let's just say Dale Steyn's got nothing on the N43SL.

From the first glance it's clear that we're dealing with a fashion conscious device here, with the top of the lid outfitted in attractive silver, with shades of black, a glossy design bordering the display and a brushed metal palmrest completing the package. Although the keyboard was a bit bland, the touchpad worked well, also supporting advanced gestures such as pinch to zoom capabilities.

Geforce GT 540M GPU with a very potent 2 GB of memory of its own, enabling the N43SL to serve as both a business and gaming machine.

Display and audio

The notebook is equipped with a 14" LED backlit display with a 16:9 aspect ratio, perfect for

"The notebook definitely lived up to all the Sandy Bridge hype"

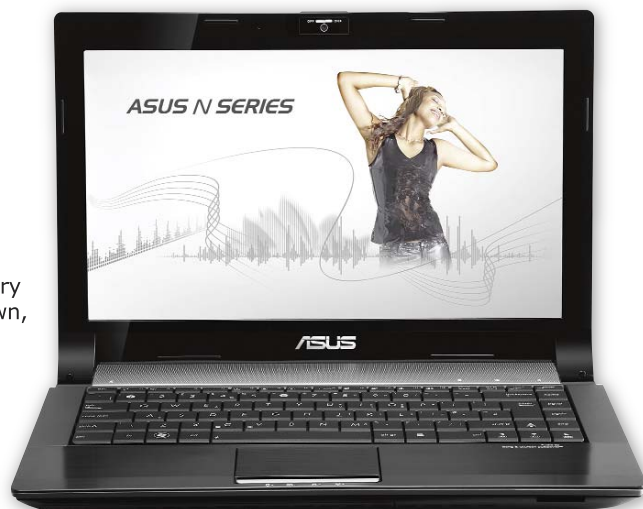
Features

Apart from snazzy looks, the true strength of the N43SL lies in its internal capabilities. During benchmarking the notebook definitely lived up to all the Sandy Bridge hype – in fact it was the second highest scoring notebook we've ever tested. This is mainly due to the Asus' Core i7-2630QM CPU with eight cores running at 2.0 GHz. Supporting the processor is 3 GB of RAM and a Nvidia

enjoying high definition entertainment. Throughout use the display was crisp and clear and displayed full HD (1080p) videos perfectly. Even on the audio side the N43SL managed to impress, with this notebook's Bang & Olufsen system pumping significantly more decibels than your average notebook.

Conclusion

With good looks, monstrous performance, high quality entertainment features and its general ease of use, the Asus N43SL



predicts really good things for 2011. Bad news is that Asus informed us that the N43SL won't be making its way to South Africa, in its stead the company will be bringing in the Asus N53, which is basically a same spec model. The N53 will be priced at **R10 999** and should be available locally from the middle of February. [JK] 🌱

» Quick specs

- 14" LED screen
- Core i7-2630QM CPU + 3 GB RAM
- Nvidia Geforce GT 540M GPU
- 650 GB HDD

Full review: <http://bit.ly/n43sl>

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IPad Bluetooth Keyboard

The Bluetooth Keyboard Portfolio pairs easily with your iPad and includes a built-in stand that positions your tablet for easy typing as well as for watching movies or reading.



ION LP to Flash

The ION Profile Flash is a turntable built to convert records to MP3s. This unit isn't designed with computer interfacing in mind, and can record directly to SD cards or USB flash drives. These recordings can then be used in SD card enabled devices such as TVs, cell phones and computers.

Sennheizer headset RS170

This wireless head-phone system comprises of a pair of wireless headphones and a multi-purpose transmitter which also functions as an 'easy-charge' cradle and docking station.

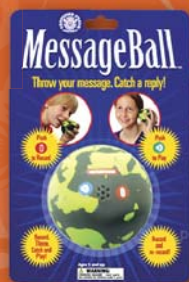


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Motorola Flipout » Being a square

Motorola's Flipout boasts a cool square form factor and Android goodness at an affordable price.

The Motorola Flipout feels a great deal different to other phones running on Android 2.1 (Éclair), mainly due to it flipping the bird to more established form factors. Its compact and sturdy square pivot design enables its 2.8" touch-screen to rotate, revealing a five-row QWERTY keypad with a

"You'll be in for a lot of attention since the square form-factor is definitely a talking point"

separate row for numeric keys underneath. This easy to use keyboard allows for speedier typing for long messages and emails, as well as coming in handy for extended MXit sessions.

The capacitive display might not be on par with higher-end devices, but it is still a bit smoother to operate than that of LG's inexpensive Optimus One's, although the Optimus' screen has a

better resolution, displaying pictures and icons in clearer detail.

Other features

The Flipout also boasts easy to set up 802.11n Wi-Fi, a 3.5 mm audio jack, 3G HSDPA, live wallpapers as well as Bluetooth 2.1 with A2DP. Motorola has opted to use the TI OMAP3410 600 MHz processor, which along with the included



512 MB RAM makes sure that the OS runs smooth on most fronts, although there can be some noticeable lag on occasion, for instance when you view your photos and vids in the gallery. Browsing the web is a so-so affair given the smallish display, while battery life wasn't the best and we averaged about half a day (around 12 hours) with mild usage, not even thinking about switching on Wi-Fi.

Final Word

The Flipout brings something different to the party than all the other Android smartphones – an interesting design twist that proved to be actually quite functional. Although battery life and screen resolution could have been better it's still a very decent entry-level smartphone. Using it you'll be in for a lot of attention since the square form-factor is definitely a talking point. [HD]

» Quick specs

- 67 x 67 x 17 mm, 120 g
- 2.8" multi-touch screen, 320 x 240 pixels
- TI OMAP3410 600 MHz processor, 512 MB RAM
- HSDPA, 802.11n Wi-Fi



Nokia C6 » Nothing wrong with nothing new

Nokia's budget friendly C6 might not be the fanciest device, but impresses with its reliability and user-friendliness.

Nokia's C6 can be described as a budget version of the former range topping N97 mini, and although it might still sport the old Symbian OS (Symbian Series 60, release 5) it offers good quality and value for money. The C6 has the standard touch-screen look of previous Nokia devices such as the 5800 Express

"A user-friendly device that provides most of the required features in a compact and useful form-factor"

Music or the 5230, with the added advantage of a slide-out QWERTY keyboard. We found this wide four-row keyboard easier to type on than the Motorola Flipout.

The C6's 3.2" resistive touch-screen displays media well, but doesn't sport any new functionality such as pinch-to-zoom (you use the out-dated tap-to-zoom) that one finds on capacitive displays.

Same old, same old

Besides the same display, form factor, OS (Symbian Series 60, release

5) and ARM 11 434 MHz CPU, the C6 also has the same 5 megapixel camera with autofocus and LED flash that the N97 mini sports, sans the Carl Zeiss optics. Regardless of the latter, the camera takes really good quality photos and videos. The OS does seem a bit more stable than on the N97 and 97 mini, although the very noticeable lag issue is still present.

The C6 has a fairly solid feature list including GPS with a-GPS support, Bluetooth version 2.0 with A2DP, Wi-Fi 802.11 b/g, 240 MB of internal storage that is upgradable to 16 GB with the use of a microSD card (2 GB card included).

Final word

This phone might be considered old-tech by users of newer devices such as Nokia's N8, but for those that don't require every feature known to man or can't afford to dish out on range topping models, this is a user-friendly device that provides most of the required features in a compact and useful form-factor. No retail price was available at time of print. [HD]

» Quick specs

- 113 x 53 x 16.8 mm, 150 g
- 3.2" resistive touch-screen
- ARM 11 434 MHz CPU,
- HSDPA, 802.11n Wi-Fi



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YOUR IT EQUIPMENT LOOKED AFTER

For equipment to function optimally, environmental conditions within a company's IT computer room, data centre or networked PC area, must be optimal. But what happens when the air-conditioning fails or a plumbing leak floods the area?

This is where electronic research and development company Netshield comes in with their hardware and software solution dubbed NVIROMON. With NVIROMON, IT managers can easily and effectively remotely monitor and manage the environmental, power, access and fire risk conditions within their company's IT computer room or other equipment areas.

What the hardware does

NVIROMON's hardware, installed in the IT computer room, will prevent catastrophes before they can occur via a number of probes/sensors on the device, which include probes for humidity, temperature & water, gas/airflow and power meters. Additional functions, like taking care of power management and control, air-conditioning, surge and fire protection/suppression, are also available. Extras such as a biometric access control system for fingerprint access to rooms can be incorporated, while a Netshield network camera can be used to monitor access.

What the software does

The NVIROMON is controlled and monitored by the Netshield SNMP-based management information system. This system can also be utilised to remotely configure the NVIROMON over a LAN connection, in order to communicate with all the NVIROMON units connected to the network. Unlike other products there are no monthly license software fees.

Thanks to the built-in GSM module, an escalating alert notification is sent to the appropriate personnel member's mobile phone as soon as a problem is detected, enabling proper measures to be taken to ensure that IT equipment remain fully functional and optimally configured. The GSM module can send out more than one SMS, alerting the relevant authorities which might include the fire department, plumbers or other relevant members of staff – a unique feature of the NVIROMON package.

Since Netshield, responsible for developing the NVIROMON, is an electronic research and development

company, they are able to develop, manufacture and customize products to the specific needs of clients.

Different modules can easily be constructed for different sized server rooms, as Netshield did when using the NVIROMON for the management of the Netshield renewable energy plant. All these products sport a lifetime carry-in warranty.



Contact Netshield for any enquiries on 086-111-4428 or 012-841-0320, or visit www.netshieldsa.com.

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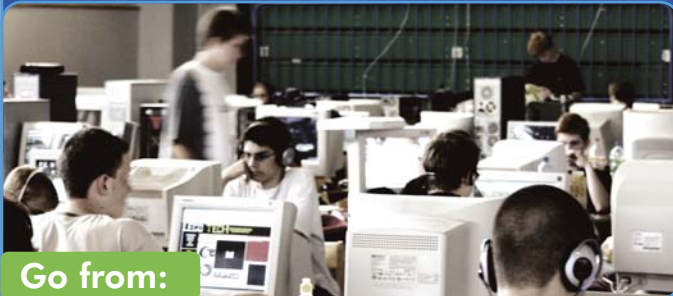
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Lexmark GENESIS S815

» Is this an All-in-One?

All-in-one (AIO) devices aren't normally the ones to get the tech party started, but the arrival of the Lexmark GENESIS S815 looked set to change these devices' usual dull tag.

The S815 sure doesn't look like a printer, since this AIO ditches conventional design with most of its bulk ascending upwards. The S815's design change lies mainly in the vertical positioning of the scanner, defying the usual flat-bed position. Apart from being a head-turner (yes, we are talking about an AIO here), this shape also wins you back some desk real estate.

As far as styling is concerned the S815 is one of the best looking AIOs we've ever encountered. Granted it does not take a lot to beat the rest of the pack, but you can see that Lexmark pushed the boundaries, with the S815 flagship providing ample evidence of the company's resurgence. An almost flat black panel adorns the front of the device providing a very modern iPad-like feel. Centred to the top is a large 4.3" WQVGA colour touch-screen, which makes this AIO a straightforward affair to use thanks to its clear and easy to understand user interface (although with some lag present). The side of the device is covered by the more conventional metallic grey.



"As far as styling is concerned the S815 is one of the best looking AIOs we've ever encountered."

Performance

As seen on other Lexmark and HP printers, you can download a myriad of apps, such as a basic calculator and Google's Calendar app, enabling you to add to the AIO's functionality. It must be connected to both a PC and the Wi-Fi network to download these apps.

Apart from design, certainly the most striking feature on the S815 is the use of a 10 megapixel Mono CMOS image sensor to do the scanning. Lexmark calls it Flash Scan, performing a scan preview virtually instantaneously while A4 pages are completely scanned in at a blistering pace of around four seconds. These can be saved as either a JPEG, PDF file or as a document (.doc) on your flash drive or PC. Flash Scan makes you actually want to scan something instead of dreading the usual cumbersome scanning process.

Printing is done at a good quality (especially on photo paper) at resolutions up to 2400 x 1200 dpi for black and up to 4800 x 1200 dpi for colour. Jobs are also completed at a fast pace, while one of our favourite features, automatic duplex printing, is also offered. Where the AIO is lacking though is with the input tray that only accommodates 100 A4 pages, meaning a lot of refilling if your office prints a lot.

Final word

The Lexmark GENESIS S815 will not only make the heads turn with its unconventional, fashionable looks, but is also a beast when it comes to scanning thanks to Lexmark's Flash Scan system. The S815 delivers good quality printouts at a fast pace, only being hampered by its input tray size limit. The S815 doesn't come cheap at about **R3499**. [HD] 🍀

Canon PIXMA MG6140 All-in-One

» Continuing a respected line

We spent some quality time with Canon's PIXMA MG6140, which offers high quality print jobs at an impressive pace and also boasts an unusual, yet simple-to-use interface.

Canon's big black beauty consumes a fair bit of desk real estate, measuring 470 x 368 x 173 mm and weighing a chubby 9.2 kg. It sports a 3" colour TFT display, boasting numerous touch-sensitive buttons to handle the different settings and functionality. Canon calls this the Intelligent Touch System, and we found it not only simple to use but it also provides the printer with a distinguishing feel different from other run-of-the-mill interfaces. The frequently used buttons remain lit, whilst the rest of the buttons remain inactive (and unlit) until required, a nice touch as you are

unfortunately does not switch from one tray to the next if one becomes empty. Printing jobs are done at an excellent pace with great quality on most settings, especially when printing photos on Canon photo paper. The printer's output tray also automatically drops down by itself if you are printing and forgot to pull it down, while automatic duplex printing works well and is simple to set up.



memory card (such as SD or memory stick). The MG6140 also offers easy to setup IEEE802.11 b/g Wi-Fi. Canon digital camera or camcorder users can use the Full HD Movie Print software to print pictures directly from HD video frames – an interesting and very useful feature.

"the PIXMA MG6140 builds on the very solid offerings we've come to expect from Canon."

not overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of buttons to press.

Paper handling

This AIO can be loaded with 300 sheets of paper using its two trays, but

Additional features

Scanning can be done to a maximum of A4 sized pages at an excellent maximum resolution of 4800 x 4800 dpi. Jobs can be saved in various formats (including PDF and JPEG) on your PC or onto a

Final word

With its user-friendly interface, printing from HD videos and excellent printing quality, the PIXMA MG6140 builds on the very solid offerings we've come to expect from Canon. It carries a recommended retail price of **R1899**. [HD] 📺

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Sony NGP » The latest low-down

It may have taken a couple of months and more than a handful of leaks, but now we're finally able to lay our eyes on Sony's new NGP or 'Next Generation Portable'.

Sticking with Sony's elegant design philosophy, one thing almost everyone can agree on is that the NGP looks good, with the 'Super Oval Design' form factor giving it both a familiar and futuristic feel. The handheld's main screen is a 5" OLED (organic light emitting) display which Sony says will deliver "visually striking graphics never seen before on a portable entertainment system." This display is of course a touch-screen, meaning gamers can control characters in the game world

"Sony's NGP is without a question the most powerful consumer handheld device to ever see the light of day."

with the traditional buttons as well as swiping motions on the touch-enabled display. In addition to the main display at the front, the NGP will also incorporate a capacitive multi-touch touchpad on the back of the device. This allows for a multitude of new control and gaming options to be explored, with motions such as "touch, grab, trace, push and pull" to be supported.

Super-powered handheld

Sony's NGP is without a question the most powerful consumer handheld device to ever see the light of day. Equipped with one of the advanced new APU (accelerated processing unit) systems, the NGP combines the traditional CPU and GPU onto a single chip. On the raw processing side a quad-core ARM Cortex-A9 sees service while a SGX543MP4+ GPU takes care of graphically demanding situations.

This makes the device extremely powerful, and while no more in-depth specs are available just yet, we saw some amazing demonstrations of original PlayStation 3 titles being played on the handheld. The original Uncharted and even Metal Gear Solid 4 was seen running on the little handheld, cementing Sony's claim that the NGP will be capable of PS3-level graphics.



No more discs

It has been revealed that different versions of the NGP will be available when it goes on sale, some including 3G connectivity while others will simply be equipped with Wi-Fi. Luckily Sony has decided to do away with the UDM-format discs on which current PSP games are distributed. Instead the NGP will use a small flash based memory card to store an entire game as well as add-on content and save data. The question now is will gamers go for the 3D charm of the Nintendo 3DS, or the brute force of the NGP? [JK] 🌟

When and for how much?

According to local distributors, Ster Kinekor, the Sony NGP will be "very aggressively priced" and will be released in South Africa on the same day as the international release. No release dates have been revealed yet, the best we can say is that it should be here before the end of the year.

ECO CHARGER » Your batteries are not flat

Do you always wonder what to do with your old AA and AAA batteries once they are depleted?

Throwing them away adds to landfill waste and is environmentally-unfriendly. While the move to rechargeable batteries has solved this problem to some extent, it seems no matter how hard you try, Alkaline batteries just keep popping up. The ECO CHARGER cuts to the heart of the matter by recharging regular Alkaline batteries. Alkaline batteries cannot be fully

recharged; rather it's filled up to about 90% - 95% each time when recharged. An individual circuit monitors each battery ensuring that voltage and temperature remains safe and efficient during the recharge process.

There are two chargers available: The notebook charger (R199) is a handy product for the office since it connects to a USB slot to recharge two batteries simultaneously, making light work of wireless mouse or keyboard batteries. A larger ECO CHARGER (R399) with the capacity to recharge four batteries at a time, is available for home purposes.



Both these chargers can recharge both AA or AAA batteries, while it can also charge rechargeable Ni-MH batteries. It's available from www.eco-charger.co.za or call 011-432-6048. 🌟

Efergy e2 wireless electricity monitor » The electricity watchdog

No one wants to return to the dark days of 2008 where load-shedding caused black-outs everywhere.

Escom last month again asked the public to save power and the e2 wireless electricity monitor seems a good way to start.

This wireless energy monitor displays the amount of kW your household consumes while also showing the cost per hour of the electricity used. To make you aware of your carbon footprint the e2 also

tracks your CO₂ emissions. When you turn on certain appliances it shows exactly how much power they utilise, making intelligent choices regarding power usage possible. Energy consumption data (days, weeks, months) is saved on the device, and it's easy to connect the e2 to a PC to get info for example on your consumption curve via the elink software.

The e2 works by clipping the supplied sensor and transmitter around the live outgoing supply cable from your meter box, saving you from having to hire an electrician.



The Efergy e2 wireless electricity monitor costs R899. Visit www.efergy.co.za for more info. 🌟

Nintendo 3DS » What we know so far

Last month Nintendo held a major unveiling for its upcoming 3D handheld, the Nintendo 3DS. Judging by the response it received, Nintendo is set to dominate the handheld market all over again.

The Nintendo 3DS will, like its predecessor the DS, feature two screens. The bottom touch-screen will be controlled by a telescoping stylus while the top screen will display the 3D images. Players will be able to adjust

Nintendo included a pedometer that counts your steps as you move around in the real world, allowing gamers to earn "Play Coins", which can be traded for bonus content.

"The device will also be capable of taking 3D photos, making it a 3D camera and gaming device in one."

the level of 3D effects via a 3D Depth Slider if it becomes uncomfortable to the eyes, or turn it off completely. Motion and gyroscopic sensors are also built-in, enabling games to react to the tilting movement of the device.

Apart from a built-in music player, advanced internet browser and the Nintendo eShop, the 3DS will also be capable of taking 3D photos, making it both a 3D camera and gaming device in one. Augmented reality technology is also present, using its cameras to superimpose graphics onto the real world. As if that were not enough,

Stay connected

If owners choose to activate it, the StreetPass feature will be capable of exchanging information with other nearby 3DS systems as their owners pass near you, while another feature, dubbed SpotPass, will allow the 3DS to connect to compatible public Wi-Fi connections, upon which it will automatically receive new content and updates. [JK] ♣

NINTENDO 3DS



When and for how much?

The 3DS will retail in the US for a suggested \$249 (R1750). Although no local pricing is currently available, local fans can expect to pay between R2000 and R2500. According to Core Group, distributors of Nintendo products in South Africa, the 3DS will be available locally on the 25th of March, a full two days before the Yanks can lay their hands on it.

Sci News



It's a guy thing

Scientists have been pulling out their hair for a while to figure out why men lose theirs. But now a research team report in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, that they may have found the root of the problem. Follicles from bald and non-bald patches of scalp appear to have the same number of stem cells, but bald scalp has far fewer progenitor cells. Progenitor cells are a more mature form of stem cells and are the driving force behind hair growth. This means that both scalp types have the potential to sprout hair, but because of faulty stem cell activation, it just never realises in bald scalp. The finding has given scientists a head start in developing cell-based therapy so that guys won't have to leave their hats on forever.

» Other interesting stuff

Mindfulness meditation training changes brain structure in eight weeks. <http://bit.ly/medbrainchange>



Water colours

You can't have it all – even if you're one of the most prolific predators of the sea. New research published in the journal *Naturwissenschaften*, reports that sharks are most likely colour blind. It's surprising, though, seeing that their close relatives rays and chimaeras have quite a colourful view of the underwater world.

Scientists analysed the retinas of 17 shark species and found that the majority had only rod cells, which respond only to light and dark. Those that did have some colour-sensitive cells could respond to light of only a single wavelength. Together the results mean that sharks probably see everything in different shades of a single colour. The scientists hope that the findings will help to develop swimming gear with lower visual contrast to help make swimmers less attractive snacks.

Living microorganisms introduced into video games. <http://bit.ly/bioticgame>



Music moods

You know that pleasurable chill when you hear a really good piece of music? Scientists say it's all in your head. According to an article recently published in *Nature Neuroscience*, emotionally pleasing music activates our brains' reward centre in the same way as more tangible pleasures like food and sex. Brain images showed that hearing good music, and even anticipating it, cause the feel-good hormone dopamine to surge through your brain. Dopamine is known to be involved in activating the emotion centre of the brain in response to pleasures that are biologically important. The new findings thus suggest that dopamine is released even when the reward is abstract and could explain why music, which has no obvious survival benefit, has been so significant through human history. [LP] ♣

Beamed thermal propulsion might power low-cost space travel using lasers. <http://bit.ly/hotlazers>

Web Time Wasters



<http://warlight.net> Warlight

If you hold a soft spot in your heart for the classic territory conquering strategy game, Risk, then Warlight is definitely a website worth checking out. Just be careful, this one is especially addictive. With the basic premise of taking over the world, this free to play turn-based board game can be played online with friends or by yourself against AI opponents, even allowing players to create their own custom maps when that world map starts getting boring. The game also includes fog of war, battle cards (such as reinforcement or spy cards) and a whole host of finely tuneable settings.



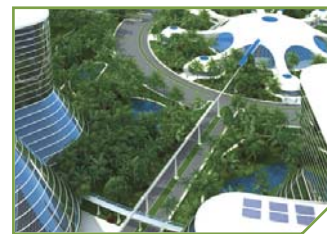
www.formspring.me Formspring

Replacing the status box with a question box is what lies behind the phenomenal success of fledgling social networking site Formspring. The site allows you to register an account, link it with Facebook or Twitter, and then answer questions posed on the site. Typical questions include "How would you describe yourself in 3 words?" and "If you could date any celebrity, who would it be?" The site currently has 20 million accounts with over 3.5 million unique visitors every day, that's a lot of questions. Plus they've just managed to raise \$11.5 million for further expansion.



www.galaxyzoo.org Zooniverse

The Zooniverse is the internet's largest and most popular citizen science website, dedicated to expanding human knowledge in several scientific fields, especially astronomy. What makes Zooniverse special though is that anyone can take part, no PhD required. Volunteers can sign up to the project they find the most interesting and immediately start helping out. One such project, Galaxy Zoo, lets users help to identify and classify some of the millions of far-away galaxies photographed by satellites and telescopes around the globe. During its first year, Galaxy Zoo attracted almost 150 000 volunteers.



www.thevenusproject.com The Venus Project

What if mankind can move beyond politics and war? Some might say that this will never happen, but the folks over at The Venus Project have other ideas. It seems like they have thought about a number of very serious problems facing modern society, including unemployment, overpopulation and the earth's ecological problems, a bit longer than most. More importantly they don't just complain about it, rather coming up with some interesting, forward-thinking solutions. Go here to see how life might be if we move past outdated traditional forms of thinking. 🌱

Android Apps of the month

With over 100 000 apps available for Android smartphones at the Android Market, TechSmart would like to help you get to the good ones first.



Dropbox

We've talked about Dropbox before and surely it must be one of the simplest ways to save (or sync) files in the cloud, to be retrieved either on other PCs or your Android (or other) phone. The Dropbox app of course makes this process a whole of a lot easier, allowing you also to save pictures or videos from your phone to the cloud. Just watch those data charges.



Speedtest.net

If you're anything like us you must have used www.speedtest.net to determine the speed of your internet connection. With their Android app you get to do the same with your smartphone connection.

It's quick and fast, showing us in less than a minute that MTN on the Motorola Flipout is giving us a download speed of 1991 kbps and upload speed of 238 kbps.



SmartRunner

The SmartRunner app is one of the easiest and best ways to track your running, hiking or biking route using a GPS enabled Android phone. Once connected your run is recorded very accurately without fuss. SmartRunner keeps the interface clean to quickly give access to important data such as current speed and distance covered. After your run you can quickly upload it to their website to study your route and stats in more detail.



Slice It!

Maybe not as addictive as Angry Birds, but challenging it sure is. The Slice It! puzzle game allows you to cut things, more importantly cut it into the same surface area. Easy you might think, but wait till you're past the introductory levels – it made us wish that we paid a little more attention in trigonometry class. Slice It! should lead to a lot less frustration on larger, more accurate screens. 🌱

PC Medic » First aid for your PC

It is said that sweat from his brow is able to pass the Turing test and that he has been playing PSP2 and Nintendo 3DS games since 2009. The PC Medic is here to answer some of your tech related queries.

Q Hello PC Medic. I bought a 3G dongle to catch up with some work after hours, but my email (using Microsoft Outlook 2003) does not want to send when I use it. What's wrong? Josh Cassidy

A Hi Josh. When using the dongle you would have to change your SMTP settings on your outgoing mail to correspond with that of your service provider. Under the Tools section on the main Outlook page, click on "E-Mail Accounts". Make sure that the "View or change existing e-mail account" option is selected and click "Next". Click on the "Change" tab and type in the appropriate SMTP address (listed to the right) within the open space next to "Outgoing mail server". Click "Next" and finally "Finish".

MTN: **mail.mtn.co.za**
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Just remember to change it back again when arriving at work.

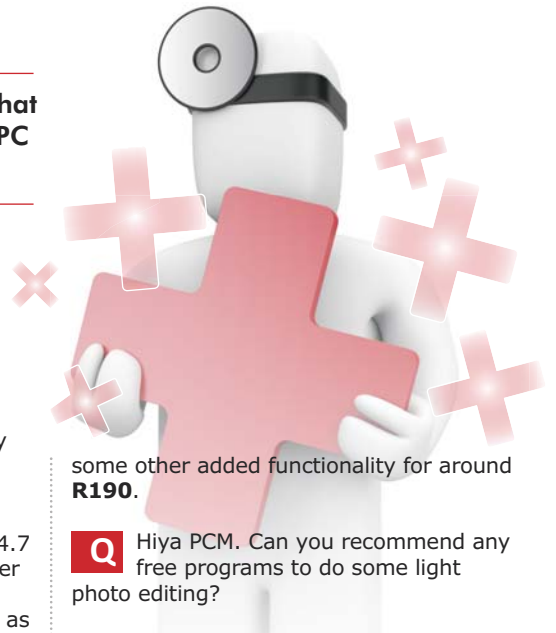
Q What's up PC Medic? Is there any freeware available for recording your Skype phone calls?

A You can download Pamela Basic 4.7 (<http://bit.ly/pamskype>, under 6 MB) for free, which will allow you to record up to 15 minutes per Skype call as an MP3. If you want to do away with this recording time limitation, you can upgrade to the professional version giving you an unlimited call recording time, plus

some other added functionality for around **R190**.

Q Hiya PCM. Can you recommend any free programs to do some light photo editing?

A We use GIMP in the office to do photo resizing as well as some light editing. You can download the 19 MB file at <http://bit.ly/getgimp>.



» Tips for Windows 7:

Quicker access to your most used folders.

Within Windows 7 you are able to pin often used folders (such as the one

containing all your work docs) to the taskbar on the bottom. Simply drag the folder to an open space on the taskbar and release. A small little

folder icon will appear, right click on it and your pinned folder along with other frequently used folders will appear.

Jargon Busters » CES 2011

This month we look at a few new technological innovations straight from last month's Consumer Electronics Show (CES), held in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Wi-Fi Direct

Wi-Fi Direct is a new method of wirelessly connecting a device to the internet or to

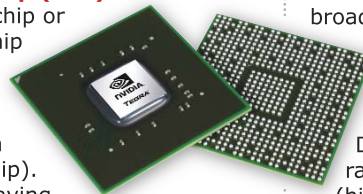
another Wi-Fi Direct device and is similar to Wi-Fi except for the fact that it doesn't require an access point (AP) to operate. With Wi-Fi Direct, devices can communicate directly with one another without the need for an access point (such as a wireless router), and either device can serve as access point. This means that devices from smartphones to gaming devices to digital cameras can connect to each other and transfer and share content between them. LG's Optimus Black smartphone comes with Wi-Fi Direct.

Android 3.0 (Honeycomb)

Android 3.0, codenamed Honeycomb, is Google's latest instalment in its successful line of Android operating systems (OS). The big thing about Android 3.0 is that it has been built from the ground up to support new tablet devices streaming into the market and already we've seen the Motorola Xoom running on it. The new OS sports a holographic user interface, home-screen customisation, Google Maps 5 with 3D interactions, redesigned widgets as well as over 100 000 available apps on the Android Market.

System-on-a-chip (SoC)

A system-on-a-chip or SoC is a microchip system in which all the individual components are integrated into a single circuit (chip). So, instead of having lots of components spread around on a motherboard, a SoC integrates them in a single chip. A good example of this is



the Tegra 2 SoC developed by Nvidia. It integrates both the CPU (central processing unit), in this case a Dual-core ARM Cortex-A9 running at 1 GHz per core) and GPU (graphics processing unit) on the same chip, also including 1080p Video Encode, Image Signal and audio processors.

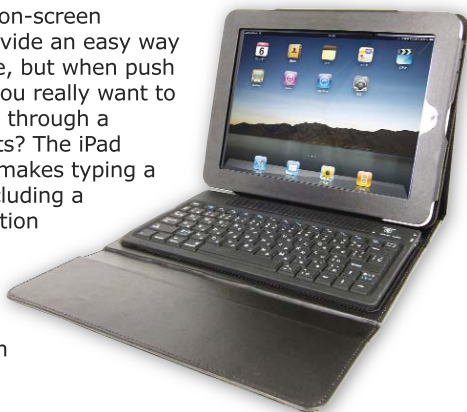
DVB-T2

DVB-T2 stands for Digital Video Broadcasting – Second Generation Terrestrial, and is an upgrade to the existing DVB-T, the world's most widely deployed digital terrestrial television system. It was recently selected by the South African government to become the broadcasting standard through which SA's digital television signal will be distributed. DVB-T2 offers a 30-50% increased efficiency in its use of spectrum compared to DVB-T and thanks to its higher bit rate is suitable for carrying HDTV (high definition TV) signals. High definition television channels in the UK, Italy, Finland and Sweden are currently broadcasting using DVB-T2. [JK]

iPad Bluetooth keyboard

The iPad's pop-up on-screen keyboard can provide an easy way to type on the device, but when push comes to shove do you really want to touch-type your way through a number of documents? The iPad Bluetooth keyboard makes typing a breeze while also including a built-in stand to position the iPad for easy typing, reading or media consumption.

R999 from The G.A.D.G.E.T. Shop on 012-346-2726. 🍷



ION Profile Flash

You love your old vinyl but your new iPod is just oh-so convenient. Use the ION Profile Flash turntable to convert all your difficult-to-replace LPs to MP3s. The Profile Flash's no-mess, no-fuss set-up requires no PC since it records straight to SD card or USB flash drive. **R2099** from The G.A.D.G.E.T. Shop on 012-346-2726.

www.thegadgetshop.co.za 🍷



TechSmart Distribution: Some facts

» Cape Town, Durban, Hawkers and Businesses

Firstly, let's begin by welcoming all our new Durban and Cape Town readers. We've been distributing magazines down to Durban since November 2010, and starting this month TechSmart is also available in the Western Cape.

We hope you enjoy SA's largest tech magazine and this monthly trip into the world of gadgets as much as our Gauteng readers have for the past eight years. Feedback is always welcome, so send any comments and queries to michael@techsmart.co.za.

Recently we've received a few concerned enquiries about hawkers on street corners trying to "sell" TechSmart magazines. TechSmart would like to state that our magazine is completely free, mahala and gratis. Anyone trying to sell, or give you a copy for a small "donation", is definitely not in the employ of our company, and we don't encourage this action.

Finally, our business distribution have continued to make inroads into major office parks and business areas in Gauteng, with 10 000 copies per month making their way to companies via our friendly delivery team. If you have a company or shop that would like to receive copies of TechSmart, please send a mail to renier@smartpublishing.co.za, and he will check if you fall in a delivery area (JHB and Pretoria only, sorry Cape Town and Durban, we're not there yet!) 🍷 



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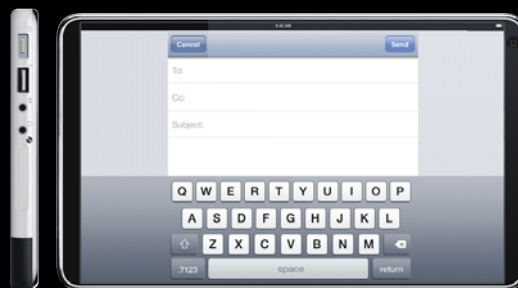


R690

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TechSmart.co.za online poll results



What will be the biggest tech trend of 2011?

- Tablets, tablets, tablets, tablets, tablets. 22%
- The dominance of Android. 21%
- Smartphones everywhere. 15%
- Diablo III, hopefully. 14%
- 4G networks. 10%
- 3D but without the glasses. 8%
- Smart TV. 3%
- Nintendo's 3DS. 3%
- Obviously something Apple creates. 2%
- Google's Chrome OS. 2%

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This month's winner is Ofentse Letsholo who commented on "All you need to know about the Nintendo 3DS":
"Wow wow wow, what a magnificent little device. I think it should be priced between 3 and 5k, it's too much of a magnificent machine to be priced that low."

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DC Universe Online » The hero is you

MMO's (massively multiplayer online) games have exploded in popularity in recent years, with World of Warcraft leading the online charge. Now Sony Online Entertainment has delved into a new project, envisioning a game which turns ordinary players into extraordinary superheroes.

Available on the PC and PS3, DCUO is the only MMO currently available on the console. Veteran MMO players may lament the PS3 version as not having the same amount of control as the PC, but throughout play we found the PS3's controls to match up nicely. The only issues we encountered were the tedious registration, installation and update procedures, but once these are out of the way it's only a matter of time until Metropolis praises your name... or fears it.

Story

DCUO's story is introduced in an amazing cinematic cutscene showing Lex Luthor viciously killing Superman, and the evil Brainiac invading the earth right after. Luthor then travels back in time with technology that can turn ordinary people into superheroes, and proposes they stand together against the greater threat. Throughout the game the main storyline involves preventing Brainiac from conquering the world, although heroes and villains still clash on the sidelines.

Gameplay

The first step is creating your character and players have a myriad of options at their disposal, from gender to powers, weapons, costumes and choosing whether to be a hero or villain. Yes, in DCUO you can play as good or bad and also choose an established DC character to "mentor" you. Creating a character aligned with the Joker for example will have you doing his dirty work, whereas aligning with a hero sees similar but more justice focused missions.

Action in the game takes some cues from WoW, such as ability recharge times, but for the most part consists of fast-paced melee brawls. Depending on how you create your character you can also fly at supersonic speeds, run up skyscrapers and much, much more.

Online

Players can choose to go the lone-wolf route if they like or they can form their own version of the Justice League and battle alongside one another. PvP (player vs player) arenas are also supported and

an Arena mode is present where you can fight with your favourite established heroes.

Conclusion

As with all MMO's, time will tell whether DCUO will be successful or not, it's too early to judge the game accurately at this stage, but for the most part it delivered an impressive and fresh experience to the world of online gaming. Bar falling into a tub of radioactive waste, DCUO is the best way we know of becoming the next great hero or villain. [JK] 🍎

» The Good

The expansive hero creation options and awesome storyline.

» The Bad

Lengthy updates and monthly fees felt like Kryptonite.



God of War: Ghost of Sparta » War on the PSP

Following in the wake of God of War III for the PlayStation 3, God of War: Ghost of Sparta brings the mythological storyline and thrill-a-minute visuals to Sony's little portable gaming system.

After notorious hot-head Kratos defeated Ares and ascended to Mount Olympus (right between GoW 1 and 2) he is tormented by nightmares from his past relating to a long lost brother, separated by force whilst they were both still kids. Looking for answers he goes on a quest to find him, and as can be expected from Kratos it's all but peaceful.

The game's developer, Ready at Dawn, has done wonders with Sony's PlayStation Portable (PSP), as this is simply the best looking PSP game bar none. Although not nearly at the same level of the last instalment, God of War III, for the powerful PS3 system, all the graphics such as the environments,

weather effects and especially the in-game cut scenes look extraordinary considering the limited graphical power of the PSP.

Combat system

The control scheme is intuitive and makes it easy to dispel foes, including a selection of bosses such as Kratos' own mother Callisto, who goes from frail-looking granny to hideous beast in the blink of an eye, plus death itself, or rather the game's final boss, Thanatos, the god of death. Also making for a nice break in between the combat are the variety of puzzles which you'll need to complete to make it to the following area. Although

not as challenging as say Tomb Raider for example, it does add another dimension to what is an otherwise straightforward hack and slash game.

Final word

For any PSP owners out there, God of War: Ghost of Sparta is simply a must have. It is right on top of our best PSP games along with Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker. The game's violence-filled journey draws you in from start to finish, complete with stunning visuals and compelling storyline. Although not really bringing anything new to the series, Ghost of Sparta is well worth the **R299** asking price. [HD] 🍎

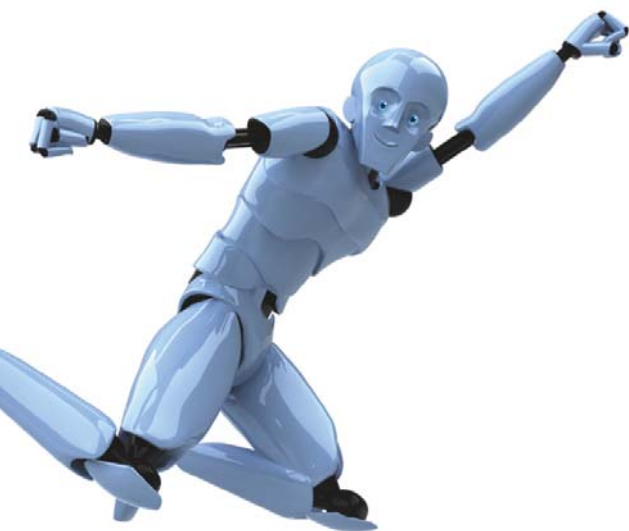
» The Good

Some excellent finishing moves against the bosses, including playing the Cyclops' optometrist.

» The Bad

The fact that this is the last PSP version Ready at Dawn will be making for the PSP.





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