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Acer Iconia

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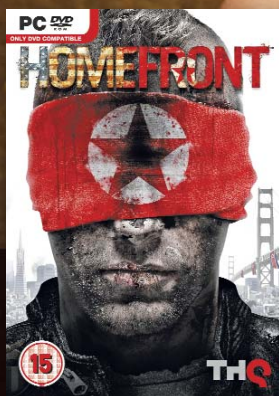
Nintendo 3DS

Portable gaming goes 3D



Homefront

Home is where the war is



THE MOBILITY ISSUE

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ISSUE 91 April 2011 ISSN 1726-3358

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The Mobility Issue » April 2011



BBC or BAC?

My grandpa told me the other day that he is tired of being a BBC. "A BBC?" I asked. "Yes, a Born Before Computer," came the reply. So, one notebook and a wireless modem later, he's not only working on his new PC but also connecting to the web. Helping him through the process it struck me how daunting it can be to learn to use a PC if you have no experience of it before. Simple things PC users take for granted, like moving the cursor on screen, when to double click and how to expand and minimise a program, are not as straight forward as one might think. But luckily it's easy to master with a bit of practice, and from what I can gather from emails received from a number of our older readers, once these Silver Surfers are connected to the web there's no turning back.

In this issue we're introducing QR codes with many of our reviews. These make it easy to quickly link to the relevant review on techsmart.co.za via your smartphone. We give a full explanation of what QR codes are and how they work on p27. Try it out, it might just change the way you browse the web.

Enjoy the issue,
Mike (michael@techsmart.co.za)



» Reviews

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TechSmart exclusively uses the LG W2794V monitor for all reviews.



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TOP TECH TITBITS

Google starts local tech incubator



Google has launched Umbono, its new technology incubator based in Cape Town. This initiative brings together seed capital, Google mentorship, angel investors, local tech stars, entrepreneurs and business leaders, in an effort to assist selected start-up teams to transform their ideas into companies. For six months, teams will enjoy free office space and bandwidth, in addition to the \$25 000 to \$50 000 in funding that they'll receive from Umbono's panel of angel investors as well as Google itself. Applications are available on the Umbono website (<http://bit.ly/umbono>) and the programme is open to all South African residents.

IE9, Firefox 4, Chrome 11 Beta launches



It's been an extremely busy month on the browser scene, with all and sundry releasing new versions. Microsoft's IE9 has seen the light of day, sporting a sleek new look and improved performance, but strangely no support for Windows XP. In the meantime the company is desperately trying to get rid of their old IE6 browser, even coming up with a campaign to help drop its market share below 1%. Mozilla's new speedy Firefox 4 has done extremely well with 7.1 million downloads in its first 24 hours (IE9 did 2.35 million), while not wanting to be left out of the action, Google released their Chrome 11 Beta. All of these have support for HTML5, a new language for developing webpages that provides better multimedia integration.

MWEB now targets hosting



Just as local service provider MWEB did when it introduced the first affordable uncapped ADSL offerings in the country last year, it is now seeking to revolutionise the hosting market with its new Uncapped Hosting offering, charged at only R19 per month. MWEB has bundled all the elements needed for website hosting into one easy-to-use fixed rate package that includes no limit on the amount of traffic to your website, as well as uncapped storage space. Websites will be hosted locally on MWEB's data centres, meaning local visitors will experience a faster browsing experience on your site. MWEB provisions the website, registers it for you and will renew the domain on an annual basis. ❖

HOT NEW PRODUCTS



1. Porsche 918 Spyder

As global resource levels continues to plummet, who knows when it'll be time to wave goodbye to the iconic supercar? That however hasn't stopped Porsche from developing the monstrous new 918 Spyder, a 373 kW V8 supercar mated to two electric motors producing 163 kW, making it slightly more efficient. Porsche estimates the Spyder will consume three litres per 100 km, but as soon as the electrical charge has been depleted it'll go into full slung fuel downing mode again. The Spyder goes from 0-100 km/h in around 3.1 seconds, which is awesome if you have around R5.9 million to spare.

2. 11 the beautiful game

Dutch company GRO Design has come up with certainly the most striking foosball table ever. Dubbed "11 the beautiful game", this table's



luxurious design emulates that of a modern football stadium, whilst the on-field action boast stunning looks with atmospheric lighting as well as chrome metal "players". Pricing thought is strictly in the realm of Russian billionaires, since it kicks off at €48 500 (almost R480 000) for the classic Black and White version.

3. TomTom's online live traffic

Wondering how the traffic will look like when you head home today? Wonder no more, with TomTom's launch of live traffic maps, available for free at www.tomtom.com/livetraffic (click on the SA flag at the bottom). Powered by TomTom HD Traffic, the same system that provides live traffic updates on certain TomTom GPS models, the new live traffic map enables anyone online to view the up-to-the-minute traffic situation in their local area.



4. SingStar Afrikaans Treffers

South Africa is one of only five territories world-wide to be granted the right to have a local SingStar release. This in the form of SingStar Afrikaans Treffers, a competitive karaoke title that has players singing along to 26 Afrikaans artists, the likes of Jack Parow, Karen Zoid and Steve Hofmeyr. Gamers score points if they hit the right notes, with the player closest to the pitch of the song is eventually crowned champ, or Liefing, or Baby Tjoklits. ❖



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HD

Chris Botha, group MD of The MediaShop

At 33 Chris Botha is group MD of The MediaShop, one of the biggest media agencies in SA.



He talks to TechSmart about online advertising, marketing your brand via social media and "consumer touch-point strategies".

TechSmart: How strong is online advertising in SA

compared for example to the US or UK?

Chris Botha: Nowhere near as strong. South African Online Advertising accounts for only 2-3% of adspend, whereas in more developed markets it's amongst the biggest around! Online globally is moving to "Online Communication" of which online advertising is a very small part. Modern digital and communications agencies (like ourselves) find that we have massive digital clients, but we hardly book any media for them. We do social media, website development, app development and advanced search. Online communication is a 360 degree



This is the
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The MediaShop (Pty) Ltd



communications approach and not limited to advertising.

TS: Is the cellular market attracting advertising spend in SA? How long before smartphones become viable advertising platforms here?

CB: Not at the moment. I do however believe that cellular is a bigger opportunity for advertisers than desktop online. Mobile access in SA is increasing at a rapid rate, and just over 70% of the population has a cellphone! How long before that same 70% all have smartphones? Mobile "advertising" is all about creating content. The successful brands are the ones that create good content, utilising the mobile platform to distribute it.

TS: How important is a Facebook page or Twitter stream to companies? Should all companies have them?

CB: If you don't have a FB or Twitter account now, you might have missed the boat already. The important cue to marketers is what they do with their FB

accounts and Twitter feeds. If you use it only to promote and sell, you will never make a success of it. Marketers need to use their accounts in a much smarter way that rewards consumers and users for visiting their FB page or following them on Twitter. It is a conversational tool, not an advertising medium.

TS: You talk about "consumer touch-point strategies", can you explain this?

CB: Communication is about more than advertising. We try and touch the consumer wherever he interacts with the brand. So from the digital element (their website), to what is being discussed about them (social media), to the traditional advertising, all the way down to the point of sale. Whenever the consumer interacts with the brand in any way, shape or form, we need to manage and control that communication. So it is about so much more than just advertising.

For the full interview, visit <http://bit.ly/chrisbotha> or follow the QR code. 📄



Sci News



Take a sho't left

Loggerhead turtles have to find their way as soon as they hit the waves. And they use their own GPS it seems. According to a recent report in the journal *Current Biology*, these turtles use the Earth's magnetic field in a clever way to find both their north-south and their east-west position. Scientists put hatchlings in water tanks with magnetic fields that mimicked those of two locations along a turtle's migratory route. Those east of the location from where they had hatched swam in a south-westerly direction, while those to the west swam north-east. Each position across the globe has a specific combination of magnetic strength and field line angle, and it seems that the turtles could figure out their exact position using both these clues. And you thought Garmin was clever.

» Other interesting stuff

All the best science videos from the TEDTalks series.

<http://bit.ly/tedscience>

techsmart.co.za | April 2011



Vanity Fair

Accept it: we're all vain. And that's why we keep buying magazines with picture-perfect models on the cover. According to an article in the journal *Media Psychology*, magazine images of people with (near) perfect bodies will get our attention when we're unhappy with our own body image. Scientists asked a group of volunteers to browse a magazine for five minutes and (unobtrusively) measured the time they spent on each page. Half the group paged through a mag where pictures of beautiful people were surrounded by image-boosting advice. The other half viewed a mag with general interest articles. Participants who were unhappy with their own body image, viewed pictures of perfect bodies 1.5 times longer if the mag promised that they could look that way too, than when the content was neutral.

NASA's Messenger probe goes into orbit around Mercury

<http://cnet.co/mercurymessenger>



Sweet memories

Bee brains are not pea brains after all. Scientists recently wrote in the *Journal of Neuroscience*, that bees form odour memories of nectar-producing flowers. Five different fragrances were presented to nectar-collecting bees, of which one was always followed by a drop of sugar. Recordings of brain activity showed that the bees learnt which fragrance was associated with the sugary treat. But it wasn't a temporary thing: three hours later they could still reliably retrieve the memory – and it took their brains less than a quarter of a second to decide whether the odour was the rewarding one. The researchers think that once bees have found a rewarding flower, odour memories may lead them to similar ones on subsequent collections, which improves their collection efficiency. There's nothing like the sweet smell of success. [LP] 🍯

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Acer Iconia » Two screens are better than one

Acer recently released a unique new product into the market, the dual-screen Acer Iconia, which they call, "the world's most advanced touchbook."

Outwardly the Iconia resembles your standard modern notebook, but its differences become apparent once you open it up for the first time. The Iconia features two 14" touch-enabled displays,



one in the traditional spot and one placed where you'll usually find the keyboard.

The future is touch

The dual screens are useful for multi-tasking as you can simply drop windows from the top to the bottom display. We also greatly enjoyed the 'Touch Browser', which enables you to display a webpage across both screens. You can also activate the full-sized virtual QWERTY keyboard, which, once you start getting used to not feeling any buttons underneath your fingers, is actually quite

"The Iconia features two 14" touch-enabled displays"

nice. The touch interface is extremely smooth and sensitive, registering keystrokes without problems.

A full set of touch-friendly software is included with the notebook, accessed via the Acer Ring, a touch-based start menu which is activated when a user places all five fingers on the bottom display. Acer did a good job by including a number of touch-based applications, with the Gesture Editor for example that allows users to draw a gesture on the touch-screen, tying that

command to open any file, URL, application or even Windows features.

It's the Scrapbook and My Journal applications though that really impressed us. These allow you to select any part of a website and then place it within the application. This is done via a handy cutting tool – simply draw an outline over a webpage and then snatch the desired content. The Scrapbook usually ends up being a collage of interesting things you've found on the web while images placed in My Journal will dynamically update itself. This means you can "cut out" the news feeds of your favourite websites, place them in your journal, and they will always be kept up to date.

Conclusion

When the Acer Iconia first arrived at the office we weren't sure what to think, but after spending some time with the device and seeing just how nice its dual-touch interface is, we're staunch converts of the 'touchbook'. The Iconia retails for about

R14 999. [JK] 🍀



» Quick specs

- Intel Core i5 M480 @ 2.67 GHz
- 4 GB DDR3 RAM
- 640 GB HDD
- 2 x 14" 1366 x 768 displays

Toshiba Portégé R700 » The Baby Jake of ultraportables

We love thin-and-light notebooks in the office. Give us anything below 2 kg and we're happy – that is if the processor is fast enough (so netbooks need not apply). That's exactly what Toshiba is offering with their Portégé R700.



Weighing in at about 1.3 kg, the R700's distinguishing feature is its processor. It does not come with the usual ultra low voltage (ULV) processor so often found on thin-and-light units, but rather a full Intel Core i5 520M dual-core processor firing at 2.4 GHz. This means full notebook power in a unit that

"Full notebook power in a unit that is so light that it barely registers in your notebook bag"

is so light that it barely registers in your notebook bag. Oh yes, all this complete with an optical DVD drive, 4 GB of RAM and about 320 GB of free hard disk space.

Heat and battery life

Seeing that it has an i5 processor we expected the R700 to struggle with two things – heat and battery life. In both

cases we were proven wrong. The notebook did get a bit hot on the bottom, but not more so than our regular Dell Studio 1668 work machine. If you need to keep a unit cool there's usually a trade-off in sound emanating from the fans, but once again the R700 proved otherwise, being silent as a whisper.

Battery life also didn't prove a problem, and we achieved about 5½ hours with Wi-Fi connected with a couple of Office programs and the browser open. That said, the machine took its time to recharge, even when it was turned off.

Styling

Toshiba went for the sleek black look on the R700 Magnesium alloy body, with

only the hinges and Toshiba logo bragging with a chrome finish.

With a HD-ready 1366 x 768 resolution and TruBrite LED backlit technology, the stand-out feature of its 13.3" screen is the fact that it is anti-glare – you can barely glimpse yourself in the screen and it catches almost no other reflections.

Conclusion

If you're looking for a thin-and-light machine, Toshiba's Portégé R700 should be right up your alley. There is criticism that can be levelled against it – lack of 3G, no stand-alone graphics card and below par sound quality, being the main suspects. But weighed against the pros, the **R9999** asking price is a very fair exchange. [MJ] 🍀



» Quick specs

- Intel Core i5 520M @ 2.4 GHz
- 4 GB DDR3 RAM
- 320 GB HDD
- 13.3" 1366 x 768 TruBrite LED anti-glare

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BlackBerry Bold 9780 » A Bold evolution

With the new Bold 9780, Research in Motion didn't try to reinvent the wheel, rather it enhanced the good of the previous Bold 9700 and stocked it with the new BlackBerry 6 operating system.

Change is inevitable for most things, but not when it comes to the Bold 9780's design, boasting the same dimensions (109 x 60 x 14 mm), weight (122 g), display size (2.44") and resolution (480 x 360) of its forerunner.

"RIM hasn't redesigned the smartphone wheel with its Bold 9780, but basically just chipped away the rough edges of its older model."

Images do appear noticeably crisper on the Bold 9780's display though and the only noticeable styling change is the black paint covering the silver chrome edging of the old Bold.

Hardware

A number of hardware improvements have luckily been made though. The Bold 9780 is powered by the same 624 MHz processor used by its predecessor, but boasts double the amount of RAM (512

MB) and storage (also 512 MB) as the Bold 9700. The latter can be boosted to 32 GB by employing a microSD memory card, with a 2 GB coming with the device. Also offered is GPS, a document editor for Office files, Wi-Fi 802.11 b/g, 3G HSDPA and a very impressive battery life of around three days. It uses an upgraded five megapixel snapper with auto-focus, geo-tagging and LED flash, which takes above average quality photos, but disappointingly HD-ready (720p) video-recording isn't offered.

New OS

The device's biggest change has come in terms of its software as the smartphone runs on BlackBerry operating system (OS) 6. This new mobile OS sports a redesigned User Interface (UI) which incorporates features like universal search and integrated social feeds from a number of networks including Twitter, Facebook and BlackBerry Messenger (BBM). It also features a new WebKit browser boasting tabbed browsing. Like



Android, BlackBerry OS 6 features some good looking animated menu transitions and now has an improved music player.

Conclusion

RIM hasn't redesigned the smartphone wheel with its Bold 9780, but basically just chipped away the rough edges of its older model. It features some hardware improvements as well as RIM's latest OS, but unfortunately the Bold has not gone touch-screen yet. It sells for about **R4699**. [HD] ❖



Motorola Defy MB525 » A tough little Android

It's been a long time since we've seen a mobile on the market that's capable of rolling with the punches and live a hard-knock life, not to even talk of a slightly rugged smartphone. Up till now that is, thanks to Motorola's dustproof, water and scratch resistant Defy.

At first glance you won't attest to this Android running smartphone's more rugged features since it looks pretty much like any other smartphone. It's not particularly big, in fact its size (59 x 107 x 13.4 mm) and weight (118 grams) was surprisingly comfortable. But as soon as you slip your SIM card in you can start telling the



dust out all ports on the phone, such as the 3.5 mm jack and Micro USB port on the side, are closed off by rubber covers. Screws are clearly visible, making sure the phone does not split open on first drop (although not tested). The screen is made from Gorilla Glass, also found on the iPhone 4, which is scratch resistant and does a lot to keep nasty nicks off the screen.

Performance

So how does the Motorola Defy perform as a phone? Well quite good thank you very much. Thanks

through pictures or going through your list of apps. We were quite impressed by the Defy's 3.7" screen loaded with a slightly above average screen resolution of 480 x 854 pixels.

The Defy though is not without a bit of hassles. First off it only carries the older Android version 2.1 (Éclair) and not the more common 2.2 (Froyo) found on 61.3% of all Android devices. Because of this the phone misses out on for example Google's voice search capabilities. Another let down is that although the phone includes a good five megapixel shooter, the video is still only VGA quality and not the higher quality 720p found on many of today's smarter smartphones.

Conclusion

Although we won't go so far as to describe the Motorola Defy as fully-rugged, it is tough enough to deal with the knocks that all smartphones get tested with through the course of a lifespan. We even dunked it in a jug of water and it worked perfectly afterwards. Despite only running Android 2.1 we really enjoyed our time spent with the Defy since it's a solid phone in all regards (bar video). It retails for about **R4000**. [MJ]

"We even dunked it in a jug of water and it worked perfectly afterwards."

difference. Instead of just having a simple slide-in back-cover, the Defy's one firmly locks in place. To keep water and

to an 800 MHz processor under the hood it's pretty speedy, not struggling too much when opening apps, browsing

For full review go to <http://bit.ly/defymoto> ❖





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iPad 2

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Apple CEO Steve Jobs, taking a break from his medical leave, was on hand to launch the iPad 2, the follow-up to the ultra-popular iPad. And with 500 000 of these tablets selling on its debut weekend in the United States, Apple has once again come up with a winner.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the iPad 2 is its sleeker design – it's 33% thinner and up to 15% lighter than the original model. To much disappointment the new version sports the same 9.7" LED-backlit LCD screen as opposed to a new high-resolution retina display, as featured on the iPhone 4.

What is new though is Apple's latest dual-core A5 processor, which enables not only smoother and faster processing, but also improved graphical performance. Two cameras, a front-facing VGA camera for Wi-Fi video calls via FaceTime, and a rear-facing camera that can capture

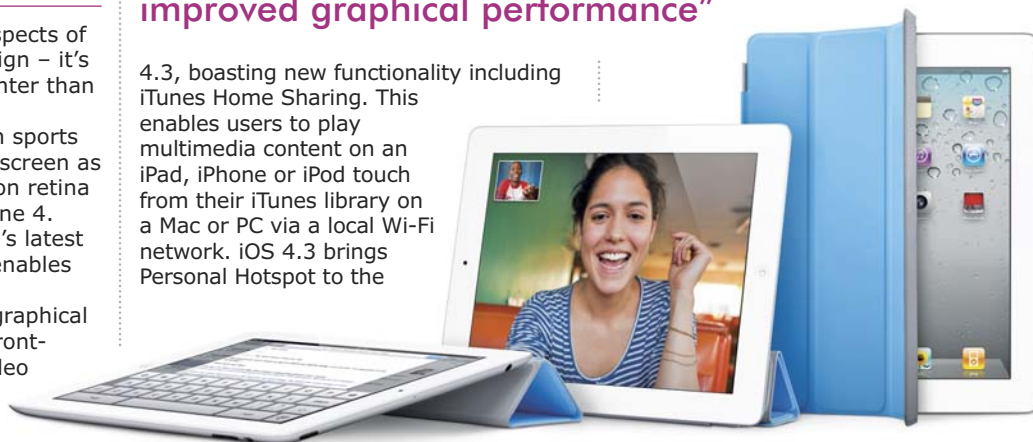
HD-ready (720p) video, have also been integrated. Apple stated that even though the iPad 2 is more powerful, it will still deliver up to ten hours of battery life. They also provided a new colour option, with the iPad 2 now available in white, with some extra saturation available via the new iPad 2 Smart Cover. This magnetised cover is available in ten bright colours and conveniently doubles as an iPad stand.

New software

iPad 2 operates on Apple's latest version of its mobile operating system (OS), iOS

"Apple's latest dual-core A5 processor enables not only smoother and faster processing, but also improved graphical performance"

4.3, boasting new functionality including iTunes Home Sharing. This enables users to play multimedia content on an iPad, iPhone or iPod touch from their iTunes library on a Mac or PC via a local Wi-Fi network. iOS 4.3 brings Personal Hotspot to the



Nintendo 3DS » The 3D handheld is finally here



Since the release of the iconic Gameboy back in 1989, Nintendo has been the undisputed king of the handheld gaming market. Through 22 years that humble little machine has been revised and updated again and again, finally culminating in 2011's 3D-enabled Nintendo 3DS.

The Nintendo 3DS is a worthy successor to the line, in no small part due to the 3DS being a 3D-enabled handheld which works without the need for special glasses. It sports the same dual screen clamshell design as the DS family, the top screen housing the 3.5" 3D display and the bottom the 3" touch-

screen. Both screens display crisp and colourful images, with 3D creating a pleasing effect throughout. Granted, you must be at the correct distance and angle for the lenticular 3D effect to work well. Users can control the intensity of the 3D with a slider on the device, so if you prefer gaming in 2D then so be it.

Controls

The 3DS sees a major change once its flipped open, with a comfortable new analog thumb slider, or circle pad as Nintendo calls it, appearing above the traditional d-pad. The triple array of cameras on the 3DS is capable of capturing 3D photographs, but while the 3D effects are nice, picture quality is unfortunately not of the highest calibre, appearing very grainy and pixelated. Luckily the cameras find a much more unique use in the realm of augmented reality. Every 3DS comes with six AR cards, enabling users to view 3D

models of famous Nintendo characters and play mini-games simply by pointing the 3DS at one of the cards. The 3DS then superimposes images and animations onto the scene in question, enabling users to defeat a virtual dragon for example. These titles aren't going to occupy users too long, but got us excited about what is possible with this device. We can already imagine navigating Solid Snake through a laser guarded maze which simply "appears" out of our kitchen counter.

Conclusion

It's impossible to give the Nintendo 3DS a fair review in such a constrained space, the handheld contains a large number of additional features, including extensive online capabilities, and that isn't even touching on games yet. We can tell you that the 3DS is a highly impressive device though, sporting gorgeous visuals and promising connectivity features. On top of that the device is backwards compatible, meaning you can still play all your DS games on it as well.

The Nintendo 3DS is available in either Cosmos Black or Aqua Blue for a recommended **R2799**. [JK] ❖

To read our full review go to <http://bit.ly/3dsnin> or follow the QR code.



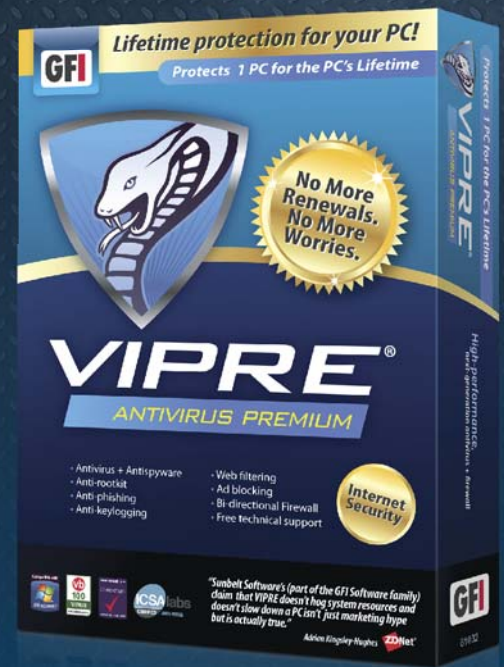
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You too can connect » Using prepaid data



For users who do not have a fixed line from Telkom which can be used for ADSL, there are alternatives in the form of the cellular networks' mobile connectivity options.

Potential web surfers can look at the Vodafone WebBox instance (see below), use their cellphone as tethered modem to connect their PC (if the phone has that capability) or buy a USB-modem.

When you purchase a USB-modem from one of the cellular networks, it will include a SIM card for which you have to acquire data bundles. After activating the SIM card (by inserting it into your mobile phone and calling the number provided by the service provider), you will need to load airtime onto it.

If you want to use airtime as data it's best to convert it to a data bundle which works out cheaper (see data rates table below). You simply buy airtime and enter the voucher number via the software provided with the USB-modem. This airtime can then be converted into

data-bundles via the same software. Make sure that you have enough airtime loaded for the specific data bundle that you want to acquire for the device. For instance, to be able to load a 600 MB Vodacom data bundle you need to have R189 worth of airtime loaded onto the USB-modem's SIM card.

If you will only use your phone to surf the net (either on the phone itself or as a tethered modem), you have to dial a specif code after you've loaded airtime: Vodacom: *111# ; MTN: *141*6# ; 8ta: *188# and Cell C: *147#. [HD] ♡

MTN	Cost per MB	Vodacom	Cost per MB	Cell C	Cost per MB	8ta	Cost per MB
75 MB @ R49	±65c	110 MB @ R88	80c	100 MB @ R50	50c	100 MB @ R50	50c
300 MB @ R149	±49c	300 MB @ R139	±46c	250 MB @ R100	40c	250 MB @ R100	40c
500 MB @ R189	±38c	600 MB @ R189	±31c	500 MB @ R150	30c	500 MB @ R150	30c
1 GB @ R289	±29c	1.2 GB @ R289	±24c	1.2 GB @ R250	20c	1 GB @ R250	25c

Vodacom WebBox » Internet on your Telly

Vodacom is aiming to give a lot more South Africans a way to access the internet via its newly launched WebBox, a device allowing users to connect to the internet by way of their TV sets, without having to worry about a PC.

The WebBox is a plug-n-play keyboard that connects to your TV via the supplied RCA cables. It comes with a built-in EDGE/GPRS modem and a once-off 100 MB data bundle, while a 2 GB microSD card is included as well. You also get a SIM card, that you have to activate from your mobile phone first (by dialling 100). Thereafter you insert it in the device's SIM slot and when you want to recharge this SIM card with airtime you can purchase it directly from your WebBox or send airtime to the number that you'll be allocated when activating the SIM.

Google powered

Users access the device's functionality via the user-friendly Android 2.1 operating system (Éclair), which includes a number of extras, including a video player, radio



and picture viewer, but unfortunately no access to Android Market for extra apps.

"An easy way of accessing the web for those users that have a TV but not a PC."

The browsing itself is handled via Opera's Mini Browser which compresses data that for the end-user translates into faster web surfing and, more importantly, lower data costs. Considering that it's an entry-level device, the WebBox does a reasonably good job at rendering web-pages and checking your email (which also boasts trouble-free setup for many

popular email services such as Hotmail and Gmail). The browsing speed is also adequate for most pages, but would have been a lot faster on a 3G network.

Typing on the keyboard to input text and utilising the five way directional keypad for browsing pages are comfortable in short stints, but can get tiring during longer sessions. Like Apple devices it lacks support for Adobe's Flash, meaning that you might have some trouble opening up certain pages.

Final word

Vodafone's WebBox fulfils a great need to bring the internet to more users in South Africa. It is by no means a perfect device due to its limitations – the likes of lack of Flash support and 3G, but it remains an easy way of accessing the web for those users that have a TV but not a PC. It's available at all participating Vodashops and selected Vodacom outlets for **R749** (including VAT), which we feel is still a bit expensive, but at least cheaper than buying a PC. [HD] ♡

For the full review please visit <http://bit.ly/webboxvodacom>



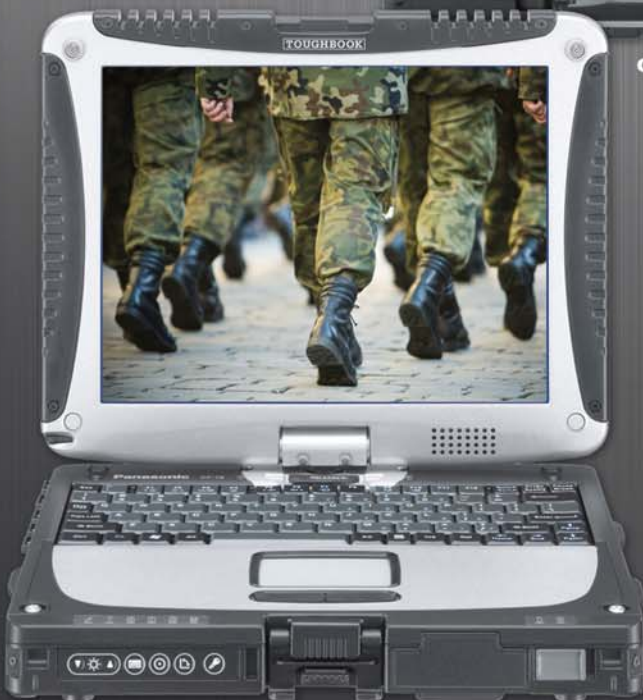
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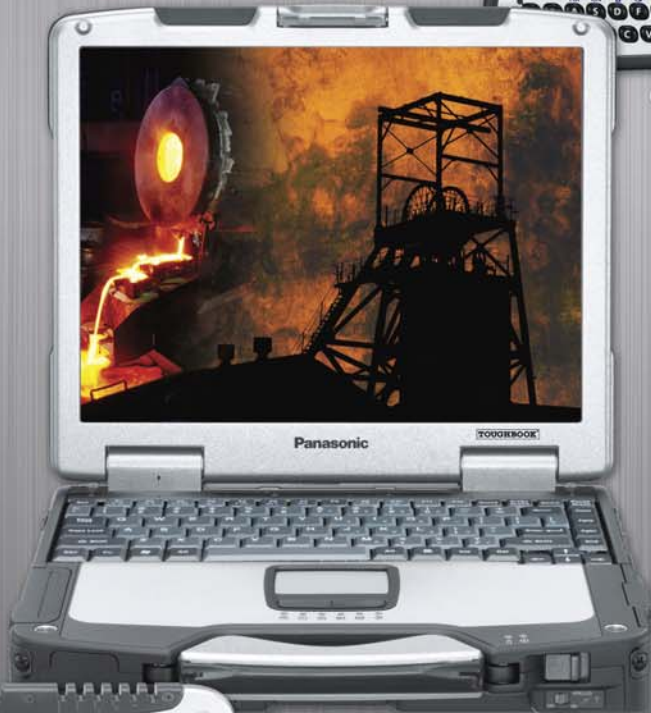
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For more information: Rohan van Heerden – 011 313 1618 or email: rvanheerden@pansolutions.co.za

Advertorial Netshield – Fire-Smotherer » Fear no flame in your server room

When it comes to unwelcome intrusions into your computer server room, the traditional thought of 'computer virus', while damaging, isn't exactly the worst thing that can happen. A fire doesn't care what kind of specialised security software you have running, if left unchecked it will destroy the server, the room, and maybe even the entire building.



That's why Netshield's Fire-Smother automatic flame suppressant is a must-have if you'd like to keep your system safe from the rampaging forces of fire. It's important to remember that if a fire ignites in the presence of sensitive equipment, rushing in with a traditional fire extinguisher can actually do more harm than good.

The compact and easy-to-install Fire-

Smother on the other hand is an automatic flame suppressant which can extinguish fires in controlled areas, without damaging electronics or leaving any residue. In addition to extinguishing fires of different classes, the non-corrosive and non-toxic Fire-Smother does not need to be maintained or serviced, is not dangerous to health and is completely environmentally friendly.

The Fire-Smother system is equipped with mounting brackets suitable for floors and walls and the casing's electric igniter is connected (by means of Netshield's Nviromon) to the room's existing smoke detectors. It's not only suitable for your server room but can also be used in workshops, control rooms, generator enclosures and for general industrial and even household hazards.

How it works

The system works through the use of a potassium powder jet, a unique fire extinguishing method which involves the

vaporisation of the powder into the area, followed by the condensation of the extinguishing substance. In simpler terms, the powder is turned into a gas and sprayed into the room.

It works by interrupting the very thing which causes a fire's chain reaction – oxygen. The aerosol jet produced is essentially an inert salt which emits gas already present in the atmosphere. These alkaline salts consume great quantities of oxygen when it comes in contact with air, thus depriving the fire of oxygen and smothering it.

Through this process, Fire-Smother is capable of extinguishing fires of varying classes. Anything from ordinary combustibles, to flammable liquid fires, to gaseous and electrical equipment fires, can be safely and efficiently extinguished with the Fire-Smother system.

The Fire-Smother fire control system can be connected by means of the Nviromon to pre-existing smoke detectors and remote temperature sensors. It will be activated automatically but can be electronically monitored and activated, leaving you free to start worrying about those malware issues rather than your entire business going up in flames.

The Fire-Smother is available from Netshield, with prices varying for smaller and larger models. For more details, contact Netshield on 086-111-4428. 📞

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New Touch-Screen Multimedia Phone from Grandstream

This new Touch-Screen Multimedia IP Phone from Grandstream not only looks amazing with its tablet-look and high resolution 7" colour screen, but on top of Voice over IP (VoIP) phone calls, you can make video calls phone to phone, through your PABX or even Skype. It comes complete with a range of built-in applications for Home or Office. The phone also integrates with the Grandstream IP cameras for an integrated Phone/Security solution.

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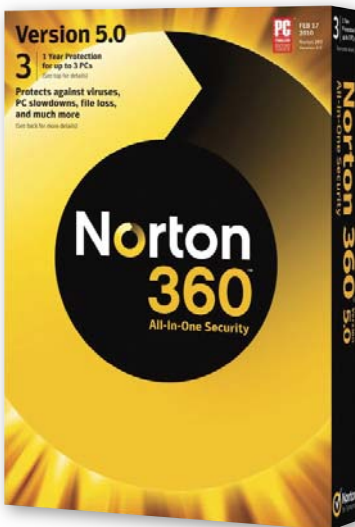
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Norton 360 V 5.0

» Security features galore



Symantec has just released its most complete anti-virus package yet with the jam-packed Norton 360 version 5.0. We try to make it through all its features.

Norton 360 V5.0 includes a really long list of features, the most we've seen yet from a security package. In addition to the traditional threat scanning, reputation scanning is also present, examining and setting trust levels for

“Norton 360 v5.0 is the most comprehensive anti-virus software we've come across yet.”

running programs. Emails, IMs and even Facebook wall posts can also be scanned to check for malware carrying links. As we've seen with Norton's Internet Security 2011, the new range of Norton products installs blazingly fast, with 360's full installation completing in just a few minutes. Norton 360 v5.0 now features a smoother user interface (UI), divided into easy to understand categories, enabling users to access PC security, identity protection, backup and PC tuneup options with a single click.


Performance boosters

Anti-virus packages are often thought of bloated and tardy, but Norton 360 does its best to get rid of this stereotype by including a number of performance boosting features. Norton Insight for example identifies trusted files that do not require scanning. We saw this in action with 59% of our programs marked as 'trusted', relegating only 41% to be scanned regularly.

Features

Norton 360 v5.0 includes a ton of security enhancing features, such as Norton's Download Insight technologies, helping to block malware and determining whether or not certain files are dangerous before you download them. Norton Safe Web will advise users which of their search results are safe to click, while banking and shopping can also be done without stress as Norton's anti-phishing technology keeps your login details secure. Backup options to hard drives and other local media, as well as online storage are also available, with every copy of 360 v5.0 including 2 GB of online storage. Norton also helps to keep your PC as fast as possible with a number of tuneup applications, such as Smart Startup Manager, Diagnostic Report, File Cleanup, Registry Cleanup and Disk Optimisation included.

Conclusion

With strong, discreet protection services, a wide feature list and even PC tuning software, Norton 360 v5.0 is the most comprehensive anti-virus software we've come across yet. A one year license for three PCs is available for **R899**. [JK] 

techsmart.co.za | April 2011



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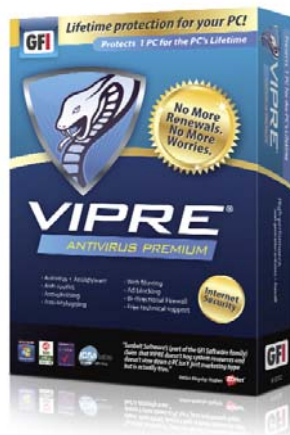
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21. The number of malicious apps that Google removed from the Android Market and user handsets last month.

VIPRE anti-virus premium lifetime edition » Anti-virus for the lifetime of your PC

VIPRE anti-virus is one of the newcomers in the field, but this hasn't stopped the tenacious software package from taking on the big boys, and living to tell about it.

One of the most annoying aspects of modern anti-virus software is the recurring



annual licenses, and this is where VIPRE truly stands out from the crowd. It is one of the only mainstream services offering lifetime licenses, meaning you buy it once and never again.

VIPRE describes itself as being a light-weight, highly efficient anti-virus program that supplies users with all the security features they may need, in addition to not hogging

system resources. The software optimises overall performance by combining anti-virus and anti-spyware features into a single tool. A firewall is included, sporting a myriad of different options which can be set up in either the Simple or Learning mode, depending on your tech-saviness. A web filter also helps block annoying online ads while email scanning will ensure clean mail at all times.

A VIPRE premium lifetime single PC license is available with an RRP of **R450**. For more info call Africa SD 012-665-2513. ♣

VKOM 401W 3G Wi-Fi Modem Router » Your own personal hotspot

Helping to keep you plugged in on the move, the VKOM 401W is a portable 3G Wi-Fi modem router.

Once users insert a 3G card into the device the VKOM creates a personal Wi-Fi hotspot, capable of sharing an internet connection between up to five devices, including mobile phones, handheld gaming systems and of course, notebooks.

Simplicity is at the core of this offering, with no extra installation discs

or cables to confuse users. To set it up simply plug it into a computer, follow a few basic on-screen instructions and the VKOM will be transformed into your personal internet hotspot. The device is completely wireless, being powered by a Lithium-ion battery capable of producing



around three hours of battery life. It's also a very light and compact solution, smaller than your average smartphone and weighing only 60 grams, making it very easy to carry around.

Speeds of up to 7.2 Mbps is promised, but at the end of the day your cellular network will have the final say on this. The VKOM 401W is available from **R1499**, for more info call Nology on 012-657-1315. ♣

Grandstream GXV3175 multimedia IP phone » A touch-screen makeover

Whoever said that Voice over IP (VoIP) phones are boring has not encountered Grandstream's GXV3175.

Supporting a massive 7" (800 x 480) colour LCD that's also touch-enabled, the GXV3175 is so much more than just another IP phone. Onboard you'll find a tiltable 1.3 MP CMOS camera with privacy shutter that is used for making video-calls, and thanks to it supporting the advanced H.264/H.263/H.263+ video

compression standard, video quality should not be a problem.

As notable as the video quality, is the plethora of connectivity options and auxiliary ports that are



available on this device. These include dual switched 10/100 Ethernet ports with integrated PoE (Power over Ethernet), integrated Wi-Fi (802.11n), SD/MMC/SDHC card slot and dual USB ports in case you want to copy data. And

in case you get bored it also offers a whole host of extra functionality such as a web browser, calendar, games, internet radio, a YouTube app and digital photo frame. You can get one for an estimated retail price of **R3572** (excl VAT). For more info call Miro distribution on 086-123-MIRO (6476). ♣

ASUS WL-330N3G3G wireless router » The all-in-one solution

Multifunction is the name of the game with the Asus WL-330N3G. This 3G wireless router has a variety of different uses, making it a highly practical device.

At its core, the device is a mobile wireless router connecting external devices to the internet. But in addition to this it can also function as a broadband hotspot, enabling a number of different PCs to share the hotspot in question (you would have to have a 3G dongle

though).

An Ethernet port is available enabling users to connect devices such as game consoles and printers, while the dongle can also be used as a universal repeater to strengthen the range of an existing connection. The device has a theoretical data transfer limit of 150 Mbps and sports a



fast setup process thanks to ASUS Plug-n-Surf technology.

The ASUS WL-330N3G features a power-,USB 2.0- and 10/100 Ethernet port and when turned on four LED indicators display the status of the connection. A great solution if you need an online connection on the go. Go to

www.asus.co.za/fb for more info. ♣

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Five ways that VDI can green your IT

1. Increased Energy Efficiency: VDI endpoints use just a few percent of the electricity consumed by traditional desktop PCs.
2. Improved Utilization: Desktop PCs are typically used only 5-10% of the time – most of the time they sit idle – while PC storage is typically used to only 30-40% of capacity.
3. Reduced Waste: VDI endpoints are far smaller than desktop PCs, with fewer parts and containing less metal, plastic and electronic components. This reduces the energy used and potential toxic.
4. Lower Operating Overhead: The ease of supporting and deploying VDI desktops translates into both reduced user downtime and increased IT productivity.
5. Longer Lifespan: Finally, the longer lifespan of VDI devices, as much as 3 times that of a desktop PC, due to a lower part count and a lack of fans and other moving parts, brings further reductions in production energy use.

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Muvi Atom sport camcorder » Extreme size for extreme sports

For the adventurous looking to record all their extreme sports escapades onto film without any bulky camera equipment getting in the way, the Muvi Atom camera is a top pick.



The kick is that included with the Atom are numerous sports mounts, including straps and mounts to easily fit the device to a mountain bike's handlebars or your helmet for instance. The Atom can also capture still photographs via its two megapixel snapper, which considering its size, is fair.

The Muvi Atom comes with a 2 GB Micro SD card included in the box, enabling users to record up to 48 minutes of footage. Alternatively, they can opt for an

8 GB Micro SD card, boosting the recording time to more than three hours. Users then simply connect the device to their PCs via USB, in order to review and save their images and video.

Available from The G.A.D.G.E.T. Shop on 012-346-2726 or 011-792-4912 for **R1199**.



NZXT Sentry LX Fan Controller » Keeping your cool

If you're a performance PC junkie, then cooling is probably comparable to your holy grail, after all it doesn't matter how powerful your system is, if it overheats, it's useless. This is where NZXT's Sentry LX comes in.

The Sentry LX is a high-performance aluminium fan controller boasting a variety of features to provide PC enthusiasts with the temperature

monitoring they require. The controller itself does not boast the traditional knobs, but instead features a sleek 5.25" LCD display. From this screen users can constantly monitor and adjust settings for up to five different fans located throughout their PC.

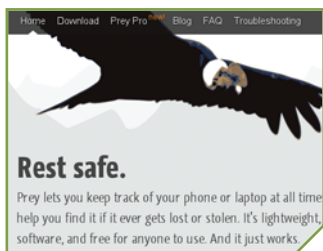
The unit is installed into any dual 5.25" drive

bay and sports intuitive buttons on the display. It also boasts manual and automatic modes, allowing users to have fan speed automatically

correlate to a certain temperature, or manually adjust settings for intense overclocking. The unit also includes an automatic temperature alarm. The Sentry LX is available from Evetech on 012-653-0033 or visit www.evetech.co.za for **R499** incl VAT.



Web Time Wasters



<http://preyproject.com>
Prey free notebook tracking software

We like clever stuff and Prey's protection software is about as clever as it comes. If you install Prey on your notebook (or Android phone) and it gets stolen, you can remotely activate Prey on your device (if it's connected to the web) to trigger some interesting functionality. Prey can remotely lock your notebook, record video via the webcam, triangulate its position and take screenshots of whatever the new "owner" is busy with. This small installation can maybe save you from some major headaches.



www.mindmeister.com
MindMeister

MindMeister allows users to create, manage and share collaborative mind maps online. The maps can be accessed anytime from anywhere, all you need is a web browser, no additional extensions or plug-ins are required. Friends and colleagues can also edit shared documents simultaneously in brainstorming mode, and users can post their mind maps publicly if they wish. It's a simple, sensible web-based tool with the advantage of being stored for easy access in the cloud. There is also a MindMeister app for the iPhone and iPad which is available on their website.



<http://mylifeisaverage.com>
MyLifeIsAverage

MyLifeIsAverage advertises itself as a place to post the mundane things in your life, and read about what counts as normal for other people. This might sound quite boring, but it's actually strangely relaxing to read about the lives of others. "We believe for every fail story, or good story, there are about a million normal stories. So tell the world what makes your life average. Anyone can submit a story, because everyone's lives are unexciting and insignificant at some time or another," the site says. It forms a good counterpoint to www.fmylife.com



<http://isketch.net>
iSketch

If you're a fan of the board game Pictionary, and spend a lot of time online, then iSketch might just be the website of your dreams. The site allows players from around the world to join each other in online games of sketching and guessing. iSketch is played within your web browser and requires installation of the Shockwave plug-in, after which you can join other players in the 10-round game. During the game each player gets a chance to draw a word which the other players must guess, with a complete drawing toolset included on the site for your perusal.



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MAPPING THE COURSE FOR HIGH-TECH CAREERS



The CompTIA TechCareer Compass (TCC) is the leading ICT career guidance portal, housing the Information & Communication Technology (ICT) skill standards data as identified by the information technology industry.

TechCareer Compass offers IT professionals, employers, educators, advisors and curriculum developers a place to find free information about the IT workforce and certification programs. It also provides potential ICT professionals the tools to define their career goals and find out which certification(s) they need to get there (<http://tcc.comptia.org/>).

The data on the website was created by a committee comprised of leading industry players including Microsoft, IBM, Cisco and CompuCom; academia and government representatives, and it has been validated by thousands of front-line ICT workers. TCC is a portal to a variety of online ICT career development resources – including job banks, assessments, resume and interviewing tools, other ICT specific sites and educational conferences. With over 1000 links that are continuously updated, the site is one of the most important ICT career resources available.

With such a vast amount of information available on TCC, it's best to break down what this means for each section:

For employers

The TCC provides an outline of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) job roles so employers can identify the appropriate skills a candidate needs to be successful in a specific technology job. Currently, the TCC has 35 main job titles and 101 uniform, fully defined job roles. Each job title is broken down into entry, intermediate and senior levels as appropriate. Employers can use this information to write job descriptions or manage their existing technical staff. They also have the flexibility to locate information under the job titles their company prefers through the linking of alternate job titles to main job titles. Hiring professionals can license this data to import into their existing human capital management system to manage their staff using the industry developed skill standards.

As an employer you can:

- Use the TCC to write job descriptions
- Map your ICT employees' career paths
- Locate appropriate certifications that map to your employees needs
- Find training providers
- Link to additional career resources

For potential ICT professionals

More than 750 technical ICT certifications have been mapped to the skills required for each job role. They include both high and low stake certifications, while certifications have also been reverse mapped so individuals can select a certification and see what jobs map to it.

Also available is a Skill Gap Assessment tool that has been added to the TCC, allowing users to rate their current skill set to those required by a specific job defined on TCC. Using the results from this tool allows individuals to identify their skills which meet or exceed minimum requirements and those skills that would require further study. With this information individuals can plan their training and certification path.

Career Advisors

Career advisors working with learners eager to get into IT can use TCC to assess students' interests and strengths, helping them to set realistic goals. The site can show students which certifications are appropriate for their career path and provides access to quality courseware and training facilities. TCC also provides learners with links to educational resources such as IT Dictionaries.

About CompTIA

CompTIA is the voice of the world's information technology (IT) industry. Its members are the companies at the forefront of innovation; and the professionals responsible for maximizing the benefits organizations receive from their investments in technology. CompTIA is dedicated to advancing industry growth through its educational programs, market research, networking events, professional certifications, and public policy advocacy. For more information, visit www.comptia.co.za.

Skill Gap Assessment

What is it? The Skill Gap Assessment is a new value-added tool on the TCC. This assessment allows individuals to compare their current skill sets to those required by a specific job defined on the TCC.

Why use it? The Skill Gap Assessment results highlight skills that meet or

exceed the requirements for a job role, as well as underline those skills that fall below the requirements. With this information, individuals can plan their training and certification paths to meet their exact needs.

Where can I find it on the web site? Once you have logged onto

<http://tcc.comptia.org>, the Skill Gap Assessment is linked on each of the job definition pages below the job description. To get started, review the job roles on the TCC and then select the job you would like to compare to your current skill set. The TCC will help you determine the next steps you should take to advance your career.

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About 305 m. The height at which an iPhone 4 (in Griffin Motiv TPU case) fell from a US Army plane travelling at 240 km/h, to come out relatively unscathed.

PC Medic » First aid for your PC

Some say Chuck Norris asked him for PC advice, while others claim he can detect Wi-Fi networks by ear. We call him PC Medic and he's here to answer your PC related queries.

Q Hello PC Medic. I want to upgrade from Windows 7 Starter edition to Windows 7 Professional. But it is on a DVD and my netbook doesn't have a DVD-drive. Can I upgrade using this disk, without having to purchase an external DVD-drive? Eugene Wentzel

A Hi Eugene. Type "Anytime Upgrade" in the Search box of the Start menu and click on "Windows Anytime Upgrade". By utilising the Anytime Upgrade feature, you will be able to perform a simple

upgrade, without having to employ your Windows 7 Professional DVD. You will need to enter your authentic Windows 7 retail product key and be connected to the net.

Q Hi PC Medic. I love WhatsApp on my Nokia as I am able to chat to any of my friends, no matter what OS their phone uses. Is there a way to log off and disconnect from WhatsApp like there is in MXit for example, to help with my data bill? Leonard

A Hey Leonard. Sorry, no there isn't. The Nokia version of WhatsApp messenger has been designed to always be connected much like BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) is. This makes it convenient to receive messages as soon as they are sent (unlike MXit where you have to be logged in and connected), but will inevitably add to your data charges. ❄



» Tips for Windows 7:

System Protection is a feature within Windows 7 that allows users to (unlike the real world) turn back time when it comes to their PCs. If you are unable to get rid of an error or virus that's messing up your PC, you are able to go back to a restore point. The problem with having many restore points though is that it

starts to eat into the available storage on your PC's hard drive. Luckily you are able to adjust the maximum disk space used by System Protection.

Click on "Start" and right click on "My Computer". Choose "System Properties" from the menu, which will open the System window. Click on "Advanced System

Settings" and then on the "System Protection" tab. Select the C drive (or the one with Windows 7 installed on) in the list of drives and click on "Configure". Move the slider to the left to decrease the amount of storage space Windows 7 can use for System Protection files in order to free more space. Click "Apply".

TechSmart's guide to using QR Codes

You might have noted the little speckled boxes dotted around the magazine. What are they and what do they do?

These are called QR Codes, short for quick response codes, and for those of our readers with smartphones they are a fast and easy way to get to the complete articles on our website.

In order to make use of these codes you need to do the following:

Download the appropriate app to your smartphone from the following places:

- For Apple iPhones from the Apple App Store. Search for: QR Reader for iPhone or QR App
- For Android phones from Android Market Search for: Barcode Scanner or QR Droid
- For BlackBerry from the BlackBerry App World Search for: Scanlife Barcode Reader

Once installed simply open the app, scan the QR code and follow the link to our website. It's as easy as that – no mess, no fuss and definitely no typing.

Want to start using your app?

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QR Codes quick facts

- QR Codes was developed in Japan by Toyota subsidiary Denso-Wave in 1994 to take care of inventory control and other uses.
- QR Codes can be seen as barcodes on steroids, since in theory a QR Code should be able to store up to 7089 characters. Traditional 1D barcodes can store 10 – 20 characters.
- It can be used to store URLs, telephone numbers, text or SMS.
- These 2D matrixes are very popular in Japan being used by the average person more than once a week.
- In Japan the first QR Code readable phone appeared way back in August 2002. ❄



Create your own QR Codes here:

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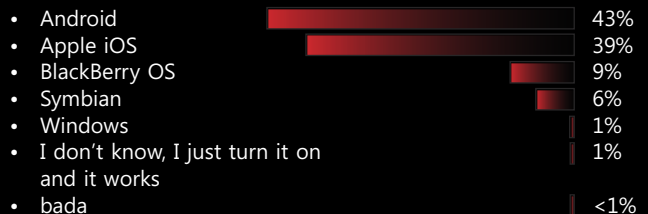
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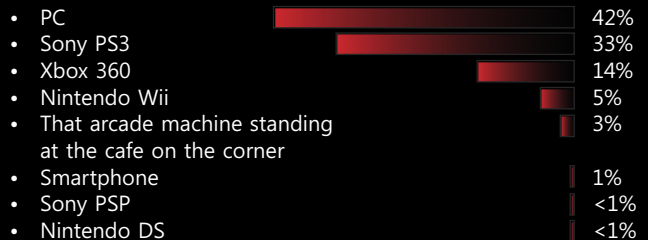
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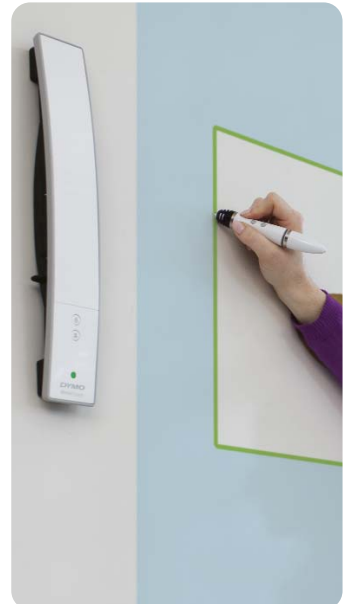
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HOMEFRONT

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS.

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Homefront interview

We talk to the top dogs

TechSmart talked to David Votycka, general manager at Kaos Studios and Frank Delise, executive producer at THQ, about their dystopian shooter, Homefront.

TechSmart: Trying to stand out in the first person shooter realm is like trying to stand out in a school of sardines. Which qualities of Homefront do you think will help it stick out from the rest?

Homefront: In single player, it's our setting and story, and the resulting emotional punch that Homefront delivers that we think really sets it apart – but there are differences from a gameplay perspective too. Typically, the current glut

of modern shooters cast you as a highly trained bad-ass with all the best kit, and a wave of military hardware to support you. In Homefront, the enemy has that military superiority. You'll be constantly outnumbered and outgunned, so guerrilla tactics and hit and run strategies are a necessity. In multiplayer we've introduced a lot of new and innovative features to the Kaos brand of large scale warfare that we think will be refreshing to both Call of Duty and Battlefield veterans alike.

TS: We've heard a lot of how Homefront on the PC will be a unique experience and not just a console port, are there any particular PC-only features that you're excited about?

HF: We've added a ton of features to the PC version, from gameplay



enhancements like advanced flight controls for aircraft and first person cockpit views, to tools for the online community like a match recorder. I guess the most exciting is the dedicated server executable we'll be shipping post launch to allow PC gamers to set up and host their own Homefront servers.

TS: We've heard that Homefront won't necessarily have to be a frantic gun battle from start to finish. What interactions can we expect to see in Homefront when the bullets stop flying?

HF: We deliberately add what we call 'why we fight' moments to break up the action, change the pace of the game and allow the player to discover more about the world of Homefront. The Resistance camp you encounter early on is a great example of this – you'll be able to explore the environment, and see how the Resistance live off the grid under the shadow of Occupation. [JK] ❖

For the full interview visit <http://bit.ly/hfinterview>.



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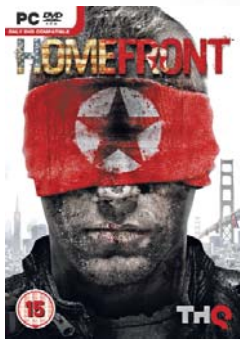
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Homefront

» Home is where the war is



Homefront is a new first person shooter from THQ and Kaos Studios that sees players fighting as part of the resistance forces in an occupied United States.

The moment you start Homefront for the first time, players are greeted not with a slick cutscene and rock 'n roll track playing in the background, but rather by a grainy, real life news broadcast showing Hillary Clinton blaming the 2010 sinking of a South Korean warship on North Korea. This focus on realism largely helps set the tone for the rest of the game.

Story

In fact it's Homefront's alternate history setting, though unlikely, that draws one in, and was penned by John Milnius, the writer responsible for classics such as *Red Dawn* and *Apocalypse Now*.

In the game, a rogue North Korea taken over by Kim Jong-il's son, Kim Jong-un, has been steadily gaining military and economic power, eventually reuniting the two Korea's. With the United States bogged down in oil wars on the other side of the world, the newly formed Greater Korean Republic (GKR) now had the freedom to annex a number of major Asian countries, slowly building up its power to challenge the US as the world's strongest superpower.

The build-up culminated in the launching of a bogus communications satellite in 2025 which turned out to be a massive EMP (electro-magnetic pulse) emitter, plunging the US into darkness and opening the door for a full scale military invasion.

Resistance is futile?

The game sees the player taking on the role of ex-pilot Robert Jacobs, who is (just our luck) quickly arrested at the start of the game and forced onto a



waiting prison bus. As we waited to be ferried to our doom we noticed a few things that help separate Homefront from the rest of the shooter mill, one of this being the ability to create a realistically brutal occupation environment.

As the bus trundled along the broken streets we saw previously peaceful suburbia turned into a disaster scene. GKR troops and police can be seen everywhere, and the air reverberates with the sound of loudspeaker propaganda as families and loved ones are forcefully separated, their screams of anguish drowned only by the barking of guard dogs. Suddenly, a man frees himself from the grip of a soldier and tries to make a run for it. He is shot seconds later, blood from the gunshot wound to his head staining the bus windows red. It's this kind of story telling which helps set Homefront apart in the sea of shooters.

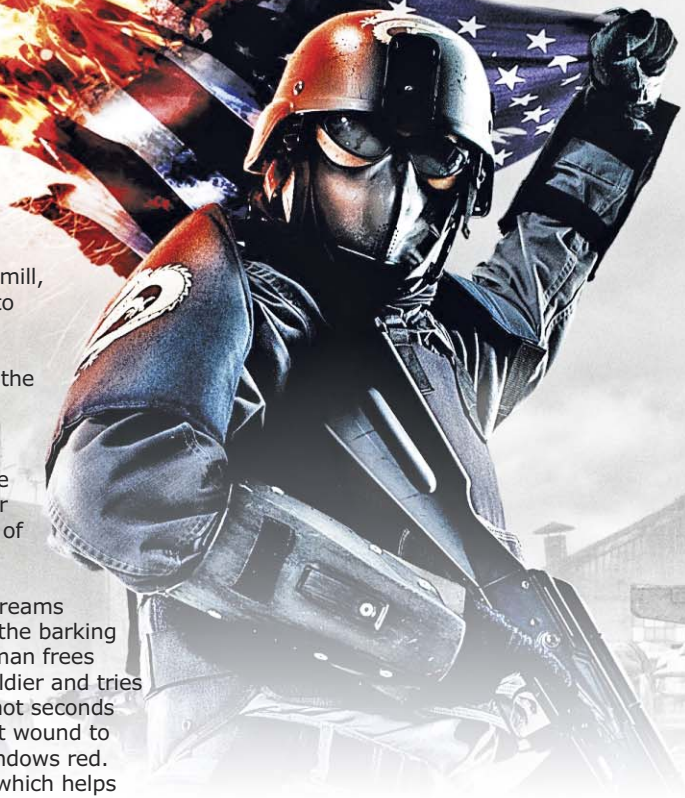
Gameplay

On the gameplay front however, Homefront plays like your run-of-the-mill FPS, and unfortunately does not introduce anything in the way of ground breaking qualities. It's clear the the single player campaign drew a lot from Call of Duty games, playing off as a collection of set-piece events and quick bouts of explosive, yet linear action. Anyone familiar with an FPS title from the last decade will be able to pick up and play the game without much hassle.

The campaign is well varied though, with helicopter flying, stealth, sniping and missile raining action delivering a comprehensive combat experience. Calling in fire support is a standard in these games, but Homefront does make it a tad more interesting by allowing players to control the Goliath, a remote-controlled Hellfire missile spewing ground vehicle. Our chief complaint against Homefront's single player campaign is its shortness though, with players able to run through it in about five hours.

Multiplayer

Homefront's multiplayer helped make up for the game's short campaign, with the combat feeling like a mixture between Battlefield and Call of Duty. Plenty of run-and-gunning is available for COD fans, while players can control vehicles such as Humvees and Apache attack helicopters to rain down some serious fire. The game features two primary modes, namely Ground Control and Team Deathmatch, with Ground Control following the Battlefield premise of capturing and



holding control points. The aspect that really set the multiplayer offering apart though was the Battle Points (BP) system.

Players earn BP by completing certain actions (killing an enemy, capturing a control point), which is then used to unlock new weapons and abilities in the game. For example, BP can be exchanged for a missile strike, remote-controlled drone or new weapons and is also used to access vehicles such as helicopters and tanks.

Conclusion

Homefront's ambitious storyline and graphical portrayal of military occupation are some of the stand-out features of the game and its major drawing cards. You don't often encounter the US as an underdog, with this "under occupation" story offering a far more emotional experience than your standard shooter. The game delivers a solid, yet non revolutionary FPS experience to the market. Although it's unfortunately quite a short game, an enjoyable multiplayer helps make up for this. [JK] ❄️



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