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The Fun & Entertainment Issue ›› June 2011

To iPad or not to iPad

With the second generation Apple iPad now in local stores, the tablet phenomenon is well and truly with us. Steve Jobs' new tablet, reviewed on p11, is clearly in a league of its own, although a pack of hungry Android devices has the iPad clearly in their sights. Catching up with the iPad will not be easy, with market analysts, Gartner, predicting that up until 2015 Apple's devices will be responsible for more than half the tablet market share. Anyone who owns an iPad will be very happy to tell you why the product is so popular. In fact, you would not even have to ask. First off they'll show a digital version of a popular magazine featuring awesome layout and video. If it's someone younger they'll progress to the spectacular Marvel Comics app, while then showing off maybe a game that they recently downloaded, looking absolutely splendid on the iPad 2's 9.7" LED screen. At the end of this encounter you'll be trying to think exactly where you'll be able to steal the money to buy an iPad, nevermind if you have a use for it or not.

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

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GPU Fight! 15
TechSmart checks out the best Graphic Processing Units Nvidia and AMD can muster. From the powerful behemoths at the top-end, to more affordable entry-level options.

» Mobiles

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Follow up to the excellent Xperia X10, the arc is new and improved, featuring everything you want in a slim and sexy body. We check out the performance of this long awaited smartphone.

» Tablets

Four tablets tried and tested 10
We spend time with four of the hottest tablets currently available, including the outstanding iPad 2. Is it as hot as its predecessor or has the competition caught up?

» Games

Top Winter Warmers 27
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TOP TECH TITBITS

Microsoft buys Skype

In one of the most interesting corporate buyouts of the year, Microsoft last month closed a deal that saw it gulp up VoIP messaging service Skype for $8.5 billion. The deal (Microsoft's biggest since 2007) has been described by analysts as an overpayment for Skype, which posted a $7 million loss last year. Either way, with the acquisition Microsoft will be taking some 660 million Skype users under its corporate wing. Skype has for long been a threat to voice carriers as it offers instant messaging and video calling over the internet for a fraction of the price. Its technology may now be heading to Windows Phone 7 or even the Xbox 360's Kinect.

No stopping the Google train

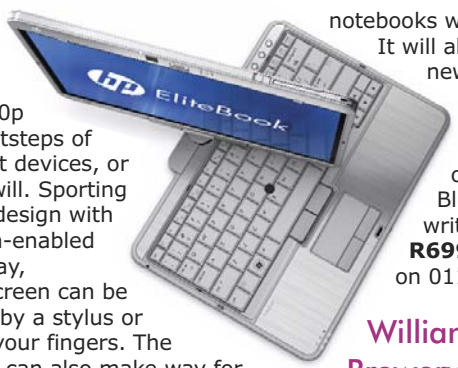
Google last month introduced its long awaited Chromebooks, the first mainstream computers to ship with its web driven Chrome operating system. It's thanks to this that Chromebooks can boot up in only eight seconds, with all applications accessed via Google's Chrome web browser. Two Chromebooks will be offered initially, a 12.1" Samsung model and an 11.6" Acer. Google's automatically updating OS is what's drawing the attention though, with the search giant even stating that a Chromebook will get faster over time as its software is improved. Google also launched paid support for the Android Market locally last month, meaning you can now shop for apps in rands.

Twitter Trouble

Privacy laws were put under scrutiny in the UK last month, when footballer Ryan Giggs's legal team managed to secure an injunction to prevent publication of allegations that he had an affair with a former reality TV star. This had no effect on the twitterati though, as users of the popular micro blogging service gossiped away. Liberal Democrat MP, John Hemming, then openly named the player in the House of Commons, saying he had the right to since 75 000 people on Twitter had already done so. The controversy raises questions on both privacy concerns as well as freedom of speech, while also asking whether Twitter, used by millions of users, can be subjected to a specific country's local laws.

HOT NEW PRODUCTS

HP EliteBook 2760p



The new HP Elitebook 2760p follows in the footsteps of the original tablet devices, or slate PCs if you will. Sporting a thin clamshell design with a 12.5" HD touch-enabled LED-backlit display, content on the screen can be controlled either by a stylus or by simply using your fingers. The swivelling screen can also make way for a full-sized keyboard when it's time for some serious typing. With new Intel Core i7 and i5 processor options, Turbo Boost technology as well as SSD options, the 2760p truly offers you the best of both worlds. Prices start from **R18 999**.

Toshiba Satellite L755

We've always been fans of Toshiba's compact Satellite notebook range, so we were happy to learn that the Satellite L755 is receiving an update. The new model will feature a 15.6" HD display, Dolby Advanced Audio technology and embedded Onkyo stereo speakers. This makes the L755 one of the best entertainment focused notebooks we've yet seen. It will also feature new Sandy Bridge processors, Nvidia GPU options and a Blu-ray drive and writer. RRP starts at **R6999**, call Mustek on 011-237-1000.

WilliamsWarn Personal Brewery

What do you get for the man who has everything? His own personal brewery it seems. A pair of Kiwi inventors have created a personal beer brewing machine capable of producing 27 litres of "commercial quality" beer in as little as seven days, in all 78 official beer styles. The beer is perfectly carbonated, crisp, clear and cold – so it seems like the new WilliamsWarn Personal Brewery is the perfect addition to any self-respecting bachelor pad. Only problem is the price – at almost **R31 000** it's enough to cause a hangover.

IL Tiro espresso gun

Looking for a shot of the perfect espresso? The Il Tiro espresso gun promises to deliver that in certainly one of the coolest ways possible. Containing the heated water in the handle, the Il Tiro forces it through the coffee "bullets" to dispense a solid shot of caffeine. It even has a refill holster, but don't count on seeing it here soon, it was a semester project of four students at the Vienna University of Applied Arts. Check the YouTube video here: **http://bit.ly/iltiro**

22%. Rise in traffic on Twitter to find out about the footballer who had taken out an injunction against the site.

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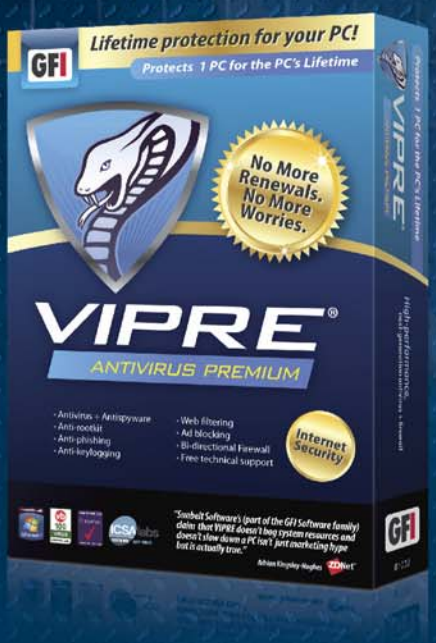

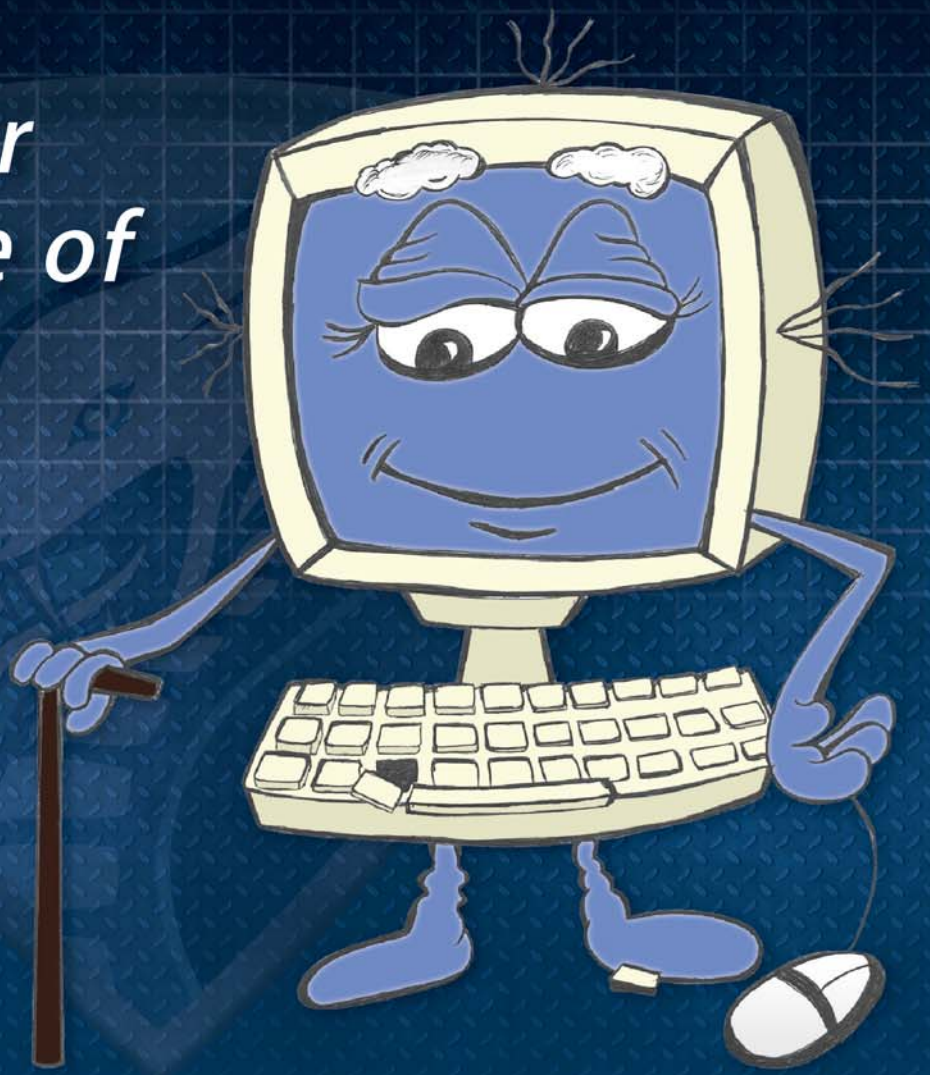

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Sci News

Good vibrations

Seals get all touchy when it comes to fish – and it's all thanks to their vibration-sensitive whiskers. Scientists write in the *Journal of Experimental Biology*, that they trained a seal at a marine science centre to press one target when it recognised the wake of a standard-sized paddle and another target for that of a smaller paddle. Even when blindfolded and with its ears covered, the seal could accurately distinguish between the wakes of paddles that differed by less than 3 cm using only the pattern of the water disturbance. Different paddle shapes didn't cause problems either. The researchers suggest that whiskers which can pick up the size and shape of the wake of a passing fish, allow seals to go after the big fish, rather than waste hunting energy on the small fry.

Charged up

About 60 years ago transistors were big news. And according to a recent article in *Science*, electronics may be in for another shake-up. Transistors, which are current switches, are the power behind the operations of a computer chip. The more operations that can be performed per second, the more powerful the processor. But fast chips run hot, which means a chip can handle only a limited number of operations before things go up in smoke. Now scientists have found that using insulating materials – lanthanum oxide, aluminium oxide and strontium titanate – rather than silicon to make transistors, greatly increases the capacitance of the transistor, yet without a significant increase in heat. The physics is not all clear yet, but if the mechanism can be worked out, computing power may soon take a giant leap forward.

Stay sharp

Think childhood music lessons were a drag? You may just change your tune in years to come. In a recent issue of the journal *Neuropsychology*, scientists write that learning to play an instrument or read music as a child may keep the brain fit in old age. A group of 70 senior adults were divided into three groups based on their level of music experience. Participants who took music lessons for more than 10 years performed markedly better on difficult mental tasks than people with less music training. Yet those with some music training again performed much better than participants without any music training. The researchers think that the demanding mental activity involved in learning to play an instrument creates additional neural connections in the brain, which may ward off cognitive decline as we age. [LP]

» More hot science

When will we grow meat in a petri dish? **http://bit.ly/meatpetri**

Sending a boat to Saturn's Titan moon's methane sea. **http://bit.ly/titanboat**

HP's Memristors 10x faster than flash, needs 1/10th power: **http://bit.ly/memhp**

Eco News

1st successful international flight for Solar Impulse

Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg got a little closer to their goal of circumnavigating the globe in their solar-powered plane, the Solar Impulse HB-SIA. This solar-powered wonder completed its first international flight, taking off near Berne in Switzerland and then landing safely in Brussels in Belgium. This flight lasted just a minute less than thirteen hours – without the use of any fuel. A crowd of supporters were on hand to celebrate the arrival of the plane. Next up the Solar Impulse is scheduled for a trip over the Atlantic, with a round-the-world journey planned for 2013. It will take long though, the plane has an average flying speed of only 70 km/h.

McDonalds to fuel your car?

Greenergy, a firm that supplies around 20% of Britain's road fuel, has announced that it has begun producing biodiesel from food waste. The privately held company and its partner, Brocklesby Ltd, which specialises in recycling edible oils, is now able to convert high fat solid foods including pies and sausage rolls, which are not fit for sale due to being misformed, overcooked or past its sell by date, into biofuel. The oils and fats in these foods (around 25% and 30%) are extracted using a process developed by Brocklesby Ltd and then further purified by Greenergy, at which point these are clean enough and suitable for conversion into biodiesel. The finished biodiesel is blended in small quantities into the diesel Greenergy supplies to petrol stations around Britain.

Vorsprung durch wind technik

According to CNet, Audi is looking to utilise the power of the wind as a source of clean energy for its forthcoming electric and natural gas vehicles. The German manufacturer is financing the construction of four wind turbines off the North Sea that will generate up to 53 gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity every year. This wind-generated electricity will be fed to the public power grid, but Audi also plans to employ part of it to charge its electric e-tron vehicles (pictured) and to produce hydrogen and e-gas. The latter is a combination of hydrogen and CO^2 resulting in a synthetic form of methane. The company will use the e-gas to power a compressed natural gas (CNG) version of the A3, which employs a four-cylinder engine that can run on e-gas, natural gas, or conventional petrol.

» Other interesting eco news

Brammo's flagship electric motorbike, the Empulse, is delayed until 2012. **http://bit.ly/Empulsedelayed**

Toyota signs an agreement to collaborate on a wireless automotive charger. **http://cnet.co/wirelesscarcharge**

Formula 1 cars' "greener" 1.6 litre four cylinder hybrid engine scheduled for 2013. **http://reut.rs/F1togogreen**

\$3.2 billion. Loss made by Sony, its biggest in 16 years mainly due to the Japan earthquake.

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The Superphones are coming! ›› Battle of the new smartphone titans

Smartphones have come a long way since bringing email and a better browsing experience to the mobile phone. The next generation of smartphones boast even more powerful processors and the latest operating systems. Here are a few to watch out for.

Samsung Galaxy S II

The Galaxy S Android running smartphone sold in excess of 7 million, while the S II's preorders already stands at 3 million. We actually had our hands on the S II at the Samsung Africa Forum (p21), and the first thing you notice is its diminutive frame, standing at a wafer-thin 8.49 mm (even less than the iPhone 4's 9.3 mm). It might be super skinny, but the S II isn't thin in terms of performance, powered by a blisteringly quick 1.2 GHz dual-core processor. Operating on Android 2.3, along with the company's TouchWiz 4.0 user interface, the S II also sports a 4.27" (480 x 800) Super AMOLED Plus display, HSPA+ (21 Mbps download), Bluetooth 3.0, Wi-Fi 802.11n and Wi-Fi Direct as well as an 8 MP rear-facing snapper capable of full HD 1080p video recording. Expect it round-about mid-July.

LG Optimus 3D

Also waving the Korean flag high is LG, who like Nintendo with its 3DS handheld gaming device, plans to liberate users from the burden of 3D glasses. The company's flagship, the Optimus 3D, boasts a 3D stereoscopic 4.3" capacitive display, enabling users to view 2D images and video and 3D multimedia content. Besides the 3D user interface and multimedia viewing capabilities, users are able to take photos and videos in 3D via the smartphone's two rear-facing 5 MP cameras. This slender (11.9 mm) Android 2.2-running device also sports an HDMI 1.4 connection to display HD content on your HDTV or 3D content on your 3D monitor.

BlackBerry Bold 9900

Research In Motion is also upping the stakes with its BlackBerry Bold 9900 smartphone, albeit in one less dimension. It will be the Canadian manufacturers' thinnest and most powerful device yet, measuring 10.5 mm and boasting a zippy 1.2 GHz processor. At long last RIM has decided to bless the Bold range with a capacitive touch-screen (2.8") sporting a very fine 287 dots per inch, but not yet cracking the iPhone 4's 326 dpi Retina display. It also runs on BlackBerry's brand-spanking new 7 operating system which brings improved graphics and browsing, plus universal voice search to the table. [HD]

THE BIG ISSUE

PLAYSTATION NETWORK HACK

When it comes to online gaming services, most PlayStation 3 (PS3) fans opt for the free PlayStation Network (PSN). Last month however, this sentiment has withered and died as the PSN and a number of other Sony services suffered hacker attacks.

The attack on the PSN exposed a massive 77 million users' private information including details such as usernames, passwords, telephone numbers and addresses. It was reported that credit and debit card details of certain users were also leaked in the hack, although no evidence of these details being used to siphon money have been found, indicating that the attack was aimed squarely at Sony, and not for financial reasons as many hacks are.

Sony bugger up

The anger felt by gamers, intensified by the length of the outage, was made much worse due to the handling of the situation by Sony. It's reported that the attacks occurred around either the 16th or 17th of April, with Sony shutting down services on the 20th of April. Sony only notified customers that their data may have been leaked on the 26th of April though, a decision which has already resulted in lawsuits being filed against the company. In addition to the PSN, Sony's Qriocity services as well as Sony Online Entertainment (SOE) were taken offline, the latter leaking 24.6 million accounts, causing Massively Multiplayer Online players to lose access to their game of choice.

Who dunnit?

The perpetrators of the hack are thought to be linked to hacker activist group Anonymous, although the group has issued several statements saying it didn't order the attacks, instead blaming it on a splinter group within its ranks. Whoever is responsible, the reason for the hack is widely thought to be linked to Sony's recent court proceedings against George Hotz, the hacker who released the PS3 rootkey to the world.

After struggling with the issue for weeks, Sony outlined a number of goodwill packages to users, including a million dollar identity theft insurance package and two free games for PS3 and PSP gamers. A new security system sporting improved firewalls and new early warning systems have also been implemented.

Now it's a matter of Sony dealing with the inevitable legal backlash, tracking down those responsible, and perhaps rethinking some of its user policies. It's a classic David and Goliath story, although no one expected the Sony giant to hit the ground quite as hard as it did. [JK]

What is the PlayStation Network (PSN)?

The PSN is Sony's online gaming portal, allowing PS3 users access to extra content such as demos and custom themes. More importantly it allows PS3 users to play games against each other online.

200%. Rise in the number of PS3 consoles being traded in, either for cash or an Xbox 360, according to a UK retailer after PSN hack.

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You are not your latest smartphone, tablet or notebook. These are mere tools.

Google Nexus S ›› Plain but not simple

The Google Nexus S is the second phone coming from the search giant responsible for creating the Android operating system. We did some operating of our own to take it through its paces.

Built by Samsung but driven by Google, the Nexus S' all-black design is enhanced by a slightly curved screen and back. Unlike Android devices from other manufacturers, Google does not provide a customised interface, the likes of HTC's Sense or Samsung's TouchWiz. It's a pure and simple Android experience, without the extra bells and whistles laid on top. This Spartan approach should appeal to Android users who want a no mess, no fuss approach.

Gingerbread onboard

There's another thing Android fans can smile broadly about since the Nexus S contains the most up to date Android operating system (for smartphones) currently in SA, namely Android Gingerbread version 2.3.4. Android 2.3 brings a few valuable improvements to the platform, most notable when using the onscreen keyboard, since cursor control when copying and pasting is much better than ever before, while the keyboard itself also works a lot smoother. Much appreciated also is the battery use monitor which shows to what percentage each aspect of the system drains the battery, with the display by far responsible for the most strain.

"The Nexus S contains the most up to date Android operating system currently in SA."

The Nexus S runs on the same 1 GHz processor found on the Galaxy S, meaning it is very fast, but not quite on par with some of the dual-core processors found on a few of the new "superphones" coming soon (p7). A good dollop of 8 GB worth of onboard storage space is included but much to our disappointment no SD card slot is provided. Video quality is also peculiarly low at 800 x 480 instead of the more preferred 1280 x 720 (HD-ready), but at least screen quality is solid at 480 x 800 for the 4" real-estate. Much was said about the Near Field Communication (see p19) functionality included on the Nexus S, but at this stage there is no place to actually make use of it.

Conclusion

If you're looking for a plain and simple Android experience, the Nexus S is the route to go. It offers Android Gingerbread at its most basic, although it's not a basic phone in any regard, containing all the mod cons expected from a modern smartphone (sans SD card slot and HD-ready video). It retails for **R6299**. [MJ]

Sony Ericsson Xperia arc ›› Her royal thinnest

The successor to the Sony Ericsson (SE) Xperia X10 has arrived and this stylish new smartphone is aiming to take top spot on your most wanted tech list.

There's no denying that this is one of the sexier devices out there, featuring a stylishly slim design with a curved back cover, measuring a mere 8.7 mm in thickness at the centre and 10 mm at each end. Add to this the fact that it weighs a mere 117g, 20 g less than the iPhone 4 (137 g), and you already have yourself a stand-out device.

This thin and light design is complimented by a 4.2" (480 x 854) capacitive Reality Display with Sony's Mobile BRAVIA Engine that, according to Sony Ericsson, delivers better visual clarity, and we tend to agree.

Gingerbread goodness

With Qualcomm's MSM8255 Snapdragon system-on-a-chip boasting a snappy 1 GHz Scorpion CPU and Adreno 205 GPU doing the processing, things on the computing side went smoothly. Google's Android 2.3.2 (Gingerbread) does the operating and this latest smartphone version of the mobile OS sports new features including improved power management as well as a redesigned keyboard allowing for faster text input and editing.

"We couldn't believe that Sony Ericsson crammed everything in such a thin body."

Besides Android running the show, SE has provided its Timescape user interface, which links contact details and messages across a number of social networks like Facebook and Twitter. It shows you these along with your SMSs in a continuously updated and visualised stream of info.

Happy snapper

Helping to fill the media gallery with images is the phone's 8 Mega-pixel camera with capable LED flash and auto-focus, a department that SE always shines in. Just like the Nokia E7 it can record HD-ready (720p@30fps) videos, with an HDMI port to display all your high-resolution photos and HD videos on your HD monitor or HDTV. Unlike Nokia though SE doesn't include a mini HDMI cable in the box. In general you won't be disappointed with the arc's media capabilities.

Final word

SE has kept what was good about the Xperia X10 and taken it to another level with the slim and stylish Xperia arc. Compared to other phones with similar specs, such as the Samsung Galaxy S or Google Nexus S, we couldn't believe that Sony Ericsson crammed everything in such a thin body. It goes for a recommended of **R6599**. [HD]

Full review: http://bit.ly/sonyearc

18%. % of South Africans who conduct bank transfers on their mobile phones.

iPad 2 ›› Still the best

The release of the iPad has resulted in a slew of competitors coming to market, but the simple truth is that none of these models have the legacy experience, apps or clout required to truly take on Apple's latest offering – the iPad 2. Here's why.

The iPad 2 is a vast improvement on a device that was light years ahead of the competition to begin with. Apple has now managed to shave the iPad 2 down to just 8.6 mm in thickness, which is almost 5 mm thinner than the original. A significant reduction in weight can also be seen as the iPad 2 is only 613 grams at its heaviest, compared to the 730 grams of the iPad 1. The overall result is a far sleeker, more refined unit which packs a significant punch but still manages to beat the competition with regards to size and weight.

Features

The iPad 2 sports a 9.7" LED-backlit IPS LCD screen with a resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels while Apple bumped the processor to a more powerful 1 GHz dual-core Apple A5, which delivers twice the punch. In addition to this, the unit's graphics engine is nine times stronger than its predecessor, which allows the iPad 2 to easily handle high definition content. All this while maintaining its requisite 10 hour battery life.

The Apple App store and third party developer base have had the opportunity to grow to such a significant extent that it far outstrips the competition. The announcement of the iPad 2 brought with it the release of a number of newly developed applications which have been ported from the Apple Macbook and iMac platform for use on the device. Chief among these are GarageBand and iMovie, both of which are extremely affordable and incredibly intuitive.

Conclusion

Although the likes of Google and BlackBerry are going some way to develop respectable offerings based on other platforms, the simple truth is that it will be incredibly difficult to catch up to the head-start Apple has had with the iPad, and now of course the subsequent improvements on the iPad 2. [TM]

And the specs?

- iOS 4.3
- 9.7" LED display, 1024 × 768
- 1GHz dual-core A5 CPU, 512 MB RAM
- 240 x 186 x 8.6 mm, 730 g
- 16GB, 32GB or 64GB storage options
- Full review: http://bit.ly/ipad2biteapple

Asus Eee Pad Transformer ›› Best of both worlds

Building from its experience with the Eee PCs, Asus unveiled the Eee Pad Transformer, a tablet that can stand next to the best in quality. We were left impressed...

The Asus Eee Pad does not lack in the power department thanks to Nvidia's award winning 1 GHz dual-core Tegra 2 processor. This allows the tablet to easily multitask as you flip between different webpages, applications and YouTube videos for example. As far as build quality goes the tablet feels very sturdy and sports a grip-enhancing honeycomb texture on the back. A vivid 10.1" display is set inside a broad bezel, delivering a wide and clear viewing area.

Hmmm, Honeycomb...

The tablet runs on the Android 3.0 Honeycomb OS, designed especially for tablet devices, and overall the user interface was remarkably smooth and easy to use, mixing the best of desktop and smartphone designs. The OS sets itself apart from other less rigid interfaces by the sheer amount of information which can be viewed from one screen alongside its unparalleled customisation options. Honeycomb also supports Adobe Flash 10.2 as well as HTML 5, which means that browsing the web on the Eee Pad is tantamount to the best desktop browsing experience you can get.

The Eeepad Transformer is a Wi-Fi only tablet (802.11n), meaning no cellular options are present, which is fine if you have Wi-Fi both at home and work, but can be a hassle if you travel a lot and don't have a Wi-Fi tethering smartphone.

Conclusion

The Asus Eeepad Transformer sports all the bells and whistles of its more famous tablet brethren, with a large display, advanced OS and powerful specs. Unlike its famous counterparts though the Eee Pad won't break the bank, and is actually the cheapest Honeycomb tablet on the market today. A 16 GB EeePad goes for **R4499**, while a 32 GB costs **R5299**. The optional keyboard adds **R1 600** to the price. [JK]

And the specs?

- Android 3.0 Honeycomb
- 10.1" screen, 1280 x 800
- Nvidia's 1 GHz dual-core Tegra 2, 1 GB RAM
- 680 g, 271 x 171 x 12.98 mm
- 16GB / 32GB +
- microUSB + 1 x mini HDMI
- Full review: http://bit.ly/asustransform

$40 million. Supposed price Twitter paid for Tweetdeck.

Huawei IDEOS S7 Slim ›› Enter the tablet market

As more and more tablets are entering the market, it's to be expected that manufacturers will start targeting different market segments with entry-level, midrange and top-end offerings. Chinese company Huawei is gunning for those who have up until now been put off by cost.

As is the case with HTC's Flyer, the S7 Slim is a 7" tablet, providing a lot more screen than a smartphone but without going overboard in size. It also allows for both Wi-Fi and 3G connectivity, with the option to make phone calls, albeit via speakerphone or headset.

Some restrictions

It looks like entry-level tablets are bound by the same restrictions as entry-level smartphones, namely a drop in screen quality and slower processing. For example, pixel count on the S7 Slim is 480 x 800 pixels compared to the Flyer's denser 600 x 1024 pixels, while you also have 256K colours instead of 16 million as on the iPad 2. That said, the S7 Slim offers an enjoyable browsing experience. The tablet also makes use of Qualcomm's 1 GHz Snapdragon QSD8250 processor, but was not as zippy as we expected, most notable when going through large pictures.

Doing the operating is Android 2.2 (Froyo) and once you get past Huawei's user interface and start populating the screens with your own apps, it starts getting fun. Reading books, browsing the net and playing the occasional bout of Angry Birds can quickly become an addictive habit.

> "It's a good deal we think, if you want a smaller tablet to browse with, check your Facebook and emails or for reading on the go."

Personally we've found that we simply don't make that much use of tablets' photo or video capturing capabilities, which on the Huawei are not so strong anyways. But we would have liked to have seen better video playback support on the device, seeing that it cannot play popular .avi or .mkv files.

Conclusion

Although the review may sound a bit critical, it's not meant to deter potential buyers. As is the case with smartphones, the Huawei IDEOS S7 Slim does what you want it to. It is available from MTN at **R179** on MTN Anytime 100 with 150 MB of data for 12 months. [MJ]

And the specs?

- Google Android 2.2.2
- 7" screen, 480 x 800
- 1 GHZ Snapdragon processor, 512 MB RAM
- 500 g, 200 × 109 × 12 mm
- 4 GB + microSD

HTC Flyer ›› Your tablet, now with notes

Tablets just seem so perfect for taking notes via a stylus. We check out HTC's Flyer that can do precisely that.

Just like the Samsung Galaxy Tab, the HTC Flyer provides a very manageable 7" of screen size in a jacket pocket friendly 420 g body. The 7" tablet models are generally a bit more manageable, with a screen size big enough for a good browsing and book reading experience.

Some might say that the Flyer could have been slightly thinner, but at 13.2 mm it's a bit like complaining that Charlize Theron should look more like Kate Moss. Design quality is overall pretty impressive thanks to an aluminium unibody design, but unfortunately the white lid underneath, housing the SIM card and microUSB slots, slightly spoils this. It's a hassle to open and the plastic feel takes away from the overall build quality of the device.

HTC opted to go with a hardcore 1.5 GHz Snapdragon processor and 1 GB of RAM that manages to slice through images, videos, orientation switches and multitasking. What you won't find though is Android 3.0 (Honeycomb) which was specifically designed to work on tablets. Instead it runs Android 2.3.3, heavily customised by HTC's Sense 2.1 for Tablets interface. We liked it, with the 3D transitions for all the different screens looking good while you also have quick access to not only your notifications but also your different settings.

Taking notes with Scribe

Included in the package is a stylus and Scribe software with which you can take notes or annotate websites you come across. It's an easy process to get used to with a little icon at the bottom of the Flyer, to be touched with the tip of the pen to activate your different options such as different pen types (marker, brush, highlighter, etc.), pen sizes and a variety of colours to choose from.

Conclusion

HTC's first entry into the tablet market provides a very decent Android tablet experience due to a zippy processor, 32 GB of onboard storage and both 3G and Wi-Fi present, with of course the Scribe note-taking technology being the clincher. The HTC Flyer retails for **R6360**. [MJ]

And the specs?

- Android 2.3.3
- 7" screen, 600 x 1024
- 1.5 GHz processor, 1 GB RAM
- 420 g, 195 x 122 x 13 mm
- 32 GB + MicroUSB
- Full review: http://bit.ly/flyerhtc

250 000. Motorola Xoom tablets shipped from February – April 2011. 1 million. iPad 2 shipped in 1st weekend of sales.

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Online Gaming – not always fun and games!

Sergey Golovanov, senior malware analyst and non-Intel research group manager, Kaspersky Lab, gives us some tips on staying safe while gaming online.

Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGs) involve the exploration of virtual worlds and quest completion to earn money or experiences, MMORPGs has become an everyday phenomenon with millions of people participating globally.

As a result, the gaming industry has become extremely lucrative and cyber criminals are engaging with gamers in various ways, either luring or direct intrusion – stealing passwords to gain access to accounts, exploiting game vulnerabilities and making use of malware. So what should gamers be aware of and how do these criminals operate?

Online troubles

Gamers pay real money to make use of gaming sites or to gain in-game valuables, and although these valuables are part of the 'virtual world' they have value in the real world. This makes it ever more enticing for hackers, who want these valuables, to resell them, or intercept any money transfers taking place.

Entering the game as a player themselves, cyber criminals can become friends with other gamers and then start offering them advice, or bonuses in exchange for other players' passwords. Another well known method is that of phishing emails, where an email is supposedly sent from the server administrator asking users to authenticate their account via a website link in the message, allowing the cyber criminal to gain access to passwords and account information.

In addition to external exploitations, it is critical to understand that every game has programme vulnerabilities. Through this they are able to gain access to the server database to harvest players' passwords or password hashes. What's more, cyber criminals can then take advantage of in-game player chats, where access to the players' database is gained either manually or by use of a dedicated utility.

Finally, a cyber criminal's last resort is making use of good old fashioned malware. From publishing links to malicious programs via file sharing networks, spam in game or via emails and exploiting site vulnerabilities, using malware to steal passwords is so simple, malicious users make use of this method more often than any other techniques.

Your defence

For gamers, the first line of defence is regularly updating all programmes installed on a computer to prevent penetration of malicious programmes, as well as ensuring they are using an internet security solution by a company that regularly updates malware databases.

If at any time users notice any abnormality in the game, quit and try to re-enter at a later stage. And remember that before even considering logging on to relax and play online, make sure that the PC being used is sufficiently protected, as the consequences can influence more than just the game, but the gamer's personal life!

Canon PIXMA iX6540 ›› A3 all the way

Canon's PIXMA iX6540 printer brings bigger sized printing credentials within reach of the pro-sumer photographer who needs high quality print jobs to be completed in larger formats than the standard A4.

It sure looks the part of a well designed tool, with the iX6540 outfitted with an elegant, all black exterior. Measuring in at 549 × 299 × 159 mm, the printer does annex a fair amount of desk real estate though, but the Canon is an A3 photo printer after all.

Interestingly enough it does not contain an on-printer LCD screen, but we suppose the more discerning photographer would check his/her images on the PC/Mac before printing. Still, there's no USB port nor SD card slot present to quickly print photos from, something that we would have preferred to have had access to. That said, Canon has included its Easy-PhotoPrint EX software, one of the easier printing packages to use and a great improvement over the usual Windows setup.

The Canon boasts a gargantuan output tray, capable of easily catching A3 pages as they leave the unit. It can be neatly folded back to fit snugly inside the printer's interior.

> "A3 photos came out vivid, well saturated and very close to the colour of the original."

Printing performance

Print quality (up to 9600 x 2400 dpi) was excellent, enabling a really good level of detail on printouts. The iX6540 is capable of printing borderless A3 photos which came out vivid, well saturated and very close to the colour of the original. Printing speed is also good, managing a borderless A3 picture on matte photo paper at the highest setting at about four minutes per print. Unfortunately automatic duplex printing isn't offered when printing regular documents. Users in possession of a Canon digital camera or camcorders can capture the best movie frames and send these to be printed thanks to Full HD Movie functionality. You simply play your movie via your PC (using Canon's software) and capture the frames you want to print.

Conclusion

Canon's PIXMA iX6540 is a very impressive printer, able to handle larger sized documents and delivering impressive printing quality. It doesn't boast any all-in-one functionality, but if you only need an A3 printer, this one will do nicely at an RRP of **R2180** [HD].

5 x speedier. Intel's 10 Gbps Thunderbolt port might not have hit the mainstream yet, but its researchers are working on a new 50 Gbps interconnect, to be ready in four years.

Advertorial NVIROMON remote environmental monitoring and control

›› The best protection for your server room

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, airconditioning, 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.

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.

Netshield Monitor One software

The Netshield Monitor One software is a comprehensive SNMP-based management information system, available to remotely monitor and manage the environmental, power, access and fire risk conditions via SNMP communication with all the NVIROMON units connected to the network.

The alerting notifications on the Netshield Monitor One system may be achieved via SNMP trap, email, SMS and or a graphic user interface. The software gives users a graphical representation of a network, allowing for direct monitoring of the remote sites. Alerting notifications are visually shown on the graphic user interface and audible alarms are activated. This system is often used in 24 hour control or call centres.

The Monitor One system can be configured as a web server, allowing monitoring anywhere on the web with a standard web browser. Historic data allows managers to trace a problem back to its root, as well as helping to discover potential problems before they occur.

This system can also be utilised to

The Monitor One software in action

remotely configure the NVIROMON settings over a LAN connection, eg. temperature limits, cellphone numbers and SMS messages. The system can also be used to remotely activate NVIROMON outputs eg. to open doors, activate air-conditioners and switch power on/off.

The Monitor One software package is a once-off additional purchase to the NVIROMON system, and, unlike other software products, there are no monthly license fees involved. For more on the NVIRONMON, contact Netshield on 086-111-4428 or visit **netshieldsa.com**.

HOW ARE YOU PROTECTING YOUR SERVER ROOM?

NVIROMON

NVIROMON is a hardware and software solution that allows easy remote monitoring of the environmental conditions in an IT server room, data centre or other wired facility. No monthly license fee: once off license fee only. The primary environmental conditions monitored typically include:

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- Smoke Detection
- Gas Detection
- Fire Suppression
- Maintenance Free
- Oxygen Displacement
- No Shipping Restrictions
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GRAPHIC PROCESSING UNIT ROUND-UP

AMD VS NVIDIA: GPU FIGHT!

The rivalry between graphics processing unit (GPU) makers Nvidia and AMD is one of the fiercest in the world of tech with both manufacturers want their devices powering your PC's graphics. We introduce the top contenders.

» High-end

At the summit of graphical performance we find Nvidia's GeForce GTX 590 competing against AMD's Radeon HD 6990. The 6990 features 4 GB of GDDR5 RAM, 3 072 stream processors, an 830 MHz core clock speed and a dual-BIOS switch that will also allow users to raise clock speed up to 880 MHz. This monster is quite power-hungry with a minimum of a 375 W PSU required to quench its power thirst. Cooling is supplied by a vapour chamber heatsink with a central blower fan, which can be a tad noisy. Prices range from **R6500** for a Club3D model, all the way up to **R8700** for an Asus version.

Nvidia's dual GPU effort, the GeForce GTX 590, packs 1024 Nvidia CUDA architecture cores and 3 GB of GDDR5 memory, onto a single 11" dual slot monster. It sports a lower graphics clock speed of 607 MHz, but runs quieter as it features a special cooling system and dual vapour chambers. Nvidia claims this GPU measures in at 48 dB on the decibel scale, over two times quieter than its closest competitive product under full graphics load. A Gigabyte version of the card goes for around **R9650**.

So which one is better? When AMD launched its Radeon HD 6990 at the beginning of March, it claimed it was the world's fastest GPU, receiving a score of P11865 in the industry standard 3DMark11 benchmark. When Nvidia released its 590 at the end of March it stated that its new top dog ruled the GPU roost, but didn't give any 3DMark11 scores to back this claim up. Of course AMD called them out on this, and up to now Nvidia has not provided any official scores.

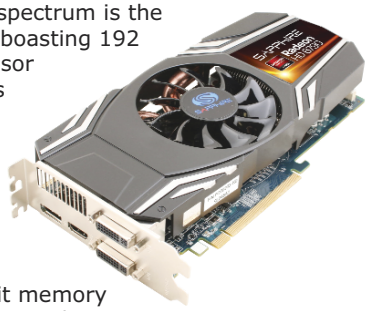
» Mid-range

The mid-range Nvidia GeForce GTX 560 Ti GPU features 384 CUDA cores, an 822 MHz graphics clock, 1 GB of GDDR5 RAM and 1645 MHz processing clock. Pricing kicks off at **R2775** and goes all the way up to **R3700**. AMD's answer to the 560 Ti is the Radeon HD 6870, sporting 1120 Stream Processors, a faster 900 MHz engine clock and 1 GB of GDDR5 memory.

All in all the AMD 6870 offers more bang for your buck, as prices range between **R2200 - R2900**, although the Nvidia 560 Ti does deliver better performance. But for the price of a 560 Ti, you can opt for the 2 GB version of AMD's Radeon HD 6950 sporting twice the GDDR5 RAM that the 560 Ti has.

» Entry-level

In the lower end of the GPU spectrum is the Nvidia GeForce GTX 550 Ti, boasting 192 CUDA cores, 1800 MHz processor clock speed, 900 MHz graphics clock speed and 1 GB of GDDR5. It goes for around **R1600 - R2000**. AMD's Radeon HD 6790 also sports 1 GB of GDDR5 RAM, but with a higher speed 256-bit GDDR5 memory interface, as opposed to the Nvidia's 192-bit memory one. The graphics clock however, is lower running at up to 840 MHz, but is more affordable than its competitor going for under **R1500**. [HD]



TechSmart.co.za online poll results

We asked "Will you be buying the Apple iPad 2?"

- Yes without a doubt! 32%
- Nope, I'm holding out for an Android tablet. 29%
- Tablets are a waste of time. 28%
- I'm rather going for the lower priced original iPad. 6%
- What? I just bought the original one the other day! 5%

We asked "Which will be your next smartphone purchase?"

- Samsung Galaxy SII 26%
- Apple iPhone 5 26%
- BlackBerry Bold 9900 25%
- Sony Ericsson Xperia Play (PlayStation phone) 10%
- HTC Sensation 9%
- Samsung Nexus S 2%
- LG Optimus 3D 2%

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90. Length in minutes of this year's upcoming CGI Tekken movie, named Tekken: Blood Vengeance.

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20 000. Number of songs users of Google's new music service will reportedly be able to store in the cloud.

Moshi Moshi 3i Bluetooth handset ›› The smart handset

Sprucing up your work desk is one thing, but adding both a stylish new piece of kit, and a useful one at that, is an entirely different story.

This is where the MM03i or Moshi Moshi 3i comes in, a contemporary Bluetooth handset with integrated iPhone charging dock. Designed by French designer David Turpin, the Moshi Moshi (which is a Japanese phrase said when answering the phone) gives users the comfort of having a static telephone option while still allowing access to all your iPhone contacts and features.

The device, manufactured from high quality sturdy materials, supports Bluetooth 2.1 multipoint technology, meaning you can pair and answer calls on two different Bluetooth devices. This means users can easily synch their iPhone and any other Bluetooth-enabled devices with the MM03i, even including notebooks for use with VoIP calling services such as Skype. The built-in iPhone dock and charger will ensure that your iPhone is kept charged at all times, simply pitch up at work, mount it on the charger and you'll have an always charging, always on, comfortable calling experience. Available for **R1399** from the Gadget Shop on 012-346-2726.

X-Mini V1.1 ›› I've got the sound in my pocket

We've all been in that situation where you'd like nothing more than to play that new song on your phone to your friends.

The problem is, most phones' sound sucks, and this is where the X-Mini portable speaker comes in. With its so-called "original capsule speaker", manufacturers Xmi Pte seems to have found the magic formula, with its innovative Bass Xpansion System (BXS) delivering a much fuller and more powerful audio experience than we are used to hearing from portable speakers.

Connecting the device to a phone for the first time, we were impressed as this speaker pumps out some incredible decibels.

Cranking both the phone and the speaker's volume up to full we were able to hear the X-Mini clearly, even from adjacent rooms, and with the doors closed. The 52 mm speaker is capable of an output of 2.4 W, weighs a paltry 52 grams with up to 12 hours of playback can be had from a single two hour charging session.

The surprisingly loud X-Mini V1.1 is available for a recommended retail price of **R195** and is available from Edumall at 011-450-4168.

Evetech Six Core Power PC ›› The joy of six

We've all undertaken the journey from single to dual core to, in some cases, quad core processors, with each advancement signalling great strides in processing capability

Now six core processors are becoming the norm for when you need to do some insane multitasking.

You'd normally expect such a computer to cost a fortune, but luckily Evetech has a deal on at the moment where you can get one of these machines for less than the price of most tablets. The computer in question is Evetech's Six Core Power PC, a custom built machine featuring a powerful AMD Phenom 1075T 3.0 GHz six core CPU set on an AMD 880G DDR3 motherboard. Also included in the deal is 4 GB of DDR3 performance gaming RAM and ATI Radeon HD4250 512 MB onboard graphics. Users will also benefit from a 500 GB Seagate HDD, powerful 400W PSU, a 24x dual layer DVD writer and an attractive black case.

*Real tower may differ

This Power PC has been built to deal with heavy CPU workloads such as photo and video editing as well as advanced multitasking and users can also enjoy high definition entertainment on dual monitors. This PC from Evetech (012-653-0033) retails for **R3999** and is customisable on their website at **www.evetech.co.za**.

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AR.Drone

Picture this, you're in one room and you want to see what's going on in another room. Power up your Parrot AR.Drone helicopter and pilot yourself into the perfect position to see exactly what's going on. Do it just by steering your hands while gripping the display of your iPhone or iPod Touch. What could be easier? Now you can do your own reconnaissance right from your couch.

The GADGET Shop

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As the world's smallest Pepper Ball Marker, the Dual Goblin Deuce uses a rechargeable air cartridge. Inter-changeable "barrels" on the air cartridge enable the firing of .68 calibre pepper balls at the velocity of 250 fps. Perfect for ladies' handbags!

Oregon Scientific Digital Rain Gauge

This high-tech wireless rain gauge displays daily rainfall amounts, nine-day historical record and total rainfall. The unit has a high daily rainfall alarm and not only measures but also eliminates collected precipitation via the self-emptying rain collector.

Clap-On Wooden Alarm Clock

Clap-On Wooden Alarm Clock from Kikkerland. Wood veneer with red LED digital time display. Clap your hands to make time appear.

Yukon Spartan Night Vision

Featuring a durable, Rubber Armour body the Yukon NVMT 3x42 Night Vision Monocular is weather resistant and completely capable of being taken off the beaten path.

iMini Cute

iMini is exquisitely cute, smaller in size than a miniature Maltese. It has a sweet and delightful voice, pleasant and smart appearance. iPod / iPhone Docking Station.

Pico Laser Projector

Connect the SHOWWX laser pico projector to an Apple iPod, laptop, MacBook or other compatible device to project photos, movies and more up to 2.5m in size in a dark room.

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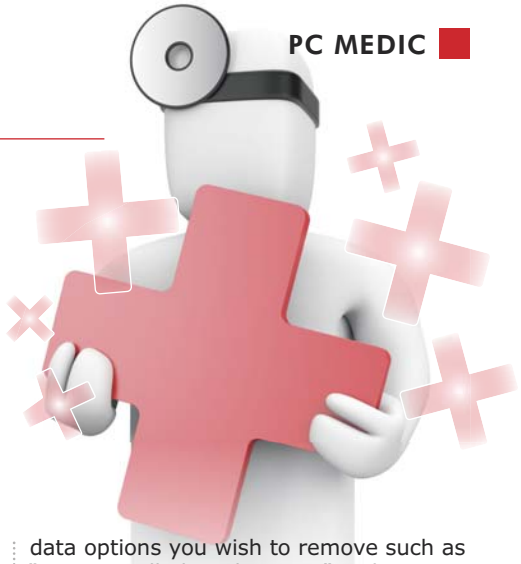
$153.3 billion. Est. valuation of Apple's brand value, an year-on-year increase of 84%, meaning it overtook Google, becoming the world's most valuable global brand.

PC Medic ›› First aid for your PC



Some say that he hacked the PlayStation Network just by logging in and that he can actually see past the singularity. All that we know is that he's our PC Medic, and he's here to answer your PC related queries.

Q Hello PC Medic. I invested in a terabyte external drive last year and was amazed at how quickly I could fill it up with movies, series and music. I have noticed however that I have many duplicates (particularly movies) that unnecessarily take up space. Is there software I can use to find and delete these copies? Allen Ginsberg.

A Hey Allen. You can download software such as Duplicate File Remover (DFR, 2.51 MB) from **http://cnet.co/deletecopies** and DupeRazor Duplicate Files Removal Kit (3.24 MB) at **http://cnet.co/getduperazor**. Both are easy to use and work well, but just take note that these are 30 day free trial versions of the software, while DFR will only enable you to delete up to 100 duplicate files. When their trail periods expire you have to purchase the full version, so be quick.

Q What's up PC Medic. I have recently upgraded my cellphone contract and am getting a new BlackBerry Bold 9780. I want to give my old BlackBerry Bold 9700 to my little sister and was wondering how to go about removing all of my personal data from it, before I hand it over to her. Carmen Wehr.

A Hi Carmen, you simply perform a security wipe by going to "Options" in the main menu and selecting "Security Options", followed by "Security Wipe". Next you simply tick off all the available data options you wish to remove such as "User Installed Applications" and "Emails, Contacts, etc." and type the word "blackberry" in the provided space to confirm the wipe. Click on "Wipe" and your smartphone will do the rest.

Send your questions to info@techsmart.co.za

» Tips for Windows 7: Saving time within Windows 7

If you always have a plethora of windows open, such as your browser, Word, Outlook, Excel and photo editing software, then there's a few ways to quickly move between these in Windows 7. By pressing the "Windows" key along with the "Tab" key, you will be able to scroll through a 3D-esque presentation of all your open windows dubbed "Aero Flip", enabling you to quickly glance at each window by pressing the "Tab" key.

Unfortunately you require Windows 7 Home Premium, Professional, Ultimate, and Enterprise editions to make use of it. No luck? You can still employ the tried and tested "Alt" + "Tab" combination.

Jargon Busters ›› June 2011

Near field communication (NFC)

Near field communication (NFC) is a short-range wireless communication technology which enables the wireless transfer of data of distances over 4 cm or less. The technology, which can be incorporated into smartphones or wallets, can be used to both read and write data and is already in use in countries such as Japan, South Korea and certain places in Europe, usually for mass transport transactions such as subway fares. NFC has a lot of practical applications, from buying groceries with the swipe of your smartphone to transferring pictures from your NFC-enabled camera to your NFC-enabled TV. The Google Nexus S (p9) contains NFC technology, with the company's previous CEO, Eric Schmidt stating that NFC should "revolutionize electronic commerce as well as payments".

Chiclet-style keyboard

This is a term that comes up fairly often in some of our notebook reviews, since Chiclet-styled keyboards are making a comeback. Chiclet keyboards have been with us since the early days of computing and refers to a keyboard or keypad with an array of small, rectangular rubber or plastic keys shaped like "Chiclets", a brand of chewing gum sporting small squares with rounded corners (just like a Stimorol). In addition to the rounded corners, chiclet keys also have spacing surrounding each individual key, giving your fingers a bit more room to effectively navigate the keyboard, unlike the traditional style that sometimes feels a bit cramped.

Form factor

In traditional computing terminology, form factor refers to the physical dimensions of system components, with more modern systems usually becoming smaller. Today the term is much more common in the sphere of consumer electronics and mobile devices though. The most common smartphone form factor found today looks a lot like the iPhone, with a large touch-screen taking up most of the space, with maybe a button or two below. This so called 'slate' (pictured left) design relies on a touch-screen for input. Other popular examples include the 'candybar'(pictured middle) design, with the display and keys on one face. A 'flip' or 'clamshell' (pictured right) design on the other hand has the display and keypad connected by hinges, creating a flip out dynamic as popularised by the Motorola RAZR a few years back.

Guiness World Record. Allocated to LG for making the 1st smartphone powered by a dual-core processor (LG Optimus 2X).

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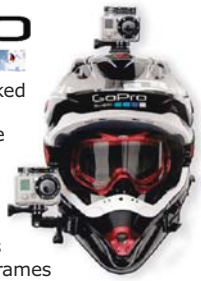

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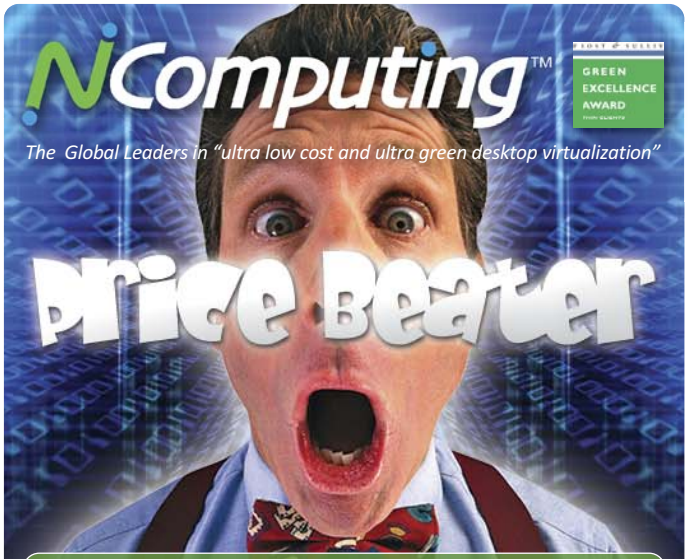

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Mango. Codename for the Windows Phone 7.5 update, bringing 500 new improvements along with it. Nothing to do with Apple or BlackBerry.

Samsung FORUM 2011
KICC, Nairobi, 11-15 May
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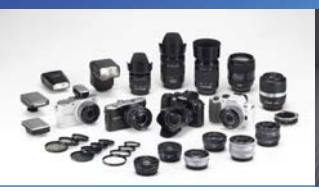

Samsung recently hosted its Africa Forum 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya. The event showcased the Korean brand's latest products, giving journalists from around Africa the opportunity to interact with the latest products. Here are our top choices from the Forum.

Samsung Series 9 notebook

First spotted at CES 2011 held earlier this year in Vegas, the Series 9 notebook should grace our shores soon. Powered by Intel's second generation Core processors and equipped with a 128 GB Solid State Drive for speedier performance, the Series 9 starts up in a mere 15 seconds (confirmed by us). But it's also the notebook's cool design that's a show stopper. Using lightweight duralumin in the enclosure, the flowing curves of the 900X3A weighs a mere 1.31 kg while measuring 16.3 mm when closed.

Samsung Galaxy SII

We actually spent time with the highly anticipated Galaxy SII, not initially believing claims of its 8.5 mm body. But yes, it's true, the SII is actually wafer-thin, about the same height as four matches stacked on top of each other. Check p7 for more.

Smart TVs

Forget 3D, the major benefit for couch potatoes is the fact that television, like most other devices, is getting connected to the internet. It's not a new phenomenon, televisions have been able to this for a few years. The big difference now is how quickly it is to set up. A Wi-Fi dongle is integrated into Samsung's more exclusive series, allowing you to quickly and easily connect to your home router. Samsung of course also has a number of apps available to download specifically for television, integrating Facebook, Twitter and Flickr alongside a regular web browser. But we wish streaming service such as Netflix (movies) and Pandora (music) were being made available locally.

Built for Africa

It was not just all about high-end devices. Samsung's "Built for Africa" strategy was also on display, with a number of products developed that take into account challenges faced by the African continent. For example Samsung's range of dual-SIM cellphones allows users to quickly swop networks either for reception or call costs, while there's also a new energy saving phone with standby battery life that stretches up to 25 days. It's a new solar powered netbook though that got our clock ticking, claiming one hour of operation for every two hours charged in the sun. [MJ]

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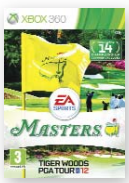

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12: The Masters – *Xbox 360*
http://bit.ly/tigergolf
The Tiger might not be World No1 anymore, but his pixelated golfing game is still top notch. We take out our scorecard after walking the virtual greens.

Pokemon White – *Nintendo DS*
http://bit.ly/pokwhite
Pokemon White brings along a new region and a lot of new Pokemon. It proves that Pokeman is still the premier series for the Nintendo DS.

Pilotwings Resort – *Nintendo 3DS*
http://bit.ly/lotwings
We take to the sky with Pilotwings Resort, a fun and solid flying game with remarkably addictive game-play elements, brought to life thanks to the 3DS.

WWE All Stars – *PS3*
http://bit.ly/wwealls
THQ serves up a wrestling hit filled with nostalgia that will have you doing battle with your favourite past and present WWE wrestlers. A hit for WWE fans of all generations.

Need for Speed: Shift 2 Unleashed – *Xbox 360*
http://bit.ly/nfshift2
The original Shift was one of our favourite racing titles and now Shift 2 brings along new racing modes, a helmet cam and some excellent online options.

Marvel vs Capcom 3 – *PS3*
http://bit.ly/marvcap

While Marvel vs Capcom 3's frantic combat and over-the-top visuals may be a bit overwhelming at first, the game's charms quickly draws you in, making it impossible to put the controller down before playing just that one last match.

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Android Apps of the month

With over 100 000 apps available for Android smartphones at the Android Market, TechSmart helps you to get to the good ones first!

LauncherPro

If you don't like your phone's current interface, try installing LauncherPro. It allows you to change the way your interface works, giving you access for example to different transition effects when scrolling through your different homepages, settings for your dock (the little icons on the bottom of your screen), or for example what your Home key does when pressed. It changed the way we use our phone, for the better. it can be uninstalled, see below.

World Newspapers

News hungry Android fans will adore this app, seeing that it conveniently brings together all the world's best news websites into one location. No more trying to locate news via your browser, simply select your country and you'll find links to all the most NB sources personalised for your android phone.

Want more? You can also find links to magazine sites as well as news videos.

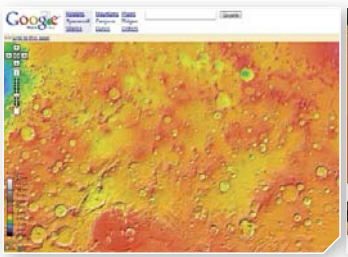
Evernote

As more and more people make use of smartphones, notebooks and tablets, having access to important data across all devices is becoming very important. Evernote is essentially a note taking app, but allows for so much more. You can save text from webpages, voice recordings or photos, with Evernote even making text inside pictures searchable (our success with this was not too good). Notes are synced in the cloud and you can then access all your notes online.

» Top Android Tip

So you don't like the app or simply don't use it as often as you thought. How to get it off your phone? Press "Settings" > "Applications"> "Manage Applications". Click on the app you want deleted and tap "Uninstall".

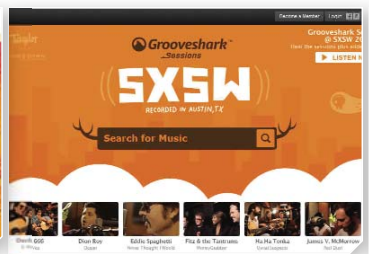
Web Time Wasters



www.google.com/mars

Google Mars

If you thought Google Earth was an impressive demonstration of what the internet can do, then Google Mars will take your breath away. With it you gain a birds-eye view of the red planet from your web browser, a truly amazing feat. The images come from the Mars Global Survey and Mars Odyssey spacecraft, both in orbit around our red-tinted neighbour. An infrared imaging feature allows users to peer through the Martian dust clouds, while a colour-coded elevation map and landmark tracker adds even more to the experience.



http://grooveshark.com

Grooveshark

Why pirate when you can stream? Grooveshark is a free online music streaming website (and one of the few working in SA) allowing users to listen to a massive collection of music online. Unlike other sites Grooveshark depends on its users to upload content, and since benefiting from thousands of members uploading music from all genres, it has one of the most complete music libraries on the net. Anyone can register a standard Grooveshark account for free and start listening right now. A strong internet service is required.

www.seriouseats.com

Serious Eats

Serious Eats is dedicated to supplying the online community with the best in recipes, videos, blogs and restaurant reviews. The site's mouthwatering design along with its casual feel makes it a great place to look for recipes, whether it's a complex new dish or advice on making a McDonald's Big Mac a bit tastier. The site also benefits from cookbook writers and chefs supplying it with delicious recipes. If you're looking for a new culinary adventure, be it Strawberry Campari Tart or simply "30 ways to upgrade your instant noodles", Serious Eats has you covered.

http://bit.ly/zagator

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If you've always dreamt of managing your own website, but have been too daunted by the technical aspects and time investment required, a new solution may be found in the form of **CoZaGator.co.za**. Here users can register their own domain names by completing a simple online form. The domain will immediately be registered at the registrar, with no additional knowledge or technical experience required. Users will only be responsible for the annual domain renewal fee of R50, with no other costs incurred.

20 million. Number of Facebook applications installed on a daily basis.

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C682BR R416

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C318BR R433

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C818BR R567

Terminator Case

0.5mm SECC structure with black coating interior
420W Premiumsun PSU W/ 3xMolex 3xSATA
3 x 5.25" Bays 5 x 3.5" Bays
2 x Front USB & Audio
12cm side color fan with shell type cover
8cm Front(Optional) & 8cm Rear fan

Interior View

Face Case

Terminator Case

0.6mm SECC structure with black coating interior
No PSU (Bottom placement power supply with removable filter)
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Top 5: Gaming winter warmers

With 2011 already at the halfway mark we decided to take a look at some of the most anticipated gaming titles to warm your heart this winter.

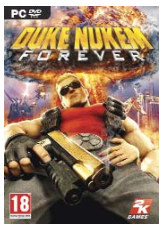
1. L.A. Noire ›› PS3, Xbox 360 – Available now

Rockstar's much hyped detective adventure should be available by the time you read this, and from initial reviews the game looks to be one of the year's best. As LAPD detective Cole Phelps, players are thrown into 1947 Los Angeles, a city glimmering in the post-war boom, yet facing increasing amounts of corruption, drug abuse and gang influence.

Throughout the game players are tasked with solving a variety of crimes as they climb the LAPD's ladder to success, from suspicious traffic accidents to corruption within the department and even a string of mysterious real life murders that remains unsolved to this day.

The game introduces players to a never before seen level of realism and character expression, with state-of-the-art motion scan technology used to perfectly recreate thousands of pre-acted scenes. The game also features Rockstar's massive game worlds, with the entire city of LA painstakingly crafted in digital format.

2. Duke Nukem Forever ›› PC, PS3, Xbox 360 – 10 June 2011



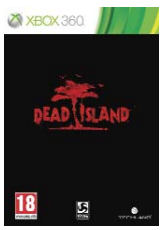
After numerous false starts and delays, the one and only Duke Nukem is returning to gamers' screens this year in the much delayed Duke Nukem Forever. Or so we hope. The first Duke game to hit the scene since 1996's Duke Nukem 3D, Gearbox Software's new title looks set to continue in the humorous, cocky and macho footsteps of its predecessors.

Duke again has to stop an Alien invasion, periodically pausing to ogle at strippers while drinking beer. The game makes no secret of this fact, parodying a lot of the classic action movie stereotypes while delivering a no nonsense action-packed shooter experience. Filled with saucy, and sometimes borderline content (capture the babe multiplayer mode), this game should appeal to the 80's action hero deep inside us all.

3. Deus Ex: Human Revolution ›› PC, PS3, Xbox 360 – 26 August 2011

Deus Ex: Human Revolution, the latest title from Eidos Montreal, will be set as a prequel to the original game, taking place in 2027, allowing players to explore the murky world of mechanical augmentations and body modifications which gives the user enhanced abilities. This time players will take on the role of Adam Jensen, a security specialist hired to oversee the defence of one of the most prominent biotechnology companies in the world. While faster paced than previous iterations, Human Revolution still seeks to maintain a link between shooters and RPG style exploration, with advanced character choices available, and the ability to concentrate on social skills and trickery instead of simply mowing everyone down.

4. Dead Island ›› PC, PS3, Xbox 360 – Q3 2011



After having wowed the world with its heart stirring (and disturbing) cinematic trailer (**http://bit.ly/zomisland**), Dead Island has become one of the hottest properties on this year's gaming calendar, even though it reuses the old zombie premise. Unlike other ammunition spewing undead shooters, Dead Island aims to take gamers on a much scarier, and "true to life" zombie experience, if that makes sense. The game takes place on the fictional resort island of Banoi, but instead of enjoying a relaxing holiday, players are forced to utilise anything to survive.

5. Infamous 2 ›› PS3 – 10 June 2011

This year also sees gamers returning to the world of Infamous, toting Cole McGrath's handy electric abilities as they attempt to uncover the truth behind the Ray Sphere and defeat "The Beast". A follow-up to 2009's surprise hit, the PlayStation 3 exclusive sports updated graphics, a new and larger open-world map and even new powers for Cole to experiment with. A good and evil path will open to players again, leading to different storyline endings and newfound powers, with Cole capable of controlling fire or ice, depending on which path he chooses. Telekinesis powers will also be introduced as players battle to uncover the vile and mind-bending narrative. [JK]

Bubbling under the surface

F.E.A.R 3 – Continuing the story of the demented Alma and her offspring, the third iteration will introduce a number of new gameplay elements as well as taking the story to an even darker, creepier level.

Dungeon Siege III – With the world of fantasy role playing games undergoing a revival in recent years, DS3 will return players to the Kingdom of Ehb in an epic story that's sure to keep veteran adventurers busy for ages.

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time – Link's amazing adventures have since seen numerous reiterations over the years, but the 3DS one, to feature touch-screen item control and gyroscope aided aiming alongside 3D graphics, is set to be one of its greatest yet.

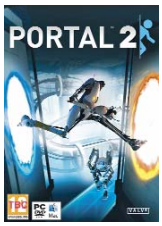
Resistance 3 – The third iteration of this PS3 exclusive will go deeper into the story behind the Chimeran Alien invasion and subsequent occupation.

The Witcher 2 – Based on the novel series of the same name, the Witcher 2 will again see players take on the role of Geralt, one of the last remaining witchers as he battles unnatural monsters as well as his own morality.

1.2 billion+. Number of hours that gamers have logged by the 9th of May 2011, whilst playing Call of Duty: Black Ops online.

Portal 2 ›› For science... you monster

With its unique style of gameplay, quirky characters and hilarious moments, the first Portal quickly embedded itself in the collective gamer consciousness. Now Valve is taking us back to the testing chambers in Portal 2, with brand new characters and puzzles.



In Portal 2 we find ourselves once again waking up in the bowels of Aperture Laboratories, a company which will put any mad scientist to shame. Soon we're discovered by Wheatley, a humorous and bungling AI, and due to an unfortunate string of errors, Wheatley accidentally reactivates the facility's sinister AI caretaker GLaDOS. As her huge mechanical body rose from the rubble strewn floor, we saw GLaDOS slowly turning her gaze on us, and as her iconic robotic voice chimed in for the first time we felt goosebumps spreading down our necks. When GLaDOS quickly retook control of the facility the terrified Wheatley fled for his life, and we were left to take on her tests alone, with not even a companion cube for comfort.

Still Alive

Portal 2 continues its predecessor's innovative use of the Portal gun, capable of placing two interlinked portals on certain surfaces. These

> "As her iconic robotic voice chimed in for the first time we felt goosebumps spreading down our necks."

"gateways" allow players to move themselves and objects in the world between them, allowing you to traverse impassable drops or launch yourself through the air at high speed. The portal gun is your sole armament throughout the game, but it's by far the most useful, and arguably the most powerful gun in gaming history.

A ton of new variables appear throughout Portal 2, from laser beams to light bridges to tractor beams and colourful globular gels, all used to solve the game's insane test chambers in some of the most innovative displays of gameplay we've ever seen. The first game's adorable yet lethal turret bots also return, prepared to pump you full of lead in some of the more dangerous tests.

Co-op

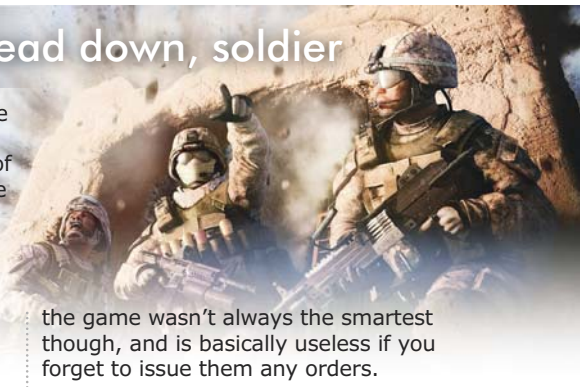
And even when you've completed the exhilarating campaign, Portal 2 keeps going by delivering a full co-op mode. Here players experience a different storyline, playing as the robots P-Body and Atlas. Solving puzzles with friends is a highly enjoyable experience, and thanks to Valve's Steam platform players can now even enjoy co-op play between the PC and PS3.

Conclusion

Portal 2 eloquently delivers a sophisticated mix of addictive mechanics, innovative gameplay, witty banter and of course mind-bending puzzles, requiring you to dust off and use the old noggin for a bit. [JK]

Full review:
http://bit.ly/portreview

Operation Flashpoint: Red River ›› Keep your head down, soldier



Codemasters' Operation Flashpoint series is known for delivering a more authentic portrayal of war than your standard game, with realistic distances, squad commands and damage that may see you dropping to the floor simply by sticking your head out too far.

In Red River we follow the story of a squad of US marines deployed to combat insurgents in Tajikistan. At first the mission seems fairly straightforward, but things quickly go haywire when bordering China sends forces into the country. As the two superpowers start beating their chests at each other, neither side refuses to back down, resulting in a conflict which may hold far reaching consequences for the rest of the world.

Gameplay

The first time we entered into combat we tried applying some CoD skills just to see what would happen, sprinting forward and zig-zagging to try and get closer to the enemy. We were on the ground before we could aim down the sight. Instead players will need to constantly be aware of their environment, always seeking out the next cover spot and not blindly sprinting around corners. For the most part battles also take place at much more realistic distances, with soldiers exchanging fire and ducking back into cover.

> "We tried applying some CoD skills just to see what would happen. We were on the ground before we could aim down the sight."

To prevail in these demanding situations players need to make smart use of their squad. As leader of fireteam Bravo you have three AI controlled squad mates under your control. Pressing RB and utilising the D-pad brings up a menu through which orders can be issued. This can include basic commands such as holding position or regrouping, in addition to more advanced combat tactics such as ordering a flanking manoeuvre. The AI in the game wasn't always the smartest though, and is basically useless if you forget to issue them any orders.

Co-op

Luckily the Red River experience is much improved when playing with real humans, supporting drop-in-drop-out co-op with up to four players, enabling you and your friends to create a much deadlier fireteam Bravo. Playing as one of four different classes, each players' abilities enhances the effectiveness of the squad, with the rifleman, autogunner, grenadier and scout classes available for play.

Conclusion

Operation Flashpoint: Red River delivers a realistic combat experience, with all the weapons and equipment you've grown to know and love, except this time around players need to utilise a bit of tactical sense to come out on top. [JK]

Full review:
http://bit.ly/riverred

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