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You will pay for that

I was tempted to use the headline “Piracy is dead” for this column, but it’s become such a common usage by journalists these days, that it seemed a little clichéd.

Back when it started, this magazine grew popular, in part, because it exposed you to tonnes of new software that were too painful to download. It was also a lot harder to find “cracks” for software online back then. However, some industrious fans put up a site called Crack Digit, which was dedicated to finding and providing keygens and serials for all the popular trials and shareware we provided in our CDs. Of course, worried about being blamed for spreading piracy in India, we started promoting open source software, and succeeded in bringing a few of you back from the dark-side.

I remember huge companies – Microsoft, Adobe, etc. – screaming bloody murder, and denouncing piracy to be as evil as Satan, and claiming that piracy was costing them more than they were already worth. Then there was the MPAA and RIAA, and over the last decade we’ve all heard the stories of little kids and grandmas being dragged to court and humiliated. Tall claims were made, and the rich cried “Foul!” as Napster, Audio Galaxy, and much later, KaZaA and Bit Torrent were blamed for putting recording industry executives in the poor house. Apparently the poor in the west live in multi-million dollar mansions, drive Lamborghinis and own private jets; but that’s a rant for another time.

It was only last year that the US government did a study and admitted that the MPAA and RIAA had bloated piracy reports way beyond proportion, and actual piracy or “losses” as they put it, were significantly lower. So basically they lied; of course it was all blamed on “human error”.

Living in India, we’re so used to piracy, it’s really no big deal. Actually, if you’ve noticed, it’s even less of a deal these days. At one time the news was flooded with reports of raids and arrests of pirates. These days, when people talk about pirates, they mean the AK-47 toting Somali kind. We’ve come full circle, haven’t we?

The fact is that piracy (in the technology sense, not the Somali sense) is dying a slow death – even here in India.

Before you dash off incredulous but anonymous letters to me, stating that I’m going senile, and sending me screen-

shots as proud evidence of your desire to wear an eye patch, humour me a little.


Open up that RSS feed reader or visit your favourite technology news site, and scan through the news. All you’re likely to see is Apple this, Google that, Android the other, apps, apps and more apps. Of course there will be generous sprinklings of 3D, LED TVs, Blu-ray, gaming consoles, and a whisper of Intel, Microsoft and the rest.

A few years ago, Microsoft started cashing in on the shift from desktops to laptops. Bundling the OS with the device made them billions, and gave us all a (gasp!) *licensed* version of Windows that needed no special tricks to connect to Windows Update! Thus started the conversion; however, laptops are still bulky and that’s why we’re all slowly shifting to mobiles now. That’s Apple’s and Google’s domain though.

The proof is in the GPU growth figures from companies such as NVIDIA and ATI – GPUs in 2009 saw about a 10 per cent growth, and even conservative estimates pegged the 2010 story to be close to 25 per cent growth in sales. In reality, reports suggest that the GPU market grew by a mere 3 or 4 per cent.

What’s happened now is that technology is inching ahead of us again. Just as it was almost impossible to download a movie over a dial-up connection a decade ago, it’s insane to try and download a 3D Blu-ray rip over our current connections. So we go to the theatre, and pay to watch movies in 3D.

We’ve stopped complaining about music prices too, because they’re just cheap little downloads for your phone. “Software” as we know it is niche already – unless you mean “Mobile apps”, because those are crazy popular now, and don’t cost an arm or a leg anyway.

Gradually, we’re being shifted away from large screen computing to small screen devices; from big bloated software that cost a fortune to small, single feature apps that cost a pittance; from OSes that try to do everything to those that do very little, but do it well, and open up possibilities to developers to add functionality to your phone. The end of piracy approaches, as does the end of popular computing as we know it! 



Robert Sovereign-Smith
Executive Editor
editor@thinkdigit.com

“The fact is that piracy (in the technology sense, not the Somali sense) is dying a slow death – even here in India.”

Liked or hated the views in this column? Write in to me and express your own opinions and ideas.

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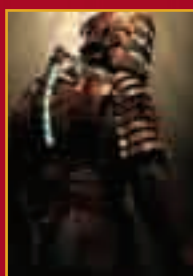
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Sleek and stylish, but far from perfect



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A decent offering for a specific type of user



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Nine Dot Nine Interactive Pvt Ltd
Kakson House, 2nd Floor, A & B Wing,
80, Sion Trombay Road, Opposite RK Studio,
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(Signature of Publisher)

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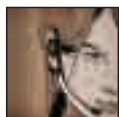
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✉ I've read all your Fast Tracks from the year 2010. One thing I want to say is that most of the Fast Tracks contain very simple topics, which are available in any books related to that topic. I did not find any Fast Track which had very advanced information about the topic. Last time I bought Fast Track to Java, I found that there is nothing for me. It all contains very very basic information about all topics. Please do rectify. Also, another request – could you have a Fast Track on Networking Programming? Thanks.

Suresh Dubey

d Thanks for writing in. The philosophy behind Fast Tracks is that they are in fact meant to be basic. They're supposed to take someone who is curious about a particular topic, from a beginner to a decent level in the subject. However, we do come out with advanced Fast Tracks every now and then, in which case we label them that way. For example it could be Fast Track to Advanced Photoshop etc. As for the topic you have suggested, we will take it under consideration and add it to our idea repository.

Nash

✉ I have sent many emails to you before but this one is truly heartfelt, because it is the first time that I tasted success thanks to you guys. This week I had to give a small five minute speech on upcoming technology without any prior preparation. Your article on CES 2011 helped me and I got a big round of applause. Thank you Team Digit. Now I have been given the responsibility of creating a website for our school. So I want some tips on how to take inputs from web pages and store the same in a database. Please can you provide a Fast Track on Web Designing in the future? This month's Fast Track on .Net was so useful for me. Thank you again for your good work. Finally, I have a few suggestions for you.

1. Please also include software reviews beside your regular hardware reviews.
2. Please change the interface of your DVD in such a way so that the videos and trailers that you provide can play within the DVD interface and not in a media player.

Ayan Sarkar



d It's great to know we were able to help you out of a jam, but in the end it was your quick thinking that helped you. A Fast Track to Web Designing is something worth considering and we will surely discuss it at our next edit meeting. Your suggestions are also valid. Expect some more Software reviews in next month's issue of Digit. As for the DVD, you'll be surprised to know that we're working on it and this is one of the things that we're trying to incorporate.

Nimish

✉ This is with reference to 'Why Indians Don't Buy Online?' article in the Feb 2011 issue of Digit. The author has rightly pointed out why online selling is not working in India. However, the author has missed one very crucial reason: Being cheated by the Vendors.

I have been purchasing online for quite some years now. And like all Indians, I like a good bargain. Though most of my purchases have been worth it, there have been a handful of cases where I felt I was cheated by the vendor. I find in India most online vendors are only interested in making a quick buck. Taking advantage of the fact that the customer cannot see the actual product, many times they show posters/photos

of good quality products, but send cheap Chinese or locally made low-quality duplicates. Quite a few times, the packages I've received have had neither an MRP nor the manufacturer's address. I've had a bad experience with a vendor on eBay.in, where he initially sent me a low quality product, which when I returned, he sent me a replacement which was of much better quality than the earlier item. My guess is that this vendor regularly sends products of cheap quality, and sends the actual high-quality product only when people complain/return the original product. And these would be very few as most people would not want to go through the hassle of re-packaging the product and couriering it back (at their own cost), especially if the product is not a very costly one. My wife keeps telling me to stop purchasing online, but I can't help myself, whenever I see a good bargain.

So nowadays I do not buy from sites like eBay, or Indiaplaza, where there are many different vendors under one roof, so to speak. I prefer buying from sites where the site is itself the vendor of the product. This way, I'm sure of the quality of the product, as the site owner's name, fame and reputation is at stake.

Sunil Suresh

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LePad coming in mid-2011

Lenovo's tablet-cum-netbook device called LePad will most likely ship in June or July this year

Fuji Finepix J40 launched

Fujifilm India launched the Finepix J40, an affordable 12MP camera that's just 20mm thick

d Thank you for sharing your experience with us. Though we're pretty much in agreement with you, we feel the situation with vendor-based market places too is improving slightly with every passing year. The only way this problem will ever completely go away, is possibly when user-maintained reporting and reviewing systems become better. Also, users should take the effort to give negative rep to the vendor concerned.

Sambhav

CORRIGENDUM

In the Bazaar section (Page 65) the website for Samsung Wave 525 should be read as www.samsung.com/in/

In the Bazaar section (Jan 2011, Page 96) the price for Sparkle GTX 580 communicated to us at the time of printing was ₹31,000. The correct price is ₹42,000 as was recently communicated.

✉ I am a regular reader of your magazine and am very interested in smartphones and the technology surrounding them. My area of interest are smartphones running on the Windows mobile OS. But unfortunately I could not find much content on this new OS in your February issue and its top apps. I know the Android and Symbian phones are quite popular, but you should also cover Windows Phone 7 OS.

K Shabeeb

d February issue was a smartphone special and we did touch up on some finer aspects smartphone operating systems. Windows Phone 7 based OSes have only recently started flooding the Indian market. As for older iterations of Windows Mobile, even the relatively recent versions viz. 6.1 and 6.5 are pretty much on their way out. Sorry, but we just felt there were no takers amongst our readers. Android and Symbian were more in demand. In any case we have reviewed the HTC HD7, a phone based on the Windows Phone 7 OS this month. We will surely cover the Phone 7 OS in the coming months, as we get to play with it.

Sambhav

LETTER OF THE MONTH

✉ I have been buying Digit since 1998. I used to choose between Digit and other magazines depending on who had the most hardware coverage. But lately I decided to go steady with Digit as you published the Zeitgeist, not once, but twice. That decision could not have been a mistake. This month, the article on the Venus Project made me sit up and forced me to send this message to you.

Zeitgeist Part 1 was okay. It seems to me that the powers that be, contacted the producers, twisted their arms, and forced them create a Part 2, the Zeitgeist Addendum. If the 9/11 attacks were part of a plan for a global government (or dictatorship), then the bogus resource-based economy model also calls for a global government.

There has to be somebody who will implement this model on all humanity. If all resources belong to everyone, then how is it different from Communism, which was like Fascism, a movement funded by Wall Street globalists? The makers of Zeitgeist have been co-opted. They are compromised. They are not the same fearless bunch they were when they created Part 1.

Your writer did the correct thing by asking a JNU professor and bringing some balance into the article. The article did seem out of place in a tech publication but I wouldn't question your right to publish it. If you are in the market for advocacy, I recommend putting the No Agenda Show podcasts

by tech columnist John C Dvorak and former MTV VJ Adam Curry. Although, I have some doubts about them too, it was from their podcasts that I learned that a lot of our vaccines today have mercury and that the WHO was also trying to use Aluminium if mercury was banned as a preservative.

V Subhash

d I don't necessarily agree completely with everything that all the activists have to say, or even with all the ideas that people have, but I do think it's important to expose Digit's rather large readership to new ideas, and get people thinking. In India, we often suffer from the "I'm just one person, what can I accomplish?" syndrome, which needs to end.

If there's one thing we should take from the West, it's that sense of righteousness that every normal citizen exhibits. That's the only reason why I featured any of those - Zeitgeist, Venus project, and The Yes Men. I'll look into whether we can arrange for the No Agenda Show podcasts to be included on the DVD. Also you'll be delighted to find John C. Dvorak's articles in the World View section and Zeitgeist 3 on the DVD.

If I can get even 100 readers to start thinking about subjects like these with the clarity of thought that you already display, I'll consider my attempts to be successful.

Robert

✉ I am an avid reader of your magazine. I have been reading Digit for about two years. I must say that I truly enjoy in reading your magazine. But the contents that you give in your DVDs are not as impressive. You should provide some good full-length games rather than just demos of the games. I have no complaints about the tools you give, but there should be more trailers of up-coming games and unboxing videos. Rest all is fine. Keep up the good work!

Aindrasis Gupta

d Thank you for writing to us with your valuable feedback. Although, we try to give trailers of the latest games on our DVDs, it's not always possible to accommodate full games of the latest titles as they are copyright protected. Besides, reader preferences keep varying and we try to cater to the needs of as many readers as we can. We will certainly try our best to fulfil your expectations from us in the future issues of Digit. Keep writing in to us.

Sambhav



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Budget networking

Facebook has partnered with Snaptu, presenting a Facebook app for low-end handsets

'Personal' videos

YouTube has given its homepage a snugger fit, with "personally relevant" content

Sony Gameplay: NGP

Sony has finally announced the PSP2, calling it the "Next Generation Portable" device (NGP). With the NGP, Sony looks to offer the "ultimate portable entertainment" using some killer hardware and cross-platform software.

The PSP2 is packed with a quad-core ARM Cortex-A9 processor, dual analog sticks, front and rear cameras, dual rear touchpads, a high-resolution 960x544 pixel 5-inch OLED capacitive touchscreen, accelerometer/gyroscope (courtesy the PS Move controller), digital compass, GPS, and yes, both 3G and Wi-Fi connectivity.

Game developers such as Capcom, Konami, Epic Games, Tecmo Koei and Sega also likened it to the PlayStation 3 console in terms of graphics. Game titles include *Resistance*, *Killzone*, *Little Big Planet*, *Uncharted*, *Metal*

GearSolid, *Monster Hunter*, *Dynasty Warriors*, and more.

With a touchscreen, rear touchpads, and dual analog sticks in tow, the Next Generation Portable will certainly be offering a surfeit of input/interface options. The PSP2's menu UI is a heavily customised Android 2.3 interface with navigable homescreens, and in-built location-based social-networking called LiveArea.



Sony plans to release the NGP only by the end of the year ("holiday" season) and much of that time remaining will be spent concentrating on creating the device's hardware-agnostic platform and library of game titles that will be called the PlayStation Suite. **[d]**

Android Market finally gets a web store

The Android Market has finally joined the rest of the other major platform-owned mobile app stores (from Ovi to Apple to BlackBerry) by launching a web version of the store – market.android.com. Now users have the opportunity to download Android Market applications on the web.

In addition to a clean interface, the app download process is pretty straightforward – pay if required via Google Checkout, choose your device, click install, and the app arrives over-the-air.

All this makes web access of the Android Market a definite boon for those not in Wi-Fi areas, or those lacking or not wanting to use their mobile GPRS/EDGE or 3G connectivity.

But, the uncertain and sometimes expensive nature of mobile data usage/connectivity is not the only reason for the creation of a web mobile app store. App dis-

covery is much easier on larger screens, there are numerous advantages for the app developers themselves.

Google has also announced some other long-awaited benefits to developers, introducing in-app purchases and thereby opening up a world of add-on content, promotion and cross-promotion – monetarily



exciting for developers, even those creating free applications. Developers will also be able to offer their apps across various markets in different currencies, and so avoid the rough, unrounded numbers common with currency conversions. **[d]**

Nvidia GT 440 and GTX 560 Ti

Nvidia has updated its desktop graphics card lineup with two new Fermi-derived GPUs: the GeForce GTX 560 Ti and GeForce GT 440.

The 560 Ti, sitting square in between the AMD Radeon HD 6950 and the HD 6870, has prompted some decisive wran-



gling in the \$200 to \$300 GPU segment, with AMD's two new variants to balance the competition. Priced at \$249, the GTX 560 Ti now sits between a cheaper 1GB VRAM variant of the HD 6950, priced at \$259, and factory over-clocked versions of the HD 6870, priced at approximately \$230. AMD has also released a series of Catalyst (v11.2 at the time of writing) drivers, upping performance incrementally across the HD 5800, 6800, and 6900 series.

The GeForce GTX 560 Ti is

based on what Nvidia is calling the GF114 GPU architecture, which rather than being something new entirely, is more along the lines of a fully enabled 1.95 billion transistor GF104 (GTX 460), with no locked or non-functional cores, engines, ROPs, and memory controllers. It also has much faster clocks (147 MHz faster core clock, 102 MHz faster memory clock, and 296 MHz increase in shader clock).

With the GT 440, Nvidia is now offering consumers retail version of a card that has been



available with OEMs since last year, with a few changes and streamlined improvements. Available from most of its add-on partners, the GT 440 is an entry-level gaming desktop card, meant for HTPC as well. **[d]**



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Sony vulnerability

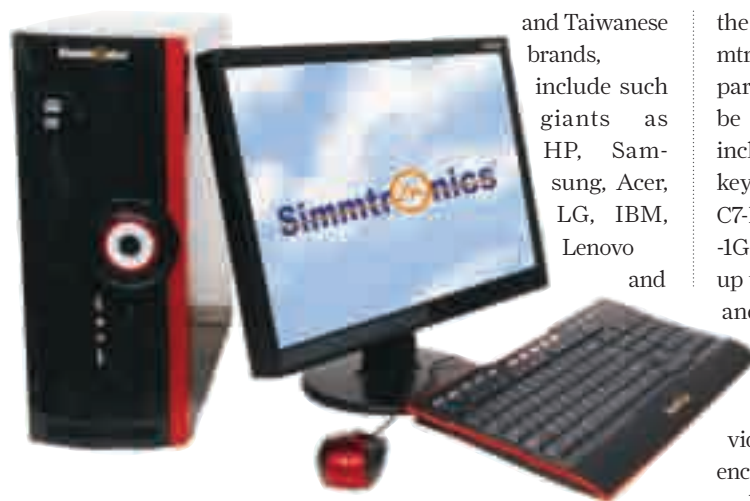
Sony's valiant 3.56 firmware security update thwarted in a day, it gets cracked and jailbroken

Simmtronics and VIA team up to offer sub-₹10K desktop in India - the SIMM

Simmtronics, a leading manufacturer of memory modules in the Asia Pacific region, is also a fast growing non-Taiwanese motherboard manufacturer. It is also one of the rare Indian companies that actually manufactures computer components right here in India, exporting them to over 15 other countries across the world, including Pakistan, Dubai, and Ghana.

Working with VIA Technologies, a major fabless supplier of x86 processors and platforms that's been focussing on the low-power, cloud and mobile markets for the last ten years, Simmtronics has struck a partnership to assemble VIA PC-1 mainboards at their new Roorkee plant.

VIA's PC-1 initiative is apparently "aimed at enabling the next one billion people to get con-



nected...with a focus on communication, education and information." Based on VIA's acclaimed and well-adopted energy efficient processors, the VIA Nano and VIA C7 processor families, PC-1 products offer OEMs and ODMs the chance to offer their customers low-cost and power-efficient products. Early adopters, apart from a plethora of Chinese

and Taiwanese brands, include such giants as HP, Samsung, Acer, LG, IBM, Lenovo and

the market soon through Simmtronics' wide range of channel partners, and amazingly, will be priced at under ₹10,000 including a 15.6-inch monitor, keyboard, optical mouse, VIA C7-D 1.6 GHz processor, 512MB -1GB DDR2 RAM expandable up to 4GB, 250GB SATA HDD and Ubuntu OS. Looking at the specs, it would be fair to think this was the bare minimum required to provide a comfortable user experience.

While VIA Technologies has been the third leg in an already imbalanced computer chip race, it seems its future is not uncertain, with the company getting its hands dirty in many fields, from ARM-based SoCs to GPUs to motherboards solutions. It is aiming its energies at a future where the cloud and connected devices are everywhere, with the desktop at the centre. **d**

MIT's OLPC.

Simmtronics is also joining these OEMs in developing end-user PC-1 products, from the SIMM PC to the SIMMBOOK, which use VIA processors and chipsets along with the Ubuntu operating systems to offer great value for money and a reliable, stable platform.

The SIMM PC will be hitting

HP TouchPad tablet and tilting TouchSmart AIOs

HP's has revealed the company's long-awaited consumer tablet offering - the HP TouchPad. Sporting a 9.7-inch screen, the 13-mm thick TouchPad offers an XGA resolution at 1024x768 pixels, and weighs in at 740 grams - all of which, as well as the tablet's curved edges, neatly position it alongside the current generation iPad.

The TouchPad runs HP's latest version of Palm's mobile operating system - webOS 3.0 - which is Flash compatible. It's powered by a dual-core

processor, a Qualcomm Snapdragon APQ8060 running at 1.2 GHz. Surprisingly, it has just 512 MB RAM. Two capacities are on offer, 16 GB and 32 GB, and its 6300 mAh is rated to provide up to eight hours of battery life. Wi-Fi only, 3G and 4G models are in the pipeline.

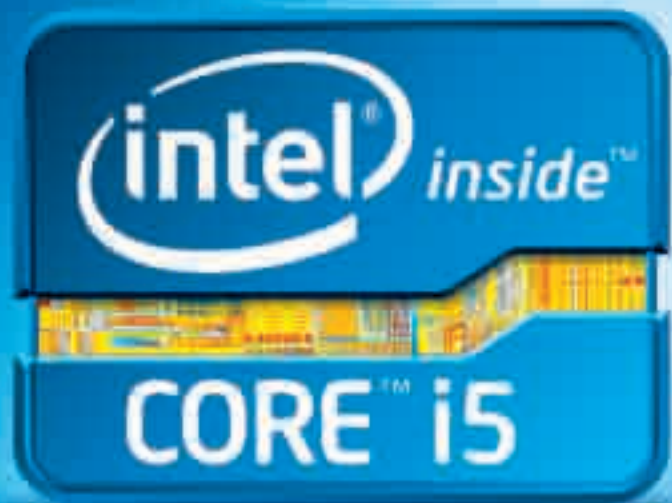
The tablet also has a 1.3 MP front-facing camera, integrated stereo speakers, a gyroscope and accelerometer, as well as A-GPS support (in the 3G model). As for app availability, there are about 8,000 apps in the ecosystem currently, of which legacy



webOS applications will run limited to non-fullscreen mode on the TouchPad. All the popular ones will be ready by the time the tablet arrives though.

HP has also hinted that it

would be bringing the touch-friendly webOS to upcoming TouchSmart PCs, and maybe, even a line of netbooks. HP also introduced its latest TouchSmart models recently, which it hopes will finally convert the all-in-one desktop world. Called the HP TouchSmart 610 and 9300, the former is a conservatively endowed AIO machine meant for home usage, and the latter is a tad bit more capable, meant for a business environment. **d**



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Mozilla games?

The Mozilla Labs Game gallery has opened with over a hundred games

Windows 7 SP1

Microsoft has released the first service pack for its Windows 7 operating system

Corsair launches its brand of gaming desktops in India - the Dream PC

Corsair has partnered with Indian distributors to bring the Dream PC concept to India, a concept that has already enjoyed success in various forms in numerous international markets.

Known as a brand that specializes in high-performance gaming components like memory, cooling systems and power supplies, Corsair's Dream PC concept introduces three gaming desktop models in the Indian market, the Ultimate Dream PC, the Gamer Dream PC, and the Custom Dream PC.


Apart from offering tried, tested and optimised configurations, Corsair offers buyers of the Ultimate and Gamer Dream PCs a 3 year Dream Service warranty. As a potential customer, if you don't like some components or configuration options of the above two branded PCs, Cor-



sair offers the Custom Dream PC concept, where you can mix and match parts, choosing from a wide range of manufacturers (with no exclusive tie-up hang-ups). The only drawback, if it could be called that, of buying a Custom Dream PC would be a component level warranty instead of a complete unit warranty.

Looking at the prices, ₹2,50,000 and ₹99,000, if you are a little skeptical of Corsair's success with these models in

India, you are not alone. But Corsair's intention is clear: not only is it trying to make a name for itself in the fast growing gaming market in India, but also to promote its many high-performance gaming components.

Corsair is targeting the "educated gamer." Its evaluation of the Indian gaming market has also led them to this conclusion – the "average India gamer" is a well educated male in his mid-20s, who spends an average of 20 hours a week gaming. 


iPhone 4 and HTC are Global Mobile Award winners

The MWC also plays host to the Global Mobile Awards, where the best devices, manufacturers, and developers are paid tribute to. Surprisingly, this year's

(2010-11) Best Mobile Device was the iPhone 4, surprising because Apple does not even attend the MWC. Its killer features were supposedly its sharp screen, build quality, and phenomenal iOS



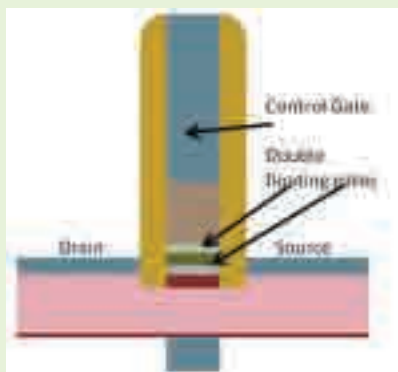
and iTunes ecosystem.

HTC won the Device Manufacturer of Year award, commended for its quick rise into prominence as one big leaguers, and, their wide portfolio of mobile devices. Points were also accorded for its customer service record. 

Memory FET: The holy grail of memory

Scientists from the North Carolina State University have developed what has long been considered the holy grail of computer storage and memory – 'universal' memory that both serves as dynamic random access memory and Flash storage.

Using double floating-gate field effect transistors, the NCSU team's prototypic effort will allow memory to switch between static and dynamic modes in a single cycle – without the data getting lost in between. This is due to the second floating gate,




which apart from holding bits in a ready to be read state, will also enable them to be frozen into place when a higher voltage is applied. When the power is

switched off, it retains the data in place just like flash.

This combination of both volatile (DRAM) and non-volatile (flash) types of memory in a single unified device is definitely a breakthrough, and can lead to significant cost and power savings from servers to desktops, for

manufacturers and home users, apart from the definite performance improvements – where main memory and storage are one and the same.

Dr. Paul Franzon, one of the lead scientists on the NCSU team, summarised the use of two floating-gates as: "Our device is called a double floating-gate field effect transistor (FET). Existing nonvolatile memory used in data storage devices utilizes a single floating gate, which stores charge in the floating gate to signify a 1 or 0 in the device – or one bit of information...By using two floating gates, the device can store a bit in a non-volatile mode, and/or it can store a bit in a fast, volatile mode – like the normal main memory on your computer." 



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Landmines in cyberspace

In most cases, threats creep into a computer's hard drive by piggy-backing onto the software programs we download. They can also sneak in through security gaps in web browsers when unsuspecting users visit certain sites or use open Wi-Fi networks

Anoop Verma

readersletters@thinkdigit.com

Rajat Sharma had to spend a weekend apologising to friends for accidentally sharing with PDF files that were infected with adware. An avid book reader, Rajat was looking for ebook readers on the net, and he managed to download few pirated editions from a web site. When he opened

the downloaded books on his computer, he was asked to update his Flash player. He did that unthinkingly and got the adware downloaded into his system. When he shared these digital books with his friends, they too got a similar requests for updating their Flash players and fell for it.

"We were hit with dizzying - and nearly unstoppable - onslaughts of pop-up ads," says Rajat. "It was really frustrating. My system also slowed down. My friends suffered the same fate, and blamed me for the mess." The problem in this case was aggravated by the fact that none of them were using anti-virus systems. A majority of PCs in India continue to run pirated Windows systems, without protection and easily fall prey to the nefarious designs of malicious coders. Rajat and his friends were ultimately able to get rid of the adware by using the free HouseCall facility from Trend Micro, one of world's major creators of software tools for safeguarding the integrity of com-

puter systems from all kinds of threats.

No one can deny the importance of the internet, but it is also true that the cyberspace is like a battlefield strewn with

Security tip of the month

A Keylogger is a program that is capable of tracking and transmitting the keys struck on the keyboard of any computer system. If such a program were to infect your system, then the hacker would be able to get access to the passwords of every account that you access. They might be able to steal money from your bank or credit card account. The best way of removing a Key logger from you system is to run a good anti-spyware program. You can also go in for a comprehensive online scan. If you have a Windows based system, then Windows Live OneCare (<http://onecare.live.com>) might turn out to be a good option. This free service is only available if you are using a genuine Windows operating system.

I Love You

In 2000, a digital menace came out of Philippines, it was a self-replicating worm called ILOVEYOU, which eventually caused more than \$10 billion in damage

Top Racer

The virus called Nimda, which is 'admin' spelled backwards, hit the Internet in 2001 and quickly gained the status of the fastest propagating computer virus of that era

Feature

land mines – viruses, malware, adware, spyware and Trojans keep proliferating at an ever-increasing pace. Even with a genuine and fully updated operating system and a valid anti-virus system, you need to be careful about web sites that you visit, or you could be on your way to joining the long list of victims of a cyber-attack. Here is a look at some of the latest threats that are making news these days.

The nemesis of Social Media: shorter URL

When you are on social media outlets like Facebook or Twitter, posting links with shorter, and a rather condensed, URL makes the message look quite cool. This kind of system is a necessity for a site like Twitter, which currently caps messages at 140 characters. But it is also true that web shortening services like <http://goo.gl> can turn out to be notoriously unsafe. At times they can lead a user to an infected web site. A post on Sophos Naked Security says, "Thousands of Twitter users are finding that their accounts have been tweeting out malicious links without their permission, pointing to a fake anti-virus attack. A quick search on the popular micro-blogging network finds many tweets from users containing no message other than a goo.gl shortened link (Google's equivalent to bit.ly or [tinyurl](http://tinyurl.com)), which itself points to a URL ending with 'm28sx.html'."

It is nothing new to have attacks hiding behind tiny URLs, but when such nefarious strategy is applied on a popular outlet like Twitter, it will

definitely end up affecting many more computer users. In this case, there are no easy solutions; after all, it is not possible to block the domain completely, as it is associated with a genuine company, which has nothing to do with the attack. For instance, <http://goo.gl> is associated with Google. The search giant will never allow <http://goo.gl> to be blocked. Anti virus maker, McAfee has come up with its own system for creating a shortened URL and the company advises users to try its service, which is guaranteed to be completely free of malicious attacks. You can access the McAfee system for generating tiny URLs, by pointing the browser at this web site: <http://mcafee.com>.

Threats from Free Wi-Fi hotspots

There are no free meals in this world – this may sound rather cynical, nevertheless, it is true. Even users of free Wi-Fi hotspots are often being milked through packet-sniffing strategies. Recently Google had admitted that its roaming Street View cameras have been doing more than just snap pictures of the neighbourhood; they had also been collecting packets of information sent over private Wi-Fi networks. The problem was later attributed to oversight error. However, it is a fact that packet-sniffing tools are very easily available on the internet. It is possible for any individual or corporate entity to use these tools for spying on the browsing data of users of any Wi-Fi hot spot. The next time you use the Wi-fi network of an airport, shopping mall or restaurant, you might be revealing your vital secrets to an unknown stalker.

When you are using the Wi-Fi network of your home or the workplace, then you have a degree of control. But if you connect your system to the network of an airport, hotel, restaurant or any other entity or individual, then the control passes out of your hand. It becomes really difficult for you to judge just how private the details of your browsing activity are. Through packet-sniffing tools and other means, it is possible for hackers to sniff out any data, including passwords, that get transmitted through a network. According to some security experts, an

Microsoft Security Essentials

If you are using genuine Windows based operating system, then it might make sense for you to go in for the free anti-virus program from Microsoft – Microsoft Security Essentials. This program will provide real-time protection for your home PC against threats such as - viruses, spyware, and other malicious software. Once you have downloaded and installed the system in your computer, it will update itself automatically with latest virus definitions. Some of the latest adware/spyware threats identified by Microsoft Security Essentials are:

Adware:Win32/ClickPotato
Adware:Win32/Hotbar
BrowserModifier:Win32/Zwangi
Rogue:Win32/Winwebsec
BrowserModifier:Win32/BaiduSobar
Adware:Win32/GameVance
Rogue:Win32/FakeSpypro
Adware:Win32/SideTab
Backdoor:Win32/Cycbot.B
Adware:Win32/Gabpath

open Wi-fi network can also be used for installing key-logger software into the unsuspecting user's system. Once such software has been installed the hacker would be able to keep track of every single word that the user has typed. But there are no easy solutions in this case, as you don't have any control over the Wi-Fi network over which the data flows.

In the early days of 2011, it came to light that internet hackers had targeted lawmakers in Missouri, USA, and their staffs. It is believed that hackers took advantage of the free, open wireless network to side-jack the Facebook accounts of the state representatives and post mischievous messages such as, "I love lobbyists! All the free food and stuff you get. This job is awesome!" This suspicion is due to the fact that each victim of hacking had used the open wireless network recently. If they can breach the security of a Facebook account, then they might also be capable of getting hold of valuable information related to your bank account or credit card. We need to exercise care before using an open Wi-Fi network for doing any kind of financial transaction. 

Targeting the smart phone

If you are an avid smart phone or tablet user, then you have reason to be worried. In its threat report released on February 9, 2011, McAfee has declared there has been a steady rise in number of threats to mobile platforms. The most famous mobile threats of the quarter four period of the year 2010 are SymbOS/Zitmo.A and Android/Geinimi. SymbOS/Zitmo. The strategy behind the malwares is also unique. McAfee has identified instances where Trojan has been inserted into legitimate mobile applications and games for the Android platform.

Replacement for paper?

Touted to replace paper as a note taking device, the NoteSlate tablet would hit the stores by June 2011 for \$99

Samsung new Galaxy series ad

Samsung has released a three minute video showing who all should be using these phones

The titans meet Nokia and Microsoft join hands...

It's official now, Nokia is partnering with Microsoft to make Windows Phone 7 its "principal smart phone strategy," and will together "combine assets and develop innovative mobile products on an unprecedented scale."

A strongly worded open letter written by both Elop and Ballmer, as well as a press release from the companies, outlined the strategic alliance's intent, and added that Microsoft services and products like Bing, Xbox Live, and Office, as well as Nokia offerings like Ovi Maps, will also be part of "broad strategic partnership".

Nokia would help drive the future of Windows Phone, innovating on top of the platform, especially in areas such as




imaging and language support, as well as maps. Other collaborations between the two include Bing for Nokia search services, Microsoft adCenter Nokia's advertisement services, and Ovi Maps for Microsoft mapping services. Nokia and Microsoft will apparently collaborate on joint marketing initiatives as well, sharing a development roadmap.

While this doesn't exactly signal the end of MeeGo or even Symbian, Nokia has stressed the continued importance of Qt as the unified development framework for these two platforms, and Microsoft's free Windows Phone Developer Tools will be used for upcoming Nokia Windows Phone devices. Microsoft has also offered

"guidance" to developers interested in porting their apps for WP7, making evident no Qt tie-in to WP7 APIs. The integration, or dissolution, of the Ovi Store into the Microsoft Marketplace might just hold some interesting opportunities for developers, effects we are bound to start seeing soon.

A letter to Nokia app developers assured them of a continued future for the Qt-based platforms, with news of plans to sell "around 150 million more Symbian devices", and of the first MeeGo-related open source device shipping later this year.

While the world is wondering how everything will pan out, of immediate consequence - Intel is not happy, and nor are the Qt developers. 

Galaxy S II and Galaxy Tab II Samsung takes the next step

As promised, Samsung unveiled the official successor to the Galaxy S - the Galaxy S II (I9100) - in a pre-MWC announcement. It is scheduled to release in parts of Europe and Asia by March, and global availability should follow soon after.

Featuring the Super AMOLED Plus - the Galaxy S II has a 4.3-inch Gorilla Glass covered screen (800x480) that Samsung assures the world is much better than the IPS



panel (or Retina Display) of the iPhone 4. The phone's screen bezel is also extremely thin when compared to the massive display.

Also new, is the use of a dual-core CPU, assumed to be one of Samsung's Orion SoC processors, which recently received the Exynos branding. It also has a solid 1GB of RAM onboard.

At 8.49 mm, it is also making headlines as the thinnest smart phone in the world. The Galaxy S II runs Gingerbread, and touts a new and


improved UI customisation - TouchWiz 4.0. The new interface will also have four new hubs, called Reader, Game, Music, and Social, for specialised UI interactions.

Samsung has also put in some new security features, including remote lock, remote wipe, remote app shutdown, and remote locator. It has an 8 MP camera that's capable of 1080p video recording, and, also sports a 2 MP front-facing camera for video calling.

The Samsung Galaxy Tab II was also unveiled in the pre-MWC announcement, with few new details. The Galaxy Tab II runs Android 3.0 (Hon-



eycomb). It has a 10.1-inch screen size (1280x800 pixel - WXGA resolution), offering a new form factor for those not excited by the original 7-inch Galaxy Tab.

Other features unveiled include an 8 MP rear-facing camera capable of 1080p HD video capture, a 2MP front-facing camera for video-calling, stereo speakers, a width of 10.9 mm, and encoding/decoding 1080p HD video onboard. 

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White is a favourite!

Ever since Apple launched white iPhone the colour white seems to be setting a trend with the Sony Xperia Play launched in the milky colour

Honeycomb on a cellphone!

The HTC HD has been running Android's latest version Honeycomb

LG Optimus Pad and 3D Yet another Tegra device

LG had previewed its G-Slate tablet back at CES 2011, co-branded with that name along with T-Mobile, a US mobile carrier. At MWC, the Korean giant unveiled the official name – Optimus Pad. The 8.9-inch Optimus Pad is an Android Honeycomb-based tablet running the NVIDIA Tegra 2 processor.

With most tablets either 7-inches or 10-inches, the Optimus Pad's 8.9-inch size is a bit unconventional, but according to LG, their research says it's the perfect size for maximum playability and productivity, as well

as minimum portability.

The LG Optimus Pad dual 5MP rear cameras allow for 3D stereoscopic video capture, as well as 1080p HD video



recording. With this level of recording ability, it is no surprise the tablet has HDMI-out, meant to output 3D and HD content.

LG also showed off the LG Optimus 3D Android smartphone, calling it the world's first dual core, dual channel, and dual memory phone which also provides a glasses-free 3D experience. It has a 4.3-inch screen, and dual 5MP rear cameras for stereoscopic 720p HD 3D recording, as well as 1080p 2D HD video recording. Running the TI



OMAP 4430 processor, it boasts of a dual-core 1GHz ARM Cortex A9 processor, and the PowerVR SGX540 GPU.

LG also unveiled a partnership with YouTube, which will allow Optimus 3D users to upload their 3D content to YouTube's 3D channel with one click. **[d]**

Quad-core comes to mobiles Blazingly fast handsets have arrived

MWC was the stage for the unveiling of numerous dual-core mobile phones, however, Qualcomm and Nvidia had a point to make. Demoing their latest chipsets and SoCs, the companies showed off quad-core mobile processors that were destined for tablets.

Qualcomm's Snapdragon quad-core chipset (APQ8064) is called Krait, and supposedly runs at 2.5 GHz. It apparently gives 150 per cent better performance at 65 per cent lower power than Qualcomm's latest-generation Snapdragons.

These products will apparently not even be comparable to previous gen processors like OMAP4 and Tegra 2, but are more in tune with the recently introduced TI OMAP5 Cortex-A15 powered chipsets. Qual-

comm also says its greatest advantage over Nvidia is that it doesn't just concentrate on video and gaming, but provides the whole package, from applications to graphics to modems.

Other new chipsets were also previewed, including the single-core MSM8930, and the dual-core MSM8960. All three chipsets will make their way to products by 2012.

While news of Qualcomm's latest Snapdragon 2.5GHz quad-core mobile processors was still resounding in the portable world at MWC, Nvidia showcased its upcoming Tegra 'Kal-El' processors – which will also feature four cores.

Promising over 5 times the performance of the current Tegra 2 architecture, the Kal-El Tegra 3 SoC processor has some pretty crazy specs apart from its four Cortex A9 CPU cores,



including twelve GPU cores. It also is capable of supporting ultra-HD (1440p) resolutions up to 2560x1600. As evinced by Nvidia's superhero studded roadmap, the various company benchmarks, the Tegra 3 processor outpaces a Core 2 Duo T7200 desktop processor.

What Nvidia is claiming as the biggest difference between

Qualcomm's Snapdragons and its own next gen Tegra SoCs is that Nvidia's will supposedly arrive in devices, i.e., tablets, in 2011, while the Snapdragon quad-cores will only start shipping in 2012. By which time, of course, the green graphics giant was also quick to point out, Tegra 4 'Wayne' would probably have started sampling. **[d]**

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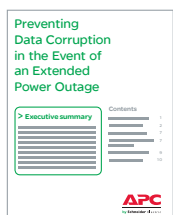
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Updated Google Docs

The newer version of Google Docs will support 12 additional formats including Excel, Powerpoint and Adobe Photoshop

Controversial trailer

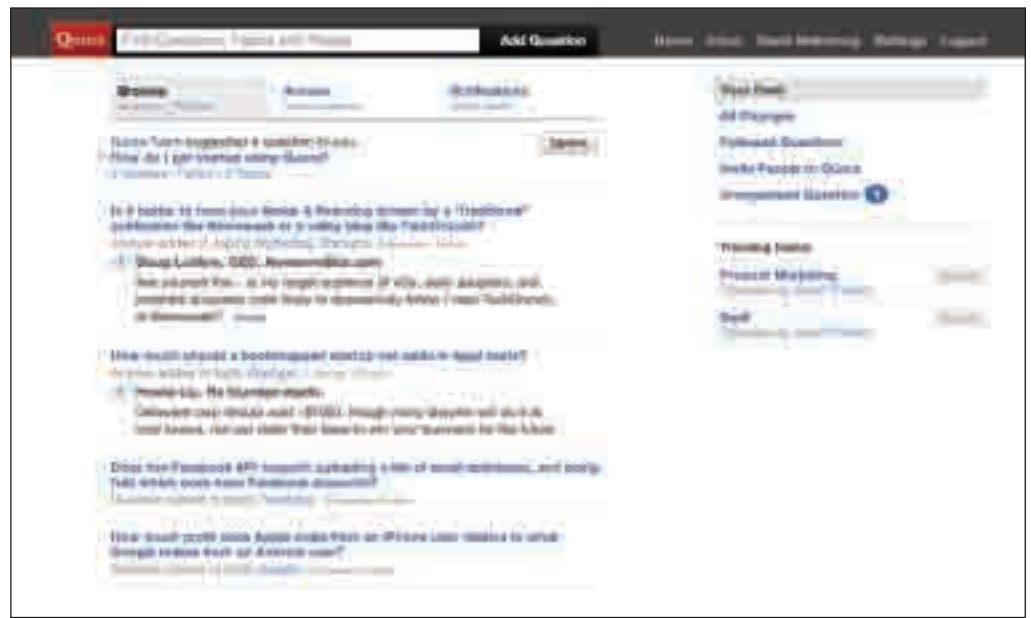
The new zombie apocalypse game Dead Island has caused a lot of stir on the internet mainly because of its disturbing trailer



What is Quora? Why's it gaining so much buzz?

What's the buzz about? The idea of sharing knowledge is certainly not new, and ever since the internet became less of a rarity, and started becoming a mundane connectivity at home and the workplace, this knowledge sharing increased dramatically, whether in the form of static content, or dynamic interactions.

An example of the latter are question and answer based web sites – nothing new as well; which originated from such esoteric roots as Forum 2000 in the late 90s, and ran wild over the course of the last decade with community driven sites such as Yahoo! Answers, Wiki Answers, AnswerBag, and Stack Overflow – some of the longest-running examples out there today. In essence, such web sites follow the crowdsourcing model. As defined by Wikipedia (a crowd-sourced web site itself), crowdsourcing is a neologistic compound of Crowd and Outsourcing for the



act of taking tasks traditionally performed by an employee or contractor, and outsourcing them to a group of people or community, through an "open call" to a large group of people (a crowd) asking for contributions.

Traditionally, with Q&A sites, a problem is posted by an individual or a company, and, the 'best answer' from the community members is selected. Various web sites – usually

of the technical or academic kind (such as Innocentive and Experts-Exchange) – offer a model where the individual that gives the best answer gets a monetary reward from the institution or individual who asked the question. There are many other knowledge-exchange models, some using virtual currency as the means of incentive, others using reputation systems, and some where the site pays researchers to answer questions – instead of the questioner.

These Q&A sites are also known as internet-based knowledge exchange marketplaces, of which there are two types – fee-based (whether for the answerer or questioner) or free. Most of the best known Q&A sites, such as Yahoo! Answers, Ask.com (formerly Ask Jeeves), and WikiAnswers fall in the latter category.

However, most free Q&A sites, especially the most pop-

ular, unfortunately suffer from a number of inherent drawbacks, such as repeated questions and answers, the posting of questions that can be easily answered by simple web queries, as well as the varying quality of answers that come from everyone from trolls to amateurs to experts.

Newer Q&A start-ups are quick to point out these problems, and are trying to incorporate innovative strategies to avoid them. While the first problem, repetition, is easily solvable by a thorough Q&A database check before accepting new questions, or by aggregating similar or identical questions, the second problem – the posting of questions that have readily available and factual answers – is a much harder challenge, one that ironically points to the separation of a mainstream audience from experts. The biggest challenge for free Q&A sites as always,



Quora-Co-Founders (Adam D'Angelo left, Charlie Cheever, right)

More power to forgive & forget.
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Accessories shown in the ad may not be an actual part of the bike.

Facebook to the rescue

It is estimated that about 70 per cent of local businesses in US are moving to Facebook for their marketing activities

Marching towards Chrome OS

In its attempt to offer a web only based OS Google has upgraded the file handling and file sharing capabilities of Google Docs

remains the quality of answers provided, once again placing experts on one side of the fence, and the perplexed masses on the other.

While the challenges faced by newest start-ups are difficult, the web and its users are continually evolving, and taking advantage of these changes is certainly one of the healthy ways of not just surviving, but thriving.

Quora, one of the newer start-ups in the field, is a knowledge market or Q&A web site that opened its virtual doors to the public in June 2010. It describes itself as a "continually improving collection of questions and answers created, edited, and organized by everyone who uses it." Its name, the plural of Quorum, is a description in itself – meaning the minimum number of people of deliberative body required to conduct business in that group, or in this case, groups.

One of its primary differen-

In Quora's words...

Everything on Quora is tied back to a person. Each question and answer has a revision history associated with it, and each change in the log is associated with the person who made

it. People use their real names and pictures on Quora and have a short bio describing who they are; this helps anyone reading things they write to understand why they should believe what is written and take into account

the author's perspective. For example, if Michael Jordan gives an answer to a question about basketball, that means something really different from someone who has never played the game giving an answer. **[d]**

professional networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Quora asks its members to use their real names and real professions on the site. Utilizing such a mature web-practice certainly has its benefits on a Q&A web site; however, careful consideration of the answer itself will always be essential, regardless of the identity of the answerer. While one's answer or opinion on an issue can be given more appropriate credence, it should not mean that the substance of the reply is disregarded on the basis on non-relevant credentials. Sur-

no proof to establish its users' identities and professions. This places a level of trust in users that still might be premature by present web-culture standards, and only those users with obvious aliases are blocked by the web site, pending submission of proof. There have also been cases where people with unconventional names (unconventional with respect to the western world) have been blocked on suspicion of fraudulent identity. Understandably, these individuals were not happy with these apparent double standards when it came to identity verification. Many users have admittedly tried and succeeded in faking their profession, going from chef to exotic dancer, without repercussion.

This new challenge, of assuming identities and professions, necessarily not celebrity in nature but fictitious none the less, might just be as difficult to overcome as the first lot of challenges. However, the small team at work behind the scenes at Quora is certainly aware of these flaws in the system, and workarounds do seem to be around the corner.

Apart from Quora, numerous other Q&A start-ups are popping up, such as Stack Exchange – a network of specialised Q&A sites; and Hipster – a yet to be launched location based Q&A site. Joel Spolsky, one of the founders of Stack Exchange, speaks of the market that new

Q&A services serve – providing the information that doesn't yet exist on the internet, information that cannot be web searched. This ranges from opinions to factual knowledge, and everything in between.

Stack Exchange, an aggregator, also keeps its community tightly knit and maintains quality by trying to build new Q&A sites in "overlapping circles."

The rising trend of Q&A sites is making an impact elsewhere as well, with mega-sites such as Facebook planning to introduce Q&A and knowledge market features to its own interface in the near future.

The potential for advertising on these Q&A sites, especially specialised ones that attract a niche audience, is also quickly becoming an enticing prospect for many companies, who can now reach a target demographic of educated and savvy individuals, without expending valuable resources on a broad-spectrum of potential consumers. The meanest trick of course, would be for a knowledge marketplace to balance itself on that fine line of mass between

While there has not been a shortage of internet-based knowledge marketplaces, no matter how specialised, in nearly a decade, the future looks capable of offering new ways to find the answers and opinions you are looking for, from real people. **[d]**



tiators is that it takes into consideration the fast-evolving attitude people are developing towards identity on the internet, which is quickly trending away from anonymity and 'pseudonymity' towards real comfort with real names. This is a mark of a maturing web culture, triggered in no small part by the growing prevalence of personal blogs, as well as social and

prisingly, most interactions on Quora manage to avoid the latter trap, and, combined with spam and troll moderation by the web site's administrators, things are kept on an even, non-biased, keel. Users can also choose to interact anonymously if required.

Not everything, however, is perfect in the world of Quora, with the web site requiring

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What happened to

The best web services and games we used to love

Here comes the anti-laser

Physicists have created the world's first device that can cancel a laser beam, aptly called the anti-laser.

The Force

Force is the flagship product of Perfect 8 technologies and was awarded the Best Sound award at CES for three years in a row. Perfect 8 claims that the Force range of speakers are based on innovative sonic research previously only known in theories, now fully realised in the Force speakers. Weighing 200kg per channel the Force stands at 2 metres in height. Encased with semi-transparent glass the Force system is made up of two gold and glass towers, four sub-woofers each with 12-inch custom modified drivers that sit at the base of the speakers. The price of this beast of a speaker is equally impressive: \$5,66,000.

The Beosound 9000 featured in July 2003 looked somewhat similar to the Force speaker system



Proclaim DMT-100

Conventionally designed speakers are a thing of the past.

Engineers and designers are trying hard to achieve that out-of-the-box design paired up in an equally good sounding speaker system. With their quirky design, people behind the

Proclaim DMT-100 seem to be heading along that path. In order to achieve the best sounding music, Proclaim has created the Driver Manipulation Technology or DMT. You can manually move all the six transducers to match the room conditions where the speakers are placed delivering the best audio output. The positioning and the time alignment of the drivers can be altered to the best physical position, the secret lies in the unique stands of the speakers which allows driver movement.

Get your pair for \$25,995.



Bergmann Audio Sleipner

Good news for fans of turntables, Danish audio manufacturer Bergmann recently unveiled the Sleipner. A first of its kind this turntable uses airbearing technology to play your favourite records. It features a linear tracking airbearing tonearm and a digital motor controlled air supply along with a vacuum clamp for stabilizing records. It produces amazing music quality as the airbearing tonearm comes in contact with a record through a stylus tip giving clean and smooth playback. All possible because of the turntable's air supply. Available for \$48000.



Global data storage

The entire data saved digitally all over the world amounts to a staggering 295 exabytes

Nokia joins hands with Microsoft

In an attempt to save the market share Nokia's been losing it's now partnering with Microsoft

Drool maal



Klang Ultrasonic Speakers

This has to be the coolest set of speakers featured in Droolmaal, this is absolutely phenomenal, it's the future of speakers so without further ado, here's presenting the Klang Ultrasonic. Designed under a project by Bang and Olufsen, this is still the prototype model. Here's the deal: these speakers can beam music in any direction desired, which means that only you can listen to it. It's like wearing headphones without wearing any. These speakers emit 30,000 Hz frequency inaudible to human ears, the ultrasonic waves are split into three, producing an audible wave encapsulated by two inaudible ones in such a way that your right ear can hear sound coming only from the right and left one only from the left speaker. Go ahead and listen to your Justin Bieber collection without anyone knowing.

We featured the Bang and Olufsen BeoLab 5 in February 2007 which boasted of Acoustic lens Technology

Metronome Technologie's Kalista Ultimate SE

Here comes another cool CD transport system from the French manufacturer Metronome Technologie. Building on the Kalista Ultimate foundation, this is a newer and more refined system. It uses a Philips CDM12 PRO 2 pickup mechanism for digital signal extraction from the CD. A top loading CD device the Kalista is built around materials that ensure best sound quality. Heavy on both your pocket and floor, the Kalista Ultimate SE is available for \$77,000 and weighs 80 kilograms.



iPad controlled Mega Yacht

Meant for the uber rich, the Soulmates Mega Yacht is a good example of how technology is affecting our lives. Everything aboard the Soulmates can be controlled using an iPad. You receive an iPad upon boarding the yacht but it's not for keeps as you have to return it when you leave. So here's how you use it: everything from the lighting to climate control to entertainment systems to adjusting the window blinds can be controlled via the iPad. You can even summon a crew member using it. The Soulmates has a \$80,000 integrated light and sound system and an alfresco gym which converts into a dance floor. Start investing for a week's holiday aboard the Soulmates as it would cost you a mere \$6,00,000 for it.





Open Office vs MS Office

"Open Office vs. MS Office" fight is on, may the fittest survive

No change

Users are tired of Facebook's constant UI meddling, is anyone listening?

TECH THAT DIED

Vishveshwar Jatain

readersletters@thinkdigit.com

For every technology, game, service or web site that makes it to the A-list, there are others that never do. Here, we look at technologies, games, services and web sites, and try to see what caused their downfall, all with a splash of good, harmless fun poked at their expense.

Age of Empires

At one point, every time someone mentioned the term "strategy," the first thing that came to our minds was *Age of Empires* (AoE). The kind of dedicated fan following it afforded was just unparalleled. Everyone abandoned TV, movies stayed on the shelf – all you dreamt and breathed was the idea of conquest, of capturing more and more land and an obscenely long gaming session culminating in a winner's screen with a statistical representation of your mad skills at the game and overall blinding awesomeness.

However, the novelty waned shockingly fast. By the time *Age of Empires III: The Asian Dynasties* was released, most of the



cult followers had become disillusioned with the franchise. Even though sales figures would suggest that everything was right with the world, the game never managed to create the mass hysteria that its predecessor did back in the day. Most of us were just left with an air of nostalgia and fading memories of vindictive victory,

Everything in the world of technology comes with an expiry date, some things more than others.

and we make no qualms about still firing up the good old *Age of Empires* every once in a while and play till we whoosh past every professional and personal deadline. What? We're building an empire after all. And in this world, we are the Kings of our castle.

Replaced by: Other games that managed to create a cult fan following, such as Sims and Civilization.

Bhuvan

Why are we talking about all this you ask? Because despite all the odds, ISRO has managed to replicate an embarrassing dud on the web now – Bhuvan. Apparently, Google Earth caught someone's fancy in the organisation, and thought of beating Google at their own game!

If you haven't used Bhuvan yet, don't! For the stubborn ones, you can download a plug-in, or use it via the browser in the same way that Google's Maps works – unfortunately, that is where the similarity ends. The web interface looks like a cheap rip-off of Google Maps, the progress bar is forever stuck at loading, and it's the polar opposite of a "smooth web experience". The advertised zoom level of up to 10 metres from the surface of the Earth is just hogwash.

Replaced by: Nothing. Thank God!

Blogger

If you are a blogger, chances are high that back in the day, you started your first blog at Blogger (blogspot). As things stand now, it is not possible for anyone to say that they have a blog on Blogger and not expect a couple of under the breath scoffs, and God forbid if you happened to mention it in front of a bunch of nerds, then you are in deep trouble. Preferences have changed over the years. Today, the order

is Wordpress for geeks who like playing with design and widgets, Tumblr for artsy people who prefer clean design coupled with social media elements in a blogging platform and Posterous for busy people who want an online presence but don't want the hassle of the work that goes into it.

Here are some things that you cannot do with Blogger: you cannot import your posts and comments from any other blog




service except Blogger (which means that it is not migration friendly); you can't upload common file formats such as PPT, DOC and PDF among others, and the storage space for uploading images is limited to a mere 1 GB. You cannot create contact forms within the web site; you cannot use the more contemporary CSS themes with Blogger, since it uses HTML coded themes; you cannot post from outside the service – you can only make blog entries via the web interface provided by Blogger; you cannot expect prompt customer support as you can with, let's say – Wordpress.

Replaced by: Mainly Wordpress, and then a host of next generation blogging platforms such as Tumblr, Posterous and TypePad.

Blu-ray and HD-DVD

Nothing deserves a space in this write-up as much as this particular technology. It has all the right ingredients – need-



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Going up

Twitter is the current blue eyed SM boy, no slump expected



Email or Facebook?

Is email dying due to the advent of social media? We'll find out soon

less at best, terribly over-hyped, and treated like a rug by the masses. And if you think this is mildly sad, the fate of the HD-DVD was even worse with Toshiba backing out after developing and fiercely supporting it. New York-based market research firm Harris Interactive found in a survey conducted in 2009 that although nearly half (47 per cent) of all US consumers owned an HDTV, the numbers for HD-DVD and Blu-ray ready equipment was just 11 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively. Further, when asked if they were likely to buy HD-DVD and Blu-ray equipment in the near future, 91 per cent and 93 per cent people respectively, responded with "not likely at all".

However, let's see if all this 3D hype can revive Blu-ray. It will take time though, and we hope companies are still developing better technology than optical media!

Replaced by: 1 Terabyte hard disk drives; on-demand video content delivered via the Internet; increasing variety of pay-per-view options on Satellite and Cable television; common sense.



Chain email forwards

You know what we're talking about. "Send this email to ((9*10)X8-dy/dx(2x/y^2)) people this very moment, otherwise the giant Yeti will drag you to the North Pole and drown you in liquid Nitrogen". Worse, the email titillated you with all the fulfilment and opulence in the world as a reward for forwarding, because some people thought that it is exactly what you want to read on a Monday morning when you are contemplating killing yourself because of the terrible hangover you have.

Maybe they all died terribly by gangrene of the forwarding finger! One grouse though, why couldn't these people also take the Nigerian spammers with them?

Replaced by: Evolution (survival of the non-forwarder) and progressively increasing median IQ of human beings.

Google Wave

When it comes to the sheer hysteria created before the launch of any technology product since the history of ever, Google Wave cannot be beaten.

Touted as an online real-time collaborative editing tool and backed by a really swanky promotional video, it sure grabbed all the eyeballs and took them home with it. But what is an online real-time collaborative editing tool anyway?

Initially, it was only made available to developers for testing purposes, a little later in 2009, as an extended preview, 100,000 people got a chance to test Wave. At best, it looked like the next generation chat room where you could see the other people typing as they typed, so now you knew just how many typos people really make before hitting 'send'. In an effort to assess how complex Google Wave really was, there were a series of online surveys which pitted Wave against some other difficult to understand aspects of life and users started voting on which among the two they thought was easier to understand. Finally on August 4, 2010, Google announced that they had halted further development on Wave and intended to support the web site for at least the rest of the year.

Replaced by: Nothing, but we don't bear anyone complaining.

Orkut

If someone were to compile a list of jokes that people crack at the expense of Orkut on other social networks today, it would be thicker than The Encyclopedia Britannica. Orkut being at the bottom end of the social media chain right now, finds itself at the worst end of the deal.

Although Orkut was never really applauded for its squeaky clean design, they have somehow progressively managed to make it worse. Currently, it is an impossible feat to log into Orkut without trying to shoot yourself in the face after looking at all those colours and letters flying around in a haphazard way, it's almost as if even the fonts want to run away from the web site. Besides that, Orkut is now the mecca of fake profiles, spam, and hate groups. If someone were to calculate the type of scraps that



people are posting these days, the prize for the highest scrapped phrase would without a doubt go to, "do you wanna friendship with me?" Well, do you?


Replaced by: Facebook

Chat rooms

"asl?" Wouldn't this go down in the annals of history as one of the most remembered technology related phrases of our times? Before social media and Google Talk, chat rooms were where the world went to kill time, and kill time we did. Most guys went there for two main goals: First, to get chatty with someone who had a user-name like SpunkyChick86 and move the conversation over to PM (private messaging.) Failing one, we would find one way or the other to start a flame war to turn a rather mundane day into a full-fledged fight-to-the-bone open for all hate fest. The most effective tactics was cracking off-color jokes or making provocative remarks about sensitive topics such as religion, sexism, politics and sports.

Every once in a while, a moderator would kick a particularly rogue user and ban his/her IP, and that was the end of all fun and games for the next 24 hours or so. Although the chances of any of us having befriended someone through chat and still remain friends with them all through these years are as high as spaghetti raining from the sky, we did have our short-lived virtual chat buddies.

As of 2007, estimates suggest that at least 60 per cent of all users who use Yahoo! chat rooms are bots. They're busy plotting to take over the world on Yahoo! servers. John Connor, where are you?

Replaced by: Social media, 9-to-9 jobs and the rat race. Our generation grew up and found out that we had bills to pay, and miles to go before we could sleep! 

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Revealed!

Secrets to Social Networking

There are two ways to look at social networking – use it for fun, as an extension of your college canteen, OR use it as a tool, to help you find better friends, make lasting contacts, work better, and gain popularity! We show you how.



Siddharth Parwatay
siddharth.parwatay@thinkdigit.com

Social Networking, or to be more specific, online Social Networking as a concept was introduced to this part of the world in a surprisingly viral manner. “Hey man, are you on Hi5?”, was what everyone seemed to be asking each other, about five years ago. “What’s that?”, was a common response such a question would garner. “Don’t you know? It’s a web site, where you get to share your thoughts emotions, likes, dislikes, and pictures with people online!” Now some of us might have said, “But why would you want to do that?” – yet many took to it like fish to water. Such is the innate need in all of us to connect. Soon that Hi5 part of those questions got replaced by Orkut, by which time almost everyone had an account. Cut to today and people have migrated from Orkut to newer platforms like Twitter and Facebook. With Facebook crossing 500 million users and Twitter clocking daily posts in the vicinity of 65 million there’s obviously no escaping this phenomenon.

But are we using social networking the right way? You could use these tools to keep in touch with old school mates, comment on candid photographs of your friend’s last trip to Goa but that’s not all you can and should be doing.

Traditionally, in the old school world of networking people would (and still do) meet contemporaries at seminars and conferences for gaining exposure and staying in touch with latest developments in their

field. The world of online social networking too can give you a lot of exposure.

Apart from self development, even in the sphere of connecting on a personal level, there are things you can do to be ‘popular’, for the lack of a better word. Even in your experience you would’ve noticed some people are better at it. They get more ‘likes’, they get more replies and seem to have more ‘friends’. If you are scoffing right now about having more friends, we’d completely agree with you. Having more friends does not really make you better at social networking at least on platforms like Facebook or Orkut. But what about Twitter? Having tons of followers does give you access to a ready and willing base of people, who are eager to help you out. No matter how much you deny it, you do get tickled each time someone RTs (that’s re-tweets to newbies) any of your clever comments. It’s an ego boost, right?

The virtual world today

At a day and age when much of our life is spent online, each of us has a certain amount of web presence. Initially when people logged on to the web and started interacting with people online, they were instinctively trying hard to be anonymous. We had usernames like “cyber_evil_dude666” and “vanilla_bunny” populating message boards. Yes, message boards and forums were and still are the social networking tools from yesteryear. The only difference is that these are niche corners of the interweb, where like-minded people assemble for mutual benefit, exchange ideas, and well, do a bit of social networking, as we know it today.

In our local context we use Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn most regularly. Even using these, there are ways by which you can meet like minded people, build lasting relationships, forward your career or business goals, and, using gaming terminology, level-up.

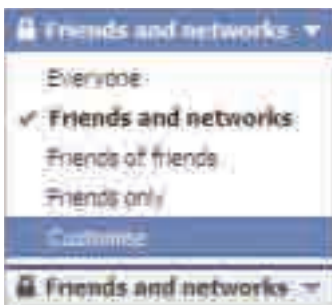
Facebook

Compared to social networking web sites that have come and gone so far, Facebook has a relatively closed, privacy focused culture. People have the choice to reveal as much as they want to different sets of people and even the world at large. Even though Facebook as an entity may not like people sharing as little as they want, that’s what the culture has evolved into. Still, there are quite a few things you can do to work better with Facebook. By default, Facebook shows you feeds from people and pages with whom you interact with the most. This is shown under the banner of “Top News” when you click on the Home button. Facebook’s algorithms are not very good at judging which people you are most interested in. The other option then is to click on “Most recent”, which will get you the most recent feeds from all of your friends and pages that you’ve “Liked”. In practical usage you may want something in between these two options. A simple way to fix this is by creating a new list of friends, just for the sake of filtering content and not for privacy tweaking – which we will cover later. Say you create a list called “favourites”. Now in the ‘Most Recent’ drop down menu you can click on Favourites and only updates

from those friends will show up in your timeline. This way, you don't waste time looking at stuff you don't really want to see.

Another way to connect with people is by joining pages with common interests. Say you like the Author Ayn Rand, or a particular artist, find their Facebook page and go to discussions within that page. In addition to this Facebook has started "Groups" some time back. These are closed 'invitation only' groups in which people can interact, share photos, documents and chat with each other. So you can create/join a group called "Geeks in India" and have fun. Back in the days when Orkut reigned supreme, people created 'communities' for even their college class or entire engineering batch etc. The same can now be done here.

But what about privacy? Being accessible goes against the grain of a few social networks, most notably Facebook. And the reason you need privacy is pretty simple. Say you're a developer, who is also a science fiction fan. You've joined relevant groups in line with your interests all over the place. You've probably had meaningful conversations / discussions with your contemporaries and they



wish to "add you" to keep in touch - in a professional context. You wouldn't want these people (whom you know in a certain context) to be able to see your entire profile which includes that embarrassing picture you were tagged in when you were giving your inebriated rendition of Axl Rose's stage antics? This is where the privacy settings come into the picture - keeping your social circles separated.

Using privacy settings you can share only as much information as you want, with those people you want to. This is very important in keeping your profile *clean* to anyone from prospective recruiters to colleagues.

Head to the 'Account' dropdown button at the top right corner and click on privacy settings. This is your dashboard for controlling content. Everyone, Friends of

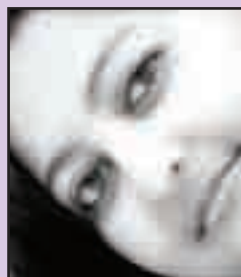
Friends, Friends Only, are your default options. Better yet is to slot people as you add them into lists such as Colleagues, Random People, Formal Contacts, etc. When you click on customise settings you can specify what you share with whom. For example if you do not want to share your posts with a group of people called "Work", just click on the drop down for that content and click 'Custom'. Here you can add the "Work" list under *Hide this from*. Similarly you should hide particular albums from being viewable to certain lists. It's a little painful to begin with, but once it's all set up and all your connections are sorted, it will give you the power to control your appearance to the world in general - and that's perhaps the first step you need to take towards becoming a social network star.

Twitter

Some people vent, some rant, and some talk about films and philosophy; whatever Twitter was intended for, people

A good cause

A few months ago, Paromita Deb Areng, who is an HR professional and a Sunday photographer, wanted to do something different for her 30th birthday. She knew she didn't want a holiday lounging on the beaches of Goa, nor the cool mountains of the Kumaon. She wanted to make a difference, wanted to make it even more memorable by bringing a bit of joy to some unfortunate orphan's life. In the month long run up to her birthday, she thought of an initiative, the goal of which was to raise ₹30,000 in a span of that month by selling her photographs for charity. To achieve this goal she leveraged the power of social networking. Posting on friend's walls, RTs, reasonable pricing and of course the thoughtful nature of the initiative all helped her reach her target.



"I had around 1000+ followers on Twitter (@sudentwilight) plus an equal number of contacts on Facebook, my fanpage and yes also my alumni network. I had launched a web site for the same and the orders just started pouring in - with maximum sales happening on Twitter and the rest from Facebook, I managed to collect ₹50,000 for the charity in a month."



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	Secunderabad	080-264 4851	9881 0100
	Surat	079-264 4851	9881 0100



	START	STOP	CONTINUE	REDUCE
Facebook	Making meaningful posts	Forwarding links mindlessly	Sharing content appropriate to the platform	The sarcasm, cynicism unless it really is witty
	Choosing privacy settings for the photos that you upload	Updating too regularly. You don't want to look too attention seeking	Commenting on other people's posts every now and then	Posting for the sake of posting something
	Updating even your professional details on Facebook. Many recruitment firms lurk around	Sharing meaningless baby videos. No one really wants to see those. But once in a while a funny video will be appreciated by your friends	Changing your profile pic every now and then. But choose carefully. You don't want one in which you've got a beer mug in hand	Posting updates one after another. Even if you have a lot to say, it's good to pace yourself. Give people time to digest what you've said
Twitter	Building a speciality area. This creates an identity for yourself.	"Cribbing endlessly. You never know who is looking, and what conclusion are being drawn	A few personal posts now and then. This doesn't mean stuff like "had 2 spoons of sugar in my tea this morning"	Re-tweeting too much of stuff
	Being a little witty. It's a little difficult to do in 140 characters, but it will set you apart	Bad-mouthing people. This is a very close knit circle, and word spreads quickly	Responding to questions, comments, replies. People like to be responded to	Pushing links too much, no matter how great the stuff your sharing. Think original content
	Sticking to a topic of interest	Using bad grammar. Post simple sentences but make them read correctly	Creating privacy lists on Facebook and Follower lists on twitter.	The flirting please. Twitter is very picky about that sort of thing
LinkedIn	A LinkedIn profile if you haven't started one already	Changing your profile picture too frequently	Valuing people's time – reach out, don't spam	Frivolous posts
	Joining relevant groups. But selectively.	Posting your twitter feed into LinkedIn	Updating your profile regularly	Using too many apps on your profile page
General	Posting in the platform that gives you most response and that you're comfortable with	Using foul language on some networks. Understand the culture first.	Using a common username across all networks, unless you <i>want</i> a separate identity	Posting things you're not really sure about. Opinions are fine

have found their own interesting ways of using this platform. Though most of what goes on in the twitterverse is utter rot generated by people with loads of time on their hands, if you make the right follow choices, you can use it to your advantage in many ways. The open nature of the platform allows you to connect with people, make contacts, get jobs, and even keep up with news specific to your interests. *[Check out the boxes for real life examples]*

So how do you use Twitter effectively? It's best if you provide a personal touch to your posts, but keep your posts restricted to a certain subject area. Your bio is very important and in keeping with the infamous twitter 140 character credo, this too has a restricted count. Keep it specific and quirky all at once. Difficult? Not really. Use a random word generator, and throw in some articulates like enthusiast, dreamer, etc., and you should be through. Of course we're kidding, but you get the picture.

Perhaps the most important advice anyone can give you is to jump in with both feet. Don't stand on the periphery and observe, because if you do, that's all you'll ever end up doing. To get what is known as critical mass, you need to up the interactivity for the initial period. If your Twitter

account is languishing revive it with full gusto rather than a half-hearted attempt.

Though Twitter is a mass market tool (unlike niche ones we'll talk about later), it is a close knit community of recognisable names (called handles). The twitterati, as they're called, monitor each other's posts with a keen eye and keep interacting on a regular basis in the offline world as well through tweet ups. Once you gain street credits in the Twitter world, more and more people will start following you. Having more followers means you get a ready sounding board for any idea you may want to test out first.

Yes, there's a lot of clannish snobbery that goes on too, but hey isn't that just an honest reflection of the real world?

To conclude, what Twitter can give you is succinctly put forth in the words of a twitter enthusiast, who for reasons easily understandable, wanted to not be associated with the quote, "I now have a wide circle of acquaintances, a smaller set of people I like, and a much smaller group of people who are friends".

LinkedIn

For the most part, LinkedIn is all about serious business. The norms and culture for

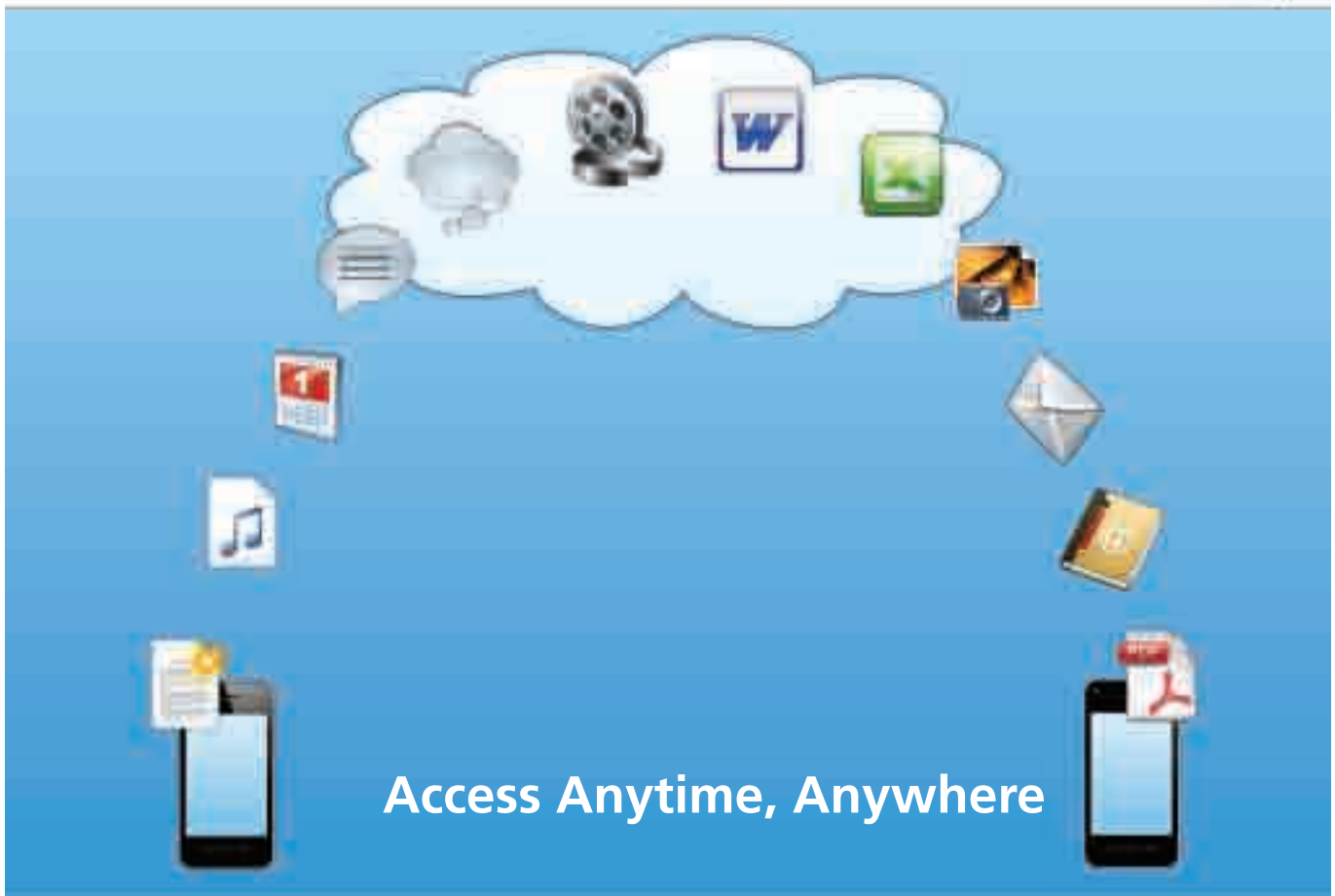
this network are pretty set. People are here to connect, so you're not asking for a backdoor entry into their space. They usually state the subject areas for which they would like to connect – Job Prospects, Business interests, etc. There are also people who call themselves LIONs or LinkedIn Open Networkers. These guys will not reject your add request.

Normally when you send requests, LinkedIn asks you to state the way in which you know them – Friend, Colleague or Classmate etc. You can choose the Friend option, but beware – if you don't add a good enough note accompanying your request, they might click on "don't know this person". If a good enough number of people click that for you, your ability to add more people gets restricted. Recruiters use this social networking platform extensively, so be detailed and create your profile carefully highlighting whatever projects you have undertaken in every job role.

Our take

Twitter enthusiasts may not want to admit it, but this world is just a slightly sophisticated version of the good old a/s/l chat room days. Except here there is anonymity by choice and one has to be a little more witty than asking an outright a/s/l to make a lasting connection.

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Going Niche

Now that you know how to deal with the biggies of the social networking world, here's something for adding more flair to your efforts. For setting up a well rounded internet personality, you should dabble in some of the more niche social networking platforms that have come up. Most of these niche platforms are driven by some common interest, goal, or objective. In most cases they integrate into your bigger social networking platforms like Twitter and Facebook. Some of the most prominent ones are listed below along with our recommendations on how to use them.

Knowledge

Quora.com – Social networking is fun, but there are times when you do want to showcase your other side. Your intelligent, knowledgeable side can be put to good use by answering questions on this knowledge sharing web site which has a strong social backbone. *[Check out our Web Watch section (Pg 24) for more info]*

Geeky

Wakoopa.com – This network is meant for us geeks. It's a social network that tracks software and games that members use. Based on what it analyses, it gives you recommendations and helps you discover loads of new software. On the social networking side it lets you share

reviews and have discussions with other software enthusiasts. The more software you install and use the more points you get. Points help you level-up from Newbie to Devotee to all the way up to Overlord. It's all quite fun – like an MMORPG.

Creative expression

Tumblr.com and **Posterous.com** – These services according to some people lie somewhere between Twitter and Facebook. Simply put, they are blogging sites which allow you to post richer content compared to the 140 character plain text offered by Twitter. And the content which includes images, quotes, video, links, etc., can be put up in an easy manner. Tumblr allows you to follow people and be followed, while your dashboard shows the live stream of posts.

Music

Last.fm and **blip.fm** – These are platforms for you to showcase your taste in music, and at the same time, let you connect with people of similar musical leanings. Last.fm works by first analysing your taste through scrobbling – a process in which information about whatever you play on your local machine gets sent to its servers. This gives you a play-count, which is good for bragging value too. Next it suggests neighbours or people with similar musical tastes. Great for finding your musical soulmates from around the world.

Goal based

43things.com – This web site is a focus group of sorts, where people who want to set

couch to the occasional fellow traveller, you still get to learn a lot. Also check out IndiMike.com for satisfying further wanderlust.

Be accessible

Gone are the days of internet anonymity. Not having a web presence these days is like burying your head in the sand. You should ideally be doing the opposite and make yourself easily accessible and unify your online presence. There are many tools that help you achieve this integration. Splash pages for instance get all your various avatars under one roof. www.about.me and www.flavours.me are good tools that allow you to set up a home page of sorts that points visitors to all of your online content on various platforms – both niche and mainstream. The beauty of these pages in the simplicity, and creativity you can unleash in a few simple steps. Also, you can choose to make one profile your hub or base – usually a blog, Facebook (with privacy sorted) or even Twitter, and share this splash-page link on all other communities.

Another useful class of tools is meant to streamline your updating. Services such as hootsuite.com and ping.fm allow you to post from one place to many of your social networking accounts. These services even let you schedule your posts. This is done so that your posts make the maximum impact, and reach the largest audience available. People are known to be most active on social networks at certain times such as between 5 PM to 8 PM for instance. In this case you would want your posts to be pushed to your network in

Lost and found

When Himani Sanghvi lost her wallet recently, the person who found it happened to get in touch with one of her 2,155 followers, who in turn instantly remembered her Twitter handle and tweeted to her about it.



"The wallet had all my debit cards, membership cards and even my PAN card. If it weren't for the top-of-mind recall created by my social networking presence, I probably wouldn't have got it back.

"I got my internship at Hindustan Times during my college days because of twitter. My future colleague was following a friend of mine and me. We got talking, and then the next day he asked us to come to his office. We were introduced to our boss right then and got the internship. Even right now where I'm teaching, the job I got was through a Twitter friend."



similar goals come together and help each other achieve them. People share inspirational stories and so can you, as you inch your way towards achieving those goals.

Travel

Couchsurfing.com – If you're serious about travel, this is a community you must check out. It's a volunteer-based worldwide network connecting travellers with members of local communities, who offer free accommodation and/or advice. Even if you can't offer your

that optimal window. Hootsuite also gives you intelligent analytics and a historical reporting archive of link click-through statistics from your social updates.

There are still more integration tools available that will let you post specialised content from various other social networks into Twitter and Facebook. Take twitterfeed.com for instance – you can use it to tweet songs you are currently listening to. Since automated posts are something people don't take too kindly to – it's akin to spamming

– these tools let you limit the quantity of posts, to say one post every half an hour, etc.

Connecting 101

Up to this point, you know how to leverage the various platforms to highlight your interests and showcase yourself well. Now comes the clincher – that final step of connecting with people. Networking as it is taught in business schools falls into the category of "connecting with people for the express purpose of getting something out of them". Although this seems very selfish a motive, one must understand that there is mutual benefit to be derived from connecting with others. Here are some of the things to be kept in mind while reaching out to people.

Cut the desperation: One of the first things you need to know when trying to connect with someone is that you may get the cold shoulder. The proverbial brush off may be just around the corner so be prepared for rejection. Avoid going "please please PLEASE reply to me". If the concerned person sees some mutual benefit in what you're saying and intends to get back to you, he/she will. Coaxing a response won't do you any good. In fact on networks like LinkedIn it's advisable to squeeze in something like this in your first contact – "If this does not interest you please click ignore and request you to not click on don't know this person". This is because LinkedIn is known to freeze add-requests if a certain number of people click on that dreaded button. Another thing is that nonchalance may actually work in your favour, ironically.

Choose the right network: When contacting someone do some research beforehand to figure out whether they are open to being contacted. If the person you are intending to interact with has a web site/blog check to see if they have contact info. Find out where they are most active – Twitter, Orkut, Facebook, or even YouTube. This will ensure that the person is on familiar ground and is receptive when you try to establish contact. An add-request without preamble saying "can we be frands" (*sic*) is not the way to go.

Brevity is the soul of wit: As it turns out it is also the soul of first contact. This problem is not so much present in Twitter as it's geared towards putting your point across in 140 characters or less. Though this may be too little for some people, there's an important lesson to be learnt here. Respect the other person's time and grab his/her

Just good business sense

Shaheen Peerbhai a.k.a @PurpleFoodie tells us about her experience with Social Networking and how she leveraged the tools available.



"When I joined Twitter, I did so to keep in touch with other food bloggers all over. It was more convenient/quicker than writing out long emails. I also looked at Twitter as an alternative to my food blog – (purplefoodie.com) – about things that could be summed up in 140 characters. I made sure I didn't talk about mundane things – updating people about the traffic situation. Twitter and Facebook are the two main tools for reaching my audience via the social network. Updating each place can be cumbersome, so I use Hootsuite and Tweetdeck for that. Also, what's interesting is that the quality of traffic one can get via social networks is much higher than the quality one could get via other sources. The average time spent on my site by someone coming in from a social network is twice the time than someone coming in via a referral link. And how has being on social networks helped me? Driven traffic to my web site, helped reach newer audiences, meet like-minded people, as well as given me more work."

attention quickly. If your subject is too big to be explained in short (and this is something common while contacting people on LinkedIn), break it up into bits. Send in the most important piece first and let the person get back to you. Remember those "Learn More..." buttons? Something in that vein.

Focus on the bigger picture: Though it's a good idea to get straight to the point about what you want, it's also good to focus on the interaction or the relationship you are trying to build. Your communication objective shouldn't merely be about the task at hand. Keep doors open, don't burn bridges, and all that jazz.

Quality not quantity: Once you've made your connection you need to make sure not to bombard them with communication. To keep a connection alive, send out an insightful communication every now and then, but infrequently. For instance take Twitter. If people who have recently followed you find that you have hijacked their timeline, they'll unfollow you without a second thought.

Remember, it's a jungle out there, and you need the right tools to survive and flourish. Happy networking! 📱


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Sambhav Daffu

sambhav.daffu@thinkdigit.com

What do you get when you add a 3G connection and a curious geek like yourself? For one, it seems like the perfect recipe for a local social superstar! As a Digit geek, you would have been approached with tech queries; and we're quite sure you must have provided some tech *gyaan* for good measure, in addition to the solution. Wouldn't it be great if that girl next door you've been sharing shy awkward glances with, came up to you and asked if you know a good sizzler joint in town? We hope you won't curl up into a ball and timidly go back to the comfort of your beloved computer.

Crowdsourcing as we all know, is the coming together of individuals with similar interests and collaborate on ideas on the internet for the greater good of the community. A good example is Wikipedia. Local crowdsourcing is a scaled down, localised version of it where people from the same area share interests and

useful information so that other users in the vicinity can make the most of the local deals. With the advent of 3G, this trend has picked up pace and is bound to grow even further. 3G has not only made surfing the internet on the go much faster, but also enhanced the uploading speeds. Users can now upload information, pictures and reviews seamlessly which is a corner stone of local crowdsourcing. Integration of ideas and opinions makes local crowdsourcing services a useful hub for users to share and disseminate information. In the west, the local crowdsourcing trend has made great inroads with new services and mobile apps mushrooming everyday. India is still at a nascent stage as we lack high smartphone market penetration and 3G mobile coverage.

While there may not be many people using 3G phones and services in our country, there is a hoard of data being uploaded by users everyday. According to Pankaj Chaddah, co-founder of Zomato.com, a service that depends on such data, "crowd sourcing faces the drawback of a lot of junk data being

generated by users and we need to moderate it. With the arrival of 3G, we certainly think that social media apps will get a huge boost here too."

Food services

Essentially a restaurant listing web service, Zomato is also one of the first Indian web sites to launch an Android app for its local listings. Formerly known as Foodiebay, Zomato currently has over 11,000 restaurants registered with it. Using the Zomato Android app, users can upload pictures and reviews of food and restaurants. What's unique about the app is that 'users get to view the menu of the restaurant, navigational maps and reviews uploaded by other users in three simple steps' says Chaddah. You can rank the ambience, service and other factors on a scale of 5 using the app. If you don't have an Android phone, you can also visit its mobile version.

Foodspotting.com is a location-based service where users upload the image of the food they spot in certain parts of the city. This helps other foodies

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know where they can find that food item. If you like what other foodies have spotted, give a 'nom' to that image which is a rating system to shortlist the best spotted foods. Foodspotting app is available on the iPhone and Android.

Shopping services

The daily deal model of group buying sprang up in India almost a year ago and now these services are gaining a lot of ground. They follow a unique method of offering group discounts where a



Find the best places to dine with Zomato.com

new deal is on offer everyday. Offers on services such as tattoo parlours, spas, fast food joints are available at huge discounts which are often in tune of 50 to 70 per cent. A deal is active only for a limited hours. You can pay anywhere between ₹50 to ₹125 for a deal. If a certain number of people purchase that deal, it gets activated. Once the deal is on you are mailed a coupon which you then take to the vendor to get your discount. If the minimum number of people required to buy a deal is not met then the deal is called off and no one is charged any money. Web services which offer such deals are SoSasta.com, Mydala.com, Koovs.com and Snapdeal.com. SoSasta.com is a subsidiary of Groupon.com, a famous daily deal web site. You can get your deals from the mobile versions of these sites and it's better to book your deal before it gets exhausted. With 3G, you can book your discounts faster. The power of local crowdsourcing is leveraged by these web sites in an innovative way as customers who get addicted to such deals and offers often refer their friends to buy. For this, they use social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Some of these sites offer movie tickets and loyalty points (which you can use to buy more deals) if two friends referred by you make a purchase.

Using fitness apps to get some motivation in your running and exercise

routine can be quite rewarding. However monitoring your fitness regime using such apps has not really picked up as a trend in India, but it's gaining momentum. These apps compare your performance with other users using social media. Apps such as Run Keeper and Daily mile keep an elaborate record of your performance with profiles, races and fitness reports. Daily mile also has a Twitter-like interface where you can boast about your work out session using a 140 character message and can check how other users have been performing.

Mobile assistant app

If you happen to be one of those people who don't find time to sift through the various deals, eating joints, and other happening places in your city then apps like Mybantu.com can come in handy. Mybantu.com is an Indian start up which uses an indigenously designed technology called ActiveRelevance to give relevant results. Mybantu's interface is simple and clean where you log in through your Facebook account and state your needs once submitted the Mybantu assistant would offer you a number of results. If you are interested in the offers proposed by the Mybantu assistant but are unsure of them then you can get an opinion from your friends using social media. ActiveRelevance works on 'humanized web' a model which uses recommendations from search engines, semantic engines, social media and web sites like Amazon.com, Rotten tomatoes, Yelp and Yahoo to generate answers for the query submitted. You get suggestions on movie venues, restaurant locations, health/ fitness services, shopping places and so on. The Mybantu assistant places results in a sticky notes-like grid where you can either like or trash a suggestion or ask other users on Twitter for their opinion. You can efficiently manage your needs by using tons of customisation and other options like profile creation, to do list, contacts list and your feed-

WAITING TO SHOW UP!

We're waiting for the following to catch up here, as they would make the local crowdsourcing bubble better and more integrated. Waze.com – a smartphone app that lets you upload traffic updates.

You would always find traffic status updates on your route, only thing is people should start using it more often here. We just hope people don't end up creating traffic jams or cause accidents while using it.

Editz.com – Don't you just love nitpicking on other people's work? Editz lets you do just that. It's an innovative way of correcting mistakes made by bloggers on their web pages. It allows you to correct typos on a web site and make it error free. As a writer you should enable the Editz add-on on your web page so others can identify and fix your errors.

back which you have given other users on their needs. The Mybantu assistant works even better on a 3G connection.

Apps not for everything!


According to Apple's approach there's an app for everything but there are a good number of crowdsourcing web-sites which still do not have a dedicated app. Below are web services for which we'd love to see an app soon.

This model of crowdsourcing truly

leverages the power of the masses. Ideabounty.com is a creative platform for ad agency clients and designers. It brings together a pool of talented designers who work on an idea submitted by you. This service is no free lunch as you have to put up a bounty for the designers so they take up your brief seriously, the higher the bounty the more and better results you can expect. Also check out Wooshii.com. Another cool web site which works on a similar model is Cre-

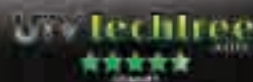


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Life without Facebook

Imagine the un-imaginable

Vishal Mathur

vishal.mathur@thinkdigit.com

“I think the internet will help bring about world peace. If you have ten Facebook friends in a country, would you feel a bit different about bombing it? The line between “us” and “them” is getting blurry, and for many, it’s already disappeared.” These are the words of Dan O’Donnell, founder of positiveatmosphere.com, an “online and offline positive thinking/self-improvement” community.

If ever there had been truer words to give us an indication of how popular social networking has become, and how deeply it has been integrated in our lives. Not only have multiple social networking web sites successfully made the world a smaller place, but also enhanced the way information (sometimes not very useful!) is shared. However, like most things, social networking comes with its own share of advantages and disadvantages.

It Rocks: the good about social networking

- Superb platform to communicate with friends, meet new people and even rediscover the friends you had lost touch with over the years. From a simple “heya” to asking someone out on a date, social networking lets you communicate whatever you want. Depending on your message, you can communicate with one, or with all of your friends in one go. It doesn’t get more convenient than this!
- Sharing of ideas. Communities, groups and pages are set up to invite like-minded people to join in. Ideas and opinions are shared, with a global perspective, which otherwise would not have been possible.
- A great source of information. The likes of Facebook and Twitter are loaded with the lots of information. Links are shared, news spreads like wildfire and ideas are exchanged.

INTERVENTION!

- Turn off that PC and go watch a movie.
- Delete that FB profile and resist that urge to ‘recover’ it.
- Use suicidemachine.org to permanently disappear from some social networks.

Rumours can spread like wildfire too!

- It’s a memory bank, as far as photographs are concerned. Photos can be stored, shared and even commented upon.
- Instant access. Be it on the PC, or the smartphone, you are never away from putting up a new post, status or tweet.

Why Facebook became so big

You can run, but you cannot hide:

facebook.com, m.facebook.com, O.facebook.com, desktop applications, hundreds of apps for the smartphone, integration with countless web sites (the “share” button, remember?) and now email as

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AP mode, WDS



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detachable antenna,
AP mode



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well. For most people, there is no getting away from the big F!

Life happens on Facebook, literally:

A lot of us cannot remember birthdays. Facebook is the saviour. Log in via the web browser and there is the list of people who need to be wished! If your FB calendar is synced on the phone, an alarm/popup display will save you from a torrent of abuses at a later date (or in some cases, later during the same day)! Events are planned on the mecca of social networking and invitations are sent on FB itself. The latest trend is to distribute wedding invitations via FB. For this to work seamlessly, it is expected that you will be accessing FB rather regularly, even if not via some constantly updating app. If not, you run the risk of becoming a social pariah. And in the present scenario, that may be the point of no return.

Source of information, and lots of irrelevant info: Status updates are not always about what someone is eating or drinking or which movie sucks. Sometimes, some people actually post relevant, important and knowledgeable stuff. News updates, cricket and football match updates and even some interesting articles can find their way on your Facebook update page – all thanks to your friends. The human angle – personal, emotional



and professional is what decides the content of the posts.

The human angle ensures emotions spill on to the social networks, and you will see posts like “Please

stop ruining my week-ends.....”, “disastrous start of the day...aar-rghhh!” and “Wish you all a happy chocolate day... got 2 Bournville and 1 dairy milk yippee !!!!!”. And without a shadow of a doubt, most of us do it too, at some point of time.

Quora: the different social network

Most social networks start with the basis of ‘making friends’ first and the spread of info and sharing of ideas is a secondary feature. However, with Quora, things are a bit different. The idea behind www.quora.com is to build a knowledge sharing platform, where users can ask questions, get answers from members of the community and follow not only people but also topics for discussion. Since this is a targeted setup, the chances of you getting a lot more relevant stuff to see each time you log in are a lot more. Unfortunately, Signing up for is a bit tricky at the moment, since it requires you to have an invite.


It sucks: Why you need to stay away

- Overwhelming: Social networking has become too “in your face”, thanks to it being a constant companion. No matter where you are, or what you are doing, the PC, laptop, mobile and even the likes of an HD media player (WD Live etc.) will bring you the latest updates. Staying connected is good, but the moment the online world starts taking over the offline world, then you must realize there is a problem which needs a solution.
- Lack of judgement: Some people really have no clue what they are posting on the www. Twitter and

IMAGINE A WORLD BEYOND FB

- Friends will actually talk to each other. And not just depend on status updates and wall posts.
- When someone sends you a friend request, instead of feeling proud about another number added to the list, you will actually try to get to know the other person. Particularly if it's in a nightclub!
- You cannot walk out of your home and start shooting at people. Life is not the Mafia Wars game.
- When you will see something interesting, you may share it with the people around you. And not search for the “Like” button.
- When you drive outside the city, you will see real farms, and actual farming activity. Not the one on the computer screen in an app called Farmville.
- Full length sentences and conversations will come back into fashion. Character limits don't apply in real life.
- You will actually get photos from the party last weekend- either on Picasa or via email or even in a USB drive. There is no Tag in real life.
- Poking someone you know may still place you at the receiving end of a tight slap. Poking someone you don't know may get you in a police station lock-up or facing a sexual harassment lawsuit.
- Wedding invitations will be sent the traditional way- wedding invitation cards!
- Peer Pressure Groups will shift focus back to things like drinks and drugs, from the “make a Facebook profile” phase.

Facebook timelines, for example, are usually flooded with a lot of random thoughts. And they get personal and abusive at times. Some also end up revealing personal information about them. Don't walk down that road!

- Waste of Time: Games like Farmville and Mafia Wars have become extremely popular and are considered as excellent stress-busters. But the fact that they are so addictive means that even though the stress may have disappeared, people end up playing these games much longer than they had bargained for. Hours spent in office are wasted in huge quantities, and the bosses are not pleased! 

A PARALLEL UNIVERSE!

- Facebook is possibly the only place where you won't get arrested for poking that cute looking girl!
- Facebook has given birth to a new breed of farmers... without the dirt, grime and smells...truly new age!
- Stalking someone online may not get you in as much trouble as if you are found standing in the back alley of the person's home, trying to sneak a peek in through the window!
- Quantity, not quality matters. The more friends you have, the better your chances of bragging about your popularity.

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Mobility on a budget

Notebooks these days are a lot more affordable than you'd think. And thirty-five grand can buy you a lot more notebook than it did a couple of years ago

Vishal Mathur, Nimish Sawant and Vinod Yalburgi

readersletters@thinkdigit.com

Notebooks have long since become everyday commodities for most of us. From those needing connectivity on the go, to those looking for entertainment, notebooks are both necessities and status symbols in equal measure, and not mutually exclusive! Product lines have segregated – there are notebooks that get the job done, and then there are those that win beauty awards (while getting the same job done). However, just because you spent 50,000 bucks less than your neighbour on a notebook, doesn't mean you deserve less, does it? Manufacturers have recognised this fact, and we were pleasantly surprised to see a bunch of rather smart looking notebooks trotting into this comparison.

What also surprised us were the specifications on these notebooks. Gone are the days when a dual core processor was exclusively reserved for notebooks costing more than half a lakh. All of the notebooks tested here are overkills for basic office work – mails, documents and spreadsheets. In fact some of these notebooks would give three-year old desktops a fair run for their money. Processing power, graphics

Acer Timeline 4820T was awarded the Best Buy and Best Performer

hardware, lots of RAM, reasonable storage space, and attractive looks – these notebooks seem to have it all, and as consumers, we cannot complain.

However, when looking at notebooks in these price segments, it becomes even more important to study each feature, and more importantly, how well it is implemented. Obviously, manufacturers

have to cost cut somewhere, and if this is not done with components, then it is surely done with materials used, features and the usability of the same. We're used to seeing sub-standard displays, poor trackpads, mediocre keypads and such in value-oriented notebooks such as these, and as such were on a stricter lookout for any grievances.

Unfortunately for us, we missed out on a few very important brands at the time of going to print. Dell, HCL, Sony and Samsung were unable to arrange to send us notebooks within our set

deadlines, and arrived too late to be included in this comparison.

You can expect reviews of the same on thinkdigit.com, and we'll be uploading a larger comparison sheet with all the notebooks that have been missed. We didn't get any HP notebooks, as they (HP) have a policy of not par-



Acer Aspire 5742G was awarded the Editor's Pick

Corrected Sandy Bridge

Intel is shipping out corrected core logic chips for the Sandy Bridge processors. These chips have the new B3 stepping

GTX 590 coming

All indications point towards a monster dual GPU, GeForce 590 GPU soon. Evidently one of NVIDIA's beta drivers list a card called the "GeForce GTX 590"

Notebook test

icipating in any "notebook comparison tests". We have been unsuccessful in trying to convince them otherwise, and cannot understand the reason behind it.

Features, build, etc.

When you're shopping for a notebook under ₹40,000, it's important to get your priorities right. Do you want a performance machine, or do you want something for office work and browsing? Additionally, is it something you will be carting around a lot? While you will typically not get 12.1 and 13.3-inch notebooks within this price range owing to the costs involved with shrinking the space available for components, there are plenty of 14-inch options, along with the much larger 15.6-inch options. So while a larger display might be tempting, it also tips the scales and makes it inconvenient to cart around.

There's a general thumb rule here – portability means 14-inch and smaller displays, with some exceptions. Some 14.1-inch notebooks might be too thick and bulky, and weigh more. Lightweight materials also add to costs, which is why ultra-portables are so expensive.

HOW WE TESTED

Over the past five years, we've more or less tuned our test processes and testing benchmarks to achieve a fine balance between fairness and subjectivity. Obviously, testing a notebook is not the same as testing a graphics card, and some subjectivity is required – the human factor, if you will. This time round we made one very major change. We figured that our Bazaar ratings have an extra value called build, whereas for our tests, we only have features and performance, with build typically rated as a part of features. Now build can be expanded to mean usability also, after all isn't it the thought process behind building something that dictates how usable (or not) a device is? So this time, our test has been divided into three parts – features, performance, and build and usability. This third part is a breakaway from the first, and henceforth will be a chunk of all tests that contain subjective elements, like cellphones, cameras, notebooks and PMPs. We might even add to this list.

Under features we list all the specifications, and characteristics of the notebooks. Not all these points are rated or given scores. For example, we're not concerned with the processor model number, which would directly affect performance, but we are concerned with the storage capacity. Similarly, we don't give extra points for discrete graphics, because that will affect other scores, however, we will rate the number of USB and FireWire ports. Usability consisted of a lot of factors, including keypad layout and feel, trackpad feel and accuracy, shortcut keys, ergonomics during usage etc.

Finally, for performance we have two benchmark suites – PC Mark Vantage and 3D Mark 2006. We also use CineBench and are now using the latest version 11.5. Battery life of each notebook is tested by playing a video using VLC player, while turning off all power saving features, including screensavers and low-power states. The tests rated on a scale of 10 are typically subjective. Tests like DivX encoding and file transfers are measured in seconds, and with such scores, the lower the better as lower scores denote the task finished quicker. Lastly, we used a couple of games, Doom 3 and Far Cry 2. The former is an old game that we run at 800 x 600 pixels, this is to test the suitability of a notebook as a casual gaming machine, while Far Cry 2, a newer game, is run at a more demanding resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels – this simulates a more game-oriented user. For gaming notebooks (none in this test were), we use games like Crysis and Call Of Pripyat to judge performance.



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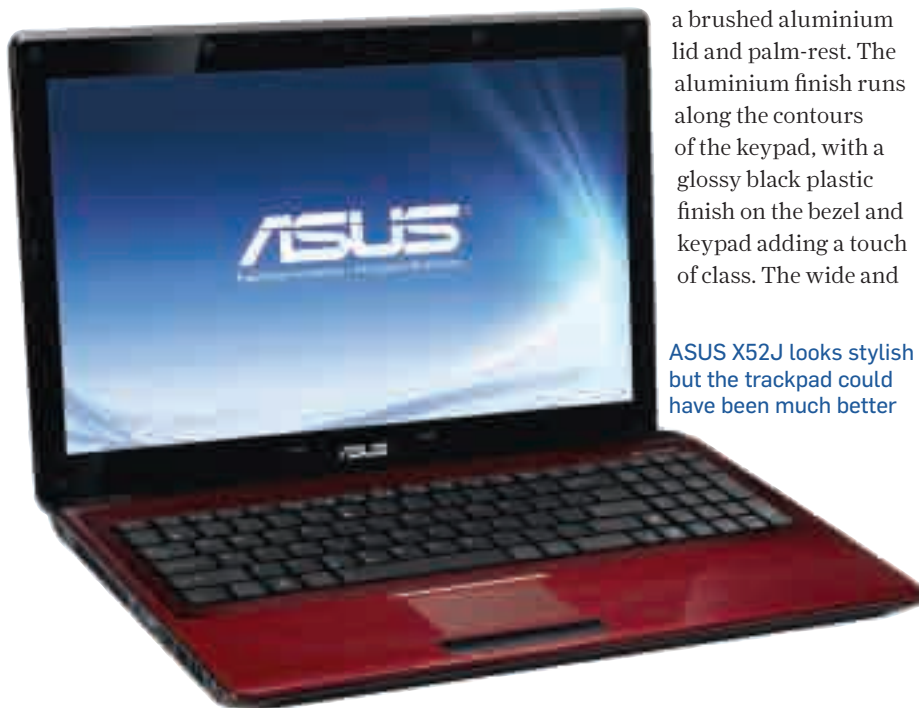
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Brand	Acer	Acer	Asus	Asus	Acer	Zenith
Model	Aspire 4738	Aspire 4820T	P52F	X52J	5742G	Uranium
Features (Out of 15)	9.48	10.32	9.39	9.84	9.84	9.69
Build (On 20)	10.4	13.1	9.44	11.7	10.1	9.88
Performance (On 65)	24.57	35.79	25.57	30.85	34.42	28.05
Grand Total (On 100)	44.45	59.21	44.40	52.39	54.36	47.62
Price (₹)	35,499	35,999	37,999	38,799	38,990	39,000
Warranty	2 years	1 year (Global)	1 year	1 year (Global)	1 year	1 Year
Plus (+)	Well built	Sleek, great battery life	Decent build quality	Looks stylish	Ergonomic keypad	Good screen
Minus (-)	Needs more RAM	Lacks dedicated GPU	Trackpad lacks precision	Trackpad lacks precision	Low battery life	Trackpad lacks precision
Features and Component Specifications						
Processor / Speed (MHz)	Core i3-370M / 2400	Core i3 -370M / 2400	Core i5 – 480M / 2670	Core i3 – 350M / 2260	Core i3 - 380M / 2530	Core i5 M560 / 2.670
RAM (MB) / Type	2048 / DDR3	2048 / DDR3	4096 / DDR3	3072 / DDR3	3072 / DDR3	1024 / DDR3
Graphics	Intel HD Graphics	Intel GMA HD	Intel HD graphics	AMD Radeon HD 6370M	NVIDIA GeForce GT 540M	Intel IGP
Dedicated Video (MB)	NA	NA	NA	1024	1024	NA
Storage size (in GB)	500	500	500	500	500	320
Optical Drive / Speed	DVD-Super Multi Drive/24x	DVD Multi-speed	DVD Super Multi 8X DL drive	DVD Super Multi 8X DL Drive	DVD Super Multi DL drive	DVD RW Multi Speed
Bundled OS	Windows 7 Basic	Windows 7 Basic	Free DOS	Windows 7 Basic	Windows 7 Basic	Windows 7 Professional
Characteristics						
Screen Size (inches)	14	14-inch	15.6	15.6	15.6	14
Screen (resolution)	1366 x 768	1366 x 768	1366 x 768	1366 x 768	1366 x 768	1366 x 768
Weight (kg)	2.2	2.07	2.62	2.7	2.6	NA
Ports (USB / FireWire)	3 / 0	4 / 0	3 / 0	3 / 0	3 / 0	3 / 0
LAN / Bluetooth / Wi-Fi	Y/Y/Y	Y/Y/Y	Y/Y/Y	Y/Y/Y	Y/Y/Y	Y / Y / Y
Display output (VGA/DVI/HDMI/Display Port)	HDMI	Y/N/Y/N	Y/N/Y/N	Y/N/Y/N	Y/N/Y/N	Y / N / Y / N
Memory Card Reader (Y/N) / Supported formats	Y / SD, MMC	Y / SD,MS,MS-Pro	Y / SD, MMC, MS	Y / SD, MMC, MS	Y / SD,MMC	Y / MS, MS Pro Duo, SD, MMC, xD
Build (So 10) Body / Keypad / Lid, movables	7 / 6 / 7	7.5 / 7 / 6	6.5 / 5.5 / 6	7 / 7 / 6.5	6 / 7 / 6	6 / 6 / 7
Keypad Feedback / Usability (on 10)	5 / 6	7.5 / 7	6 / 5.5	7.5 / 7	7 / 6.5	6 / 5.5
Shortcut Keys (on 10)	6	6	6.5	6.5	6	6
Trackpad ergonomics, size, position / accuracy (on 10)	7 / 7	6 / 5	5.5 / 5	6.5 / 6	5.5 / 5	5.5 / 6.5
Wi-Fi / Bluetooth / TouchPad	N / N / N	Y / N / Y	N / N / N	N / N / N	N / N / N	N / N / N
Performance						
PC Mark Vantage Overall Score	4737	5157	5943	5549	5617	5530
3D Mark 2006 Overall Score	1497	1426	1944	4179	8218	1597
WinRAR 3.9 (benchmark in kbps)	1509	1499	1571	1468	1413	1562
Performance Mark 7 bandwidth (Mbps)	31.01	45.23	32.01	31.81	35.49	39.98
PassMark Wireless Mon 3.0 Signal Strength (Zone 1, in %)	55	51	55	50	63	50
Maxxon CineBench R11.5 (CPU score)	2	1.99	2.32	1.88	2.09	2.25
Performance (Real World Tests)						
Speaker Quality / HD Movie Viewing (So 10)	6 / 6	5.5 / 6	6.5 / 7	6 / 7	6 / 6.5	5 / 6.5
DivX Encode 7.0 (.VOB to .Divx, default mode) (in sec)	50.45	52	41	52	54	44
File transfer Test (4 GB sequential / assorted) (in sec)	156 / 337	147 / 202	190 / 209	166 / 158	143 / 176	220 / 228
Doom 3 (800 x 600) / Far Cry 2 (1024 x 768) in fps	20.7 / 12.48	21.6 / 11.07	26.5 / 15.09	112.4 / 35.75	156.7 / 48.21	20.2 / 11.53
Battery Life Test (in minutes)	135	427	66	80	80	167

We're expecting new MacBook Pros from Apple. Rumours point to new Intel processors and platforms and a GPU refresh as well

Intel is trying hard to break into the cellular SoC domain and their Atom-based Medfield SoC is now undergoing sampling

Acer's Aspire 4820T is part of their Timeline series. It is as close to a portable notebook as the entrants in this comparison get, weighing in at 2.07



kilograms. Although not as attractive or as sleek as some of the earlier Timeline models we tested in 2009, this notebook is reasonably sleek. It has a brushed aluminium lid and palm-rest. The aluminium finish runs along the contours of the keypad, with a glossy black plastic finish on the bezel and keypad adding a touch of class. The wide and

ASUS X52J looks stylish but the trackpad could have been much better

seamless touch-pad is a dark shade of grey, giving it a nice contrast against the lighter grey shades on the palm-rest. The palm-rest includes three LED indicators representing the display on, power on and Wi-Fi on/off status from left to right.

The other two notebooks that had 14-inch displays were the Acer Aspire 4738 and the Zenith Uranium. The former has a nice matte finish that is smudge-immune. The lid has a patterned design on it and the chocolate colour is a nice touch. Acer has been following the concept of using large keys that are flat and lack bevelling and larger gaps found on other keypads. They call this design a floating keypad and from what we've seen these floating keypads are really comfortable and offer quick, precise typing. The 4738 is no exception – typing is a pleasure. The notebook is pretty well constructed.

The Zenith Uranium has a black, brushed metal finish on the lid. The inner body is plastic and looks cheap, especially since we expected the goodies



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AMD pokes Intel

Driven to the point of the sword, AMD got some much needed respite with Intel's 6 series SATA woes and their marketing campaign taunts Intel to this effect

Intel to ship 10 core CPU

Intel's spokesperson said that their upcoming Westmere EX Xeon processor is expected to ship soon, definitely in the first half of 2011

from the lid carried over inside, and especially on the palm rest. While it's reasonably well built, Zenith has cut corners in obvious regions. We noticed the left side of the palm rest tends to get hot after using for more than two hours. The recessed USB ports on the right are a pain while inserting devices – an example of usability foregone for style.

The next notebook we looked at was a heavyweight. At 2.6 kilograms, and with a display size of 15.6 inches, the Acer 5742G is definitely not the sort of machine you'll want to tote around a lot. The matte black texture that does duty on the exterior also extends to the inside. The 5742G is well built and looks rather suave – the floating keypad works very well. The trackpad while featuring pinch zooming isn't as accurate as we'd like. One of the "features" of this notebook was the presence of a dedicated graphic solution – and that too a DX11 solution – a GeForce GT 540M. The only other notebook that featured dedicated graphics was the ASUS X52J with the AMD Radeon HD 6370M. The X52J is an attractive notebook with a bright red lid with attractive graphics. The ASUS logo is embossed in steel – an attractive touch. The Radeon

HD 6370 graphics and Core i3 processor ensure it's no slouch, while the large, flat keys ensure high points in the usability department. The keys have good tactile feedback, and this aids usability. Biometrics login is supported via facial recognition, and the trackpad incorporates basic gesture-based controls.

The other 15.6-inch monster is the ASUS P52F – which has a much faster

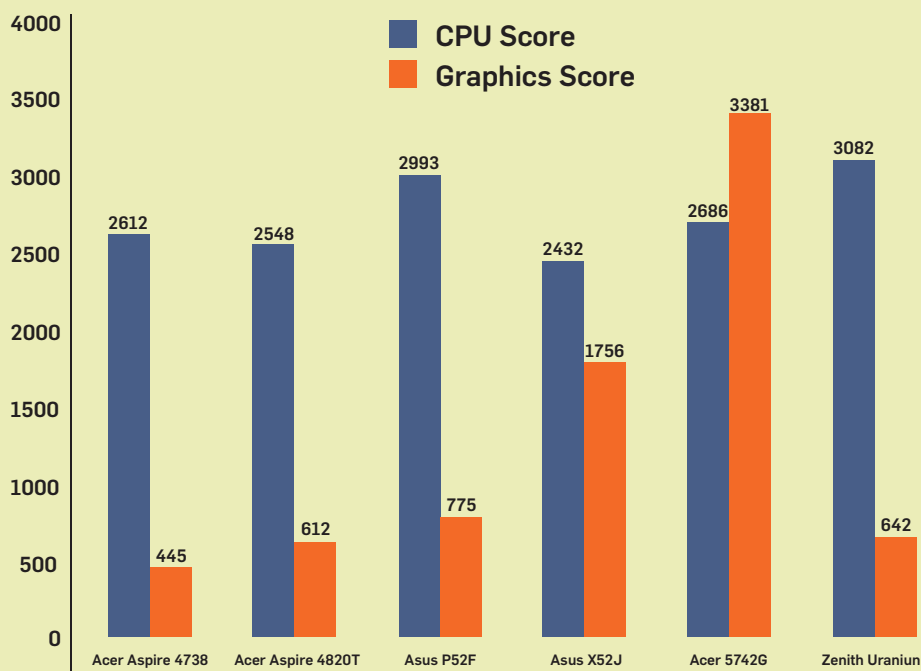
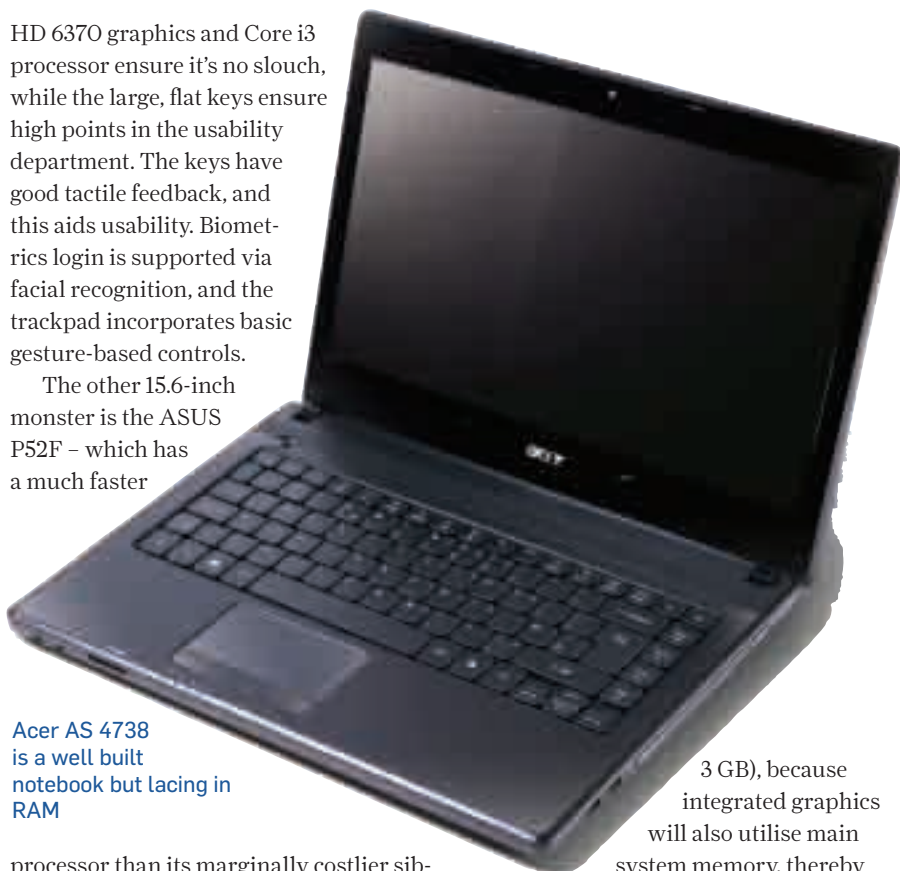
Acer AS 4738 is a well built notebook but lacking in RAM

processor than its marginally costlier sibling, but makes do with integrated (Intel) graphics. We're pleased ASUS upped the RAM by 1 GB to 4 GB, (the X52J has

3 GB), because integrated graphics will also utilise main system memory, thereby leaving less memory for OS and application use. Looks wise, the P52F is a bit different from the X52J – matte black with texturing does duty in place of the glossy finish. The P52F's design seems to be reminiscent of the ASUS Bamboo series, if not on the use of materials, then on the overall look and placement of elements. One of the sure indications of the corporate nature of this notebook (in case the finish wasn't clue enough) is the presence of hard drive protection, by means of cushioning built into the notebook that protects the drive from sharp impacts.

Performance

When it comes to performance, there will always be a divide between notebooks with discrete graphic solutions and those with integrated solutions. While gaming on a sub ₹40,000 notebook may be considered foolhardy by some, the two solutions with discrete graphics can handle the odd game. That is not to say we recommend them for gaming, and a desktop worth the same amount will surely give you more bang for buck, but it's to be noted that they have strong multimedia



3D Mark 2006 score : Most of the notebooks which didn't have a discrete graphics solution gave similar graphics score except ASUS X52J and Acer 5742G

3 new Acer tablets

Acer has announced three new tablets as part of their Iconia range, and these will come with either Android or Windows 7

Tablet year for ASUS

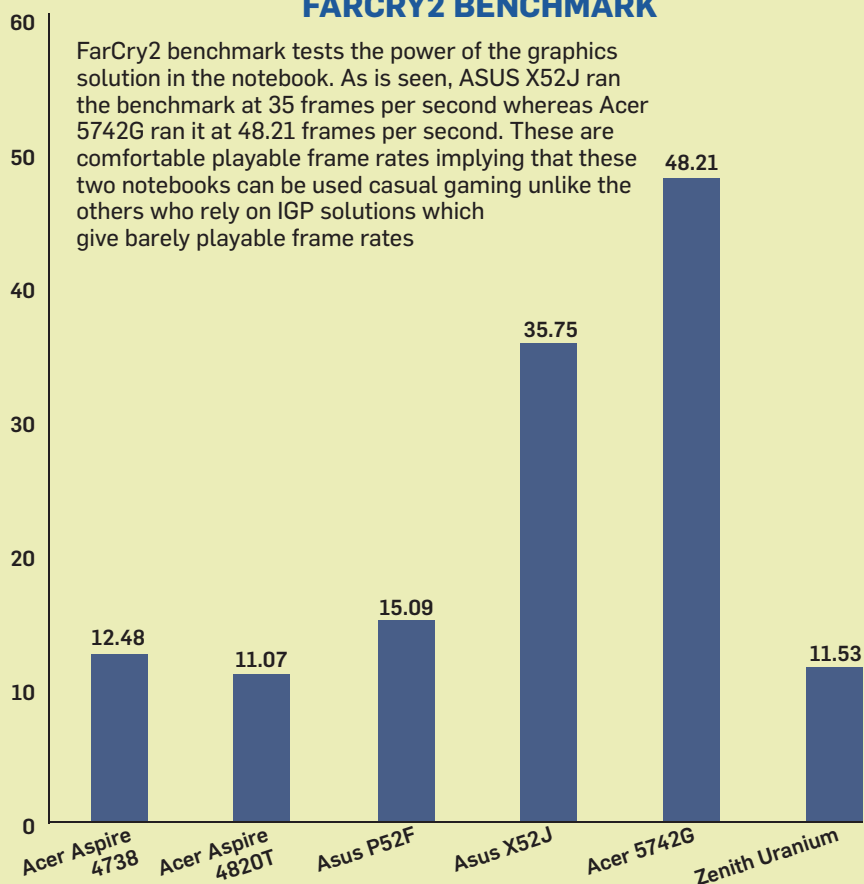
ASUS figures this to be the year of the tablet and is planning to ship 1.5 million units in 2011

Notebook test

capabilities. Additionally, we're seeing a lot more processing grunt in terms of both CPU and GPU on these solutions, and such configurations might have been impossible at the price around a year ago.

When it comes to CPU performance, expect Core i5 processors to lead the Core i3 bunch. The major difference between these two mobile family of CPUs is the Core i5s have support for Turbo Boost and run at higher clock speeds. Both do not support Hyper-Threading. Curiously, all three Acer notebooks were the quickest in the sequential copy test, while the ASUS X52J was strangely faster with assorted reads. It was also no surprise to see the notebooks with discrete graphics edged past the others in the game benchmarks, and with 48 frames per second in Far Cry 2 at a resolution of 1024 x 768, the Acer 5742G is more than suited to casual gaming. This is obviously on account of the GT 540M graphic card. Curiously, the AMD HD 6370 pulls ahead on the PC Mark Vantage gaming score - we're sure the NVIDIA solution is faster, and this benchmark is probably

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New Intel 14nm fab

Intel is planning to set up a 14nm fab in the US that is rumoured to cost a whopping US 5 billion dollars

Lynx to follow Brazos

We've already seen AMD's value-oriented Fusion parts in Brazos, and it seems Lynx parts based on the 32nm Llano APU should also be arriving within the next few months

not stressing the right GPU parameters.

Not surprisingly when we come to real world CPU intensive tasks like compression/decompression and media encoding, we see the notebooks with Core i5 processors take the lead. What the benchmarks do not tell you is that for most mundane tasks, a Core i3 will get you through very easily. While not indicative of the market, the fact that all six models featured Intel processors and platforms is testament to Intel's widespread influence. Another factor that many theoretical benchmarks do not measure is the usability of the system, and the quantity of RAM. Most memory benchmarks will utilise memory only to gauge bandwidth, however, just because a system with 2 GB gives a higher bandwidth score does not mean Windows will be snappier than on a machine with 4 GB of RAM. Windows 7 is a lot less demanding on components including memory than Vista was, and thankfully, even on 2 GB these notebooks didn't slouch. The Zenith Uranium misses a point and features only 1 GB of RAM, which is glaring – even some netbooks come with 2 GB! Regardless, we continue to recommend 3 and 4 GB notebooks – as with 2 GB, Windows tends to slow down after a while, as the load on memory increases due to an increasing list of installed applications, some of which might run background tasks even when not explicitly run.

Verdict

In terms of overall performance, the **Acer Aspire 4820T** just edged out the **Acer 5742G** – mainly because of superior battery performance. The Aspire is a very different beast, with no additional graphics solution, and comes with a very handy battery and optimised power consumption. This allowed a whopping 427 minutes of backup, while playing back a VOB file – that's a shade

over 7 hours – pretty sublime, and well into netbook territory. This featured as a part of performance, and is why the Acer Aspire 4820T scores so high on the overall performance charts.

Despite not winning the Best Performance award, the **Acer 5742G** had some well-rounded scores. A good CPU, strong GPU and 3 GB of RAM, with 500 GB of storage to boot seems like a decent deal, especially for an MRP of only ₹38,990. This notebook bagged our **Editor's Pick** award, because if it's sheer computing and gaming speed you are after, the 5742G gets the nod ahead of the 4820T.



The ASUS P52F has a decent build quality but its trackpad lacks precision

Best Value?

Value can mean different things to different people. However, in our opinion, there are a few things that a notebook should have, in order for us to recommend it. Besides the spec-list, that means little for ordinary work, usability is a major element. What's the use of a really fast graphic card and quad core CPU, when the keypad is poorly designed? Or what use is a great display, when the trackpad is inaccurate? When one

reviews notebooks for a living, and uses a lot of them, one realises that on-paper specs mean as little as the on-paper capabilities of the Indian Cricket team. What matters is ability to deliver. And we try to design our tests to be indicative of not just specifications, but the look and feel factor, the usability quotient, features that may be hidden away that matter and the overall design of the product. Battery life, for example, is very important, and often neglected, but really, very important. Especially for someone who is likely to be travelling a lot, and cannot be hindered with chargers. Then there's performance – which should not be compromised for better battery life.

That being said, both the **Best Buy** and the **Best Performer** awards go to the **Acer Aspire Timeline 4820T** for a good mix of features, components, performance and frugality on power. It's stylish and upmarket looking to boot, and we reckon many an executive will find the smart grey colour in tone with the dress code for such positions. If you want something with a little more graphics power, but nearly equal on the value factor, look no further than our **Editor's Pick** – the **Acer 5742G**. Both notebooks are workhorses, and whether you want to work, play or entertain yourself – you'll not be disappointed. However, both are meant for rather different audiences. The 4820T is strictly for those on the go – it's smaller and lighter with a great battery. The Acer 5742G is the opposite – it's bulkier, heavier and thicker, and the battery life is not that great. It is meant to sit on a desk all day, and entertain you, while being plugged into the mains – this is a true desktop replacement, and the HDMI out means you can hook it up to your HDTV too.

In the end, somebody has to win, someone has to lose – and the scores tell no tall tales. However, after this mini test, we were hard pressed to find serious faults in any of the notebooks. Build quality was pretty good all round, and many of the notebooks actually looked a bit costlier than we'd have figured – which is a good thing! We're happy to report we found this year's crop of sub-₹40,000 notebooks much better than

MSI Wind U160MX

MSI announced an addition to its U100 series of netbooks with an ultra-slim 10.1-inch netbook which weighs only a kilogram with battery and promises over 8 hours of battery life

Ovi store has Indian presence

Nokia and Reliance have come together to launch the Indian arm of the popular Ovi Store, with Reliance offering integrated billing for content bought from the Ovi Store

Notebook test

last years batch – it seems technology keeps getting more and more affordable.

For example, the Core i5 processor was something we never thought we'd see in a notebook priced below ₹40,000. Performance increments per clock and improved thermal performance mean that a Core i5 is faster than a Core 2 Duo at the same clock speed, while consuming less power. We're also quite pleased with the fact that manufacturers have finally upped the storage on the more affordable notebooks – 250 and 320 GB seems sufficient, but not when one uses a notebook as the primary means of entertainment – games, HD movie rips, and lossless music have a way of gobbling up drive space before you know it. We're also seeing 4 GB of RAM – which we feel should become de facto given the ultra affordable current pricing of DDR3 RAM. Which is why we were shocked with Zenith imbuing the Uranium with a very paltry 1 GB of memory. Multimedia demands more RAM – heck, Windows 7 demands more.

Which brings us to the usability quotient. It is nice to see the level of thought going into designing these notebooks.

Manufacturers have woken up to the fact that people spending 40,000 Rupees do not expect plain beige or grey briefcases. Neither do they expect shoddy and un-optimised keypads. Thankfully, for the most, these notebooks are all pretty usable, especially the Acer notebooks. ASUS too seems to have pulled up their socks with some functional and nice looking offerings.

As mentioned earlier, we've received notebooks from Dell and HCL that arrived after our deadlines for receiving products, and we didn't dare try delaying the magazine going for print, so these notebooks were skipped. However, we intend to review them online, and feature them alongside the tested models in an extended comparison from the one you just read. Stay tuned for the models within this category



Zenith Uranium has a good 14-inch screen but the build quality of its palm rest and trackpad is bad

that were missed this time. Additionally, we'll be doing a wider category of notebooks later on, in the year, which you might want to tune in to, especially if you're looking for something more upmarket. **d**

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Epson Stylus Photo R3000

Epson announced a new A3+ inkjet printer - the R3000 - which supports Wi-Fi connectivity

MFD Test

Do more than just print

Multi-functional devices are slowly but surely replacing stand-alone printers due to their versatility. We tell you why...

Nimish Sawant

nimish.sawant@thinkdigit.com

Back in the day, a printer purchase was a major decision, as it cost a bomb. Only the very ambitious ones went for the colour printers, whereas mere mortals had to make do with mono-chrome printers. And who can forget that buzzing sound of the dot matrix printers? All that is in the past.

Fast forward to today, where printing is just one of the many features on offer. Multi-functional devices (MFD hereon) offer printing, scanning and copying on the same device, with many of them also adding PictBridge support, Wi-Fi support and memory card slots so that you don't even have to power on your PC to get a print. With the web functionality (and we don't just mean Wi-Fi support) added to the multi-functional devices, this category has also entered the league of convergence devices.

We got around seven MFDs to test, from brands such as Canon, HP, Epson and Brother. We also received MFDs from brands such as Samsung and Ricoh, but since they were way above our set price barrier, we could not include them in the shootout. Do look out for their reviews in the coming month though.

Features

Epson ME Office 960FWD and ME 620F

Office 960FWD comes in the traditional Epson all black body. This colour inkjet multi-function device comes with a 2.5-inch LCD screen bang in the middle of the operational panel, which is neatly divided into four sections: Photo, Scan, Fax and Copy. The operational panel is tilt adjustable making it easier to use while you are in a sitting position or standing.

The 960FWD supports Wi-Fi and the instruction manual explains the Wi-Fi setup procedure brilliantly. Although the nomenclature says Office, it has some features such as an SD card slot and PictBridge connectivity that will appeal to the home user.

The Epson ME 620F looks similar to the 960FWD, but is more bulky and has a two-line LCD display as opposed to the 2.5-inch colour LCD found on the 960FWD. There is no backlight on the display that makes it difficult to view in the dark.

While the 620F has no network connectivity options, the 960FWD comes with ethernet and Wi-Fi connectivity. The 960FWD also supports duplex printing.

Canon PIXMA MP287 and PIXMA MP497

Canon sent us their basic MFDs from the PIXMA range, namely MP287 and MP497. Both the MFDs are identical in all aspects, except the fact that the MP497 has an in-built Wi-Fi support. Both of them come in the standard MP series form factor, comprising a glossy black body with rounded edges. Surprisingly, none of the MFDs sported a PictBridge connect or a memory card slot. The paper loading tray is located on the rear side of the printer and they both have a flatbed scanner which forms the top portion of the device. They house two cartridges: colour and black.

On the right hand side of the MFD you have the operational panel which is

the same for both MP287 and MP497. It comprises a single digit LCD screen which allows you to select number of pages to print among other things. A single button below the display, can help you select between paper type and size. There are three status indicators for paper jam and ink running low.

Canon's bundled software, Canon Solutions, when activated arranges itself in the form of bubbles on the right hand side of your screen and allows you to select the specific functionality.



HP PhotoSmart Premium C310a



Epson ME Office 960FWD was awarded the Best Buy

This is one smart MFD from HP aptly titled PhotoSmart. The C310a apart from having the regular print, copy and scan functionalities, also includes a new one - Web. Not only does it support

Wi-Fi and have network connectivity, but it supports cloud printing. Once you register the printer on HP's ePrint web site, you can send an email to a unique ID associated with the printer from anywhere and get a print.

The C310a is very sturdy, with a piano black glossy body. The HP C310a lacks an automatic document feeder. It sports a 4.3-inch touchscreen. There are no buttons on this MFD, apart from the power button. All other operations are touch controlled. The main screen is divided into three sections: one showing functions such as Print, Scan and Copy; the other showing various applications supported which require an internet connection. The third one on top shows the status indicators. At present in India, there is a limited app support for Google Docs, Tabbloid, Sudoku, Quick Forms, Yahoo! News and DreamWorks. Quick Forms comprises forms such as notebook paper, puzzles, and calendar. The apps

allow you to print stuff off the MFD without any intervention from the system. There are many apps supported by HP C310a but only a limited number of them are available in India, which should hopefully change with time.

Brother MFC-J615W

Black seems to be a favourite with MFD companies. Brother MFC-J615W also comes in a piano black glossy body, which is radically different from its traditional white / grey coloured devices that we have tested in the past. In terms of form factor, not much has changed from the DCP series of MFDs, but the two-line monochrome display is replaced by a 3.3-inch colour display.

USB and network connection ports are still under the hood of the MFD with a nice channel for the cords. This design was seen in older models and prevents accidental removal of cords. The power connector is of the BS-1363 type (commonly known as flatpin - typical to UAE and European regions) which will require a universal spike guard or an adapter, if your electrical sockets are not compatible.

MFC-J615W can print, copy, scan and also has the fax functionality. There are direct buttons to access these functions. The W in the nomenclature indicates Wi-Fi support. You can set up Wi-Fi on the MFD in a couple of easy steps in the Settings menu. Cartridges are housed in the right hand corner section. Unlike the ADF found on other MFDs that we tested, in J615W, the documents need to be fed at the base of the ADF and they come out from the top. It also has an SD card slot and a USB slot for direct printing off or scanning to these devices.

Performance

In MFD testing, the outputs all appear to be the same at first glance as you are basically printing the same test sheets. However, for quality scores, we really have to look deep into each print. Of course the time taken for each print job is duly noted, but that is just one part of the test.



HP OFFICEJET PRO 8500A PLUS

This is one of the most good looking MFDs that we have ever come across in our labs in a long time. The front and top piano black glossy finishes are neatly complemented by matte black finishes on the right and left hand sides. Another interesting aspect of this MFD is the almost modular arrangement of various parts. The operational panel is a full touchscreen rectangular glass surface which looks eerily similar to an elongated iPod. This MFD comes with four colour cartridges namely C,M,Y and K and two extra which

comprise of the C+M and Y+K combination. Installing the cartridges is quite

easy if you follow the animation on the operational panel touchscreen. The operational panel is a 4.3-inch resistive touchscreen. The touchscreen can be made to lie flat with along the front portion of the MFD or tilted at an angle. The animations explaining tasks are quite helpful.

Initial setup of the MFD took close to 30 mins, which may seem too long as compared to the other MFDs we tested, which were up and running in five minutes. Paper input tray is located at the base and this is covered by the output tray which can be lifted at 45 degrees to refill more papers.

The ADF section is quite sturdy with boldly designed tray which can extend to accommodate 50-100 pages at a time easily.

All in all, this is one MFD that will occupy a place of pride in your home or office. The thing we really liked about this MFD is the ability to do so many things apart from just print, copy and scanning. It supports ePrint which means, you can send the document you want to print on an email ID from anywhere and the printer will print from the cloud. We tried our hands at it but were disappointed as we kept getting 'Message not sent' errors. It has a Pictbridge connectivity and also the option to print directly from memory cards.

Apps support : Google Docs, Tabbloid, Sudoku, Quick Forms, Yahoo News, DreamWorks are just some of the apps it supports. The 8500A needs to be connected to the internet to access apps. Google Docs app was quite fascinating. We actually printed out a document saved on Google Docs from the printer itself. This just takes printing over the air to a completely new level.

As far as text document printing goes, all the MFDs fared well, with the HP 8500A, C310a and Brother MFC J615W doing particularly well. The other MFDs gave decent prints, but in some text portions, we did notice sharpness of the fonts being compromised.

Unless your document is being read under the microscope, you shouldn't feel the jitters.

In the mixed document printing, we noticed that Brother MFC-J615W did not fare as well as the others. It

scored least on all five areas that we compared for all the MFDs. The test print comprises a section with black background and yellow text, which gradually reduces in size. In laser prints,

the yellow text is legible even at the smallest font size, but not so in the inkjet printers. Canon MP287 fared quite well in this parameter. Epson 620F took the longest time to print this document.

In the fast document printing, most MFDs gave the five prints fast, with

Epson 960FWD being fastest at 25 seconds.

We noticed that the quality of prints from the Epson MFDs was not usable as the colours were washed out and text was not sharp at all. HP and Canon's economy prints were better

compared to the rest.

Photo printing test was done at the best quality settings. Canon and HP MFDs scored higher than the other MFDs. HP C310a gave the best photo



Brother MFC-J615W looks beautiful and occupies less space on your desk

Brand	Epson	Epson	HP	HP	Canon	Canon	Brother
Model	ME 960FWD	ME 620F	C310A	8500A Plus	MP 287	MP 497	MFC – J615W
Price (in ₹)	14,999	6,999	14,999	24,999	4,295	6,999	10,390
Grand Total (Out of 100)	78.83	54.15	62.06	74.57	47.39	50.35	61.05
Features (on 30)	27.34	13.51	19.25	25.66	14.25	16	23.57
Performance (on 50)	35.86	22.77	32.98	38.02	23.15	25.11	24.7
Total Cost of Ownership (on 20)	15.64	17.88	9.82	10.89	9.99	9.24	12.78
Connectivity options							
PictBridge Support (Y/N)	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
USB Flash Drive Support (Y/N)	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Network printing support (Y/N)	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Wi-Fi support (Y/N)	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Bluetooth Printing (Y/N)	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Memory Card support (Y/N)	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Features							
Maximum print resolution (dpi)	5760 x 1440	5760 x 1440	9600 x 2400	4800 x 1200	4800 x 1200	4800 x 1200	6000 x 1200
Power Saving Mode (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Duplex printing (Y/N)	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Zoom / Fit to Page (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ink Type	Epson DURABrite Ultra Ink	Epson DURABrite Ultra Ink	HP Thermal Inkjet	HP Thermal Inkjet	FINE cartridge	FINE Cartridge	NA
Size of display on printer	2.5 -inch	2-line LCD	4.3-inch	4.3-inch	NA	NA	3.3 -inch
Cartridge Colours	C,M,Y,K	C,M,Y,K	C,M,Y,K, Photo	C,M,Y,K,C+M, Y+K	Colour, Black	Colour, Black	C,M,Y,K
Build Quality							
Body	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	5.5	5.5	7
Folding / Hinges	6.5	6.5	7	7.5	5.5	5.5	7
Tray Quality	7	7	7.5	7.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Dimensions (W x D x H)(mm)	446 x 360 x 226	460 x 411 x 235	455 x 450 x 199	502 x 417 x 308	450 x 335 x 153	450 x 335 x 153	390 x 375 x 180
Weight (kg)	7.6	7.1	7.7	16.37	5.5	5.6	8
Performance							
Text print (Quality)	7	7	8.5	8	7	7	8
Text print (Time)	11.21	26.08	27	15.02	32.41	26.77	56
Mixed Document Print (Quality)	6	6.4	6.8	6.6	6.6	6.4	5.9
Mixed Document Print (Quality) (Time)	42.83	106	39.33	36.83	84	93	60.41
Mixed Document Print (Speed/ Eco) 5 copies (Time)	25	70	25.35	26.53	85	85	32
Photo (Quality)	6	5.85	7.07	5.92	5.92	6.21	5.78
Photo (Quality) (Time)	255	221	144	140	186	196	451
Copy Test (Quality)	6.25	6.25	6.25	5.5	6.5	6.5	5.5
Copy Test (Time)	30	86	23.68	24.92	60	56	91.63
Scan Test (Time)	26.5	33	31	13	15	18	20.23
Ease of Use							
Hardware Connections	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Cartridge Installation	6.5	6.5	6	6	7	7	6.5
Paper loading	7	7	6.5	6.5	7	7	6.5
Software User Interface	6	6	6	6	7	7	6
Ease of Wi-Fi setup	7.5	NA	7.5	7.5	NA	7	7

Oatmeal on printers

A hilarious take on printers from online web comic giant Oatmeal : <http://theoatmeal.com/comics/printers>

PSD, SVG on Google Docs

Google Docs has added support for 12 more formats to its list including .PSD, .PPTX, .XLSX among others

quality in all the test regions giving crisp colours, great skin tones and detailing in complicated patterns. Brother MFD took around seven minutes to print the page and we noticed a warm overall cast in the output. This made the skin tones look good, but it didn't really earn many points in the other regions of the photo.

Copying test was good across all the MFDs with just HP 8500A giving a noisy output. There was no smudging. Again, Brother MFD took the longest with 91 seconds to copy.

Scanning quality was also quite similar across all the MFDs. HP 8500A took a mere 13 seconds to scan the magazine cover at 300dpi. MFDs like HP 8500A, C310a, Brother J615W and Epson 960FWD offered scanning to email, USB drive and memory card (wherever applicable).

Setting up Wi-Fi on the MFDs supporting it was quite easy. Each one comes with a detailed manual to guide you through the steps. Epson's manual, was the most detailed with proper flowcharts explaining the Wi-Fi setup process. Web connected MFDs from HP were quite impressive but the resistive touchscreen is not as fluid as we would have liked. Also we would prefer if HP enabled more applications for the Indian

market, as the HP ePrint centre has a lot of apps on offer. We did face some issues with the ePrint on both the MFDs.

Verdict

When it came to the final verdict, we had to take into consideration not just the print quality but also the time taken to print. Features had an important weightage, Quality of ADF scanning and scanning to USB drives and memory



Canon PIXMA MP497 gave good quality prints, but has expensive cartridges

was not scored as some MFDs did not provide that function, but the feature was scored. Total cost of ownership was taken into consideration with Best Buy calculation.

According to our tests, **HP OfficeJet**

Pro 8500A Plus was the awarded the **Best Performer**. Not only did it give good quality prints, but did the job fast. HP 8500A quality was slightly lower than that of HP C310a and was at par with

Canon's MP 287, but the speed is where HP 8500A scored higher than the others.

Epson ME Office 960FWD was awarded the **Best Buy** as it gave the best price to performance ratio. Although the overall score of the 960FWD was higher than that of HP 8500A, in terms of performance only, the 8500A was better than 960FWD. Despite scoring highest on the total cost of ownership, Epson 620F lost out to 960FWD on the feature set. For the same cartridge cost, you get better features on 960FWD at a higher price and better performance. Canon lost out on the Best Buy, despite having good quality prints and lower MFD price, due to the overpriced ink cartridges. **d**

HOW WE TESTED

All the multifunctional devices that we got were tested on our standard printer test bench – Intel Core i7 965 CPU, 2x2GB of Corsair DDR3 RAM. This year, we decided to concentrate only on colour MFD's for home and SoHo use. We also kept the maximum price point around ₹25,000, because we don't think anyone in a home or SoHo setup will spend more than this on an MFD.

As expected, all the MFDs were inkjet-based. We ran a few dry runs with the MFDs before actually starting off with our tests. We used standard A4 size paper for normal print and copy tests, and Kodak Photo glossy paper for photo prints.

The print tests were standard printer tests – quality of text printing, mixed document printing and photo printing. The text-only documents were reviewed for clarity of the smallest and largest fonts, and we looked for evenness of the text at different settings. In the mixed document tests we tested the prints against each other for clarity of text, merging colours, changing gradations of colours and white to black progressions. In our photo test, we printed an A4 size test photo, and checked for the sharpness levels, colour output and also looked for flaws such as merging of colours or grain.

For the mixed document and photo prints, we identified over five regions where printers usually struggle, and scored the outputs out of 10. The final quality score was an average of all the individual test scores.

For the copy tests, we compared the output to the source and checked for noise, change in colour level, clarity, etc. Each test was timed, and that was also scored. Scanning speeds and quality were also tested in all the MFDs.

Features of MFDs often affect buying decisions, and we gave considerable importance to this. We tested the ease with which cartridges could be replaced, how easy was the MFD to setup, and of course how user friendly was the software interface. We also felt that build quality of MFDs is important, and scored it accordingly. We did not really test the fax functionality, as some MFDs lacked it, and who uses fax any more?

What's new this year is the way we calculated total cost of ownership (TCO). We did this to ensure that those MFDs which were priced low, but had high running costs weren't given any undue advantage. We assumed that the life of an MFD in SoHo conditions is 15,000 prints, and calculated the cost of owning the MFD for that long – this included calculations with cost of the device, cost of cartridges, and thus cost per print, and also the warranty period and the assumed maintenance costs. The TCO index we got was considered in the overall score of the MFD.

Brand	Contact	Phone	Email	Web site
Brother	Brother International India Pvt. Ltd.	1800-222 422	info@brother.in	www.brother.in
Canon	Canon India Private Limited	1800-345 3366	info@canon.co.in	www.canon.co.in
Epson	Epson India	+91-80-3051 5000	think@eid.epson.co.in	www.epson.co.in
HP	HP India	+91-124-256 6111	bharatkharbanda@hp.com	www.hp.com

RAW update for Aperture 3

Apple has released a RAW compatibility update for Aperture 3 and iPhoto '11

Sigma weds Micro Four Thirds

Sigma has announced that it will make lenses for Micro Four Thirds and Sony's NEX system cameras

Bazaar

Nikon D7000

An interesting middleman

For Nikon fans, the D7000 has been an agonising wait. Even those looking to buy their first enthusiast-grade dSLR, or even people upgrading from their D60's and D3000's. A few Canon users would also have been curious. And while Nikon launched the D7000 around three months back, review samples were scarce, or so we had been told.

Though the dimensions are similar, the D7000 feels much better built than the D90. The rubber grip on the D7000 is a letdown - it is the same as on the D90 and still feels like too hard. While the dual SD card bay door opens with a reassuring spring action, the battery door feels limp, unlike

the nice spring-loaded door on the EOS 7D. The lines on the D7000 are tight, with no gaps. The flaps are rubberised but it's a hard sort of rubber, and would not be weather sealed. Comparatively, the flaps on the D300s are softer and seal better.

Owing to a smaller footprint, and lower profile, the grip of the D7000 is less comfortable, as the camera fits in hand, with room to spare. The D300s has a substantial feel, and your fingers get more camera to grip. Thumb positioning on the D7000 is also cramped. Some of the buttons on the rear of the body are smaller, and have noticeably less travel. The metering selector ring on the D300/D300s is absent, modifying this setting now involves pressing a dedicated button and using the rear dial - this is less convenient than the layout on the larger Nikon bodies. A flip switch for toggling video/still mode is a major change, highlighting the fact that the Nikon D7000 is a much more serious video recorder than any previous Nikon dSLR. The viewfinder on the D7000 is pretty good - it's bright, and better than the one on the D90.

The focus system consists of 39 points, out of which 9 points are cross-type. Focus points are overlaid, and not



etched and have good coverage. Focussing is fast and accurate, though in low light, with no contrast in the scene, it's not as good as the EOS 7D. On the whole, image quality is excellent. The output is punchy, without being too vivid, and colours are neutral. At ISO 100 up to 400, you are in for a treat - the output of the D7000 is pretty much in line with the EOS 7D and D300s, and if you are looking at screen-size images, the differences are impossible to spot. More importantly, the D7000 manages to retain more detail and has a better dynamic range than the D90.

The D7000 produces better images at ISO 3200 than the D300s does at ISO 1600, using identical settings, and of course, the same lens. This is heady stuff - for the sensor rating has grown to a respectable 16.2-megapixels, from 12.1-megapixels. The

D7000 gives the 7D a healthy run for its money, and we feel the D7000 is identical or a bit worse, at ISO 1600. At ISO 3200, the D7000 enjoys a marginal lead over the 7D. This lead grows at ISO 6400, but really, we're talking about sensors that are a generation apart chronologically. If you're talking about high ISO, low-light performance, the D7000 is probably the king among crop sensors.

Additionally, the D7000 supports really high ISO settings, and even at ISO 12,800, the image is usable with web size prints being very acceptable.

At ₹89,950 including the kit lens, the D7000 is expensive for sure. Fortunately, it's also a great performer, especially in low light. The focusing system while good, is not up to the best in this price range, and some will prefer the larger bodies on account of their usability and heft alone. People looking for a D90 upgrade - this is it.

Michael Browne

Specifications

Sensor: 16.2-megapixels;
sensor size: 23.1 x 15.4mm;
autofocus: 39 point, 9 cross-type; memory interface: dual SD slots; weight: 780 grams

Contact

Nikon India Pvt. Ltd.

Phone: 1800-102-7346

Email: nindsales@nikonoa.net

Web site: www.nikon.co.in



Features.....	7.5
Performance.....	7.5
Build.....	7.0
Value for money.....	6.5

Thinnest smart phone

World's thinnest smartphone by NEC is only 7.7 mm thick

Kinect SDK

Microsoft would be releasing Kinect SDK by mid-2011

Blackberry Bold 9780

New wine, old bottle

The Bold 3 is based on the new OS6- the operating system for future Blackberry. The Webkit web browser is the most important upgrade, possibly. Not only is this browser interface snappier than the predecessor, but the page rendering speeds were also improved. Apart from the upgraded browser, OS6 also brings universal search from the home screen, an app called Social Feeds, an updated music player and multiple 'screens' for customising app links. Apart from this, the navigation and options menus are a lot more streamlined. The settings menu is a lot easier to navigate than before, thanks to the clubbing together of similar

options. The 9780 is identical to the Bold 9700 – same dimensions, look and feel on the outside.

The call quality is good and both the hands-free and in-ear speakers are loud and clear. The music library looks fantastic now, for a Blackberry device.

The QWERTY keypad is easy to use and the keys are big enough. The battery lasts about two days, and the 5 MP camera is quite decent – images are clear, vivid and not noisy.

There's an app called Social Feeds, which allows you to check for all updates on Twitter, Facebook, BB Messenger, Gtalk, Yahoo Messenger, etc. – all from a single application.

While this is a new phone, the focus is largely on the software side. The Blackberry Bold 9780 carries forward the performance standard set by the Bold 9700. A better camera, better interface, better battery life, and more memory – the Bold 9780 is just about better in every way, at roughly the same price. Definitely a must have for Blackberry users looking for a new handset, and anyone wanting a feature-rich QWERTY phone.

Visbal Mathur

**Specifications**

Quad Band GSM, 3G, Blackberry OS6, 2.4-inch screen (480x360 resolutions), 624MHz processor, 5MP camera, 1500mAh battery

Contact

Research in Motion

Phone: 18004253730

Email: tssasiapac@rim.com

Website: www.in.blackberry.com

Price: ₹27,990

7.0
10

Features	7.0
Performance	7.5
Build Quality	7.0
Value for money	7.0

Specifications

Screen size : 47-inch;
Display : LED backlit LCD;
Resolution : 1920x1080p;
Ports : 4 x HDMI, 2 x USB, 3 x Component Video and Audio

Contact

LG India

Email: neeru.rajpal@lge.com

Website: www.lg.com/in

Price: ₹2,00,000

6.5
10

Features	7.0
Performance	7.0
Build Quality	8.0
Value for money	4.0

LG Infinia 47LX9500

Impressive TV but 3D experience is a let down

The all glass monolithic body looks quite impressive. The TV section is really heavy and has to be screwed to the base stand, which is also made of glass. On the rear, there's a woofer/speaker section that makes it impossible to wall mount the TV. The connectivity ports are not recessed either.

The remote is not attractive, but is quite intuitive. There's a single-button 3D mode, and active shutter 3D glasses are bundled.

Display mate tests gave good scores. We noticed a greenish tinge in the 16 step and 256-step intensity ramp (black to white). The colour ramp did not throw up any problems. HD movies look great, but up-scaled DVD content is not impressive.

It has a NetCast option which can pull internet content from sources such as YouTube, AccuWeather and Picassa once you connect the TV with a LAN cable.

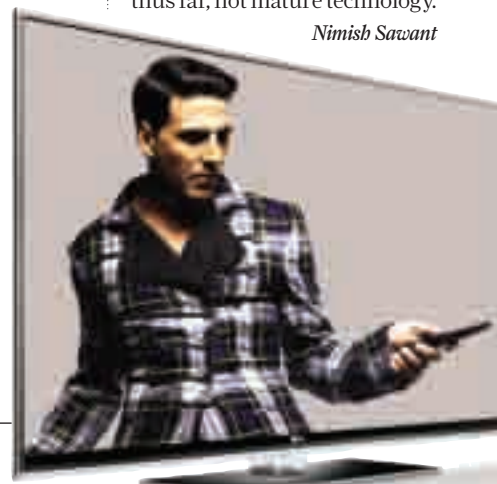
We tested the 3D playback on the TV using LG BX 580 3D Blu-ray player. While the TV does play back 3D content without any hitch, the experience isn't immersive.

The screen is quite reflective, so you need to watch your movies when there is little or no ambient light. Sound quality was quite good and it does offer you the ability to enhance speech via the Clear speech option.

Buying this TV purely for the 3D play-

back will require an additional investment in a 3D Blu-ray player. At this point in time, we still aren't convinced enough to recommend a 3D TV at a hefty price of ₹2,00,000. You just will not get the kind of experience you're used to in theatres, and you certainly don't want a headache. It's all too gimmicky thus far, not mature technology.

Nimish Sawant





ZOTAC GTX 560Ti AMP! Edition

Watch the review of this card in Digit TV on the Omega DVD and have a look at the detailed scores while it is being tested

Samsung's new lenses

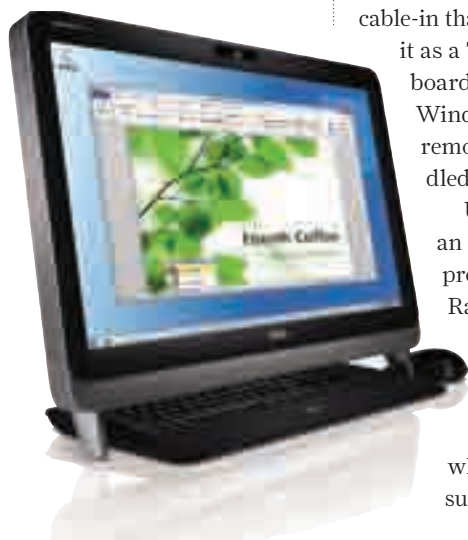
Samsung has announced five new lens for its NX series of cameras which include three prime lens and two movie optimized zoom lens

Bazaar

Dell Inspiron One AIO 2310

It's an all-in-one, it's a TV

The Dell Inspiron One 2310 looks quite impressive on first glance with a 23-inch wide screen surrounded by matte black plastic bezel revealing a



speaker section at the base. The screen has a matte finish which prevents any reflections. On the right, and on the bottom rear, you will find a variety of connectivity options – USB ports, a VGA port, and a Coaxial cable-in that allows you to use it as a TV. A wireless keyboard and mouse and a Windows Media Centre remote control are bundled.

Under the hood is an Intel Core i5-460M processor with an ATI Radeon HD5670 1GB graphics solution.

Audio is powered by the THX audio engine which simulates a 5.1 surround sound mode.

In the synthetic benchmarks the AIO 2310 yielded moderate scores. PC Mark Vantage gave an overall score of 6697, Cinebench R10 rendering was a lousy 8115 on multi-threaded cores. Data transfer speed was around 40 MB/s. HD movie viewing experience was really good. Performance wise it was slightly better in Lenovo IdeaCentre B500 in some benchmarks but at par on most of the real life tests. We were expecting a comparatively better performance.

At ₹47,000 the Dell 2310 makes for a good desktop replacement if you are looking at a system for home use and casual gaming.

Nimish Sawant

Specifications

Processor : Intel Core i5-460M; Clock speed : 2.53 GHz; RAM : 4 GB DDR3; No of USB ports : 6; Display : 23-inch WLED

Contact

Dell India Pvt. Ltd.

Phone: 1800 425 4026

Email: dechama_uthappa@dell.com

Website: www.dell.co.in

Price: ₹47,000

7.0
10

Features.....	6.5
Performance.....	6.0
Build Quality.....	7.5
Value for money.....	7.0

Specifications

Processor : AMD E350;
Graphics : Radeon HD 6310;
RAM : upto 8GB DDR3;

Contact

Gigabyte Technology India

Phone: 91 22 4063

3218

Email: anilkumarr@gigabyte.in

Website: www.gigabyte.in

Price: ₹8,900

6.5
10

Features.....	7.5
Performance.....	6.0
Build Quality.....	7.0
Value for money.....	6.0

Gigabyte GA E350N

AMD's Fusion APU enters the market

The Gigabyte GA E350N is a mini ITX form factor motherboard housing the E350 processor or as AMD would call it, the Accelerated Processing Unit. The E350 is a dual core APU running at 1.6 GHz and also houses the HD 6310 graphics solution.

The layout of the board is quite dense and has ample space to house two memory card slots, one PCIe x16 slot that can run only at x4 speed and four SATA 3 ports.

The processor is soldered onto the motherboard itself as there is no socket on board. The heatsink is quite sturdy with a

small fan placed in the centre. It offers a raft of ports on the back I/O panel.

Performance wise it gave scores comparable to the ZOTAC ZBOX ADO3BR which also houses the E350. The PC Mark Vantage score of 2535 was a little higher than ZOTAC's 2324. Multicore Cinebench rendering returned 2036. In real life tests, it took 133 secs to convert a 100MB VOB file to DIVX whereas data transfer speeds hovered around 28 MBps. HD viewing experience was flawless and we did not notice any stutter. Gaming using only the HD 6310 GPU built onto the APU is not very exciting.

Intel's Atom line has some



competition for sure with the versatile E350. It's a great option for an HTPC setup.

We did find the PCIe slot running only at x4 a bit odd. At ₹8,900, we feel it is priced on the higher side. We would advise potential buyers to wait for the prices to come down.

Nimish Sawant

Convert images to text

With www.betterocr.com you can convert any scan, image or pdf to editable text. Just upload the stuff you want converted and the txt files will be sent to you by mail for free

Quickly Share text

Ever wanted to share some random text with someone but didn't want the trouble of loggins, mails or IMs. Use <http://justpaste.it/>

HTC HD7

Sleek and stylish, but far from perfect

Beautiful looking phone – black and dark grey, exceedingly slim side bezels, and a massive 4.3-inch capacitive touchscreen. It has a raised metal bezel running around the phone, which means that placing the phone face down on a flat surface will not scratch the display.

There are three touch-sensitive keys beneath the glass slab that extend below the LCD. These are well spaced and quite usable. The camera key offers no feedback to half-click (for autofocus). The Micro USB port and 3.5mm jack are conveniently located on the bottom of the phone. The touchscreen is sensitive, and navigating around is a snap.

The display is mediocre – colour and contrast are strictly so-so. The camera on the HD7 is pretty decent with colour and contrast, and the flash is reasonably powerful. Music quality via the handsfree kit is good – decent bass for earphones, and a nice mid-range. The loudspeaker is frankly rubbish for music and distorts a lot. Video playback is a mediocre experience. While the large display is good, colours can look a bit washed out, and the contrast is mediocre at best. Battery life seems decent considering the paltry 1230 mAh powerplant.



With heavy usage and 2-3 hours of calls, battery life drops to 25 per cent within a day.

With good reception, call quality and clarity is good, but as signal levels drop slightly, there is a loss of coherence on the other end. At an MRP of 29,990, the HD7 isn't cheap. Neither is it close to perfect. There are better performing, more rounded devices available.

Michael Browne

Specifications

OS: Windows Phone 7;
CPU: Qualcomm QSD8250 (1 GHz); RAM: 576 MB;
Display: 4.3-inch, 480x800 pixels, capacitive; battery: 1230 mAh; weight: 162 grams

Contact

Bright Point India

Phone: 9910821100

Email: nitin.pandita@brightpoint.com

Website: www.htc.com/in

Price: ₹29,990 (MOP)

7.0
10

Features	7.5
Performance	7.0
Build Quality	7.0
Value for money	5.5

Specifications

Video formats : MP4, MOV, AVI, MKV, FLV;
Audio formats : MP3, WAV, OGG, AAC, FLAC;
Connectivity : HDMI, SD card slot, USB

Contact

ASUS Technology Pvt. Ltd.

Phone: 91 22 6166 8800

Email: reachus@asus.com

Website: www.asus.in

Price: ₹4,400

7.0
10

Features	6.5
Performance	7.0
Build Quality	7.0
Value for money	7.5

ASUS O! Play Mini

Finally, an affordable HD media player

HD media players have been flooding the market since the last year, but most of the better ones start from ₹5,000 and up. With the ASUS O! Play Mini, that barrier has been lowered. Asus O! Play Mini is a basic HD media player supporting resolutions upto 1080p. It has an SD card slot and a USB port in the front. It is one of those rare HD media players that bundles in an HDMI cable. We really don't know what stops companies from bundling an HDMI cables with the HD media players.

It is a compact player with a sturdy build. The patterned design on top with recessed

ports makes the player look aesthetically pleasing.

HD media playback was quite smooth and we did not notice any video skipping. HD movies – both 720p and 1080p played quite well. Fast forwarding proved to be an issue as the maximum speed is 32x and does not allow seeking. Starting up the player took around 14 seconds whereas movie loading took under 5 seconds. User interface is quite straight forward but we found that it does take some time to segregate the media according to its type, depending on your hard drive



capacity. It is faster to use the file manager to get to your file. Options like resume playback are quite good. It also allows you to upgrade the firmware from a USB drive.

At ₹4,400, O! Play Mini is a very economical full HD media player around that can play literally anything you throw at it. We will definitely recommend this, for those who are looking at a no frills HD media player.

Nimish Sawant

LG BX580

Is the 3D experience finally upon us?

This is LG's first attempt at entering the much hyped world of 3D entertainment. The blu-ray player has a lot of interesting features which includes DLNA, wide codec support, and web content. For testing regular Blu-ray playback we used our standard movies and the player did not disappoint at all. In fact the HQV benchmark returned the highest possible scores in three out of the four benchmark tests we ran - Video resolution loss test, Jaggies test, and Film resolution loss test. Regular DVD playback was where the player faltered most, consistently giving us a grainy picture. The UI was a little laggy and



but upscaling of standard definition content from USB was quite good. As for design and build quality, it was at par with other Blu-ray players we've seen.

We tested 3D playback on the LG Infinia 47LX9500 3D TV. For content we used the IMAX Space Station 3D movie and a Philips 3D blu-ray demo disc. The 3D experience was without much depth perception and not at all immersive. However, our lacklustre experience with 3D could just as

easily be the fact that 3D technology has not yet come of age, and not necessarily the player. At a recommended price of ₹27,990, we feel it's way too much to pay for one additional feature - 3D, especially when you're getting impressive Blu-ray players such as the Sony BDP S370 for under 10k. Of course, if you have a penchant for being on the cutting edge of tech at all times, got for it by all means.

Siddharth Parwatay

Specifications

Connects: HDMI, LAN, Optical, Coaxial, Component/Composite
Audio formats: MP3, WMA
Video formats: Avi, DivX, MPG, MKV, MP4, AVCHD

Contact

LG India
Email: neeru.rajpal@lge.com
Website: www.lg.com/in/
Price: ₹27,990

7.0
10

Features.....8.0
Performance.....7.5
Build Quality.....7.0
Value for money.....5.0

Specifications

Network: GSM-850 / 900 / 1800 / 1900 MHz; Data: GPRS, EDGE; Screen: 3.2" TFT LCD (Capacitive) @ 240 x 400 pixels; Dimensions: 109.5 x 55 x 11.7mm; Weight: 100g; Battery: 1200mAh Connectivity: Wi-fi 802.11n, BT 3.0

Contact

Samsung India
Phone: 91-124-4881234
Email: rengith.n@samsung.com
Web site: www.samsung.com/in
Price: ₹8,500

7.0
10

Features.....7.0
Performance.....6.0
Build Quality.....7.0
Value for money.....7.0

Samsung Wave 525

A decent offering for a specific type of user

The Wave 525 is a budget offering from Samsung's line of phones running the bada operating system. The phone is all plastic, but surprisingly manages to look sleek and can easily masquerade as a mid range smart phone, rather than the entry level smart phone that it is. The build is sturdy, the screen is vibrant and the touch response is quite good. Call reception and voice quality is exceptional on the earpiece. Camera quality is at par with other 3.2 MP phone cameras out there, while the on-



phone photo editing features are something to rave about. But apart from these positives, in each and every aspect of the phone there is something or the other lacking. "Almost... but not quite there yet", will be a recurring complaint in your mind. bada OS offers almost every feature you can think of - multitasking, an app store, multiple home screens, widgets and more. But are they any good or just on paper? Let's look at the pre-installed apps - for the most part they do what they're supposed to, but there's hardly any refinement; every-

thing's clunky. What about the app store? Not exactly empty, but finding good apps is a task in itself. The phone multitasks, sure, but turn on Wi-Fi, run a few process intensive apps and stuff begins to lag a little - at times even typing. The Dolphin browser loads full websites and features multiple window browsing, but won't reflow screen size or zoom level. Lots of minor irritants everywhere. Overall this is a phone for those who like to (more or less) use their phones with whatever it comes with, rather than delving into the world of customisation. If you are that sort of a user it's not a bad deal for ₹8,500 approx.

Siddharth Parwatay

Bazaar

mini ^{QUICK} INSIGHTS FROM INDEPTH TESTS

The Digit Test Centre receives hundreds of products every month. Each of these products is put through a series of tests, and are finally given a verdict. The final score is arrived at after considering a number of factors and evaluating them in terms of features, performance, value for money, build quality, and in the case of software even ease of use.

For better understanding of our ratings, here's a quick guide to our overall score

- 1.0 - 3.0 - Extremely poor product. Keep away!
- 3.5 - 5.0 - Strictly OK. Not recommended
- 5.5 - 6.5 - Decent product. Go for it, but there maybe better products.
- 7.0 - 8.5 - Very good product. Highly recommended.
- 9.0-10.0 - Ground-breaking product. We've never seen anything like it before. A definite must buy!



Watson wins Jeopardy

IBM's supercomputer named Watson defeated human competitors in Jeopardy which is an American Quiz show

GRAPHICS CARDS



Sparkle GTX 570

Price: ₹32,500



Galaxy GTX 570

Price : ₹21,500

SPECIFICATIONS

Core Clock 732 MHz
Memory Clock 3800 MHz
Memory Interface 320 bit
Frame Buffer 1280 MB

Core Clock 732 MHz
Memory Clock 3800 MHz
Memory Interface 320 bit
Frame Buffer 1280 MB

TEST CENTRE RATINGS (All Scores out of 10)

Features 6.0

Based on GF110 architecture housing 480 CUDA cores with a core clock speed of 732 MHz.

Performance 7.5

Performance is at par with Galaxy GTX 570. FarCry2 (1080p, 8xAA): 91 fps; STALKER: COP (1080p, 4xAA): 93. Load temperature was under 80 degrees.

Build Quality 7.0

Sturdy plastic cover and it has two six-pin power connectors.

Value for money 3.0

At ₹32,500 this product is very highly priced.

Features 6.0

Based on GF110 architecture housing 480 CUDA cores with a core clock speed of 732 MHz.

Performance 7.5

Performance is better than HD6970. FarCry2 (1080p, 8xAA): 90 fps; STALKER COP (1080p, 4xAA): 104 fps. Load temperature 74 degrees.

Build Quality 7.0

Similar to the Galaxy GTX 580 in build quality except that it sports two six pin power connectors.

Value for money 7.5

At ₹21,500 Galaxy GTX 570 is quite decently priced.

WE SAY

6.0

Sparkle GTX 570 is a good card and replaces the GTX 460 in terms of performance. It also performs better than HD 6970. There are no issues with performance. Pricing is where it sticks out like a sore thumb. Galaxy GTX 570 is priced around ₹21,500. So paying over ₹10,000 for very similar performance does not make any sense. Wait for the prices to drop to sensible levels.

ALSO SEE:

- 1) Sparkle GTX 580
December 2010
- 2) Galaxy GTX 460 GC
November 2010
- 3) ZOTAC GTX 460 AMP Edition
September 2010

7.0

Galaxy 570 performs slower than the GTX 580 in all the tests, but is at par with other GTX 570s that we tested. The card is essentially targeted at users who want a supreme performance but at a comparatively lower price point. Galaxy GTX 570 priced at ₹21,500 makes the proceedings quite sweet as it is substantially economical than the Sparkle GTX 570 which comes at ₹32,500.

ALSO SEE:

- 1) Sparkle GTX 580
December 2010
- 2) Galaxy GTX 460 GC
November 2010

Intel Core i7 990x out

Intel has started shipping its six-core Core i7-990x Extreme Edition processor which is clocked at 3.46 GHz and includes 12MB of cache memory

Google Music coming soon?

According to UK's newspaper Guardian, Google's music service will be launched soon and will be a part of Android Honeycomb

Bazaar mini

GRAPHICS CARDS



ASUS GTX 580

Price: ₹37,000



ASUS Radeon HD 6970

Price: ₹27,000



NVIDIA GTX 560Ti

Price : ₹15,000

BATTERY CHARGER



Choiix Power Fort

Price: ₹3,500

SPECIFICATIONS

Core Clock 782 MHz
Video Memory 1536 MB
Memory Interface 384 bit
CUDA Cores 512

Core Clock 890 MHz
Memory 2048 MB
Memory Interface 256 bit
Unified Shaders 1536

Core Clock 822 MHz
Memory Clock 4008 MHz
Memory Interface 256 bit
CUDA Cores 384

Power Capacity.... 2700 mAh / 10 Whrs
Weight: 102 g
Battery Type..... Lithium-polymer
Dimension..... 11 x 6.4 x 1.2 cm

TEST CENTRE RATINGS (All Scores out of 10)

Features.....6.5

ASUS GTX 580 is overclocked by 10 MHz and is a triple slot card with two 8-pin power connectors.

Performance8.5

3D Mark Vantage : 27046; FarCry2 (1080p, 8xAA) : 99 fps; STALKER COP (1080p, 4xAA) : 105 fps. Crysis Warhead (1080p, Very High) : 45fps

Build quality7.0

One of the bulkiest GTX 580s that we tested. Built sturdily with two fan sections and a heatsink.

Value for money.....7.5

At ₹37,000, it is much cheaper than Sparkle GTX 580.

Features.....6.5

ASUS HD 6970 comes with a 10MHz overclock and features the Voltage Tweak tool.

Performance7.0

3D Mark Vantage : 19213; FarCry2 (1080p, 8xAA) : 77 fps; STALKER COP (1080p, 4xAA) : 83 fps. Crysis Warhead (1080p, Very High) : 34fps

Build quality6.0

Sturdy aluminum build, very similar to the reference AMD HD 6970 card.

Value for money.....4.0

At ₹27,000 ASUS' pricing is higher than other HD 6970 cards.

Features.....6.0

It's based on the GF-114 architecture with all 8 Stream Multiprocessors activated.

Performance7.5

3D Mark Vantage : 21046; FarCry2 (1080p, 8xAA) : 81 fps; STALKER COP (1080p, 4xAA) : 76 fps. Crysis Warhead (1080p, Very High) : 32fps

Build Quality.....6.0

Sturdy plastic build with a strong fan is placed in the centre of the card.

Value for money.....7.0

At ₹15,000, the GTX 560Ti is appropriately priced.

Features.....8.0

It comes with a fully loaded travel accessories pack and the device itself sports an LED flashlight.

Performance7.0

On a single charge we were able to fully charge an iPod Touch 3G followed by an iPhone 3G to three-fourths of the way. Smaller devices would benefit even more.

Build quality7.0

The device, though surprisingly light, is well built and even ergonomically convenient

Value for money7.0

Good value considering the kind of audience it is targeted at.

WE SAY

7.5

ASUS GTX 580 is a great card and the 10 MHz overclock adds a minor boost to the scores, not more than 4-5 per cent. ASUS GTX580 scored higher in COH:TOV, FarCry2 and STALKER Call of Pripyat as compared to Sparkle GTX580. Crysis Warhead performance is similar to Sparkle GTX 580. One of the things that we felt can work against the card is its bulky form factor that occupies three slots which can be problematic for those planning on doing dual GPU SLI. Pricing is about ₹5,000 cheaper than the Sparkle GTX 580 which comes at ₹42,500

6.0

In our performance scores, the ASUS HD6970 performed at par with the XFX HD 6970 in most tests except in FarCry2 and STALKER COP. The 10MHz factory overclock hardly makes any difference in the overall playing experience. Smart Doctor that comes bundled with the card allows easy overclocking of the card as it allows you to tweak the voltages so that the card is stable at higher clock speeds. However, it is considerably slower than GTX 570. We would not recommend a ₹5,000 premium on the 10MHz overclock. Great card if the prices come down.

6.5

This is a very good card for those looking to buy a good performer at an economical price point. It performs better than HD 6950 in most of the tests. As compared to the ZOTAC GTX 560Ti AMP Edition, the stock NVIDIA card pales in comparison as the former is factory overclocked. So for the performance boost, we would recommend the ZOTAC card for its sheer prowess over the stock card in all parameters.

ALSO SEE:

- 1) ZOTAC GTX 460 AMP Edition
September 2010
- 2) Galaxy GTX 460 GC
November 2010

7.5

The Choiix Power Fort is a battery pack that can charge your devices such as iPhone, iPad, PSP and almost any phone, on the go. It comes with a travel accessories pack that includes a USB car charger, and a wall adapter on which you can clip on the various bundled pins to suit the regional plug points. An ideal companion for globe trotters who constantly find themselves running out of battery on their devices. The device is light and small enough to be pocket-able but considering the various attachments it comes with, this baby will most likely be in your backpack.

Baby named Facebook

An Egyptian parent named his first daughter Facebook after the role social media played in organising protests in Egypt

Home electric car chargers

Toyota Motor Corp will launch home battery chargers for electric and plug-in hybrid cars from next year

DIGITAL CAMERA



Samsung ST 600

Price: ₹19,990

Sensor 14.2 MP CCD
ISO range 80 - 3200
Screen 3.5-inch 1152k colours LCD
Battery 760mAh Li-ion

Features..... 7.5

It's got a 1.8-inch LCD screen in front and a motion sensor. It offers 5x optical zoom.

Performance 6.0

Daylight shots were crisp and colour reproduction was good. On-camera editing options handle your basic post processing needs. It gets noisy after ISO 400.

Build quality 5.5

Although the camera is sturdy, the build quality seems cheap due to the plastic body.

Value for money 7.0

Great buy for those looking at basic functionalities with on board editing options.

6.5

At ₹19,990, the price may seem high for a camera which does not offer many manual features. But the biggest draw of Samsung ST600 is its on-camera editing options which allow you to add effects to your photos, pass them through filters, retouch faces, convert colour photos to sepia or black and white all on the camera. The 1.8-inch screen in the front helps you in taking better self portraits and it also has the smile sensor. Motion sensor on the camera allows you to switch between three modes by just moving the camera up or down.

CELL PHONES



iBall Aasaan

Price: ₹3,499

SIM GSM
Display size 1.65-inch mono display
Battery 1000 mAh

Features..... 5.5

It comes with minimal features like calling and messaging. SOS is an emergency calling feature.

Performance 7.0

Call quality was good in all zones. The SOS option when activated sends SMSes to the concerned numbers ASAP. It has a loud speaker and large fonts.

Build quality 7.0

Build quality is quite sturdy and feels solid in the hand. Buttons are quite responsive.

Value for money 6.5

At ₹3,499 it may be on the higher side but no price should be too high for the safety of your elders.

6.5

iBall Aasaan is a very good phone for senior citizens as it has large keys and large fonts making it convenient for them. The phone has an SOS option which allows you to allot upto five numbers. In an emergency, the SOS switch on the rear side has to be activated which will emit a loud alarm signal and send SMSes to all the numbers. It will then start calling them till someone attends the phone. A very well thought out product and though the price of ₹3,499 may seem steep, it is worth the price for the SOS feature.



LAVA A10

Price : ₹5,499

Display size & type 3-inch, IPS
Display resolution 240 x 400
Memory microSD up to 16GB
Battery 1400mAh

Features 7.0

IPS display is its main USP. MapMyIndia app with voice guided GPS navigation system present.

Performance 6.0

An unsatisfactory overall performance, mediocre touchscreen is a killjoy for such a feature-rich smart phone. Excellent video-playback quality.

Build Quality 7.0

It is built sleek and stylish, with a gun metal finish body, which also gives it a rugged feel and look.

Value for money 7.0

Provides good value for money with interesting features like gyration and motion sensor.

7.0

The LAVA A10 despite its feature-rich configuration and a superior IPS display technology, is a killjoy with an unsatisfactory overall performance and a mediocre touchscreen interface. Although decently priced, at ₹5,499, there are better performing phones like Micromax X550 QUBE & X510 PIKE which offer most of the same features.

ALSO SEE:

- 1) Micromax E390
November 2010
- 2) Micromax X550 QUBE
October 2010
- 3) Micromax X510 PIKE
October 2010
- 4) Huawei C5600
November 2010



Micromax Andro A60

Price : ₹6,999

SIM GSM/WCDMA
Display size & type 2.8-inch, Display resolution 240 x 320
Battery 1280mAh

Features 7.5

It has a rich feature set including 3G, Wi-Fi, touchscreen and the 3D cube interface.

Performance 6.5

It is a decent overall performer with excellent sound on the earphones and good video quality. Only major disappointment is the mediocre image clarity.

Build Quality 6.5

Body has decent build quality, the battery cover is vulnerable to damage during usage.

Value for money 8.0

The A60 provides great value for money in its price range, with no stiff competitors.

7.0

The A60 is a cheap yet worthy smart phone coupled with a decent all-round performance. At a price tag of ₹6,999, we have very little to bargain, except for the lack of a hardware keypad and a fast processor. So, the Andro A60 is seriously recommended for those who want a taste of everything at a cheap price!

ALSO SEE:

- 1) Micromax E390
November 2010
- 2) Micromax X550 QUBE
October 2010
- 3) Micromax X510 PIKE
October 2010
- 4) Huawei C5600
November 2010

WE SAY

Twitter blocks third party clients

Twitter suspended third party Twitter clients like UberTwitter, UberCurrent and Twidroid for alleged violation of Twitter policies

Samsung unveils Chat phones

Samsung has come out with two budget dual-SIM QWERTY phones Chat 322 and Chat 335 for the Indian market

Bazaar mini

GAMING KEYBOARD



Razer BlackWidow Ultimate

Price: ₹7,299

PORTABLE SPEAKER



Portronics Zcube - Portable Speaker

Price: ₹1,099

MINI PC



ZOTAC ZBOX AD03BR

Price: ₹26,999



ZOTAC ZBOX HD-ID34

Price: ₹26,999

SPECIFICATIONS

Size in mm 475(L) x 171(W) x 30(H)
Weight 1.5 kg
Additional Macro keys 5
On-the-fly macro recording Yes

Impedance 4 Ohm
Dimensions 120x35x66 mm
Driver Size 70 x 30 mm
Net weight 130 g

Processor AMD E350 @ 1.6GHz
GPU AMD Radeon HD 6310
RAM 2 GB
HDD 250 GB

Processor.. Intel Atom D525 @ 1.8 GHz
GPU NVIDIA ION
RAM 2 GB
HDD 250 GB

TEST CENTRE RATINGS (All Scores out of 10)

Features 7.5

This mechanical keyboard is fully backlit and provides five dedicated macro buttons

Performance 7.0

Good tactile feedback with increased words per minute. Placement of the macro keys was a bit of a problem while going for CTRL or ALT-tabbing.

Build Quality 8.5

Built like a tank. The glossy piano black finish, however is a magnet for dust and grease.

Value for money 6.0

Mechanical keyboards do tend to be more expensive, but at ₹7,299, it is way too expensive.

Features 8.0

It's got FM radio, an SD Card slot for MP3 playback, and a 3.5 mm audio jack for headphones

Performance 6.0

Compared it to a ₹1290 X-mini Capsule, the Zcube's audio quality falls short. It was loud enough but sounded a bit muffled with less bass.

Build quality 6.5

The overall build seems sturdy with a decent finish. Though we wouldn't want to drop-test it.

Value for money 7.0

For the price you get decent performance, with a whole lot of features including an MP3 player.

Features 7.5

It has an AMD E350 dual core APU with a slot loading Blu ray drive and supports USB 3.0.

Performance 7.0

PC Mark Vantage gave 2324 which was higher than 2097 on the Atom D525 based ZBOX. HD movie viewing was quite good and did not stutter.

Build quality 6.5

Built with strong plastic tapering at both ends. Comes with a stand to mount on TV or a wall.

Value for money 5.0

The price of ₹26,999 is a bit on the higher side for a media player and mini PC.

Features 7.5

It houses an Intel D525 dual core CPU with a slot loading Blu ray drive with USB 3.0, eSATA ports

Performance 6.0

PC Mark Vantage gave 2097 which was lower than the AD03 BR. Blu ray playback was flawless and did not stutter. It does tend to heat up under the sides.

Build Quality 6.5

Built with strong plastic tapering at both ends. Comes with a stand to mount on TV or a wall.

Value for money 5.0

The price of ₹26,999 is a bit on the higher side for a media player and mini PC.

WE SAY

7.0

Mechanical keyboards are supposed to give the best tactile feedback in the industry, but if you've spent too much time on membrane-based keyboards, this one might take a little time to get used to. For us it brings back memories of the good old TVS Gold. The driver software is easy to use and great for programming macros. The command stack could include delays and launching programs. There is a gaming mode which disables windows functions. At 1.5 kg it will be a bit difficult to carry around. Good for those seeking exclusivity at a premium.

7.0

If you're willing to put your music on an SD card, you could look at this as an MP3 and FM player built around a portable speaker. Although the device may not exactly be pocketable, it's still quite compact. It has the footprint of a regular full size mouse. It charges its lithium ion battery through a USB cable which is provided. This is a good device for someone looking for all three of the features it provides, but if you want just the functionality of a portable speaker there are better options available out there.

6.5

ZOTAC ZBOX AD03BR makes for a great HTPC, with Blu ray support and HDMI out which allows it to be hooked to your HDTV sets. The AMD Fusion APU did not return impressive computing scores, but is a good answer to Intel's Atom line of processors. Gaming is manageable at resolutions of 800x600 pixels using the AMD HD 6310 graphics solution. Doom 3 (800x600) gave 44 fps while Company of Heroes: Tales of Valor (1024x768, low) gave 52 fps. The AD03BR comes at a price tag of ₹26,999 which is a bit on the higher side.

6.0

ZOTAC ZBOX HD-ID34 makes for a great HTPC, with Blu-ray support and HDMI out which allows it to be hooked to your HDTV sets. It gets a thumbs up for the various connectivity options. As far as computing goes, it is best for casual surfing, basic office work and entry level gaming. USB 3 support does make it future proof. We still felt that the pricing of ₹26,999 was a bit on the higher side, as the computing performance leaves a lot to be desired. It would have been nice if ZOTAC had bundled in a wireless keyboard or a remote controls.

Speed Highway

According to reports, Apple is planning to announce a new high-speed connection technology with its MacBook Pro refresh

C1-01 and C1-02 launched

Nokia has launched two entry level dual-SIM phones C1-01 @ ₹2,789 and C1-02 @ ₹2,394 for the Indian market

BLUETOOTH LOCK



Portronics Green Lock
Price: ₹1,399

WIRELESS KEYBOARD



Amkette Wi-Key Touch
Price: ₹2,495

MOTHERBOARD



MSI P55A-GD65
Price: ₹12,500



MSI 890FXA-GD70
Price: ₹12,300

SPECIFICATIONS

Dimensions (mm): 40 x 27 x 9;
ISM Band 2.4 GHz; 128 bit AES
Encryption / Decryption

2.4GHz RF; USB type receiver; 88
key layout; Dedicated web keys;
Dedicated media playback

Intel P55 chipset, 2 PCIe x16,
2 PCIe x1 slots, USB 3.0 support,
FireWire port, eSATA port

AMD 890FX chipset,
5 PCIe x16, 1 PCIe x1 slots,
USB 3.0 support

TEST CENTRE RATINGS (All Scores out of 10)

Features 7.0
Performance 7.0
Build Quality 7.0
Value for money 6.5

Features 5.0
Performance 7.0
Build Quality 7.0
Value for money 6.0

Features 7.0
Performance 7.0
Build Quality 7.5
Value for money 6.0

Features 7.5
Performance 7.0
Build Quality 7.5
Value for money 6.0

WE SAY

The green lock is for those concerned about the safety of their sensitive data while they are away from their computer. Wearing this remote, you can walk away from your PC and it will lock down. When you return back it will unlock itself.

7.0

The Wi-Key does well as an HTPC keyboard-cum-mouse. While it's not as sleek or showy as some of the Logitech options, it costs a lot less too, and offers decent bang for buck. It doesn't make sense for PC or notebook users.

6.0

Slightly expensive for a P55 board. Feature-rich in many ways – it supports USB 3.0. Layout is good with plenty of space for a Crossfire setup. Performance is at par with other P55 motherboards. Better options are available if you can go slightly higher.

7.0

Similar to the P55A in terms of looks. A similar feature set to the P55A-GD65 with USB 3.0 support. There are plenty of PCIe slots for expansion. Crossfire is supported. Lots of cooling arrangements have been done. At ₹10,000, would be a good VFM.

7.0

SPEAKER



Epro SW 2600
Price: ₹1,200

ETHERNET ADAPTER



Billion BiPAC P106 R2
Price: ₹4,700 approx (\$105)

PORTABLE DRIVE



Toshiba Canvio 500GB USB 3.0
Price: ₹7,990

NAS



QNAP TS-459 Pro
Price: \$1,399 (approx ₹70,000)

SPECIFICATIONS

Frequency Response: 40Hz –
20kHz; Sensitivity: 70dB; Output
Power: 20W + 2x10W; FM: No

TDMA, CSMA; Frequency Range:
2MHz – 30MHz; Security: 128-bit
AES

Capacity : 500 GB; Interface
: SuperSpeed USB 3.0; Cache
Buffer : 8MB; Weight : 180 gm

Storage Capacity: 8GB; Installed
memory: 1 GB; Processor: Intel
Atom @ 1.66 GHz

TEST CENTRE RATINGS (All Scores out of 10)

Features 5.0
Performance 6.0
Build Quality 7.0
Value for money 7.0

Features 6.0
Performance 6.0
Build Quality 7.0
Value for money 6.0

Features 6.0
Performance 6.0
Build Quality 7.5
Value for money 4.0

Features 8.0
Performance NA
Build Quality 8.0
Value for money 7.0

WE SAY

ePro SW 2600 is a decent set of speakers, ideal for casual listening. Higher frequencies did not sound very good and low frequency response was passable. Mid-frequency range is its plus point. Beware of distortion at higher volumes. Pricing is decent.

6.0

BiPAC P106 R2 is an ethernet adapter which comes in a pair, and it uses the electrical power line of your home / office to send digital data, provided both adapters are on the same power line. We noticed substantial improvement over wireless data transfer.

6.0

The drive has a USB 3.0 port which is backwards compatible. In our real life tests, it gave speeds of 63 MB/s for a 4 GB sequential file write and 68 MB/s for file read. The price of around ₹7,990 is very high as a faster Iomega eGo 1TB is available for ₹6,999.

6.0

QNAP TS 459 Pro is an enterprise level NAS, can be used as a file server, FTP server, web server, among others. Has four lockable bays which can house four SATA drives. The front face has a 2-line LCD display and also has VGA connectivity.

8.0



NOMINATE A YOUNG INDIA FELLOW

Know an amazing student? We want to know that student too!

The Young India Fellowship (YIF),
in collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania's
School of Engineering and Applied Science,
is a **one-year long fully funded programme** that promises to take 50 of
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PS3 pirates beware

Sony has announced that users trying to hack PS3 will be banned for life from Sony's online services

AMD cards debut in PCs

New AMD 6000 series cards like HD 6450, HD 6570, HD 6670 can be purchased as part of a pre-assembled PC from Dell or HP

CELLPHONE



Videocon V6200 Ducati
Price: ₹11,995



Karbonn K406
Price: ₹2,590



iBall Floater
Price: ₹2,999



iBUZZ iQ-3
Price: ₹3,499

SPECIFICATIONS

Screen resolution: 240 x 320 pixels 262K colours; Screen size: 2.4 inches; Battery: 1030 mAh

Dual SIM; Screen resolution: 176x220 pixels, Size: 2 inches; Camera: VGA; Battery: 1000 mAh

Screen : 1.44 inch; Battery : 650mAh; FM : Yes; Bluetooth : No

SIM (GSM+GSM); Display: 2-inch, Screen resolution: 176 x 220; Battery: 1100mAh

TEST CENTRE RATINGS (All Scores out of 10)

Features 7.0
Performance 4.0
Build Quality 8.0
Value for money 5.0

Features 6.0
Performance 5.5
Build Quality 5.0
Value for money 6.0

Features 4.0
Performance 5.5
Build Quality 7.5
Value for money 5.0

Features 6.0
Performance 6.0
Build Quality 6.0
Value for money 7.0

WE SAY

For a price of almost ₹12,000, the Videocon V6200 phone does come at a huge premium for the Ducati branding. The phone is solid, and does offer some interesting new features. However, buying a phone at this price, may not be the best deal.

5.5

The Karbonn K406 does not fit into the shoes of a music phone lacking even a 3.5-mm audio jack and delivering a lacklustre music performance. At a price tag of ₹2,590, it is not worth the buy considering its mediocre overall performance.

5.5

iBall Floater is a well-built, water resistant phone. But the pricing is a bit high for the absolutely basic functionalities like calling, messaging and FM radio. Ideal phone to be used on treks and in the rainy season, but for daily use there are better options.

5.0

The iBUZZ iQ-3 is not made for the power user; but, it just integrates basic features in one cool package at an affordable price. So, if you are looking for a cheap QWERTY for sending messages sans a decent camera, go for it.

6.0

KEYBOARD



Logitech MK260
Price: ₹1,495



ASUS GT 440
Price: ₹6,500



ZOTAC GTS 450 AMP! Edition
Price: ₹9,333



XFX Radeon HD 6950
Price: ₹17,325

SPECIFICATIONS

Frequency band: 2.4-GHz RF; Keyboard Power: 2 x AA batteries; Dedicated media keys

Core Clock: 823 MHz; Memory: 1024 MB GDDR5; Memory interface: 128-bit

Core Clock: 873 MHz; Memory: 1024 MB; Memory Interface: 128-bit

Core Clock: 800 MHz; Memory Clock: 1250 MHz; Memory: 2048 MB

TEST CENTRE RATINGS (All Scores out of 10)

Features 5.0
Performance 7.0
Build Quality 6.0
Value for money 6.0

Features 6.5
Performance 6.0
Build Quality 7.0
Value for money 6.5

Features 6.0
Performance 6.5
Build Quality 5.0
Value for money 6.0

Features 6.5
Performance 7.0
Build Quality 7.0
Value for money 5.5

WE SAY

For the price there's not much to dislike about the MK260. It is a good deal on paper, and performs well when asked to. If you are in the market for a basic no frills wireless keyboard and mouse combo, this is the one to check out.

6.0

ASUS GT440 is smart looking card based on the GF108 architecture. 3D Mark Vantage : 8382. STALKER: Clear Sky (1024x768, Low): 32 fps; COH: TOV (1024x768, High): 162 fps. Ideal for an HTPC setup and casual gaming.

6.5

Impressive design. Overclocked by 90MHz. 3D Mark Vantage : 11871; Crysis Warhead (1280x1024, med): 57 fps; STALKER: ClearSky (1280x1024, ultra): 59.6 fps. Great card for mid range gaming at resolutions under 1680x1050. Pricing should have been lower.

6.0

XFX HD 6950 performs at par with the AMD HD6950. 3D Mark Vantage: 18068; FarCry 2 (1080p, 4xAA): 63 fps; STALKER: Call of Pripyat (1080p, DX11): 82 fps. ZOTAC GTX 560Ti AMP! Edition gives a much better performance at the same price.

6.5

Vishal Mathur

vishal.mathur@thinkdigit.com

Move over, Powerpoint! There is a new free tool in town, and this one lets you make exciting presentations on the world wide web itself. The good part is, it's a lot easier here. You can create presentations online, store them, and download them for offline use, with a starter account which is available for free. The Enjoy

and the ability to make presentations online. Go to www.prezi.com to sign up.

Getting started

Once you are signed up, you can start making a presentation. Adding text is very simple. Double click anywhere on the canvas and you will get a text box. Start entering whatever text you wish to. If at this point you wish to relocate the text, click once on the text to open a circular object called zebra. Now, click on the center of



Prezi account types

Powerful presentations using Prezi



A free tool to make vibrant presentations, via the web browser or the iPad



zebra works in the same way here, to resize, tilt as well move the image.

Adding videos

Adding You Tube videos to the Prezi is a breeze. Just copy the video URL, double click on the Prezi canvas to open the text box, paste the URL in the text box, and click OK. The zebra

will allow you to move the video around as desired and also resize it. However, you will not be able to tilt a video.

Once you have added all the elements and text, you will need to select a path- the order

in which the objects will

appear during the presentation. Click on the Path option in the Bubble Menu (top left of the screen) and select the elements in the order in which you want them to appear.

To view the final presentation, click on the Show option in the Bubble menu. The entire Prezi will be displayed in the order which you had chosen. Also, if you had included any You Tube video, it will start playing back automatically.

Apart from the web browser access, Prezi is also available as an app for the iPad.

account costs \$59 for one year, and offers the ability to share the presentation with other users, 500MB storage space and also use your own logo on the presentation. The top of the line Pro account costs \$159 per month, with 2GB storage space

the zebra and drag the text to any part of the canvas. To place the text at an angle, click on the outer part of the zebra and turn it like a wheel. If you click and drag the ring, the text can become smaller or

larger, depending on your preference.

The top left corner of the screen has the Prezi Bubble Menu, which is the all-in-one tool for making a presentation.

To add an image, click Insert and then load the file you wish to add to the presentation. The



Prezi Canvas

Adobe Persuasion

This was an old presentation program developed by Aldus Corporation in 1994, later acquired by Adobe

Impress with Impress

Head over to OpenOffice.org and use another free and open source presentation tool called Impress

You're being spied on!



At least five items on this desk could contain a bug that people could be spying on you with. We'll show you how easy it is for people to put you under surveillance

Nash David

nash.david@thinkdigit.com

We often find ourselves with a vast amount of junk: there's talk of our planet needing help on one hand and on the other we're busy consuming technology at a ridiculous pace. Over a period of time, we end up with more waste than we can deal with.

The problem

Most of us have used mobile phones for a few years now, and hardly any of us uses the same old mobile we started

off with. It's not like we've just thrown away the old phones, although some of us may have donated them to those less fortunate or the household help. Still there are chances that most of us have an old phone lying about collecting dust!

The easy way

We pooled our junk together, and found that we had a few phones at hand. Some were fully-functional, some needed new batteries, and some were just scrap that could only be used to cannibalise parts for other phones. We're going to keep working on inventive ways in which to use your old phones in subsequent issues. However,

based on our experiences at exhibitions and from the letters we get, it's obvious that one of the most popular new toys is an audio spying device based on a phone. What this device does is use a SIM card and a mobile network to allow you to connect to it silently, and listen in on the sounds of the surroundings. Now, almost any phone made in the last 5 years should allow you to do this just by tweaking some settings, the problem is that the darn gadget still looks like a phone – and a phone is not something you're used to seeing lying about in the open. So the obvious thing to do is to find a way to conceal that it's a phone.

Razer Starcraft II

Razer has unveiled a new line of gaming mice custom designed for Starcraft II

Intel SSDs

Intel's new line of SSDs (codenamed Elm Crest) would be available in 120 and 250 GB variants

DIY

The complications

Based on feedback from you, we realised that not all of you are comfortable with multimeters and soldering irons, or even



Set your phone to Silent mode

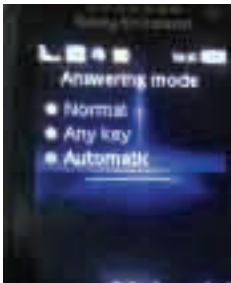
too happy to rip devices apart. Thus we've decided to go about this DIY in a much simpler manner than most are used to. More advanced ways of using old phones will follow

in subsequent issues.

Setting up the phone

In order to use a phone as a surveillance device, as we said before, all you really have to do is change a few settings. More effort will go into concealing the fact that there's a phone lying about.

Let's take a quick look at the phone settings: the functional phone we found ourselves with was a Sony Ericsson K850i. The setting names might differ between



Finally, set the Answering mode to Automatic

brands, but you shouldn't have any trouble getting the gist of it.

First go to Phone Settings, and look for profiles and set the phone to silent mode, with no vibrations or audio/visual indica-

tors of any sort – turn off backlight, turn off blinking LEDs, or anything that screams "I'm a phone!". Some phones don't allow you to disable the audible low battery warnings, so it's best to check this before you plan your espionage.

Next, just look for your phone's Answering Mode. This is where you'll set your phone to answer calls automatically. Some phones will let you answer the calls immediately, or only after a few rings. Either way, since you're not going to be around to press the Accept button, this is the essential step in turning the



Make sure you disable Vibrating alert

device from a phone into a bug. Make sure to test the way the new monitoring device works, and of course remember to use a SIM card that you don't use and don't get too many calls on. The last thing you want is a telemarketer calling and spying on people using your phone.

The hard way

The more adventurous amongst you can get rid of all the flab in the cell phone by removing the cover and getting rid of the speaker. You could tape over the display also to prevent any light from leaking out, and also end up with a much smaller bug.

We also had an old Sony Ericsson T200 handy, which had been put through much abuse and didn't break



Black tape on the screen to hide the light



The speaker is the one on the top left

device from a phone into a bug.

Make sure to test the way the new monitoring device works, and of course remember to use a SIM card that you don't use and don't



Taping the battery in place

any hearts when we ripped it open. The pictures will tell you the story.

Camouflage


In order to hide your bug you're going to need some sort of container. Just remember to avoid placing it next to speakers or a CRT monitor, where it will be easily discovered. You're also going to need to charge it regularly, which may make it hard to fix it in place behind or inside another object. You can, of course, connect the charger and hide it in a place with a



The finished bug is about one third the thickness of the original phone body, and cannot make any sounds

permanent power supply, but please don't shock yourself when trying to deal with electrical mains. You've been warned!

The spy game

Just call your SIM's number when you want to listen in to what's happening around the phone. Remember, it's illegal to spy on other people and invade their privacy. You can earn yourself a serious jail term if caught spying on people. However, no one can stop you from using surveillance devices on property you own, so use it at home and you'll be on the right side of the law. 

Disposable pen drive!

Art Lebedev's Flashkus have designed a new form of pen drives which are made of card boards and are disposable read more on <http://bit.ly/dQuZ7L>

More Xoom news

Motorola Xoom would be available for \$799 for 3G version with a free upgrade to 4G

Phone locked, optical drive troubles, slow start ups and dual booting

Digit Q&A answers these queries and more...

Unlocking phone

My Sony Ericsson k750i is locked, so I cannot use it. It asks for a lock code and I don't know it. I got this cell phone from my cousin brother, and he has also forgotten the password. Please help.

Samuel Tamer

What you need is a software called "_phonelockcode.zip" that will tell you the password to unlock the phone lock of a Sony Ericsson K750i / W800i. Since this can also be used by people who have stolen phones, we're just pointing you in the general direction, and not giving you full instructions on how to use it. There are many other similar software, such as XS++, that will help you do the same thing, but you're going to have to do your own web searching for them.

Slow boot

I am facing a very big problem with my PC. It takes about 15 minutes to finish booting, another 10 minutes to get to the welcome screen. I have removed all extra applications – even my media player – but to no avail. My PC configuration is as follows:

Intel Pentium 4 (3.2 ghz)
Intel motherboard
1 GB DDR2
80 GB SATA HDD

Manoj

Get into your BIOS (press [Del], [F1], etc., applicable to your BIOS), and check that the 'Quick Power On Self Test' is enabled. Also, in case your motherboard manufacturer's logo displays instead of the POST screen, make sure that you disable this so that you can see what's actually taking so long. If the BIOS is just sitting there doing nothing, you may want to reset to defaults, or use the Clear CMOS jumper. We'd be able to help you a lot more if you gave us the exact model

numbers in your configuration, which is why we ask all our reader to send those in. If all that fails, see if you can borrow a power supply from someone and ensure that your power supply is functioning properly..

Which Win 7 is for me?

What is basic difference in Windows 7 versions – ultimate, home basic, home premium and professional in details. Which one is suitable for me? I am a student of B Tech (CS) branch.

Sandeep Kumar Maurya

To be honest, just knowing that you're a BTech student isn't really enough information for us to suggest a version of Windows 7. Although all the software you need will run on Windows

the ability to run things in Windows XP mode.

Head to <http://bit.ly/h4RHTP> and <http://bit.ly/egTGC0> for the detailed comparison that you want.

Drive can't read CDs

I have an Acer laptop (model no aspire 4720Z) running Windows XP SP2, with 1GB RAM, 160GB hard drive. My DVD drive is able to open and browse almost all DVDs, but refuses to read most CDs.

Alok Rao

You either have a software or hardware problem. To make sure it's not a software problem, go to <http://bit.ly/i2qtN4> and download and run Microsoft's Fixit tool. If this does not solve the problem, go to Start > Run > regedit > [Enter], and when the Registry Editor opens up, search for "PxHelp20" or "PxHelp20.sys". If you find mentions of this folder or file, just rename it to something like "_PxHelp20" and "_PxHelp20.sys", and see if your drive can read CDs. If none of this works, get the latest firmware for your drive, and update it. If even that doesn't fix it, then you probably are out of luck and will need a new optical drive.

How do I dual boot?

I want to install Ubuntu10.10 on my computer. I have Windows XP Professional. I have heard that people face problems with dual boot of Windows and Linux. Also what kind of drivers do I need to install? My XP discs are NTFS, can I install Linux on that? My computer specifications are: ASUS M2N MXSE Plus motherboard, AMD



Home Basic, if you're looking to run applications that may be built for Windows XP or earlier, you may need Windows 7 Professional. The major advantage Professional has over Home Basic and home Premium is

Open Source guitar kit!

Zoybar has made an open source guitar which you can put together yourself and arrange it many combinations

Developers outraged

Symbian coders are angry with the Nokia Microsoft tieup as they accuse Nokia of selling themselves out to Microsoft

Q&A

Athlon 2 X2 250 3.00 GHz CPU and 1 GB of DDR2 RAM.

Akshay Raul

! You will be able to install and run a dual-boot system just fine. However, you haven't mentioned your hard drive configuration. You will have to create a partition with nothing on it to install Linux. You can either do this by moving your files around manually and creating the free space or you can do it from the Ubuntu 10.10 disk itself. You can get detailed instructions at <http://bit.ly/i2Jmng> on how to set up dual-boot. Ubuntu 10.10 has most generic drivers included, and you should have no problems with that. An easy way to check this without installing is to run it as a live CD, and use it for some time to ensure that all essential drivers such as the network card and GPU drivers function as they should, and only then go ahead and install Ubuntu 10.10 to the hard drive.

! Encryption woes

I have a pen drive that shows the names of all files and folders as: "+++++++.+++". Every time I try to open the files, the system asks me for admin privileges, and all files show up as 0 bytes. Drive properties shows the drive has 3 GB of files in it, and I'm already logged in as an administrator. How can I access these files?

Sukanta Das

! Sounds like an encrypted drive, which you will not be able to decrypt. If not, then it could be the flash drive itself that's corrupted, and either way, you're going to have to format it to find out if it works or not, so you can probably forget about the data that's on the drive.

! Hot stuff

Hi, my Intel Core 2 Quad Q8400 processor runs at a temperature of 52° to 55° Celsius at idle, and 90°C at 90 to 95 per cent load. Is this normal?

Manju

! A bit hot actually. Re-seat the HSF (heatsinkfan) properly and apply some TIM (thermal interface material), or just some thermal paste on the heat sink, after carefully removing the existing TIM using some isopropyl alcohol, easily found at a chemist or pharmacist. Make sure to keep away from the edges of the processor.

After applying paste, reseat the HSF properly and put the locks carefully in place. Then check the temperatures and tell us what you find.

! GPU Kaput?

I've had an 8600GT for the last three and a half years and it has been working beautifully... until today. When I switched on my PC today the monitor refused to detect the graphics card and I had to unplug it from my motherboard to get it

working. I'm pretty sure that my card is bust but I would just like to know more about it before I buy a new one? Is this really the end of my beloved card? The fan on the GPU is working, so at least the power supply to the card seems to be fine.

Also when I booted to my desktop, I was greeted with the 'New Hardware Found' dialog box, which said that it had found a new Video Controller (VGA). And when I tried to install the driver (the latest one that I had been using for sometime now), it said it could not find 'compatible software for the hardware present'.

Should I have to hunt for a new card or is there is any way to salvage my 8600GT. Also is only three and a half years really the lifetime of the card? I've only over-clocked it marginally using Riva Tuner for a short period (3 to 4 months, around two years back)

Specs:

Intel E6600 2.4 GHz
Intel DG33BU mobo
2 x 1GB RAM
Gigabyte GeForce 8600GT
400W Circle cabinet (at least 400W is what it claims).

sandyqbg

! Clean your PCI-E slot, and remove any dust from the card. If that didn't work, your GFX card is almost as good as dead. Sorry. And the culprit might be your PSU.

That found new hardware dialog is because, your Operating system detected your onboard integrated graphics processor (IGP) solution for the first time. And the driver you are trying to install might not be compilable with the IGP you are using. Make sure that the driver you are trying to install is from the same manufacturer. Your motherboard comes with an Intel IGP, download your VGA drivers from <http://bit.ly/e62aIR>.

! HDD burnt out

Hello Friends, a cousin of mine gave me a hard disk in the evening & informed that it has a problem. He told me that the very instant he

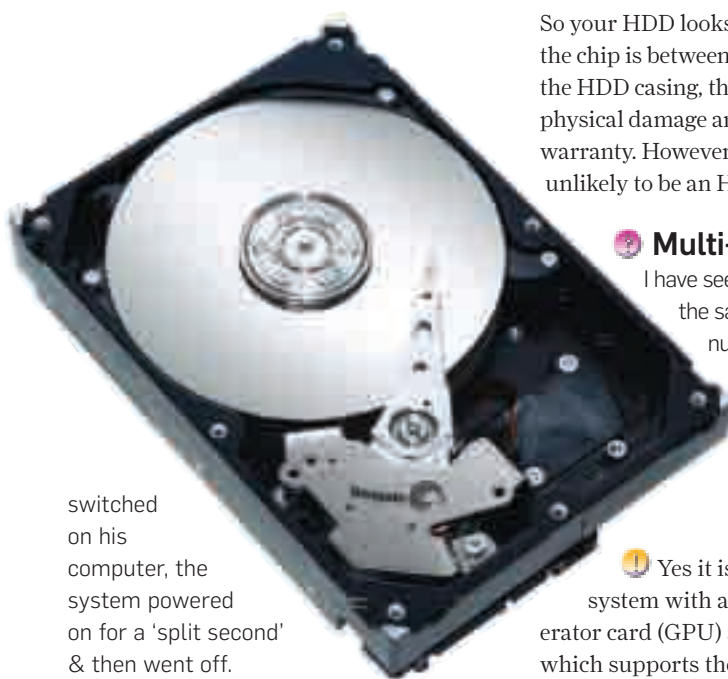


iPhone Nano?

If rumors are to be believed then Apple might launch an iPhone Nano by the end of year

Windows phone 7 update

With its new update Windows phone 7 has added multitasking capabilities and new Internet Explorer



switched on his computer, the system powered on for a 'split second' & then went off. After that there was a 'burnt' smell emanating from the hard disk in question. I take it that the logic board/card present below the hard disk is burnt. The warranty of the hard disk expires this year in July. My cousin has some important data that he wishes not to lose! His main queries are:

1. Can he recover his data if he is able to change the logic board appropriately?
2. Where can he procure an appropriate logic board for his hard disk? Is it very expensive doing so?

The details of the hard disk are -
Seagate Barracuda

[7200.9]

160GB IDE

ST3160212A

S/N : 4LS2Y52D

P/N: 9BD012-304

Firmware : 3.AAJ

Date Code : 06487

Is it a faulty PSU that has caused the above mentioned issue?

Awaiting your apt responses Friends.

insaneYLN

⚠ If you try to test a PC without a HDD (or crashed HDD) at least you'll be taken to BIOS.

So your HDD looks fine. Still, test it. If the chip is between the circuit board and the HDD casing, then they can't say its physical damage and will have to provide warranty. However, as I suspect, it's unlikely to be an HDD problem.

Multi-screen setups

I have seen many ads where the same video is split over a number of screens to give a large screen appearance. How do I use this for my day-to-day presentation work?

anandsemwal

⚠ Yes it is possible. You need a system with a discrete video accelerator card (GPU) and a motherboard which supports the same. Most motherboards do these days. Two connectivity cables are put into the GPU and lead to individual monitors. In theory your desktop is now spread across two panels. BUT applications (not games) will open on an individual screen. So if you have MS-Word open on the left screen it will never show on both halves. But you can drag it where ever. Takes a while to get used to, but is good if you want to do editing, quality check, reference work.

Team Digit's reply

If you're asking about span mode, instead of extended mode, then that's

also available through the NVIDIA or ATI drivers for graphics cards that support them. Thus, if you have two monitors with a resolution of 1920x1080, then you can create a large desktop with a resolution of either 3840x1080 or 1920x2160, depending on how you want to place your monitors. Extended mode, as explained by the forum member asingh is just allowing you to have multiple desktops. Also, check out our multiple monitor article at <http://bit.ly/eHt7Jt> to get a better idea of what's possible with multiple monitors.

How do I access webcam?

I have a local AITEK web cam. Whenever I plug it into my Windows 7-based desktop, it shows it in the device list, but there's no icon or way to access it, except when I use Skype.

I tried connecting the web cam to my Windows XP HCL laptop, which has an integrated web cam, and in devices I could see two web cams and I was able to click photographs and record videos using either web cam. How can I get it to work with Windows 7. Also, I didn't get a CD with the web cam.

mohityadavx

⚠ Just get software such as YawCam – www.yawcam.com. Your problem is that you don't have software to access the features of the web camera. **id**



Google Chrome

Google Chrome is one of the most ambitious projects by Google and there are very few people who can actually pick problems with it. It is an extremely fast and lightweight browser which packs a ton of features into its minimal interface. And what's more, this functionality can be extended even further by employing different Chrome extensions.

Multiple pages at start up

With Chrome, you can open up multiple pages simultaneously when you launch the browser. Simply go to the 'customize and control Google Chrome' button which is the right most

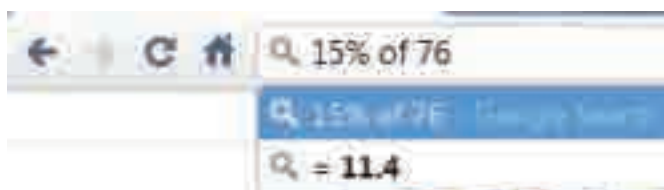


Explore more options under Google Chrome Options

button on the primary toolbar, and click on the options menu. On the first tab of the options window you can choose your homepage, simply click the add button to add all the individual URLs you want to open while Chrome starts up.

Calculator

Chrome's address bar is not just a simple address bar, but also doubles up as a calculator. Type in the expression, and Google will give you the answer.



Google's inbuilt Calculator in the address bar



Google Chrome	17
Firefox add-ons	19
Gimp	22
Windows Live Movie Maker	23

Incognito Mode

Chrome comes with a special secret mode that lets you surf the web anonymously. To activate this mode, click on the page control button, on the top right of the page. Just click on it and choose the 'New incognito window' or simply use [Ctrl] + [Shift] + [N] to open a new window in incognito mode. Any web site you visit while in this mode will not show up in your browsing history and all the cookies stored during this mode will be removed from

your system immediately after this tab is closed.

Navigation

You can right-click the back or the next navigation buttons to check the recent history. Additionally, you can simply drag and drop any of the tabs present onto your desktop to start a new browser window with only that tab open and in case you accidentally closed a tab or you want to open a recently closed tab, you can bring it back by simply pressing [Ctrl] + [Shift] + [T]. If there are multiple open tabs present in your browser window, you can cycle through them by pressing [Ctrl] + [1] to [Ctrl] + [9] on your keyboard.

Desktop shortcuts

Using Chrome you can create a desktop or start menu shortcut for any web site of your choice. Just open the site in Chrome and click the 'customize and control Google chrome' button on the right most corner of the screen. Then under the tools menu, select the 'create application shortcuts' option. You can choose to select any of the three

options, desktop shortcut, start menu shortcut and pinning it to the taskbar in Windows 7. Now from the desktop, you can just double-click the site to launch a new window with the site open.

Inspect memory usage

Right-click on any empty space on a web page and click on the 'inspect element' option to view the source code of the site in Chrome. While in the Developer Tools section simply click on the first line of HTML code, which will, in effect, select the entire site. Then click on the 'resources' tab and it will show you the usage of the memory by each individual element present on the web page. You can manually arrange the elements by time or size. With this window active, if you reload that particular page, all images and scripts present on the web page will show up on the graph and will be plotted in real time.

Firebug Lite Extension

Although Chrome has a very robust inbuilt Developer Tools section with similar features, seasoned web developers who are used to the magic of firebug in Firefox, with the help of the Firebug Lite extension can now use the same in Google Chrome. This is a great extension that helps with debugging and testing a web site in Chrome. The extension can also be used to see how certain cosmetic changes affect a site.

Web Developer Toolbar

The Web Developer toolbar extension for Firefox has been widely used by designers and front-end developers for a long time now. But fortunately, apart from Firefox, it is also available for use in Chrome but with a much better interface. The toolbar has many options for



You can check CSS styles with the web developer toolbar

seeing and analysing different web page layouts along by displaying the CSS style information about different elements. It also helps with browser cache controlling and much more.



You can enjoy features of Firebug in Chrome too

Resolution Test

Resolution Test is a very simple extension for checking out and testing a particular web page in different screen resolutions. It also lets you define your own custom resolution for testing a web page. It is a very handy tool that helps you make sure that your web design looks good across a spectrum of different monitor sizes and resolutions.

Pendule

Pendule is a Chrome extension that helps in extending the functionality of the inbuilt Google Chrome developer tools. This extension gives its users plenty of features including a one touch markup validation that is done through the W3C automated web services site. It also lets you hide images on the

page, view scripts included in a web page and much more.

Web page Screenshot

It is not always easy to capture

images of web pages. It can be annoying if you have to do it repeatedly. If the page is too



Inspect memory usage of a web page

long, you would have to take multiple sections of the web page as different screenshots. With the chrome web page screenshot extension, you can capture an entire web page with just one click of a button even after it spills out of the browser viewport. You can also resize the screen grab and save it as a PNG file using the same extension.

Plain Clothes

More often than not the CSS styles mask a lot of the web sites core HTML and become the identity of the web page,

making it difficult to isolate just the content being presented. In a few occasions you might just want to get rid of the entire styling and just get to see the content on the web page. The Plain Clothes extension helps you do just that. It helps in simulating the user experience when he does not have access to a full fledged browser on a monitor screen and has to rely on the web page's markup to gain access to the content. Though created primarily as a web developer extension, you can use Plain Clothes to view sites which would normally be recognisable and make them unrecognisable and yet have access the content. For example if you wanted to surf Facebook at your office without your Boss noticing you would be able to do so inconspicuously.

testing JavaScript commands and also aids in learning and experimenting with jQuery

Chrome Sniffer

Did you ever want to know which technology, framework or open source project a particular web site or portal was using to accomplish whatever



You don't need to change computers to test web pages

it is that it is doing. Experienced web developers usually

jQuery Shell Extension

It is a simpler equivalent of the Grease Monkey extension available in firefox. The jQuery Shell extension lets you run any JavaScript or jQuery commands on your current web page in a command prompt style interface. It is a very good tool for checking out and

figure this out by accessing the sites source code, but you can do it very conveniently and quickly by using the Chrome Sniffer extension. It goes through the web page and lists all the knows JavaScript libraries and frameworks and the CMS tools such as Drupal, and WordPress, if any, that are present on the web site.



With Pendule, you can decide what you want to see on the web page

Firefox Add-ons

Mozilla Firefox is undoubtedly one of the most popular web browsers present. Apart from being extremely functional the best part of firefox is the fact that a lot more features can be implemented and the ease of use increases with the addition of add-ons and extensions. A recent user survey revealed that more than one third of firefox users use at least one add-on to enrich their browsing experience. More than two billion add-ons have been downloaded since Mozilla started maintaining statistics. There are a lot of add-ons online, which let you do different things with your browser.

Trying to get a hang of the ever-increasing world of Firefox add-ons can be extremely difficult and time consuming. We hope to make this task less daunting and listed below are a few must have add-ons to help you be more effective with your workflow.

Download Statusbar

One has to admit Firefox's default download window is not very appealing. Firstly it's a pop-up, opening up a new window when you begin a download and you always have to keep going back to this window to check the status of your download. But Download Statusbar changes

all that, it's a helpful little add-on that just adds a tiny unobtrusive toolbar at the bottom of your browser, that keeps track of the progress of all your file downloads. It shows you the percentage completed, time remaining and has a many additional options like pausing, resuming, setting up a post download

virus check or simply not showing the download of certain file types like images.

Morning Coffee

A lot of us have a basic set of web sites we visit every time we log on to the internet. The browser, by default, lets you set only one page as your homepage. The Morning Coffee add-on lets Firefox automate the entire process for you and makes sure you don't have to type in the same site addresses over and over every time you open your browser. Apart from specifying a list of sites to open, morning coffee also lets you schedule which of them to open on which par-

ticular day. You can schedule a weekly cycle and choose to have them pop-up when you open your browser or simply let them appear as individual tabs when you hit the coffee cup button beside your address bar.

WebMail Notifier

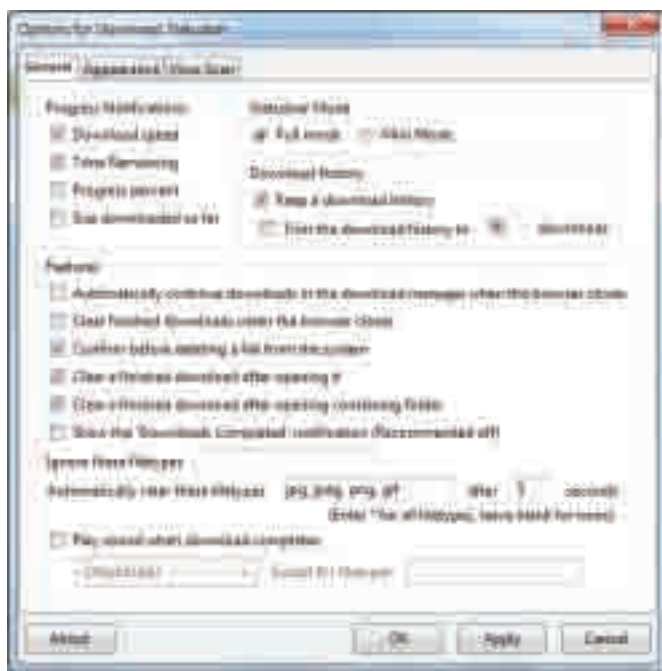
Normally you would have to visit every individual site for every mailbox you have to check for your email, but with the WebMail Notifier add-on, you can just put in your account information and a tiny little non intrusive button appears located at the corner of your firefox window telling you when you have received any new mail without you having to go to the web site. It gives you a small pop up notification at the bottom right corner of your browser whenever any new mail arrives in your inbox. You can click the icon to access your email in a new browser window. You can also set notification settings to open in a new tab or window automatically and to play a sound notification whenever a new email is received.

Personas Rotator

With Firefox 3, Mozilla lets you personalize your browser toolbar backgrounds and colours with custom made themes called personas. With so many thousands of personas now available, it's easy to get lost in them. There are so many cool personas out there yet you can setup only one to show up until you change it again manually. With Personas Rotator you can let Firefox pull personas from an online set of Firefox skins all sorted into a nest of categories and automatically keep changing them at whatever intervals you desire. But you should note that this add-on only works with the Personas Plus add-on.



Plain Clothes lets you personalise your web page

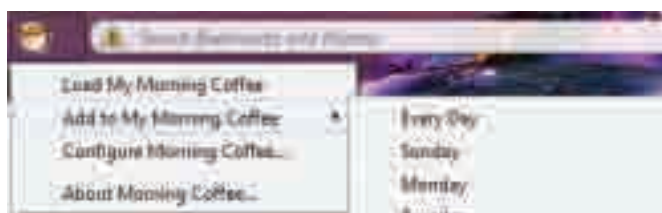


Download Status Bar options

Read It Later

Bookmarks almost always get a little messy unless you are very organised with your bookmarks. Also it takes more than one click to save a bookmark. Using Read It Later, web pages can be marked for reading later with a single click. It also lets

It's a must have if you are an active user of multiple social networks such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn or if you use multiple IM applications to interact with people. Yoono is a one stop solution for most of your basic socializing needs. Yoono integrates with most of



For you, if you visit a specified list of web sites

you read the items offline. Another cool feature is that it lets you synchronize them across multiple devices and workplaces from your browser itself. Using this add-on you can categorise your pages among different listing, mark pages as read after reading them and also download them for future offline reading.

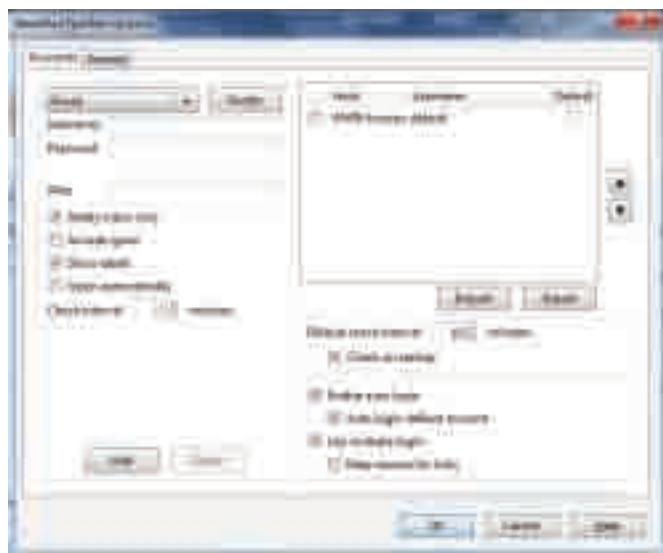
Yoono

Yoono is one of the best social media extensions you will find for an internet browser.

the popular chat clients like gTalk, MySpace, Windows Live Messenger, AIM, Yahoo Messenger and even with social networks like LinkedIn, Flickr and FriendFeed. It supports using multiple accounts with the same service. If you are using Yoono Firefox will give you a pop up at the bottom of the screen for every update you receive through these services.

FireFTP

Conventionally for using FTP you would need a full



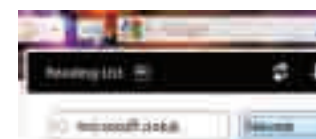
Web mail notifier options

fledged FTP client application software on your computer. Nowadays many alternative light weight clients are available but they do not offer all the features. But FireFTP on the other hand is a simple browser plugin that lets you get most of the features offered by a basic FTP client software right inside your browser. FireFTP includes many advanced features like directory comparison, syncing directories while navigating, SFTP, SSL encryption, search and filtering, integrity checks, remote editing, drag & drop facilities and file hashing. The best part though is that you can do all this directly inside your browser and it doesn't even slow your browser.

SeoQuake

SeoQuake is a very useful extension for developers who need help with search engine optimization. This particular extension obtains and gives you an analysis of a lot of important SEO parameters of the internet project under study. One can note and save the particular parameters for future reference and com-

pare the results obtained with other competitive sites to see which modifications



Bookmark for reading later

are faring better and what changes need to be made to the parameters.

Shareaholic

With the increase of our social media presence, we are starting to share and exchange an immense amount of information and links through multiple channels. Shareaholic is a Firefox add-on which helps you do just that way faster and through multiple different social channels. It is a customisable, light weight method to share any web page you might be visiting. There is a humongous range of supported networks through which you can share your links.

Lazarus – Form Recovery

Many a time, you end up typing into a long form; enter text, comments, with a lot of



Yoono: You know, for your social networking needs

content and suddenly your browser or sometimes even your computer crashes. In certain cases the data might not get submitted after you hit the submit button and the fields are reset; In these situations you are faced with the problem of re-entering all the information all over again. With the Lazarus add-on, you can prevent this from happening. If for some unforeseen reason your browser

should close, Lazarus lets you recover all the text that you were typing in any web page. It automatically saves all the content that you are typing into forms. Even better is the fact that all of this information is stored in an encrypted database locally for your security.

Faster Fox – Browse Faster

The Faster Fox add-on generally tends to increase the overall speed of surfing on the internet. It makes custom changes like tweaking the Wikipedia page to show only the related articles, auto loads, next pages, suggestions from Google, enhances Google's search results and

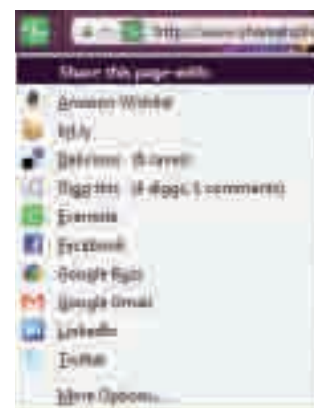


Collaborating your content is now easier with Shareaholic...

many more, thus speeding up the normal process of surfing online. You can save time by speeding up repetitive tasks and get faster, parallel downloads.



Firefox show you how to optimise your web site for search engines



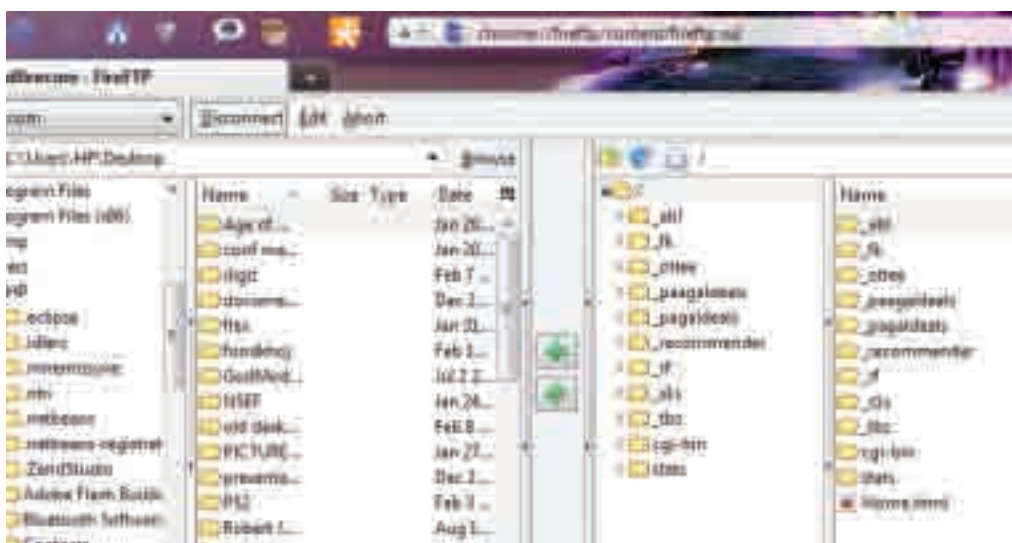
... and includes many web sites

Firebug

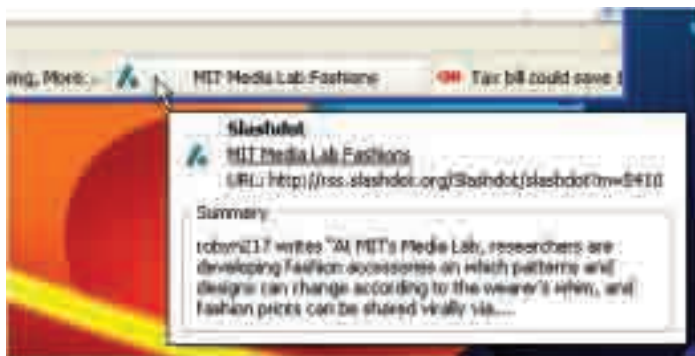
Firebug is probably the most fundamental, useful and a must have add-on for all web developers. Firebug is a firefox add-on which is a web development tool which aids developers in viewing the CSS, HTML and JavaScript of any page, and lets you open the hood and code in which allows you to get an insight of the inner workings of a webpage. It is definitely a must have who even have the slightest inclination towards web development, testing sites or debugging them. It is crucial for figuring out how a site works towards performing its various tasks.

Reminder Fox

Reminder Fox is a special plugin for people to schedule and plan out their future plans. It brings all the basic calendar



FTP Client: Filezilla built into your browser



RSS Ticker, if you're looking at aggregating your desired content

and organiser functions to the browser. Since the browser is one of the most used applications on a computer, setting reminders on your browser is the most effective way of maintaining your To-Do list. Reminder Fox integrates with ease into Firefox and gives the user the power to manage To Do lists, set reminders, notification alerts and alarms right from their browser.

RSS Ticker

RSS is a very good source of information and is a common communication standard for many blogs and news sites. The RSS Ticker add-on in Firefox shows all the live bookmarks in a scrolling fashion across the user's screen and the updates are visible to the user while browsing itself. So the user doesn't have to specifically log in to any feed reader like Google Reader for accessing the RSS feeds of their choice.

Scrapbook Plus

Scrapbook Plus is a great Firefox add-on for people who want to organise their web pages or even full web sites. The add-on lets you define filters which can be defined to exclude related links or any unwanted web pages. It is way better than making a list of cluttered bookmarks and not knowing what the bookmark is about at a later date.

Grease Monkey

Greasemonkey is one the oldest and the most popular add-ons used in Firefox which is primarily employed to run custom scripts on web pages. It changes the way a web page works or is displayed and how it interacts with a customer using small bits of JavaScript. You can write your own custom code to make changes to how your browser interacts with a particular web site and automate many manual processes and get more done faster.

Gimp

GIMP which is short for the GNU (which is recursively short for 'GNU is Not Unix') Image Manipulation Program is an open source and free alternative to Photoshop, available for Windows and Linux platform. We will now mention some handy tips and new tricks for the same.

Convert to black and white

Go To Colors, and Select Desaturate. You will be now presented with three options 'Lightness', 'Luminosity' or 'Average', ignore the technicalities and choose what pleases your eye. If you want more control over this, select 'Hue-Saturation', Click on Master, and drag the 'Saturation' slider till you achieve your desired effect.

Installing plug-ins and scripts

You can download as many plugins or scripts you want from <http://registry.gimp.org/> among many other places to enhance your functionality. Now from the Menu, go to 'Edit > Preferences > Folders', from there note down the location of the 'Plug-ins' and 'Scripts' folder. Then simply copy the Plug-ins or scripts you have just downloaded from the Internet there and restart GIMP.

Linux users are strongly recommended to install the 'gimp-plugin-registry' package. On a Debian-based system such as Ubuntu, this can be done by typing `Sudo apt-get install gimp-plugin-registry` on the terminal.

Rounded Corners

If you think photos look fancy with rounded corners, here is how you do it. Choose "Rounded Rectangle" from 'Select' Menu, Choose a Radius of around 30%, then press [Ctrl] + [I] to invert the selection (optionally you can choose invert from select menu) and now simply press 'Delete' button. If whitespace around images trouble you, go to Image>Autocrop Image and you are done.

Open a closed toolBox

Many new users get frustrated when they can't figure out how to open the layers toolbox or any other toolbox after closing it by mistake, since Gimp provides separate windows for each. Solution is very simple, Just go to 'Windows>Recently Closed Docks' and select what you want to reopen. Under Windows > Dockable Dialogs you will find all the toolboxes.

Finding a plug-in

After installing a plug-in/script you might find yourself digging through the menus in hope to find it. A smarter way is to go "Help > Plug-in Browser" and then search for your plug-in. Then the third-line in the right hand side pane, will show you the Menu Hierarchy under which it is located.

Liquid Rescaling

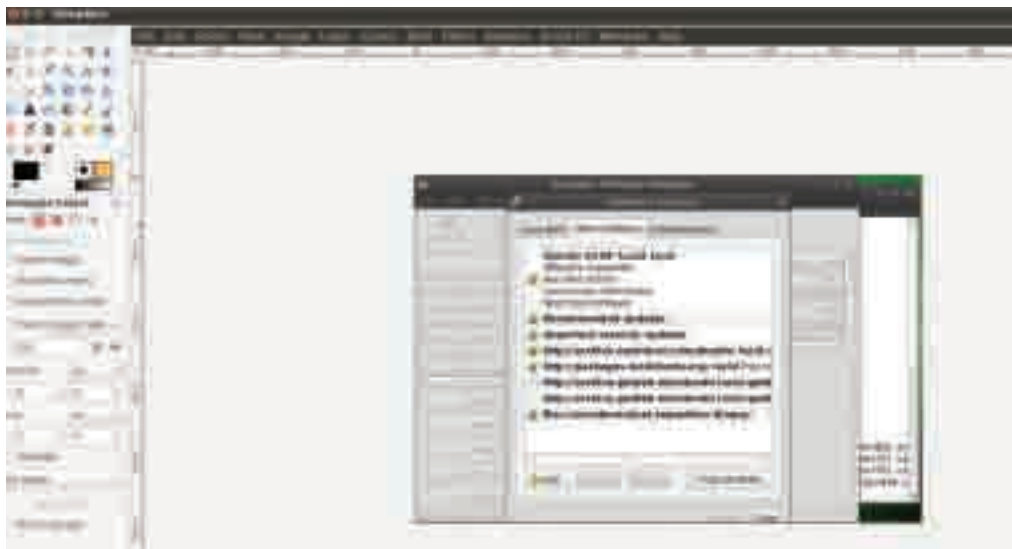
Have you ever wanted to resize a picture with a change in aspect ratio, hoping it won't distort important things inside, like in a very very smart way. This is your answer to that. It uses a very innovative 'Seam Carving' algorithm. Install the plugin from registry.gimp.org [If you have gimp-plugin-registry installed it will be there by default]. You can find the plug-in under the 'Layers' menu unlike most other plug-ins which are under Filters menu. You will need to experiment a bit, but we will show you some examples, which will make your efforts worth it. For more, visit <http://liquidrescale.wikidot.com>.

Processors Cores

Did you know Gimp can very effectively use multiple processing cores? If you Batch Process images or apply multiple filters at the same time, this can considerably decrease your processing time. With multiple cores being common even in laptops, it is an essential setting for speed gain. Go to 'Edit > Preferences > Processors to Use' and set it to number suited to your needs and Hardware.

Keyboard Ninja

A lot of filters will just work on the selected area of the image if there is any, and it can get difficult to remove a selection once done. In that case, simply go to the 'Select' Menu and choose 'None' or press [Shift] + [Ctrl] + [A].



A more organised GIMP

You can press [Ctrl] + [F] to repeat the last filter, very helpful when batch processing images, and to save some space you can press [Ctrl] + [E] to shrink wrap your window to the size of the image.

GimpBox

A common complaint that many users have (especially those migrating from Photoshop) is that Gimp opens a separate windows which float independently around. You can of course fix this by using GimpShop (<http://www.gimpshop.com/>) which will make your GIMP look exactly like Photoshop including menu structure, but then it is proper fork of the GIMP project. If you just want a single window mode, then you can use a simple python script called 'GimpBox', you can download it from <http://wget.http://gimpbox.google-code.com/hg/gimpbox.py> Linux user don't forget it grant it Executable permissions [From the terminal, in the directory where it is located, simple type `chmod +x gimpbox.py`. Further detailed instructions can be found at <http://ranjith.zfs.in/gimpbox-gimp-in-single-window-for-gimp-2-6-10-or-older-gimp/>.

Windows Live Movie Maker

With the advent of Microsoft's Windows Live services and products; came Windows Live Movie Maker (WLMM) which replaces the Windows Movie Maker that was in versions of Windows prior to Windows 7. WLMM is Video editing software focusing towards basic video manipulation requirements of a general user. WLMM 2011 is provided as a part of the Windows Live Essentials 2011, available for download at <http://download.live.com/moviemaker>. The installation of WLMM necessitates the installation of Windows Live Photo Gallery. Some of the things a user can do using WLMM are:

- Adding videos and photos: You can start your project by adding videos or photos from your collection in one of the compatible formats of WLMM. This can be added directly into the Movie Maker or through the Windows Live Photo Gallery.
- Personalise your movie with various transitions and effects like pan and zoom effects, visual effects, titles, credits, captions etc.
- Integrating sound tracks from your music collection and other sound files.
- Quick movie generation

using the AutoMovie themes which automatically adds a title, credits, transitions, and effects for you.

- Preview your movie at any time midway during the project creation, or any segment of the movie.
- Share the movie on the web by publishing your movie on sites like YouTube, Facebook, Windows Live SkyDrive, or through plugins provided by other sites.
- Burn your movie directly to DVD using Movie Maker.

User Interface

WLMM user interface includes the ribbon interface (also known as the Fluent User Interface introduced in Microsoft Office 2007) that helps users find commands directly with least clicks minimizing the necessity of trial-and-error usage or Help referencing.

The ribbon consolidates the functionality previously found in menus and toolbars; which improves the speed with which an average user can create / edit videos.

Essentials of Producing a Movie

Adding Videos and Photos
Add videos or photos by clicking on the "Add videos

and photos" option in the Add group and selecting the file of your choice by navigating to the folder with your collection. You can select multiple photos or videos by holding the [Ctrl] key, and then selecting the respective files.

You can quickly add photos and video files to the WLMM project by dragging the files from its folder location.

Trimming Video

If you want only some sections of your video to be retained in your project, you can trim the beginning and end of a video so your project shows only the part of the video you want. For example, you can remove the blank frames in a movie by trimming. Trimming a video in WLMM environment does not affect the original file.

Trimming can be done by selecting the 'Trim Tool' from the 'Editing' group of the 'Edit' tab on the ribbon. You can set the exact start and end points for the segment you want. Remember to 'Save Trim' before exiting.

When you edit a video file in WLMM, the original video file isn't affected. All the video footage remains in the original video file. You can quickly trim the video by pressing the 'I' key which makes the current point as the start point on your project, pressing 'O' makes it the end point. 'Split' option breaks the video at the pointer location, you can also use key-stroke 'M' for splitting a video into two segments.

Clear any new start and end points in Movie maker to make the entire video to play from the Trim Tool by dragging the start trim handle to the beginning of the video to make it play from the beginning, or the end trim handle to the end of the video to make it play to the end; from the point of trim.



Ribbon interface of Windows Live Movie Maker

Integrating visual effects

You can add visual effects to still pictures and video clips from the 'Visual Effects' tab on the ribbon of the WLMM workspace. All you need to do is hover over the choices available and get an instant preview of the effect.

You can also add multiple effects from the 'Multiple Effects' option of the bottom of the expanded 'Effects' Section. In this section you can add / remove effects from a set of available effects.

Adding Animations

You can use the 'Animation' tab on the ribbon to provide transitions between clips. As in hover action of Visual Effects, the Animation transitions also show a simple preview of effect to expect. The animations on the 'Transitions' section are applicable to videos and photos. Specific to Photos only, you can add Pan and Zoom animation effect.

Adding Music

You can add music to your project from a sound file in your collection to act as a sound track for the movie. This you can do by selecting the 'Add Music' option in the 'Add' section on the Home tab of the WLMM ribbon. After adding a song, duration time will be auto-

matically adjusted by WLMM to coincide the length of the song with a certain number of photos. In case your movie is longer than the duration of the music clip added, you can choose the 'Add music at the current point' option from the Add music option, which automatically appends the new track after the previous one

Music Tools

You can make the audio fade in at the beginning into your movie soundtrack, and smoothly fade out towards the end to make the audio editing sound professional. You can do this from the Music Tools on the Options tab of the WLMM ribbon after selecting the audio clip you want to apply the effects for. You can select the fading speeds between Slow, Medium and Fast.

You can use the same tools to change the start and end points of the music or to change the audio volume.

AutoMovie Themes

Use the auto movie themes from the Home tab of the WLMM ribbon to make a video in just a few clicks. All you need to do is pick your photos and videos, and apply a theme followed by the required transition effects to get your ready-to-go movie

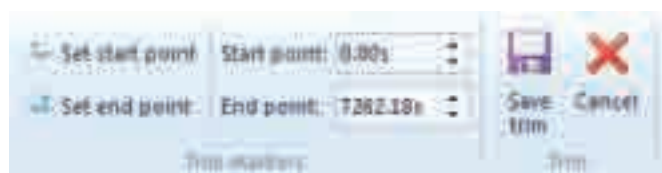
Miscellaneous

The Add section provides options for Webcam capture for video footage, captioning and crediting. You can choose aspect ratio of your choice between Widescreen (16:9) and Standard (4:3) for the video, an Audio Mix to balance the volume levels between audio and the video and an option to make the Video 'Fit to music'. You can share the movie online on Facebook, YouTube, SkyDrive, Windows Live Groups and Flickr. You can add more plug-ins from [http://](http://plugins.live.com/movie-maker)

than it may take you to read this article!

Why Windows Live Movie Maker?

WLMM is a fast and easy way to convert your images and raw video footage into a professional looking movie. Auto-Movie does most of your task by creating a polished movie from your collection. You can enhance the same with transitional and video effects. A simple tweak of using the sound recorder for a voice



Trim tool



Video tools

plugins.live.com/movie-maker. To connect more services to your WLMM, you need to sign in with your Live ID and add the service you desire.

Saving the Movie


You can save the movie in various formats by selecting the 'Save Movie' option from the Share section of the Home tab. You have option to select from a set of pre-sets available, or customize the format for yourself.

Engaging WLMM

Need to make a quick video to impress your boss for a business proposition, want to educate your pupils with panache, or preserve your personal photo and video collection as a pristine memorabilia? Windows Live Movie Maker is the option you need to use. With the above mentioned tricks, you can do all this within minutes, probably even lesser

over can even make it interactive. Above all, in the age of social media, making oneself heard with a video gives your plan or idea much higher credibility than any presentation or brochure can give.

Live presentations

Giving a slide show leaves the connectivity of slides to the viewer's discretion. To put forth your idea seamlessly, it is easier to connect it with a video wherein you can include conversations, debates and real footages; for instance quoting a personality in words is one thing, but showing a video of the person saying it gives a fresher outlook at the proposition. Above all, the sound track you choose can convey the right emotion you want the viewer to have. You don't need a team to do your marketing presentation; you can do it yourself on the way to a meeting! 

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Sandforce 2500

The first OCZ SSDs based on the upcoming enterprise-grade Sandforce 2500 controllers have been spotted.

Agent 001 goes UPS hunting

Blackouts, dirty power and brownouts are becoming a way of life. Agent 001 shows you how to keep your PC protected.

Agent 001

agent001@thinkdigit.com

Prevention is better than cure, as the time-tested adage goes. I'm a firm believer, and with summer around the corner, most of our country will face an increase in power cuts. Now in case you're not among those fortunate ones living in cities such as Mumbai, chances are, your PC will face power outages. I feel a UPS is most needed, even if power cuts are less frequent. Components need constant supply of current, and stable voltages. Fault tolerance levels in terms of volts are very minute, and most power supplies while able to regulate cannot cope with sudden spikes and troughs.

Think of a UPS as a first line of defence. On your checklist should be a UPS with AVR or automatic voltage regulation, otherwise a UPS is little more than a battery backup. You should at least have rudimentary protection from fluctuations to reduce the load on your power supply. Obviously, people with even cheap computers need at least a basic UPS, while if you have blown upward of 50 grand on your machine, you may even want higher-end UPS.

Ratings

VA ratings are not as important, except if you want more back-up time. If you have a basic dual/quad core rig, a rating of 600VA will suffice, as this means the UPS can supply up to (600×0.7) 420 watts. If your machine draws more than 420 watts, the battery will not be able to run your PC in the event of a power cut, and the PC will switch off. For a high-end Core i7, SLI or Crossfire rig, with lots of hard drives, you may need a 1000VA UPS, or even something beefier. Higher VA rating also equates to more backup time on the same configuration, but you end up paying more as well. There's a balance, although, higher VA rating UPS' are arguably better built than the lower models in the same line-up.

Price

Prices for UPSes have fallen, owing to popularity. Big computer markets like Nehru Place and Lamington Road are full of options. Among brands like APC, Numeric, VIP Powersafe, Microtek, V-Guard, I'd give preference to APC and Numeric. In fact, I have used an 800VA Numeric UPS for 6 years now, and just had its battery replaced – the UPS was fine. However, I've recently upgraded my PC, and wanted to run my LCD TV off my UPS too. Shopkeepers are not the most helpful bunch and will try to sell you something cheap. I would give preference to quality over sheer VA ratings, and your PC's life is on the line, so don't play around!

Support


Most brands offer onsite support, and dealers have AMC options, which you should enquire for. I saw a generic 500VA UPS priced at ₹1,300, but steered clear. Next I was shown Microtek, but I didn't like the options available. UPS' are available in different form factors, although if you're keeping yours on the floor, a regular box one will do. From what a couple of vendors told me, and based on feedback from friends, APC is by far the most common, although a lot of pieces are faulty. A good friend who shifted to Delhi recently, bought an APC BR-1500IN and told me he got his replaced four times (within warranty) on account of defective pieces. I recommend the Numeric 500VA for a basic dual core, browsing rig with a 400-watt power supply, and up to 22-inch LCD monitor. This should give you at least 5-10 minutes of backup and comes with a two-year warranty, and is priced at ₹2,100.

Higher-end UPS models not only provide longer backup, but also output more power, and can therefore handle more devices. Additionally, the greater number of relays used means voltage regulation is finer. The 1 KVA model (Numeric SB1000) is also available for those looking for longer backup on beefier systems. This is priced at ₹4,700, while the 1 KVA from APC (BR-1000IN) is priced at ₹5,500. The BR1500 IN from APC commands a price tag of ₹10,500. Numeric's SB1600 is available for ₹8,700 all-inclusive, while the 2KVA model (SB2000) was priced at ₹9,500. Microtek has a 1 KVA model available for ₹3,950.

Decision

Both brands have Pure Sine wave output models as well, although these are priced high enough for me to recommend an online UPS. Numeric's 1 KVA model is called the Digital 1000 LI SW and is priced at ₹9,700. A pure sine wave UPS is nothing more than one that regulates the AC output to resemble a pure sine wave i.e. with minimal steps, whereas regular UPS' output a stepped sine wave. Online UPS' are different beasts, featuring double conversion, where AC current is used to charge the batteries, and

the batteries output is again converted to AC outputted. Such UPS' have the most steady output voltage and isolate your equipment from the mains, but they are prohibitively expensive. Numeric's 1 KVA online model (HP1000 series), retails for ₹15,000, while a set of three batteries would require an additional ₹2,000.

The Numeric SB1600 was not available, and the SB2000 was priced at ₹800 more. In the end, I was able to bring the dealer down by a cool 400 bucks. I paid ₹9,100 for the Numeric SB2000 and that included delivery. My PC, TV, PS3, Blu-Ray player and DAC are just a little safer! 



Dual TV!

Sony's dual-view technology allows users to view different images on the same TV simultaneously

HP Tablet

The world's first Web OS based tablet the HP TouchPad would arrive by April

Agent 001

Need affordable QWERTY

Please help me in finding a mobile phone. I would like to go for a Nokia and Samsung phone.

Features that I need are Wi-Fi and up to 8 GB expandable memory. I would prefer touch screen or QWERTY keypad with good sound quality. My budget is ₹5,000-6,500.

Abhey Goyal

A You can get the Nokia C3 for approximately ₹5,700. This one has a full-fledged QWERTY keypad, has Wi-Fi and expandable memory up to 8 GB. The other option is the Samsung Chat 335, which will cost approximately ₹5,000.



Nokia C3

Need a laptop

Can you please help me by suggesting a laptop in the range of ₹60,000 which has the best configuration with 4 to 6 GB RAM, 500 GB to 1 TB hard disk, high graphics of up to 1 GB or more, Intel i5 or i7 processor, 3-4 hours of battery back up and Windows 7 Ultimate. I don't think the Dell XPS 16 fits my budget.

Saad Bin Tariq

A You can get the Dell XPS 14 with an Intel Core i7 processor, 6 GB RAM, 500 GB hard drive and the NVIDIA GeForce GT425M with 2 GB dedicated video memory. This one costs approximately ₹59,000. The only thing missing is the Windows 7 Ultimate version, since this one comes with Home Premium (64-bit) preinstalled.

Need gaming PC recommendations

I want to buy a computer that will run games such as *COD: MW2*, *Crysis*, and *Just Cause 2*. My budget is ₹50,000 to



Dell XPS 14

₹55,000. Is there any good laptop in this range? Also tell me the configuration of a desktop in this budget.

Pritam

A You can check out the Dell XPS14 laptop that would cost you ₹54,000. It has a Core i7 processor, 4 GB RAM, 500 GB hard drive and the NVIDIA GeForce GT 425M with 2 GB dedicated memory. This machine should perfectly suit your gaming requirements. If you want to buy a desktop, the Dell Studio XPS 7100 will cost ₹57,600 and is powered with the AMD PhenomII X6 processor, 6 GB RAM, 1 TB hard drive and has ATI Radeon HD5450 graphics with 1GB dedicated memory.

Netbook with good battery

I need a netbook, primarily as a 24/7 companion to enter data in Word and Excel, and for browsing. I already have a 15-inch



Samsung N150

HP laptop. I am looking for a netbook with long battery life (6-9 hours), portability (the smaller the better) and zero maintenance problems (for next 1-2 years). I have done my research and shortlisted three netbooks and request your expert advise regarding my selection.

1. Samsung N-150-JPOGIN - 10-inch, Atom N550, 1.5 GHz, 1M cache, 1GB DDR3, 250 GB, 6 cell battery, Win 7 starter for ₹16,000 in Delhi

2. Asus 1215T - 12", AMD IIK125, 1.7 Ghz, 1M cache, 2GB DDR2, 320 GB, 6 cell battery, DOS at ₹20,000 in Delhi

3. HP mini. I don't recall the model number. 10-inch, Atom N550, 1.5 GHz, 1M cache, 2GB DDR3, 320 GB, 6 cell battery, Win 7 starter for ₹22,200 in Delhi.

V Karthik

A We would recommend you to go for the HP Mini or the Samsung N150, since these come with the Windows 7 versions pre-installed with sufficiently powerful specs and battery life of about 4-5 hours. The Asus machine will require you to install a Windows version, which will increase acquisition cost. Pirated versions are not recommended, since your data will be at risk.

Phone for Media playback

I want to buy a phone for under ₹13,000 by July. I want to use it for watching films and playing music so good quality speakers and a big screen is a must. It must have a good processor, 128MB+ RAM, 3G capability, good graphics, touch screen and 8Gb+ memory. Which phone should I buy apart from the Nokia X6 (8 GB)

Atishay Kumar

A Apart from the Nokia X6, you can also take a look at the Nokia C5-03. This one has a 3.2-inch resistive touchscreen, expandable memory up to 16 GB, a 600 MHz processor, 128 MB of RAM and also has 3G. The C5-03 is currently available for about ₹9,300.

Gaming config wanted

I want to build a good gaming rig for approximately ₹25,000-26,000. Please suggest me a good configuration excluding monitor and speaker. I prefer Intel processor only.

Subrata Halder

Ubuntu in your car

The Navisurferrl is a small computer meant for your dashboard which runs Ubuntu

Truly a home theater!

Mitsubishi has launched a 92-inch 3D Home cinema TV available for \$6,000

A The budget you have mentioned is a bit less for a good gaming rig considering you are looking at only Intel processors. Here's a configuration that could suit your needs:

Processor: Intel Core i3-540 (₹6,000)
Motherboard: Gigabyte GA H55 UD3H (₹4,500)
RAM: Corsair 2x2GB DDR3 @1333MHz (₹2,250)
Graphics Card: Sapphire HD5670 (₹5,300)
Power Supply: Corsair VX 450 (₹3,500)
HDD: Seagate 500GB (₹1,800)
Cabinet: CM Elite 310 (₹1500)
Keyboard / Mouse combo: ₹800
That comes to ₹25,650.



CM Elite-310

Q Need a graphics card

I want to buy an ATI Radeon graphics card. My budget is ₹10,000. My requirements are GDDR5 Memory, DirectX 11or above, 1GB or above VRAM. I want to play latest games on ultra high resolution and max settings. My Possible target is HD 5770. Another thing which I wanted to know is regarding the 6000 series. Is launched in India? If launched what's the starting price of these. Would these suits my budget or not. Please help me! Next Problem is in my mother board. My mother board is a Intel chipset one, that is D945GCE. Which won't allow me to install a graphic card, as there is no slot in this which allow graphic cards. What should I do?

Ankit Raj

A Radeon HD 6000 series has launched in India. There are four cards available in this series namely HD 6850, HD 6870,

HD 6950 and HD 6970. Of these, the HD 6850, starts from around ₹12,000, whereas the higher end HD 69xx start from ₹17,000 onwards. New cards in the series such as HD 6670, HD 6450 are which will be comparatively affordable are presently being launched only with pre-assembled desktop PCs and are likely to take some time before being sold separately. You can either stretch your budget now for HD 6850s or wait for sometime for the prices to fall or wait for lower end HD 6xxx series cards to enter the market.

Right now for your budget, HD 5670 and HD 5770 are great cards. You can play games at 1080p but might not be able to crank up the Anti Aliasing and Anisotropic filtering without affecting gaming performance. HD 5770 is available around ₹8000 and is a better performer than HD 5670 which comes around ₹5500. Your board does not have PCIe x16 slots, so if you want to use the graphic cards, you will have to upgrade your motherboard.

Q To Mac or not to Mac

I've got a budget of about ₹75000/- and want to buy a new computer. The main confusion is that I'm stuck between the new Dell XPS 8300 and the Apple MacBook Pro. I need a computer that can play mid range games like NFS, etc. Please help me.

Prateek

A You have asked a question comparing two different product categories. On the one hand you have Dell XPS 8300 which is a desktop whereas on the other you have a laptop - Apple MacBook Pro 13-inch. Between the two Dell XPS 8300 is a much better performer as it has the latest processor as compared to the Core 2 Duo on the MacBook Pro. Also XPS 8300 is comparatively cheaper. You can play mid range games on both the systems. But in case of Dell XPS you might have to purchase a monitor as the website just shows the cabinet with the peripherals. Also Dell XPS 8300 has a Blu Ray drive, not found on any Apple products till now. Only if you want portability then go for MacBook Pro 13-inch.



MacBook Pro 13-inch

Q Graphics card and PSU required

My PC configuration is as follows:
Motherboard- Asus P5B-VM, 965 Chipset
CPU-INTEL Core 2 Duo E440 @ 2GHz
RAM-2GB, Symtronex667 MHz, DDR2
PSU-450w
DVD RW-Sony
Speakers-creative 2.1
Monitor-Samsung 19inch LCD
I want to buy a graphic card and PSU. Regarding graphic card I am confused about whether to go for NVIDIA or for ATI graphics card. I also want to know that if my motherboard can support DDR5 memory GPU. Please tell me a best and cheapest GPU of 512MB with DDR5 memory or 1GB with DDR3 memory. Please also suggest me a PSU of 650 watt.

Sohail Khan

A Many people wonder about the NVIDIA and ATI question while choosing a graphics card. However, it's best to judge the decision on the performance and price mix, not the brand. Your motherboard has one PCIe x16 slot which will support GDDR5 memory on the GPU. One of the most inexpensive cards with a good price performance mix and GDDR5 /512 MB is still the HD 5670 available at around ₹5,500. As for NVIDIA card, there is GTS 250 around ₹7000. Its a good performer, but has slower DDR3 memory and does not have DX11 support. As for the powersupply, why would you need a 650W? A Gigabyte Superb 460W for ₹2,200 should do just fine. In fact if your existing PSU is from a decent brand, continue using it. **U**

Confused

Which Gadget to BUY ? ...



Expert Reviews and
Ratings powered by

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FIND

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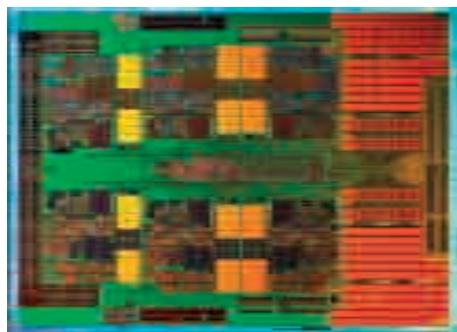


Buy what is right for you!


Expert Buying Advice

Online Buying Guide for Laptops | Mobiles | LCD/Plasma TVs | Cameras | Camcorders

PRIMARY COMPONENTS



PROCESSOR

- AMD Athlon II X2 250 / ₹2,700
- AMD Athlon II X3 440 / ₹3,250
- AMD Phenom II X4 945 / ₹6,250
- Intel Core i5 760 / ₹11,500
- Intel Core i7 960 / ₹14,800



HARD DRIVE

- 500GB Seagate 7200.12 ₹1,700
- 500GB Seagate 7200.12 / ₹1,700
- Seagate 1 TB 7200.12 / ₹2,825
- Seagate 1 TB 7200.12 / ₹2,825
- 2 TB Seagate Drive / ₹5,675

MOTHERBOARD

- ASUS M4A78LT-M LE / ₹2,600
- Gigabyte GA-MA785GMT-US2H / ₹3,400
- MSI 880GMA-E45 / ₹5,900
- Gigabyte GA-P55M-USB3 / ₹9,570
- ASUS Sabertooth X58 / ₹12,755



GRAPHICS CARD

- None
- Sapphire HD 5670 / ₹5,500
- PowerColor Radeon HD 6850 / ₹10,990
- ZOTAC GTX 560Ti AMP Edition / ₹17,500
- ASUS GTX 580 / ₹30,500



MONITOR

- Dell 1920IN / ₹5,500
- BenQ G2220HD / ₹7,500
- BenQ G2220HD / ₹7,500
- BenQ G2220HD / ₹7,500
- Dell U2311H / ₹14,000



RAM

- Transcend 2GB DDR3 1333 MHz / ₹1,350
- Corsair 2x2GB DDR3 1333 MHz / ₹2,250
- Corsair 2x2GB DDR3 1333 MHz / ₹2,250
- Corsair 2x2GB DDR3 1333 MHz / ₹2,220
- 3x2 GB Corsair Dominator 1600 MHz / ₹9,200

■ Basic rig = ₹17,745

■ High-end Multimedia / Gaming rig = ₹46,285

■ Ultra high-end PC / Gaming rig = ₹1,32,200

■ Multimedia cum gaming rig = ₹31,095

■ High-end gaming PC = ₹68,990

SECONDARY COMPONENTS

CABINET

- Zebronic Bijili w/o SMPS / ₹1,100
- CM Elite 310 / ₹1,500
- CM Elite 430 / ₹2,805
- NZXT Lexa S Mid-Tower / ₹4,920
- Cooler Master HAF912 / ₹6,265



SOUND CARD

- None
- None
- None
- None
- ASUS Xonar DX 7.1 / ₹5,620



POWER SUPPLY

- VIP 350 Watts / ₹800
- Corsair CX400 / ₹2,600
- Corsair VX450 / ₹3,500
- Corsair VX550 / ₹4,800
- Corsair HX850W / ₹9,500



SPEAKER

- None
- Altec Lansing VS2621 / ₹1,400
- Altec Lansing VS2621 / ₹1,400
- Creative Inspire T6100 / ₹4,425
- Creative Inspire T6100 / ₹4,425



MOUSE

- Logitech M90 / ₹330
- Logitech M90 / ₹330
- Logitech MX518 / ₹1,200
- Logitech MX518 / ₹1,200
- Logitech G9x / ₹4,900



OPTICAL DRIVE

- Sony DVD Writer / ₹1,400
- Sony DVD Writer / ₹1,400
- Sony DVD Writer / ₹1,400
- Sony DVD Writer / ₹1,400
- LG 10x Blu ray RW / ₹10,235



KEYBOARD

- Logitech K100 / ₹265
- Logitech K100 / ₹265
- Logitech K100 / ₹265
- Microsoft Comfort Curve 2000 / ₹1,100
- Razer Lycosa / ₹4,305



MISCELLANEOUS

HD MEDIA PLAYERS

- ASUS O!Play Mini / ₹3,500
- WD Live Hub TV / ₹12,000
- Xstreamer Pro / ₹13,000



GAMING HEADSETS

- Plantronics GameCom 367 / ₹1,705
- Razer Orca 1 / ₹3,395
- Corsair HS1 / ₹4,999



PORTABLE DRIVES

- Transcend StoreJet Mobile 250GB / ₹2,550
- Seagate FreeAgent Go Flex 500GB / ₹3,150
- Iomega eGo 1TB USB 3.0 drive / ₹6,999



MOUSEPAD

- Razer Goliathus / ₹460
- Cooler Master Storm CS-M / ₹850
- Razer Goliathus Fraggd Control Edition / ₹999



GAMING CONSOLES

- Sony PlayStation3 (320GB) with Move / ₹24,855
- Xbox 360 (250GB) with Kinect / ₹31,980
- Nintendo Wii Black / ₹18,990



POWER PROTECTION

- APC (BR600CI-IN) / ₹2,165
- Numeric SB1000 / ₹4,700
- APC (BR-1000IN) / ₹5,500



Vaio's Core i5 upgrade

Sony Vaio's S series has undergone a design change and will come with Intel Core i5-2410M alongwith Radeon HD6470M graphics solution

SPEND SMART

Updated prices of Laptops, Cellphones and Digital Cameras

Laptops

Brand	Model	Processor	OS	Memory	HDD	Market Price
Acer	5739G	Intel Core 2 Duo	Win 7 HB	4 GB	320 GB	40425
Acer	5742G	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	43315
Acer	4820TG	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	46465
Asus	1008P-BRN100S	Intel Atom	Win 7 HP	2 GB	320 GB	22365
Asus	VX6-BLK021M	Intel Dual Core	Win 7 HP	2 GB	320 GB	35125
Asus	X42JR-LF001V	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HP	1 GB	500 GB	46440
Asus	K52JR-SX195D	Intel Core i5	DOS	2 GB	640 GB	47120
Asus	NX90JQ-YZ071V	Intel Core i7	Win 7 HP	8 GB	1 TB	133331
Dell	Mini 10	Intel Atom	Win XP Home	1 GB	250 GB	18115
Dell	Inspiron 15R	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HB	2 GB	320 GB	37485
Dell	15R	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HB	4 GB	500 GB	47675
Dell	XPS 15	intel Core i5	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	54495
Dell	M11x	Intel Core 2 Duo	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	70035
Dell	M15x	i7-740QM	Win 7 hp	4 GB	500 GB	98710
Dell	M15x	Intel Core i7	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	98710
Dell	M17x	Intel Core 2 Duo	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	131860
Fujitsu	AH530	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HP	2 GB	320 GB	33285
Fujitsu	P770	Intel Core i7	Win 7 HP	2 GB	320 GB	106895
Fujitsu	T900	Intel Core i7	Win 7 Pro	2 GB	500 GB	120070
HP	210-1085tu	Intel Atom	Win 7 starter	1 GB	160 GB	17855
HP	210-1099TU	Intel Atom	Win 7 starter	1 GB	160 GB	17855
HP	DV6-2174tx	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HP	2 GB	320 GB	45785
HP	DV4-2112tu	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HP	3 GB	500 GB	47515
HP	DV6-3057tx	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HP	3 GB	500 GB	48095
HP	dv6-3124TX XV700PA	Intel Core i7	Win 7 HP	4 GB	640 GB	60065
HP	DM3-1131tx	Intel Core 2 Duo	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	60275
HP	XB775PA	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HP	3 GB	500 GB	60795
Lenovo	S10-3C 59-051325	Intel Atom	Win 7 Starter	1 GB	250 GB	18295
Lenovo	S10-3s 59-043055	Intel Atom	Win 7 Starter	2 GB	250 GB	21525
Lenovo	Z-460 59-048168	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HB	2 GB	500 GB	35965
Lenovo	Z-560 59-049752	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HB	2 GB	500 GB	36225
Lenovo	Y-560 59-040352	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	52815
MSI	CR 620	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HB	2 GB	320 GB	31975
MSI	GX400	Intel Centrino 2 - P7350	Win Vista HP	4 GB	320 GB	44680
MSI	FX400	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	48065
MSI	FX600	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	50825
MSI	GX620	Intel Core 2 Quad - Q9000	Win Vista HP	4 GB	320 GB	60640
Samsung	NP-N150-JP0G	Intel Atom	Win 7 Starter	1 GB	250 GB	17015
Samsung	N150-JA01	Intel Atom	Win 7 Starter	1 GB	250 GB	18905
Samsung	NP-R440-JA04	Intel Core	Win 7 HB	3 GB	320 GB	32135
Samsung	NP-R439-DA09IN	Intel Core	DOS	4 GB	500 GB	32655
Samsung	R430	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HP	4 GB	320 GB	37275
Samsung	R580-JT01-IN	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	40955
Samsung	NP-R580-JT01	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	42265
Samsung	R480	Intel Core i3	Win 7 Pro	4 GB	500 GB	44525
Samsung	NP-R580-JT02IN	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HB	4 GB	500 GB	46515
Samsung	NP-SF510-S01IN	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	51345
Sony Vaio	VPCEM126AG	Intel Atom	Win 7 Starter	2 GB	320 GB	24526
Sony Vaio	VPCEA31EN	Intel Pentium	Win 7 HB	2 GB	320 GB	32920
Sony Vaio	VPCEB31EN	Intel Pentium	Win 7 HB	2 GB	320 GB	32920
Sony Vaio	VPCYA15FG/B	Intel Core i3	Win 7 HP	2 GB	320 GB	39905
Sony Vaio	VPCEA36FG	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HB	4 GB	500 GB	62483
Sony Vaio	VPCZ136GG	Intel Core i5	Win 7 Pro	6 GB	128 GB (SSD)	109650
Sony Vaio	VPCF137HG	Intel Core i7	Win 7 Ultimate	8 GB	750 GB	129600
Sony Vaio	VPCZ138GG/xQ	Intel Core i7	Win 7 Pro	1 GB	256 GB (SSD)	159525
Toshiba	AC100-T1A10	NVIDIA Tegra	Android 2.1	512 MB	8 GB	18220
Toshiba	NB250-A1110	Intel Atom	Win 7 Starter	1 GB	250 GB	20815
Toshiba	C650-D5010	Intel Core 2 Duo	DOS	2 GB	320 GB	26885
Toshiba	C650-P5210	Intel Pentium Dual Core	Win 7 HB	3 GB	320 GB	28665
Toshiba	L640-x4310	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HP	3 GB	320 GB	42215
Toshiba	C640-I4530	Intel Core i3	Win 7 Pro	2 GB	320 GB	46725
Toshiba	L650-x5310	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	53345
Toshiba	A11-I5530	Intel Core i3	Win 7 Pro	3 GB	320 GB	53555
Toshiba	A660-X5310	Intel Core i5	Win 7 HP	4 GB	500 GB	80855
Toshiba	M780 - x2530	Intel Core i5	Win 7 Pro	3 GB	320 GB	90985

12.8 GB/sec

Samsung's memory lab have developed a mobile DRAM with wide I/O interface capable of transferring data 12.8 GB/sec



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Price watch

Digital Cameras

Brand	Model	Optical Zoom	Market Price
Canon	A3100 IS	4x	6870
Canon	IXUS 105 IS	4x	8820
Canon	200IS	4x	11290
Canon	SX120 IS	4x	12210
Canon	SX210 IS	14x	17800
Canon	SX210IS	4x	17800
Canon	210IS	5x	20685
Canon	EFS 18-55	3x	22785
Canon	D10 IS	3x	23415
Canon	IXUS 300 HS	10x	23415
Canon	IXUS 1000 HS	10x	24335
Canon	PowerShot S90	4x	25180
Canon	SX30IS	4x	27095
Canon	G12	4x	29925
Canon	EOS-500d	NA	30820
Canon	EOS 500D	NA	34495
Casio	Z-90	3x	8615
Casio	Z-280	4x	9555
Casio	S-12	3x	13285
Casio	FS-10	3x	17115
FujiFilm	FinePix JX200	5x	6515
FujiFilm	FinePix JZ300	10x	9245
FujiFilm	FinePix S1800	18x	11235
FujiFilm	FinePix Z700 EXR	5x	12025
FujiFilm	FinePix S2500HD	18x	13025
FujiFilm	FinePix F80 EXR	10x	16695
FujiFilm	FinePix HS10	30x	23105
Kodak	CD14	12x	3515
Kodak	C143	3x	4205
Kodak	M550	5x	6275
Kodak	M580	8x	10185
Kodak	Slice	5x	14805
Kodak	Z981	26x	16595
Nikon	L21	3.6x	4570
Nikon	L22	3.6x	6382
Nikon	S3000	4x	7115
Nikon	S5100	7x	8900
Nikon	S4000	4x	8900
Nikon	S5100	5x	8980
Nikon	S6000	7x	10685
Nikon	S80	5x	15175
Nikon	S1100pj	5x	16040
Nikon	D3100	3x	29455
Nikon	P7000	7.1x	29597
Nikon	D-90	5.8x	38800
Nikon	D-7000Kit	5x	80300
Olympus	FE-4040	4x	9555
Olympus	E-450	Any	33395
Olympus	E 520	3x	34810
Olympus	E-P1	3x	37645
Olympus	E-P2	3x	42315
Olympus	E 620	3x	46990
Panasonic	DMC-FS4	4x	5255
Panasonic	DMC-FS42	4x	6825
Panasonic	DMC-TZ6	12x	15755
Panasonic	ZR1	8x	15965
Samsung	ES73	3x	8415
Samsung	EC-PL100	3x	8605
Samsung	EC-PL150	5x	10055
Samsung	ST70	5x	10880
Samsung	WB600	15x	14020
Samsung	WB650	15x	16435
Sony	DSC-S2000	3x	6355
Sony	DSC-S2100	3x	6855
Sony	DSC-W310	4x	7825
Sony	W360	4x	10685
Sony	W350	4x	12479
Sony	DSC H55	10x	14650
Sony	DSC WX1	5x	14650
Sony	DSC-TX1	4x	15535
Sony	DSC-TX7	4x	23819

Cellphones

Brand	Model	GPS	Camera (Primary)	SIM Slots	Market Price
Acer	M900	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	16265
Acer	liquid e	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	18685
BlackBerry	Curve 8520	No	2.0 MP	Single SIM	11685
BlackBerry	9105	Yes	3.2 MP	Single SIM	16400
Blackberry	9300 CURVE	Yes	2.0 MP	Single SIM	17320
Blackberry	9100 PEARL	Yes	3.2 MP	Single SIM	18695
BlackBerry	Bold 9780	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	26185
Blackberry	Torch 9800	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	32775
Dell	XCD28	Yes	3.2 MP	Single SIM	8585
Dell	XCD35	Yes	3.2 MP	Single SIM	16060
HTC	F3188	Yes	3.0 MP	Single SIM	7880
HTC	Wild Fire	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	13840
HTC	Desire	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	25355
HTC	HD-7	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	29190
LG	GM200	No	2.0 MP	Single SIM	3690
LG	6300	No	2.0 MP	Single SIM	4700
LG	GDE510	No	3.0 MP	Single SIM	6465
LG	KS660	No	5.0 MP	Dual SIM	9145
Micromax	X235	No	CMOS	Dual SIM	2075
Micromax	G4	No	2.0 MP	Single SIM	2525
Micromax	Q5 fb	No	2.0 MP	Dual SIM	3865
Micromax	X600	No	2.0 MP	Dual SIM	3890
Micromax	X510	No	2.0 MP	Single SIM	4045
Micromax	Q7	No	2.0 MP	Dual SIM	4120
Micromax	Q6	No	2.0 MP	Dual SIM	4345
Micromax	X550	No	2.0 MP	Single SIM	4345
Micromax	Q75	No	3.2 MP	Single SIM	4600
Micromax	A60	Yes	3.2 MP	Single SIM	6745
Micromax	Modu T	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	10105
Motorola	MB502	Yes	3.0 MP	Single SIM	13135
Motorola	Milestone	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	21820
Nokia	X2	No	5.0 MP	Single SIM	4855
Nokia	C3	No	2.0 MP	Single SIM	5830
Nokia	X3	No	3.2 MP	Single SIM	6545
Nokia	C5	Yes	3.2 MP	Single SIM	7310
Nokia	X5	No	5.0 MP	Single SIM	9140
Nokia	5530 XpressMusic	No	2.0 MP	Single SIM	9620
Nokia	E5	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	10200
Nokia	E71	Yes	3.1 MP	Single SIM	12990
Nokia	C6	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	13135
Nokia	X6 8GB	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	13950
Nokia	X6 16GB	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	15725
Nokia	N97	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	22870
Nokia	N8	Yes	12.0 MP	Single SIM	23825
Olive	V-G300	No	Digital	Dual SIM	3235
Olive	V-G400	No	2.0 MP	Dual SIM	3435
Olive	V-G500	No	2.0 MP	Dual SIM	3640
Olive	Wiz V-GC800	Yes	2.0 MP	Triple SIM	5205
Samsung	Chat 322	No	1.3 MP	Dual SIM	4345
Samsung	3653- Corby	No	2.0 MP	Single SIM	6205
Samsung	S5233- Star	No	3.2 MP	Single SIM	6660
Samsung	Corby TV	No	2.0 MP	Single SIM	8085
Samsung	S5603-star	Yes	3.2 MP	Single SIM	9595
Samsung	B7320	Yes	3.0 MP	Single SIM	11615
Samsung	B7300	Yes	3.0 MP	Single SIM	12625
Samsung	I9000	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	28990
Samsung	I8910	Yes	8.0 MP	Single SIM	31315
Sony Ericsson	Aspen	Yes	3.2 MP	Single SIM	10605
Sony Ericsson	Xperia X10 Mini	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	11515
Sony Ericsson	Xperia X8	Yes	3.2 MP	Single SIM	12780
Sony Ericsson	Vivaz Pro	Yes	5.1 MP	Single SIM	19800
Spice	QT-68	No	3.2 MP	Dual SIM	3840
Spice	M-6000	No	2.0 MP	Dual SIM	3965
Spice	QT-56	No	2.0 MP	Dual SIM	4045
Spice	MI-300	Yes	5.0 MP	Single SIM	10380
Videocon	V204	No	No	Single SIM	1465
Videocon	V1305	No	No	Dual SIM	1545
Videocon	V1300	No	No	Dual SIM	1565
Videocon	V1306	No	No	Dual SIM	1780
Videocon	V1604-Upto 2GB	No	2.0 MP	Dual SIM	4015
Videocon	V1675-Upto 2GB	No	2.0 MP	Single SIM	4140

Budget Apple

Apple planning cheaper, smaller iPhone:
<http://bit.ly/em14lr>

Yet another tablet

HP to showcase tablets, smartphones:
<http://bit.ly/gBoIGM>

Avoiding Mobile Menace

Prevent unnecessary hassles due to handhelds

Kapil Rustagi

readersletters@tbindigit.com

Cellular telephony is no longer limited to the rich and famous. This mode of communication has its charm amongst masses throughout the world. In the past decade, it has become the common man's necessity. You can now access the internet on your mobile via Wi-Fi, click pictures and shoot videos using extremely high resolution cameras. Add to that an on-the-go MP3 player. In the midst of all these conveniences, it has its share of disadvantages. There are few suggestions a mobile consumer needs to keep in mind to avoid incidental problems. One of the major issues that concern the mobile user today is unwanted telemarketing calls and messages. Although such information is meant to be inacces-

sible both legally and ethically, both mobile network corporations and their employees earn a major chunk of their profits by selling customer database to telemarketing organisations. As a result, you are flooded with numerous unwanted calls by such organisations endorsing their services. The potential threat of such unsolicited calls lies not only in the nuisance they create, but there is a fair chance that the person on the other side can induce you reveal such vital information that can be detrimental to your interests. For example, they can offer you some lucky gift, discount coupons or dinner at some petty restaurant in exchange of some vital information related to your bank account, office timing, age, relatives, and family members. You may have told a teller caller that you and your spouse are

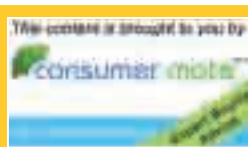
information and even transferred money on false promises of winning lotteries abroad.

Apart from making you vulnerable to fraud and cheating, it causes nuisance which is painstaking. You may be rushing to the office or to some emergency that needs your ultimate priority. In the midst of it all, you find yourself answering a call which is nothing less than idiotic. Moreover, at times due to such pesky calls, we miss important calls.

Legally speaking your provider has to maintain your privacy intact which if breached should be compensated. The mobile company can be held liable for passing on any information without the consent of the consumer. The consumer must register with the DND (Do Not Disturb) directory. It is duty of the company to dis-

close to the consumer in case the mobile number was being used by some other consumer in the past. If they do not adhere to such compliances, such conduct becomes

actionable. The service provider can be held vicariously liable for any damages caused due to such infringement. Above all, prevention is better than cure. So the next time, just be careful when your mobile phone screen displays an unknown number. **■**



We can help!

If you're facing a problem with your purchase, write to us at help@consumermate.com

working professionals and generally return home late everyday. Inadvertently, what you have just revealed is that your home is quite prone to theft during the active hours of the day. That apart, many have given their bank account details and credit card

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

Mobile Phones

Faulty Videocon motherboard

Question: I am already blaming myself for my decision to buy a Videocon mobile phone. Its quality is the same as Chinese phones. Service centres take months to repair. Within three months of buying it, its motherboard got damaged by itself. The service centre guys are saying it's not covered under warranty and need to pay 70 per cent of the price of a phone to replace it.

Prashant

Answer By Consumermate

Dear Prashant,
 Thanks for sharing your inputs and suggestions regarding the product and services that may be beneficial could guide prospective customers. Do not feel

cheated this way, as you can very well take legal action by lodging a complaint with the district consumer forum. We suggest you write them a registered letter containing all the details of your complaint. In case, they do not come up with a solution, then you may go ahead with complaint in the district forum.

Lemon mobile not working fine

Question: I purchased a Lemon duo 211 with dual SIM in February 2010. Within a month it started malfunctioning. I went to some service centres, but they say they won't be able to do anything, and asked me to send it to the company service centre. I am now in Chennai. I want to know whether there are any service centres of Lemon in Chennai

M Murali

Answer By Consumermate

Dear Murali,
 You can challenge the dealer and the company with regard to your phone. At this stage, we suggest you to write them a registered letter containing all the details of your complaint. In case they do not come up with a solution, then you may go ahead with a complaint in the district forum.

We hope some sense will prevail over them at the stage of issuing a notice itself, and they will sort out matter with you. And, yes maintain a record of all communications that may be necessary in the future as evidence. It may tough for you to go to the consumer forum, but sometimes even the filing of a complaint is sufficient to move them.

worldview

OUR PICK OF THE BEST TECH ARTICLES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

(MUST READS)

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF SOCIAL NEWS



A graphical story that covers everything from pre-historic cave paintings all the way up to social news aggregators such as Paper.li, Flipboard, Pulse and Taptu, while covering stuff like marathon runners, radio and colour TV along the way.

<http://bit.ly/eE2bqK>

LARRY PAGE'S GOOGLE 3.0

Business Week gives us a very detailed account of what really goes on behind the closed doors of Googleplex. Learn how the imperial triumvirate of Google - Sergey Brin, Larry Page, Eric Schmidt - bring together their near-sovereign chieftans of Google's far-flung product groups into a single room and harmonise their disparate initiatives.

<http://buswk.co/g8rpQT>

2G, 3G, 4G, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

Wireless has come a long way from when cellphones caused more than just a little bulge in your pants. But through the years it's dropped so many 'G's along the way, it gets confusing to keep up. Sure 4G is one G higher than 3G but what the hell does that really mean? And what is 2.75 G? Did you even know about it? This Engadget wireless primer is for you

<http://engt.co/eGqSep>

(Lifehacker Corner) TOP 10 HEADPHONE HACKS



Headphones have been around for ages and in this article, Lifehacker gives you 10 ways to increase their sound quality, make them more comfortable, and carry them around hassle-free.

<http://lifehac.kr/f4C66i>



Get Multitouch gestures on linux
Who says linux can't have Multitouch? Free download Touchegg will give you MacBook-caliber gestures on your Linux-based laptop. This Lifehacker Downloads tip tells you how:
<http://lifehac.kr/h5vnUa>



What's the Deal with Open Source?
Unless you're a developer, or have dabbled in programming, the whole concept of open source software may be a bit confusing. Here's an excellent guide for the uninitiated.
<http://lifehac.kr/hqfrLY>



Ever hear of the Iron Browser?
In this article Lifehacker tells you exactly what information about you Chrome sends back to Google. It even suggests privacy focused browsers like the Iron Browser
<http://lifehac.kr/gqtPpt>

THE DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS OF SEARCH

Don't worry, Google is still 'not evil'. But that doesn't mean others aren't either. This article delves into the subterranean world of "black hat" optimisation, the dark art of raising the profile of a Web site on Google's results page.
<http://nyti.ms/dOSZSk>

IROBOT, UDESKTOP

From the rudimentary drawings of Da Vinci to the insanely complex visions of Asimov, Robots have always ruled our minds. Now they're here to rule your desktop! Check out this collection of amazing robot wallpapers
<http://lifehack.kr/ggmAly>

COULD THIS BE INTERNET BOOM 2.0 ?

When asset management companies start amassing funds for internet ventures, you can be pretty much sure we're entering another internet boom. Apparently JPMorgan is to Start Social Media Fund. Read here and draw your own conclusions:
<http://nyti.ms/f3vLC2>

FACEBOOK FLIRTER

Continuing with its hilarious Facebook conversation articles (and in line with our theme this month) is College Humor's spin on how a persistent flirter would stalk any good looking girl on Facebook. None of it is true though.
<http://bit.ly/fPuQJl>

SHORTS

Microsoft Phone 7 Stays Alive

- By John C. Dvorak

Microsoft will get a huge boost from its partnership with Nokia, but it's just going to slow Nokia down.



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Microsoft got a huge boost by the deal it did with Nokia. This will ensure the platform has legs and will probably ensure the slow death of HP/Palm WebOS which announced three new products recently.

While the WebOS looks like road kill, let's not forget the Nokia-Intel joint venture: the MeeGo OS, a Linux-based initiative that seems stillborn. Nokia mentioned that it will continue to experiment with MeeGo, but the Nokia CEO, Stephen Elop, did not seem too inspired by any sort of possibility that it will go anywhere. He was just being nice.

In fact, you have to wonder what Intel needs to do to get some respect in the mobile arena. When you think of mobile chipmakers, the last name to come to mind is Intel.

Whatever the case, Microsoft pulled a rabbit out of a hat with the Nokia deal, and over the next few months, this will be over-analyzed until we're sick of it.

I personally have written about Nokia strategies and think this decision is the most risky one it could make. Windows Phone 7 isn't going anywhere. It has no buzz, and Microsoft seems jinxed on some level. After all, Microsoft essentially invented the smartphone over a decade ago, long before the iPhone. Where did it get them?

Microsoft was single-handedly responsible for perception that the smartphone was a dog of an idea. The smartphone languished under Microsoft tutelage. Then the iPhone came along, and Microsoft was dumbfounded and slow to react. Years had to go by before a kind of iPhone-like Windows Phone 7 appeared too little and too late.

The irony, of course, is that Windows Phone 7 is not a bad OS and modern. In fact, a lot of what Microsoft has done on the mobile platforms has been quite good. Which brings us back to the notion that the company is "jinxed." Years of bragging, bad marketing, and lazy PR has resulted in major perception problems that Microsoft seems unaware of.

This was all epitomized by the Vista fiasco.

I was amused by the Nokia roll-out of its partnership with Microsoft where CEO Elop kept telling the media how the company will now change modes and get things done faster. Faster? With Microsoft? How would that work?

Nokia said it will continue with MeeGo in the background. None of the media at the press event managed to ask if Nokia is com-



Microsoft Business Division President Stephen Elop and Nokia Executive Vice President Kai Oistamo

pletely ruling out Android. My guess is no. And my guess is no only because the sluggish pace it will find coming from Microsoft.

In the mobile segment, things are flying. I see no evidence that Microsoft can keep up the torrid pace of real innovation. The company has gum on its feet.

I actually recall talking to Steve Ballmer during the roll-out of Windows 98 and asked him if the company was thinking of bringing out a complete and new upgrade to the OS every year like car companies do with their vehicle models. There was Windows 95 and then 98. It seemed headed that way.

He said they were considering it.

Well, since the two year gap between 98 and 2000, the gap has widened as the company cannot keep up a faster pace. You can get away with slowing down progress with a desktop computer and a game console, but not with these phones. Hopefully, Nokia has a plan B when the Windows Phone platform falls behind the rest of the pack.

SUPERCHARGE YOUR MEMORY!

Find out how Joshua Foer trained his brain and became a world-class memory athlete. This long and extremely detailed article adapted from "Moonwalking With Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything," by the same author, is bound to

make your mind ache.

<http://nyti.ms/fyQmUW>

WHY PRESIDENT OBAMA INVITED THE SILICON TECHIES FOR DINNER?

We think the Oatmeal is probably the funniest website on the internet and the guy behind it all, Matthew Inman, has done it again with his understanding on why Obama invited the heads of tech giants for state dinner. And even you would start wondering why Microsoft was left out. <http://bit.ly/gaDyUT>

ANDROID VERSIONS DEMYSTIFIED

Confused about Froyo, Gingerbread, Honeycomb? They're sweet, and they're probably giving you a toothache? Here's your one stop guide to the various Android versions so far and some relevant numbers. <http://lifehack.kr/dZ7Bqn>



Microsoft and Nokia Need Lady Gaga

- By John C. Dvorak

Instead of giving Nokia billions of dollars, Microsoft should hire Lady Gaga. Both Nokia and Microsoft could use her marketing skills.



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I'll describe the Lady Gaga angle in a minute, but first I'll explain why she is needed.

I've made it clear that the adoption of Windows Phone 7 (WP7) by Nokia is a strategic blunder. But, thinking about it, it's better than what the company has been doing: banking on Symbian.

The fact that Nokia is phasing out Symbian is a step in the right direction. I've had numerous Symbian phones, and their structure is so convoluted that I hardly used any of the features other than the dialer. I have never liked Symbian. Every so often, I try to think of ways to express my hostility, and it always comes back to organization problems. I have to jump through hoops, hit endless confirmation buttons, and go from here to there just to change a ring tone or turn on vibrate.

Yes, sometimes the function is on the top menu. But what top menu? I can take an Apple iPhone or an Android device and pretty much have its operation down cold in a minute or two. I don't have a Windows Phone, but I've played with them. It's much better than Symbian from what I can tell. So at least, that is good. To make things more interesting, Nokia is supposedly soaking Microsoft for billions of dollars, according to Nokia CEO Stephen Elop, who spoke this



Ballmer and Elop looking quite pleased

week at the Mobile World Conference.

Billions of dollars for what? Is it marketing money? Is it for developer bribes? Is it a relocation fee? Or is it a payoff for choosing the platform? The logical purpose for the payout is that it's a payoff. Microsoft hasn't even seeded many of these phones to the media like it used to do with other products, so it's not showing any signs of marketing aggression, to say the least. I don't know that the company has spent anything on marketing, except on those ads that show other smartphones as hypnotic and compelling, while the Windows phone isn't.

So why suddenly payout billions to the Nokia coffers? Shareholders would like to know. I'm guessing that this money was the reason Nokia took the deal with Microsoft rather than going with Android. Neither Google nor Apple should be too concerned with WP7, because Microsoft cannot develop its products at the breakneck speed of Apple and especially Google, which is up to version 3 of the Android OS already.

I hate to keep beating the same drum, but there is zero buzz surrounding the WP7

phone. The buzz variable used to be considered important. What changed? Nothing, that's what. I don't think that it can generate a buzz this late either.

Well, there is something they can do: hire Lady Gaga.

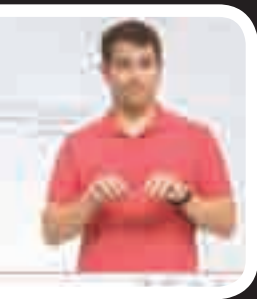
The rock and roll star and performance artist Lady Gaga emerged out of nowhere in the last five years to become a dominant force in marketing and music. According to 60 Minutes, which profiled her, she is slated to make \$100 million this year alone. She admits that she is a student of fame and uses her marketing skills to get attention.

Microsoft could do worse than give her the billions it is giving to Nokia. Of course, this will never happen because one meeting with Microsoft and she'd run away, screaming.

And that's assuming Microsoft could ever understand why they need to hire her as a consultant and listen to what she tells them. Understanding why Microsoft would never hire and listen to Lady Gaga would reveal everything that is wrong with the company. First of all, the company doesn't listen to anybody. This is obvious by the fact that they created WP7.

So here we have Microsoft, with its late to the party WP7, joining forces with Nokia, a company that took forever to realize that its bet on Symbian was a loser. Neither company seems to understand that it is indeed all about the apps and who has the most. We have officially entered the app era where it's commonplace to say "There's an app for that!"

These two companies just don't seem to be able to understand this. But OK, we'll see what happens with this partnership. In the meantime, I'd get a meeting with Lady Gaga and see what she thinks.



Have you ever wondered how Google searches a million pages in less than a second

and gives you relevant information? This video gives you an inside view into the workings of the Google engine. The three minute video is hosted by Matt who is an engineer at Google. See it on <http://bit.ly/95x8FW>

DO YOU LIKE THE WORLD VIEW SECTION?

With our new World View section, we're trying to expose you to more international stories and culture.

Instead of just a list, we hand-pick the stories we think you'd like. However, in order to ensure that we're doing a good enough job, we'd love to hear your feedback and comments.

IF YOU LIKE, HATE, SKIP OR ABSOLUTELY LOVE THIS SECTION, LET US KNOW.

Send in your feedback to editor@thinkdigit.com

(PRODUCT LAUNCHES)

NIKON COOLPIX P500



Nikon announced a variety of cameras in the Coolpix range recently, but what grabbed our attention was the 12 MP Coolpix P500 which sports a whopping 36x optical zoom and supports full HD movie recording. Ultrazooms sure have new competition.

NINTENDO 3DS



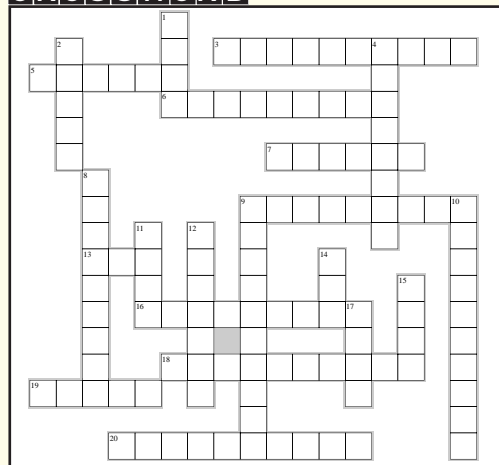
Although the 3DS isn't launched yet, we couldn't resist covering it. The long awaited Nintendo 3DS finally hits the stores on March 27 with 18 game titles available at launch. It features dual 3D screens and WLAN. The device would retail for \$249.

SONY XPERIA PLAY



Due in March is another great product - the much talked about Playstation phone which runs on Android 2.3 Gingerbread and has a slide out keypad housing its PS gamepad. The phone would release with over 50 titles to choose from.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. I record keystrokes
2. Hottest toy at CES this year
3. The version control system used by Mozilla
4. Food listing web service which recently launched its android app
5. Relive the Soprano fantasy
6. Multi Functional Devices short
7. This tablet is touted to replace paper by the end of this year
8. Place where code is kept under control
9. I can make vibrant presentations, without any software downloads
10. Problem analysis based on experience versus data manipulation

DOWN

1. Awarded the best gadget at CES this year
2. Mobile World Congress was held in this country
4. Intel 990x architecture codename
8. This makes everyone a modern day farmer
9. Lego's programmable robotics kit
10. Tracking your music online
11. Name the UI which Notion Ink Adam uses
12. Social networking with a penchant for brevity
14. Silly, incompetent, stupid OR a revision control system
15. Playstation Phone also known as Xperia ____?
17. Nokia CEO who recently inked a deal with MS

ABSOLUTE
TIMEPASS

Top 3 YouTube Picks

Make sure your boss doesn't catch you goofing off with one of these playing on your screen



<http://bit.ly/feyFJw>

Duration: 2 min 44 s

A hilarious spoof video where the revolution in Egypt has gone to Facebook and they're trying to find their new leader



<http://bit.ly/1QyhJ>

Duration: 1m 8s

Got \$139,500 USD ? If yes, you can have your very own hydro powered jet pack! One of the coolest things you'll ever see.



<http://bit.ly/dHzNYG>

Duration: 2m 59s

It's about energy and force and electrons and stuff. But most of all, this is pure visual art. Watch in wonderment.

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Get qualified to assure Quality

With cutting edge software constantly running on all kinds of machines, many talented youngsters are scrambling to get a toehold in the lucrative segment of IT industry, which deals with testing of software and analysing its quality.

Anoop Verma
readersletters@thinkdigit.com

When Sanjay Prakash began working at a reputed Bangalore based software company, his department head advised him to take a Spanish language course that was being taught on the company's campus. Within few weeks he found himself debugging software written for the Spanish market, and realised how important it is for a professional to learn the nitty-gritties of the language. Before joining his job, Prakash had taken a Computer Science degree from a reputed university. He has also successfully taken a certification in software testing, and now is also learning Spanish, to further enhance his capabilities in debugging software written for Spanish market.

Professionals working in Software Quality Assurance departments of IT

companies play a very crucial role. If software has not been tested adequately, then it can lead to delays and cost overruns – something that companies cannot afford in a time of heightened competition. It is the job of Software Quality Assurance engineers to ensure that the software is free of bugs when it released. Typically, almost 40 per cent of software professionals employed in any company work on Software Quality Assurance. After joining a company, the selected candidates have to undergo intensive training on technologies and tools that the company wants them to use during the testing process. After completing the training period, they are allowed to take up live projects. Testing and verification is done manually or through an automated process.

Work for top corporations

When we think of information technology, we automatically start thinking

of the creators of software. We tend to forget the middlemen who perform the crucial job of testing the software before it gets shipped to the user. These middlemen are those who comprise the Software Quality Assurance team. Often Software Quality Assurance is confused merely with Software testing, but that is not the case. Software testing comprises only a small part of all the processes that come under Software Quality Assurance. During the entire process of the development of software, the Software Quality Assurance Engineer has to be involved in order to ensure that the final product is of high standard. The job may entail tasks such as gathering and documentation, source code control, code review, change management, configuration management, release management and finally the actual testing of the software.

Any reputed company will prefer to have a Software Quality Assurance Engineer who has a Computer Science or similar degree. But along with that some specific certifications are also required. When a fresh individual joins a large company in the Software QA department, he has to pass through an extensive period of training during which he might also have to take relevant certification from a reputed International agency. The most notable certifications in this field are those that are being offered by QAI (Quality Assurance Institute) and by ISTQB. The company, where the individual is employed, typically pays the examination fees for these certifications. The exam consists of multiple-choice questions and in most cases is over in around an hour. Along with the degree and certifications, a Software QA engineer is also expected to have good communication and networking skills. He should be good at documenting his work.

If your resume is embellished with a Computer Science degree from a reputed institute and a latest certification, then you will have no difficulty in getting a suitable position in any top multi-national like Adobe, Infosys, TCS, Wipro, IBM, HCL and others. For instance, Adobe India is operating a

Anti-Soviet spy bug

In 1982, the CIA allegedly planted a bug in the Canadian computer system, which the Soviet government had purchased to manage its Siberian pipeline

AT&T hit by the bug

In 1990, AT&T released software infected with a bug that caused many of the company's mammoth computers to crash causing network outage

Feature

huge R&D facility in different parts of the country. It won't be wrong to say that the backbone of these facilities is made out of the Software Quality Assurance departments. In 2005, Adobe had been ranked 15th on the list of best places to work for in India. Viraj, who is employed in the Software QA department at the Noida headquarters of Adobe India, says, "The work atmosphere is simply the best. And that's what makes the atmosphere so charged and great fun." In fact, the field of Software Quality Assurance is so vast that it corners a sizable percentage of the total operating budget in almost all the top IT companies in the world.

Highly paying jobs

As far as the salaries go, Software Quality Assurance is considered to be one of the most important departments in any technical company, and hence the professionals employed in such departments are highly paid. A fresher can expect a salary ranging between Rupees 25,000 to Rupees 50,000. The size of the paycheck will depend on the size and scope of the company. Also, students with a B.E./B.Tech degree and a latest certification are paid much more than those with only a diploma in engineering or science. Those with MCA or Masters degrees in computer science might be able to draw the highest salary. However, once an individual has joined the company, further progress is usually linked to his or her

performance. The designations for this line of work differ from company to company. The most common designations include - Associate Software Engineer, Software Verification Engineer, Technical manager, etc.


A study done by NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) in USA has come to the conclusion that in USA alone almost a hundred billion dollars are lost due to bugs in software. The loss figures for the entire world would be much larger. Software companies have realised that much of this money can be saved if better testing and quality assurance practices are implemented. So the importance of the Quality Assurance department is well recognised all over the world. If you choose this line of career than within a period of five to ten years you can expect a significant advancement, in terms of perks and privileges. A Software QA engineer with an experience of 5 to 10 years can easily expect a monthly compensation of more than Rupees 75000. Of course, the final compensation must vary from company to company, and it will also depend on the performance of the engineer.

Taste of Software

There are many different types of testing that are currently in use, but broadly these systems can be divided into two categories - White Box testing and Black Box testing. In case of White Box testing, the engineers take an internal view of the software, whereas in Black Box testing, an external view is taken. The testing can also be static or dynamic. Merely reviews or inspections are considered to be examples of static testing. In dynamic testing, the program is actually executed so that its operational efficiency in the live environment can be analysed. Over the years, many new software tools have been developed to make the job of testing new software easy. However, even with better tools we are still far from the stage where software performance can be perfect. According to Capers Jones,

founder of Software Productivity Research (SPR), "The number of bugs in newly written code has remained constant at around five per function point." Jones further states that only 85% of bugs are usually removed before software is put into use.

One problem that professionals face is that most firms no longer have all their programmers and testers in the same place, or for that matter in the same country. So it is possible that one campus might be testing or assessing the quality of only one segment of the software code, while a campus located elsewhere might be handling the other segment. It is necessary for the engineers to be able to communicate with each other in real time, so that they can request design changes, report bugs and basically coordinate their efforts. Engineers need to be able to decide which bugs are really worth fixing. If the bug is not doing any harm to the operations of the software, then the best option might be to ignore it and move on to solving the really big problems. Along with knowledge of coding, the field of Software Quality Assurance also requires the ability of stepping into the shoes of the actual end user, so that you can focus on the kind of product that will actually work for him.

While shedding light on the job that he actually performs, Sanjay Prakash says, "I do not carry with me the feeling that all software has bugs, rather my job is to let my company know that this is the amount of time and money it is going to take for making a software of this quality. Basically you have to take the budget into account in order to decide what quality of software you are going to create." The bottom line is that software testing is an art, in the sense that good testing also requires an engineer's creativity, experience and intuition, together with proper techniques. There is no doubt that the challenges that Software Quality Assurance engineer faces are stiff, but if you can manage to take all the hard work in your stride, then you can make a comfortable living. 

Major software certifications by QAI

Associate-Level Certifications

- Certified Associate in Software Quality (CASQ)
- Certified Associate in Software Testing (CAST)

Professional Certifications

- Certified Software Quality Analyst (CSQA)
- Certified Software Tester (CSTE)
- Certified Software Project Manager (CSPM)
- Certified Software Business Analyst (CSBA)
- Certified Software Process Engineer (CSPE)
- Certified Quantitative Software Process Engineer (CQSPE)

Advanced Certifications (Professional Certification is a prerequisite)

- Certified Manager of Software Testing (CMST)
- Certified Manager of Software Quality (CMSQ)

Version control systems

Git and Mercurial are distributed version control systems, while SVN and CVS are centralised version control systems

Linux revision control

Git was created by Linus Torvalds for the Linux kernel as he found other systems unsuitable. The first 10 years of Linux development were un-versioned

A look at 7 popular code-hosting services

Just wrote some awesome code? Want to share it with the world? We explore the growing trend of online code-hosting services with a look at seven popular code-hosting sites.

Kshitij Sobti

kshtij.sobti@thinkdigit.com

Introduction

Source code can get increasingly difficult to manage and collaborate without a revision control system is involved. Developers embarking on any serious project are likely to be using a revision control system, and the recent trend has been towards distributed revision control systems such as Mercurial and Git rather than the older CVS and SVN.

In addition to a repository, a software development project needs a bug tracking system as well. Hosting code in a central place, such that it is accessible by everyone involved is quite important, especially for open source projects.

A number of web sites have emerged recently that make sharing code online simple, and make it extremely simple to collaborate on. Many web sites have evolved into a sort of source-code-based social networking sites.

We take a look at some popular code-hosting services, and the services they offer.

SourceForge

SourceForge is possibly one of the most popular code-hosting web sites on the internet today. It hosts the largest number of projects and has the largest user base. SourceForge is owned Geeknet, Inc. the same people who are behind ThinkGeek and Slashdot.

Like many similar sites, SourceForge offers free hosting for Open Source projects. SourceForge provides many unique features such as shell access to your projects, and a MySQL database to power your web site or applications online. Project owners can run their own

CMS and host project information on SourceForge, allowing them to essentially host their entire project web site code and downloads on a single site for free. SourceForge is also unique in that it does not enforce any usage quotas on their projects, instead trusting their users to use this resource reasonably. SourceForge does not host closed-source software.

Suitable for:

- Open source projects
- Projects that need web hosting / blog / forum in addition to code hosting
- Projects that need flexibility in bug tracker, and wiki
- People who want shell access to their projects online

Google Code

Google provides free hosting for open source projects in its Google Code web site. It is used by Google for hosting its own open source projects such as the Chrome browser, Chrome OS, and other

open source tools and libraries. Similar to SourceForge, Google Code is for open source applications only.

Besides offering a repository for your project, Google Code also includes a Wiki, an Issue tracker, online source code browsing interface, and downloads for your project.

Google Code integrates with Google's other services such as Google accounts, for login, and Google Analytics for tracking downloads. Additionally, Google Code also includes some integration with Google Groups to help form discussions around a project.

Suitable for:

- Open source projects
- People working on Google projects or derivatives
- Those already using Google services and who prefer clean interfaces

GitHub

When it comes to hosting code managed using the Git revision control system, GitHub is the most popular of them all, and for good reason. GitHub offers a powerful social experience for coders that makes it incredibly easy to "fork" someone else's work to create your own derivative, and to merge projects with common goals.

Social Networking-like concepts such as following people / projects and getting status updates on your profile are employed by GitHub to make following



Among its vast bouquet of services is Google's 'Code'

Save changes

Sparkleshare is a project in development that automatically stores any changes you make to files in a directory in a Git repository

CVS for Windows

TortoiseHg, TortoiseGit, TortoiseSVN and TortoiseCVS are graphical interfaces for VCSs that integrate well with Windows Explorer

Developer corner

your favourite developers / projects easier. Creating a fork of an exiting open source project is a single-click process! GitHub also makes it easy to see a network of all the forks a project has undergone to get an idea of where and what development is happening.

While GitHub is free for open source projects that have a public repository, unlike the previous two code hosting sites, it offers paid plans that allow one to create private repositories for personal / closed-source projects.

GitHub has a 300 MB limit for storage, however this is a soft-limit, and project actually needing more space can contact GitHub to increase their capacity.

Each GitHub project has its own wiki, issue tracker, and web page that can be managed from GitHub.

Suitable for:

- Open Source and closed source projects
- Heavily community-based projects
- People wishing to follow development of, and contribute to many projects.
- People who want an SCM on their own server



Get the benefits of social networking to work for your code with GitHub

Bitbucket

Bitbucket is a Mercurial-only code hosting website. Like GitHub it offers both free and paid solutions. Bitbucket is unique among code-hosting websites in allowing free users to create unlimited private repositories.

Bitbucket differentiates its paid offerings based on the number of users allowed to access your private repository.

per-project Wiki and issue tracker, which too can be kept private.

Bitbucket is similar to GitHub in features, and has similar features for viewing status updates, following users / projects, forking and merging. Like GitHub, you can also host your project page on Bitbucket itself.

Your Bitbucket account can even be configured to be accessed from a

repository. The free offering has a limit of 5 users per private repository, while a paid account can opt for 10 users starting at \$10 a month to unlimited users for \$80 a month.

Open Source projects do not have these limits on the number of users allowed. Bitbucket offers a

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Version control platform

Git is meant to be a low-level version control system that can be used as a base for another version control system

Text, not binary

Most version control systems are intended to be used with text code, and as such are not very efficient while handling binary files



Service	SourceForge	Google Code	GitHub	BitBucket	Gitorious	Launchpad	CodePlex
Owner	Geeknet, Inc.	Google	GitHub, Inc.	Atlassian	Gitorious AS	Canonical	Microsoft
Website	sourceforge.net	code.google.com	github.com	bitbucket.org	gitorious.org	launchpad.net	codeplex.com
Supported revision control systems (RCS)	CVS, SVN, Git, Bazaar, Mercurial	SVN, Mercurial	Git	Mercurial	Git	Bazaar	TFS, Mercurial
Public API supported	Read-Only	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Project management features							
Wiki	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Issue Tracking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Web interface for RCS	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Project Downloads	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Online Forking	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other	Shell access, choice of blog, wiki, bug tracker, analytics	Integration with Google Groups	POST-Receive hooks	Custom domain names	Multiple repositories per project	Blueprint, Answers, online builds for Ubuntu, Open Source	Advertisements on project page for funding projects
Free usage limit	None	25 Projects, 2GB downloads and code repository	300 MB soft limit	5 Users for private projects	None	None	200MB per file for downloads
Popular Projects hosted on service	ffmpeg, MinGW, LAME, 7-zip	Android, Chromium, Chromium OS	jQuery, Perl, Ruby on Rails	Pylons, TortoiseHG, OGRE	openSUSE, Qt, XBMC	Ubuntu	Silverlight Toolkit, Iron-Python

custom domain. So if you have your own website for a project, it's Bitbucket page can be accessed <http://hg.myproject.com> or something similar.

Suitable for:

- Open and closed-source projects
- Personal small-scale closed-source projects
- Closed-source projects where number of contributor is fixed
- People working on Open Source software no ready to be open yet

CodePlex

CodePlex is Microsoft's own service for hosting open source projects for free. It only allows for open source projects, although some Microsoft licences that are allowed to be used are not compliant with the open source initiative.

CodePlex offers the usual Wiki and issue tracking features, along with support for hosting project downloads. CodePlex also offers a discussions feature for each project. Unlike the other services we have mentioned, CodePlex has inbuilt support for displaying advertisements on project pages that can be used to fund the development of your open source applications.

Being a Microsoft service it supports Microsoft's revision control system, Team Foundation Server.

Suitable for:

- Open source projects
- Projects using / derives from Microsoft applications
- People targeting Windows
- People already using Team Foundation Server for their code

Gitorious

Gitorious is an open source code hosting website that is itself open-source, with its source code hosted on itself! Accessing <http://gitorious.org/gitorious> gives you access to the Gitorious source code, allowing you to clone / fork it and contribute to its development. This also means you can host it on your own server.

Gitorious is free for all open source projects, and does not mention any storage or other limits.

The way repositories are handled in Gitorious is a little different from other services. On Gitorious, you create a new project, and each project may have multiple repositories. You can have a wiki at the project level, such

that it is shared between multiple repositories for the same project. Gitorious however does not include a bug tracker and doesn't support creating a project page.

Suitable for:

- Open Source projects
- Large projects requiring multiple repositories
- People working on openSUSE-related projects
- People wanting a free open source SCM on their own server

Launchpad

Launchpad is a service by Canonical, the company behind Ubuntu, that is used for hosting all their open source projects. The Launchpad service code itself has been open sourced by Canonical, such that it can be run on your own server.

Other than code repository hosting, Launchpad offers a number of useful features, some of which are unique to the service. Other than Bug / Issue tracking, Launchpad also offers a specialized software for tracking specifications and features called Blueprints; it also offers an online tool to help devel-

RCS

The first revision control system was released 29 years ago in 1982 by Walter Tichy

KForge

An enterprise application architecture, KForge supports Git, Mercurial and Subversion

Developer corner



CodePlex is Microsoft's open source initiative

opers translate their applications to multiple languages; and an "Answers" feature for providing help and support powered by the community.

Launchpad can automatically build software for Ubuntu, allowing Ubuntu end-users to easily install and keep

updated with code on Launchpad.

Suitable for:

- Open Source applications
- Applications derived from / designed for Ubuntu
- Projects already using the Bazaar system
- People wanting a free open source SCM on their own server

Conclusion


The internet is a friendly place if

you are trying to develop open source software at least as far as code hosting is concerned. Some websites such as Google Code, Launchpad, Gitorious, and SourceForge are in fact intended only for open source projects, and have no payment mechanism at all.

Hosting code on a such services exposes your code and application to hundreds of thousands, if not millions of users, some of which may choose to contribute their time, effort or money to your cause.

For closed source projects too, using a code hosting site can have its advantages. They offer an integrated solution for hosting code, sharing information using a Wiki, and tracking bugs.

These services aren't all, there are many more services available online (such as Assembla, BerliOS, Tigris.org), and most are quite friendly and generous with open source projects, If nothing else, Launchpad and Gitorious can even be installed on your own infrastructure if you need more control.

Depending on which version control software you prefer, whether your project is open source or not, and the number of contributors to your project, your preference of a code-hosting service can vary. Hopefully this article has been of help. 

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THIS EVENT AT KODNÉE, SAVARAPUR CAMPUS HOSTS TARANG 2011. FORMERLY KNOWN AS RAJEE, TARANG IS SCHEDULED TO BE A PERFUSSION OF TALENT AND STUDENTS' GATHERING FROM ALL OVER MYSORE SET TO BEAR WITNESS. A REFLECTION OF THE VERY SPIRIT OF NORTH, IT PROVIDES A PLATFORM FOR STUDENTS TO SHOWCASE SOME OF THEIR INNER TALENTS WITH A VARIETY OF EVENTS WHICH COVER VERSATILE ASPECTS OF INDIAN AND WESTERN CULTURE THAT WE HAVE INCLUDED IN OUR LIVES. THIS ESPECIALLY HELDS FOR THE LATEST AND GRIPPING ALL PEOPLE WITH A COMPUTER OR EVEN A SMARTPHONE... GAMING... WITH A HOST OF THE MOST POPULAR MULTIPLAYER GAMES, "CALL OF DUTY" HAS LAUNCHED TARANG TO NEW HEIGHTS WITHIN THE GIVER COMMUNITY... IT'S AGE, AND DUTY REMAIN SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR GAMES AND ADAPTATIONS LIKE PAPA AND MYS ANIME THIS COMPETITION THE PLACE TO BE FOR GAMERS OF ALL AGES...

THIS TIME, TARANG SEEMS TO SEARME AS A GATEWAY TO PHENOMENAL EXPERIENCES AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF EVERLASTING PROGRESS. THIS THREE DAY SOCIO-CULTURAL ENTERTAINMENT IS SET TO GO OFF WITH A BANG ON THE 4TH OF MARCH 2011. THE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT GIVEN BY THE MANAGEMENT, ITS SPONSORS AND THE PARTICIPANTS HAVE HELPED THIS FEST TO RISE FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS AND CLIMB TO BE NORTH MYSORE'S LARGEST FEST, IN TERMS OF OUTREACH. VISIT WWW.TARANG11TR.ORG TO SIGNUP!

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Rahil Banthia

readersletters@thinkdigit.com

To start Meego Development, you will have to install and configure the MeeGo 1.1 SDK on your Operating System. Download the Meego SDK from <http://download3.meeGo.com/MeeGoSDK/1.1.2/meego-1.1-sdk-update-installer.exe>

Now open the Installer and follow the prompts to install the SDK. You will have to create a QEMU emulator from the MADDE terminal found in from Start > All Programs > Meego SDK > MADDE terminal by following these commands:

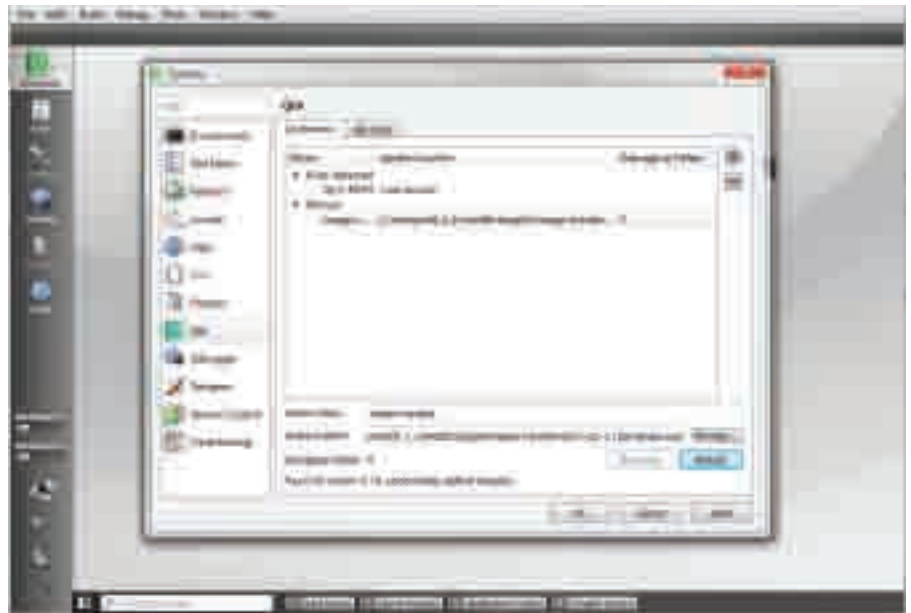
1. Run `mad-admin create -f meego-handset-ia32-w32-1.1` to create target meego-handset-ia32-w32-1.1.
2. Run `mad-admin create -e -f meego-handset-ia32-w32-qemu-1.1.20101031.2201-sda-runtime` to create a runtime meego-handset-ia32-w32-qemu-1.1.20101031.2201-sda-runtime.

Once the installation is complete, you can open QT Creator from the Start > All Programs > Meego SDK > QT Creator. Before you start developing your "Hello World" Meego application, you will have to configure the Qt Creator to support MeeGo sysroot by opening Tools > Options > QT4 and adding a Meego target. Click on the + button and add the following details:

Version Name: meego-handset
qmake location: C:\MeeGoSDK_1.1\MADDE\targets\meego-handset-ia32-w32-1.1\bin\qmake.exe. This is the default location if you did not change the Install location in the Meego SDK installer.

Now your computer is set for Meego

Kick Start Meego Development



Click on Rebuild to enable Debugging Helper

development. Time to write some code!

You need to create a new project in QT Creator to start a Meego Application. Do this by going to File → New File or Project → QT C++ Project → Meego Touch Framework Application.

Select Touch Framework Application.

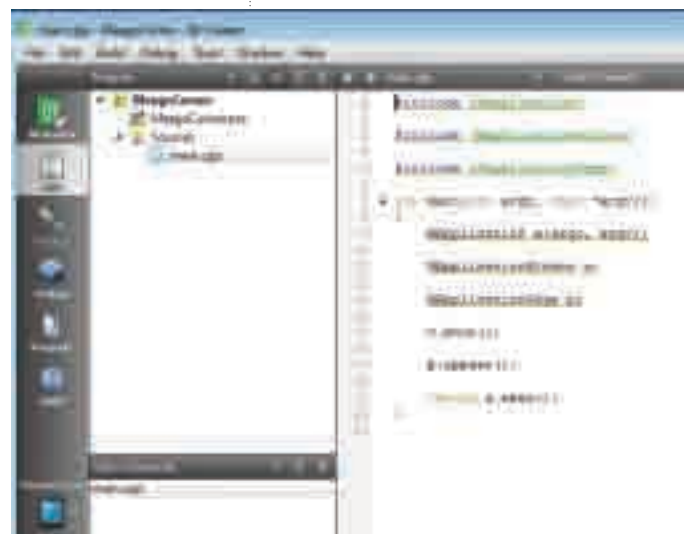
Choose the meego-handset version of QT in the Project Setup dialog box. You created this by using the first of the two MADDE terminal com-

mands. Click on finish and you will be presented with a main.cpp file of your first Meego application. This is the area where you will actually write your application.

Open Meego-Corner.pro and type the following if its not automatically generated:

```
QT += core gui
TARGET = MeegoCorner
CONFIG += meegotouch
TEMPLATE = app
target.path=/usr/local/bin
INSTALLS=target
SOURCES += main.cpp
```

Also open the main.cpp file and enter the following to create a Meego application with an empty windows:



Use the left pane to edit source files

Huawei smartphones

Chinese telecom major Huawei has launched its Ideos smartphones in India

Kindle paging

Amazon has finally added page numbers to the books on its Kindle ebook readers

```
#include <MApplication>
#include <MApplicationWindow>
#include <MApplicationPage>
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    MApplication a(argc, argv);
    MApplicationWindow w;
    MApplicationPage p;
    w.show();
    p.appear();
    return a.exec();
}
```

You can even use the following code and make a traditional Hello World application:

```
#include <MApplication>
#include <MLabel>
#include <MSystemInfo>
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    MApplication a(argc, argv);
    MSystemInfo s;
    MLabel *label = new MLabel
(MObject::tr("hello").append(s.currentCountryCode()));
    label->show();
    label.resize(100,30);
    return a.exec();
}
```

To check if your application is working, you will need to Build and Run it. But since Meego applications cannot run on Windows, you need to either Set up a QEMU emulator on your Windows, (We had to switch to a 32-bit version of Windows 7 for this, as 64-bit Windows is not supported for the emulator.) or test it on a real device.

We are assuming that most of you don't have a real Meego device yet, so let us see how to set up an emulator on Windows:

1. Install the `kqemu` accelerator for QEMU by downloading the package from <http://wiki.qemu.org/download/kqemu-1.4.0pre1.tar.gz>. Unzip the package contents and edit the `kqemu.inf` file to incorporate the following changes if you are using Windows 7 like our Developer test environment.

```
[DefaultInstall.NT] --> [Default-
Install]
[DefaultInstall.NT.Services] -->
[DefaultInstall.Services]
[Uninstall.NT] --> [Uninstall]
```

```
[Uninstall.NT.Services] -->
```

```
[Uninstall.Services]
```

2. Right-click the `kqemu.inf` file, and click on "install".

3. Open Command Prompt with Administrator privileges by going to Start > All Programs > Accessories and then right clicking on Command Prompt and Selecting Run as Administrator.

4. Run `net start kqemu` in the command prompt window.

Note: You need to start `kqemu` every time you reboot your system.

You might have to start QEMU from the MADDE terminal if it doesn't open properly with the Command Prompt. For that you need to type the following in the terminal:

```
mad list to see the runtime and
target names, and then type mad
remote -r meego-handset-ia32-
w32-qemu-1.1.20101031.2201-sda-
runtime poweron to start the QEMU
emulator.
```

5. Now you need to Configure this Emulator in your QT Creator by going to Tools > Options > Projects > Meego Device Configurations and clicking on Add. Use the following details for this Configuration:

Name: Meego Emulator
Device Type: Meego Emulator
Authentication Type: Password
Username: root
Password: meego

Click on Test to see if this Configuration is properly working and your emulator is set for Meego applications.

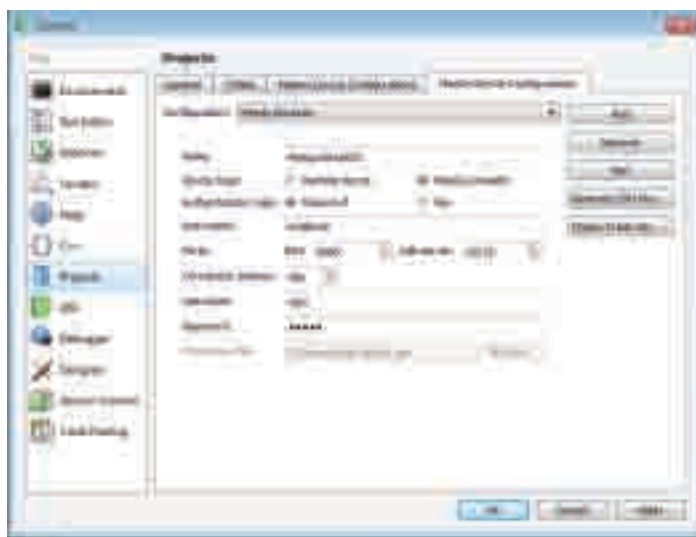
6. Next, click on Projects in the Left hand pane and Select run from the Meego Build/Run box at the top of your screen. Make sure that the "Device configuration" is set to "Meego Emulator". This will ensure that QEMU is started when you run your application.
7. You can now launch the QEMU Meego emulator. Click the "Start Meego emulator" icon near the bottom left corner of Qt Creator. Click on the Green button to build and run your first Meego application.

8. Now you can Build, run and deploy your application in the QEMU emulator. If the QEMU emulator has been started by you, just click on the Green arrow in the left pane to run your application in it. Qt Creator will package and deploy your application to QEMU and start it on the target.

Compile Output Compile Output view shows the message "Package created." and an `.rpm` package file (`<project name>-<project version>-<release version>-<device architecture>.rpm`) has been created in the build-specific project subdirectory ("`<project name>-build-meego`"). You will later be able see the window of your application in QEMU.

Note: You can even SSH into your QEMU

Image anytime Meego emulator is running. Open the MADDE terminal. Use `ssh meego@127.0.0.1 -p 6666` to SSH to connect to the image from your computer. You can use two standard accounts available in Meego images:
User: meego / root. Password: meego/meego



Now your computer is set for Meego development. Time to write some code!

Monitoring children?

If you want to check what your kids are upto or block out certain objectionable sites, try the Crawler Parental Control application at <http://cnet.co/dVWSXF>

Super Duper Computer!

US Department of Energy (DOE) has hired IBM to build the fastest computer capable of 10 quadrillion calculations per second

MONITOR YOUR EMPLOYEES

Here's how SoHos and SMEs can monitor employees using easy to use monitoring, reporting and tracking software. It's time to snuff out resource wastage and get your organisation's productivity up.

Siddharth Parwatay

siddharth.parwatay@thinkdigit.com

It's a well known fact that employees are known to play hookie from work. Whether it's common distractions like spending endless hours socialising on Facebook, YouTube surfing, or tending to virtual farms on Farmville, there's a lot of productive time being wasted the world over. The problem doesn't just extend to illegitimate internet usage. Employees are known to play truant in a number of ways. Your office printer might be churning out nice full-colour prints of an employee's child's school project. A coterie of work-buddies may be having extended lunch breaks, and water-cooler conversations that may be lengthier than an entire Koffee with Karan episode. According to a survey by www.salary.com, 22 per cent employees waste approximately 2 hrs daily at work. 44.7 per cent of those polled cited web surfing as their number one distraction at work. Socialising with co-workers came in second at 23.4 per cent.

Conducting personal business, spacing out, running errands, and making personal phone calls were the other popular time-wasting activities in the workplace.

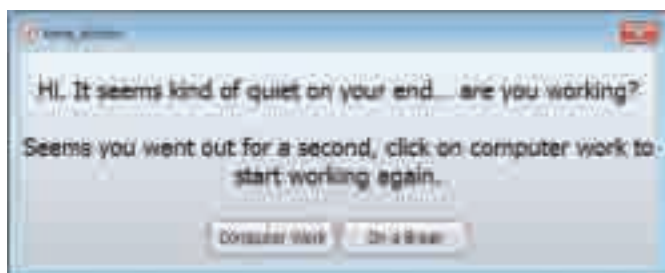
Now, as an employer you might be willing to turn a blind eye to genuine personal work such as personal mail or banking transactions, which is why you may not have implemented a draconian IT policy that blocks everything across the board. But even genuine occasions of personal usage of office resources need to be regulated and only be allowed a certain quantum of time. In this article we highlight a few applications that will keep your employees under check and improve your organisation's overall productivity. These are apps that will silently record and in some cases restrict usage of company resources. On a side note some of them can also be used by parents to keep an eye on miscreant kids and teenagers. Read on.

How do your minions spend their day?

There are several applications out there that will help you keep track of what your employees are up to. Some are paid solutions such as Work Examiner (www.workexaminer.com) that offer

a host of functionalities from internet and application monitoring to filtering and report generation thrown in. At the same time there are free solutions such as Time Doctor (www.timedoctor.com), and SurveilStar Activity Monitor (www.any-activity-monitor.com) that help keep track of your employees daily activity that includes remotely accessible timed screen shots. SurveilStar Activity Monitor captures the Network Adapter on client machines and reports to a server. The software can block web sites and optionally simply report the list of web sites visited and also time spent at each site. We had trouble setting it up on a complicated network.

Instead TimeDoctor was very easy to install and get working, thanks to its strong web integration. It's easy to deploy for a significantly large number of personnel too. All you have to do is register an account and add any number of employees to your workgroup by providing their email addresses. As an admin, you can assign statuses to employees such as Manager or User. Step-by-step instructions for installing the client software are emailed automatically to each of your employees. More than just surveillance, the software



Dude where's my productivity



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Printing for your office?

Have a look at our MFD test for the perfect printing solution for your office needs

Wi-Fi theft

It is estimated that one third of the Americans use Wi-Fi which does not belong to them

Smart SoHo

even helps employees self-manage their activities, which is the beauty of it. As an employee, your first step is to input a few priorities or projects you are working on. The software is unobtrusive and silently tracks activities, requiring hardly any manual input once the initial priorities are entered. The application is quite intuitive as well with provision for marking time away from the computer as a break, or 'work off computer'. It has an option to set daily tasks such as checking mail. If it notices no activity on your computer for a certain period of time, or if you are farting around on sites such as Facebook, you get a pop-up which goes something like "it's awfully quiet at your end, are you still working on so and so task?"

The software is powerful enough to track typical time-wasting websites such as Facebook, Twitter and even news sites. All this info is time stamped and stored away for retrieval by an admin. Time Doctor calls them "poor time use websites" and data for these can be found in the admin panel.

At the end of the day the application sends a report consisting of hours worked, and on what tasks, to the server. Admins have the option of receiving daily or weekly reports of their employees activities. Reports can even be generated on the fly as per requirement – by employee, time period, etc – from the admin dashboard. As an added level of enforcement, Time Doctor also features taking automatic screen shots of your employees activities. In the Time Doctor desktop client, click on Screenshots. This



Time Doctor monitoring the activity of an employee



PaperCut In Action

will launch a program called "Screenshot Viewer". Here you can choose from a drop down list the employees whose screenshots you want, then choose where you want the folder created and click "download". The screenshots will then be pulled from the employee's computer and made viewable in the folder you have designated.

We implemented Time Doctor for our little team and came out with some surprising insights for ourselves. Errr not that we ever slack off or anything.

Monitor printer usage

Did you know printer misuse is one the most common forms of mischief employees indulge in? Often you'll find people taking printouts when they're not really necessary. Employees even take prints for personal use. It's common for kids to tell their parents to print out an eBook or school/

college report from office. As a small business owner you'd rather not have this additional expense and drain. PaperCut is an interesting application suite that can allow you to drastically cut down printing costs by monitoring printer usage and assigning print quotas to users. The basic solution called PaperCut Print Logger is free to use and runs as a service on individual computers, silently tracking details of printer usage such as time of print, quantity etc. Logs are available in a friendly HTML format or in an Excel format to facilitate

further data analysis. There is an advanced version with network support called PaperCut NG. A free version of PaperCut NG is made available for small offices and home users (upto five users). It will not ask for a licence as long as it detects five or less users on the network. The software needs to be installed on the PC hosting the printer or a Print Server that manages print queues. There's also a client software that needs to be installed on individual workstations. It intercepts prints orders and launches the pop ups where users are alerted about their remaining quotas. A detailed instruction manual is included in the installation bundle. You can download it from <http://www.papercut.com/download/ng/>. Once the installation is complete you can assign print quotas for different users from the convenient Web UI.

The best deterrent

Applications such as TimeDoctor and PaperCut make no effort to hide the fact that they are monitoring an employee's activity. Yet there are many apps out there that stray more towards eavesdropping than just monitoring. Although it's not illegal to monitor employees' computers by using almost any means (even keyloggers and email spying), it's not very ethical is it? The law gives you full rights to protect your intellectual property and hence implement all sorts of measures. Yet the best deterrent out there is simply telling employees that they're being monitored. If they know they're under the scanner, they will be more likely to concentrate on work-related tasks. And now, thanks to us you have the tools to back your fair warning!

Dog fight: augmented reality

Watch the AR Drone dog fight video at <http://cnet.co/h9ms36>

Sphero

Watch the Sphero in action at <http://bit.ly/fSvOjX>



Drone of its hull shield to give you greater control. The Drone experience becomes even more fun when you install the AR Pursuit app (which is currently available only on the Apple app store) on your iPhone to have crazy fight rounds with your friend. No toy comes close to the kind of fun you can have battling it out in a dog fight with your friend in an open ground.

We've already covered the Orbotix Sphero ball which was unveiled at CES this year. Sphero is a 74-mm orb approximately the size of a baseball. It can be controlled using an iPhone or iPad, you can move it around in different directions and it changes colour. Well that's all the information revealed about this crazy bot ball, it's going to release later at the end

Smart bots to play with!

Sambhav Daffu

sambhav.daffu@thinkdigit.com

As kids, we were content with the small G.I. Joe or the disproportionately brawny He-Man toys we had. Toys have become smarter today. They have a mind of their own. As absurd as it may sound, these smart toys are capable of interacting with their environment and with each other. These toys have a developed AI that can be further enhanced to make them even more interactive.

An interesting trend in toy development has surfaced over the years – you no longer need expertise and technical know how to develop your own toy bot. All you need is a few lines of code and basic moveable hardware. You can control your creation by using a smart phone and the best part is there are apps specifically designed for it. All of this is possible as toy building components have become cheaper, flexible and more standardised over the years giving any budding toy developer to play around with his imagination.

The obvious question we find ourselves asking is – are these still toys and are they meant for kids only? That is certainly not the case, these toys are enjoyed by kids and adults alike, let's have a look at some

Even your toys are getting intelligent these days. Here's a closer look at some brainy tech toys!

of these smart bots we'd love to play with, but first let's go down memory lane.

Ghosts of toys past!

We all have seen copters and cars that are controlled using a remote control; but in the good old days, the remote used to be wired to the car so you had to literally run behind the car once it achieved some acceleration. And how can we forget the obstacle avoiding robot? It changed its course each time it hit an obstacle. These were the 'smart toys' we grew up playing with.

Control'em with your phone

A very popular toy is the AR parrot drone. The iPhone/iPad controlled copter was featured in Drool maal in June 2010 and is surely droolworthy. The AR Drone is a pretty cool concept, it uses Augmented Reality as the base technology which means its potential is almost limitless. The Drone has two cameras, one mounted on its head and the other on its base which makes its navigation seamless. You can enjoy flying the drone both indoor and outdoor. While indoor, use the full hull shield that is provided to protect it against impacts with walls. Out in the open you can rid the



AR Drone parrot_AR.Drone_color18

of this year. Developers Ian and Adam do not reveal any other 'cool feature' as they claim that the Sphero has, well we just have to wait and watch all that the robotic ball can do. However some rumours about its design suggest that the Sphero might have light notification system for email or SMS you receive on your phone.

Okay so far we have seen a helicopter and a shiny ass ball which can be controlled using your smartphones or tablets, but what about the toy category we all grew up playing? Yeah we are talking about a smart car bot. Unlike the AR Drone and Sphero there is no proper car model that we could have covered, guess we all just have to wait for CES next year for it to show up considering the way things have been moving so far. However a lot of independent devel-

World's biggest toy collection!

35,000 different toys made between 1850 and 1940 are up for auction at Sotheby's

Lego MMORPG

Check out Lego Universe, an MMORPG game at <http://bit.ly/ev8Yw5>

Feature



AR Drone with its hull shield

opers have created some really interesting iPhone controlled car prototypes, but these are not mass produced yet.

It's an artificial bug's life!

HEXBUGs could just scare some of you, but are kind of cute especially when they try to get back on their feet after flipping over. This is one of the main USP of the hottest selling model of the HEXBUG-Nano. This tiny little bug packs in a lot of technology in it and a great deal of research has gone into making these so much fun. HEXBUG has worked on 150 different types of variants for its legs alone before the final Nano came out. There are six dif-

ferent models of bugs available- Original, Inchworm, Crab, Ant, Nano and Spider. The Inchworm and Spider are remote controlled and feature a dual band control which means two bots can be controlled simultaneously. These bugs are light, sound and touch sensitive and react when they are exposed to each other. These things are pure fun to look at imagine how cool it would be to play with them. There are just too many video links for each one of their models so it's just better that you visit the web site <http://www.hexbug.com/> This year they won the Toy of the Year award.



HEX BUG Nano

LEGO Mindstorms NXT

The Mindstorms was first launched in 1998 and following its tremendous success the NXT was unveiled in the market in 2006. Lego Mindstorms works on NXT technology which basically is a Lego brick with a micro computer packed into it. The NXT brick serves as the main unit on to which various sensors can be ported. The coolest thing about the Mindstorms is that it gives the user freedom to build any form or shape of robot using the NXT brick as its base which can be programmed using the NXT-G language written specifically for it. The Mindstorms bots are light, touch and sound sensitive. The complete set comprises of 619 different elements like gears, tires, wheels, tracks and so on. The instruction manual would guide you into building four bots each with different movements and sense abilities, these four bots train the user in building a basic to an advanced bot.

Make your own Android driven car

Although still in development phase, this project is a good lead for any developer interested in creating a small car robot controlled via an Android phone. BluCar is a free app available on the Android Market which you can use as an interface between the car and your phone. Once you have downloaded the app, you need to have a separate Bluetooth module to communicate with your phone. This module can be placed on any car or robot lookalike hardware and it can perform basic functions like moving forward, backward and left to right. Watch an interesting video at <http://bit.ly/fyhBoG>. To download the app from Android market visit <http://bit.ly/gqgnvf>.

Get your hands on these toys!

We would like nothing better than to play with these toys all day long, emphatic geeks that we are, however its not that easy to score for these toys in India but we did the research and found out a few places where you can get your hands on these cool bots. The Lego Mindstorms NXT is available for approximately Rs. 25000 and would be available at leading toy stores in metros. You can order for the AR Drone from Amazon.com for around ₹14,000



AR Pursuit game screen : Targeting the enemy with your missile



AR Drone default screen view with thumb controls on left and right.



The Lego NXT brick

excluding shipping charges. The creepy crawly HEX BUG micro bots are shipped from ₹540 to ₹1,125 from their web site.

We want more!

So these were the toys of today we'd fancy ourselves playing but the way smart toys are developing they would get better and more intelligent. We'd like to see Transformer bots which transform on their own and fight each other while changing into robots. Guess there's a child in all of us somewhere. Send us your creative concepts on cool future toys. 

Medal of Honor sequel?

According to a blog post, EA Executive Producer has confirmed a follow up to the Medal of Honor which is being developed by Danger Close

Too easy to play?

Players are cribbing that super combo moves achieved with a single hit has made Marvel vs. Capcom 3 unenjoyable

Faiyaz Shaikh

readersletters@thinkdigit.com

Visceral Games are back visiting the terrifying Dead Space universe, after a somewhat

disappointing adaptation of Dante's Divine Comedy. Those of who missed the first installment of Dead Space ought to know that it was the most remarkable release of that year and even among the best games of all time in its category. Its most outstanding feature was a fresh and very successful take on player's heads-up display and weapons that were mostly extension of an engineer's tools. Rest of the game was a solid tight-corridor shooter, making apparent the developer's firm grasp on what it takes to make a thriller sci-fi game.

The resilient and persistent engineer, Isaac Clarke, is back to reprise his role as the game's protagonist. The game begins a few years after the incidence of Ishimura, with Isaac finding himself in a medical facility of a colony on one of Saturn's moons. Isaac is troubled by the memories of his experiences during the first game and his mind is haunted by an apparition of the Market. Looking at the plot from a bird's-eye view, the premise is almost exactly the same as the first game, with different locales and characters.

Going into Dead Space 2, the studio had a clear disadvantage, in that the game's key design elements had lost its novelty. With the task of delivering two titles in almost as many years, it is understandable that Visceral Games could not have accommodated being as adventurous with the sequel. Dead Space 2 will be all too familiar to returning

players to the series and with relatively few new ideas. The good bit is that the single-player campaign is considerably longer, spanning over two discs on the Xbox 360. The new content in the game comes mostly in the form of new weapons, armor and enemy types. The game-play is almost exactly the same

and locales are not much different from the first game.

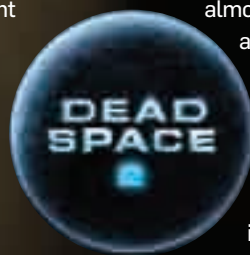
There are a few sequences in the game when rays of innovation do shine

through the typical

drudgery of sequels. I won't get into the specifics of these instances to avoid giving away spoilers; however, they are readily recognizable by being effective in alleviating the monotony that sometimes seeps into the game.

Fortunately, Dead Space 2 inherits the tight and mostly engaging game-play from its predecessor and with some added sheen. Isaac's necromorph annihilation war-gear has received a major expansion with new weapons and armor joining the familiar stuff from the first game. Beating the game unlocks 'New Game +' mode which carries over all the weapons and armors, along with all unlocked upgrades. This mode also features collectible alternate version for all armor sets, and the game in general now allows re-specking of upgrades. Another mode called Hardcore also gets unlocked which, true to its name, challenges the player to beat the entire game without dying with just three saves available.

Dead Space 2 is chockfull of content compared to the first game, but little in terms of innovation. There is great value for the purchase, but not much in terms of inspiration. **d**



Genre: Action, Shooter, Horror
Developer : Visceral Games
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Platform: PC, PS3 and Xbox 360

THE SKOAR

8.0

Dead Space 2 is chock full of content compared to the first game, but little in terms of innovation. There is great value for the purchase, but not much in terms of inspiration

3DS is here, finally

Nintendo's glassless 3D portable game console - the Nintendo 3DS is slated to release on March 27

Ban on gaming?

The Vietnamese government has asked ISPs to block online access to games from 10 pm to 8 am to curb the 'negative side-effects' of gaming



Retribution has a new face... A preview...

Faiyaz Shaikh

readersletters@thinkdigit.com

Retribution will be the second and most likely the final standalone expansion pack for Dawn of War II, making way for Space Marine action game that is scheduled for release later this year. Retribution introduces a new faction of the human race, the Imperial Guard. The inclusion of Imperial Guard takes the number of playable races in Dawn of War II to six. It looks like Relic is building Retribution to be a grand finale to the Blood Ravens saga, with each of the six races getting their own single-player campaign.

The multiplayer mode of Dawn of War II has remained virtually untouched by Retribution, with the obvious exception of the new faction. Each of the six races


has three heroes to choose from before the start of a multiplayer session. These hero units fall in archetypical categories of offence, defense and support. With the exception of Annihilation game mode, multiplayer in Dawn of War II focuses on capturing and defending strategic points on the map. These games can be played in competitive or co-operative modes with the same overall objective of controlling territory. Resource points and power is used to keep the war machinery growing. The use of unit population cap keeps the size of opposing enemy forces in balance. With the release of Retribution, Dawn of War II has consolidated a good number of multiplayer maps across a variety of environments, locations and game types.

For the emperor

Although both factions are loyal to the Emperor, the Imperial Guard is a very different breed of combatants when compared to the Space Marines. While the Space Marines are genetically enhanced, heavily armored and deploy in small numbers, the Imperial Guard make up for their physical frailty by fighting in numbers. The Imperial Guard's units and structures are more readily recognizable as traditional instruments of war. These include use of resilient bunkers, massive tanks and a variety of infantry units that can quickly swell in numbers to overwhelm the enemy. The one common tactic between the two human factions is introduced by the religious fervor of Witch Hunter Inquisitor of the Imperial Guard.

Building on the previous

two releases, the multiplayer games in Dawn of War II are pretty solid barring some balance issues with Imperial Guard units. I found the grenadier units of the Guard being exceptionally effective at decimating enemy ground forces. Some of the reported performance issues are being addressed by the developers via patches, but I personally did not encounter any major issues with the game.

The multiplayer of Retribution is shaping up well to welcome the newest faction and there is little reason for it to be not as solid as the previous two installments. The clincher for me however is going to be the single-player campaign which will hopefully bring a satisfying resolution to the Chapter. The game is slated for release in the first week of March for Microsoft Windows. 

Legend of Zelda Anniversary

Link (the game's protagonist) has completed 25 years in the gaming industry and is still making an impact today

Lost link to host!

Player have complained about losing connection to the servers while playing Marvel vs. Capcom 3

The design philosophy behind logos

They are everywhere, we are surrounded by them and the moment we see them we immediately connect an association with their parent brand. Yes we are talking about logos, we are bombarded by their presence everyday, according to one statistic an average guy would see close to 250 logos in a day. Here's a look at some of the most famous logos and the concept behind them.

Apple

The apple represents the tree knowledge with reference to Adam and Eve. The bite in the apple represents a byte of memory. The bite/byte was made a part of the logo to avoid confusion between tomato and apple.



Amazon

At first look the Amazon logo appears to be just plain text with a yellow smile beneath it. If you observe closely the smile is in a shape of an arrow which starts from letter a and points to z which signifies that Amazon sells everything from A to Z.

IBM

The IBM logo, also known as the Big Blue where big signifies the size of the company, blue is the official colour. The logo is divided in eight parallel bars and in the lower right corner the lines represent an equal sign which generates a message of equality.



Cisco Systems

While on their way to register their company the founders of Cisco crossed the Golden Gate bridge and decided to name the company Cisco taking its name from San Francisco where the bridge is situated. The logo represents the Golden Gate bridge.



Sun Microsystems

The Sun microsystems logo was designed by Prof. Vaughan Pratt of Stanford University. The letters S, U and N are interspersed in such a way that the word SUN is formed and read from all four directions.

Fed Ex

Although the Fed Ex logo appears to be quite simple without having any fancy pattern or colour scheme but if you closely observe the E and X the shape of an arrow pointing towards the right comes out. The arrow signifies moving forward and that's what Fed Ex does.



Spin off on social networking sites

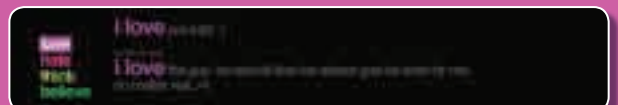
Here's an interesting spin off on Facebook and Twitter.

Facebook Fail Blog

The site aggregates utterly stupid messages which Facebook users post on their walls along with equally dumb comments people leave on their friend's page. Have a look at <http://bit.ly/ePejMAfbfails.png>

Twistor

This site pulls tweets which contain any one of these keywords LOVE, HATE, THINK, BELIEVE, FEEL, and WISH and puts it into an interesting scroll up format. Any tweet with these words would show up here. Visit <http://bit.ly/fwvl6g twisstori.png>



Know your Batman

Think you know everything about the Dark Knight? Head over to go.ign.com/fklYgl to get know the difference between the comic books, movies and video games Batman

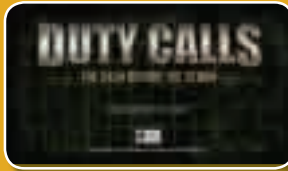
Action against hacked PS3s

If you are running illegal firmware to play pirated games on your PS3 then be warned as Sony has started banning users from the Play Station network who use hacked software

Unwind

How we unwind

Duty Calls



We have not played a spoof game in a long

time, at least not this well made. Duty Calls is a parody of Call of Duty and has a similar plot and mission objective as COD. Its got some cool graphics and voice overs. Find it in this month's Alpha DVD, its hilarious to play.

127 Hours



Nominated in the best picture category for OSCAR, 127 Hours is based on

true story of Aron Ralston. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with the movie. It's not long in duration and keeps the viewer at the edge of the seat. Look out for background score by AR Rahman.

Morcheeba



We got our hands on Morcheeba discography this time which is a good mix of trip hop,

R&B and pop. They cannot be classified in any specific genre of music which makes them a good balance of soothing and club music. Our favourite track – Enjoy the ride.

DIARY

digit

We went for 127 Hours after issue closing this time as the initial week of the month is relatively free. We don't deny the fact that the movie gets gory towards the end but Siddharth freaked out the most amongst us and was in a state of shock when it got over. He defends it by saying that he was imagining himself as the actor whose hand gets stuck under the boulder. Who thinks like that right? Nimish suggested we should go to Kala Ghoda Art festival this time. Siddharth and Sambhav who are absolute connoisseurs of Arts & Culture (Pun intended) decided to give their own interpretation of the Art installations displayed in the festival and to our surprise Siddharth's version of one of the installation was better than the artist's one. LOL but it was a fun weekend at the festival. Our office walls are beautified as magazine covers are hung as paintings, so we now look at December and January covers each time we get our eyes off the computer screen.

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<http://www.facebook.com/gladtobeaprogrammer>

Community of software programmers who enjoy writing code and want to grow their career in software development



Technological Development in the recent years has put a tremendous pressure on environment. Thus going green is the most important task today. To discuss the hows and whys, IT-BHU is set to organize Technex from 3 to 6 March 2011. Enthralling lectures by the likes of Padma Vibhushan Prof. J.V. Narlikar, Padma Bhushan Prof. Yash Pal and Prof. Rajendra Singh, and competitions that encourage students to develop green technology are set to mark this mega event.

Highlights:

- * Biggest online coding event in Asia which includes more than 2500 participants from more than 60 countries.
- * Biggest Robotics competition and workshop series (Robo-Opus), Biggest Cyber Security competition (Hack Tricks), Biggest Gaming event (Clutch), Biggest Business Plan presentation competition (Ventura) and Biggest Model Making competition (Modex) in India.
- * Biggest school level competition (Balvigyan) among engineering colleges in India.
- * Biggest start-up fair that has 900 participants and 25 startups.
- * Participation of more than 3000 participants from BHU, 1700 from outside institutes and more than 20000 in online rounds and at zonal centres in Technex '11.
- * A highly appreciated website (www.itbhu.ac.in/technex) that received more than 5 lac clicks within a span of 4 months.



How to identify RAM sticks just by looking at them

There are basically two types of RAM sticks available, out of these the most common is the DDR RAM. Depending on how old your computer is you can tell what RAM stick it has. However you cannot accidentally put a different RAM stick in a slot not meant for it as it would not fit. The two main types of RAMs are SD RAM and DDR RAM. RAM sticks can be easily identified just by looking at them here's how you can tell the difference

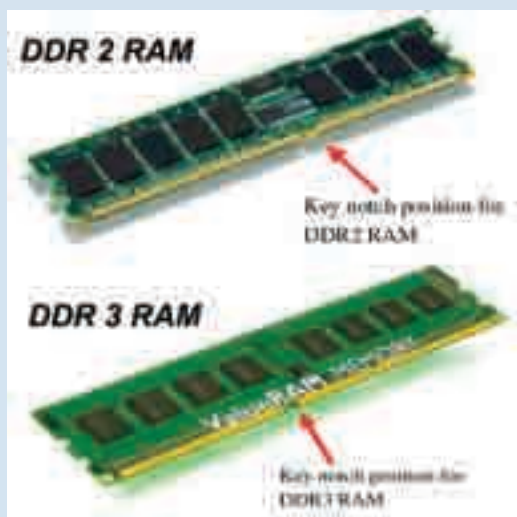


SDRAM with its two notches

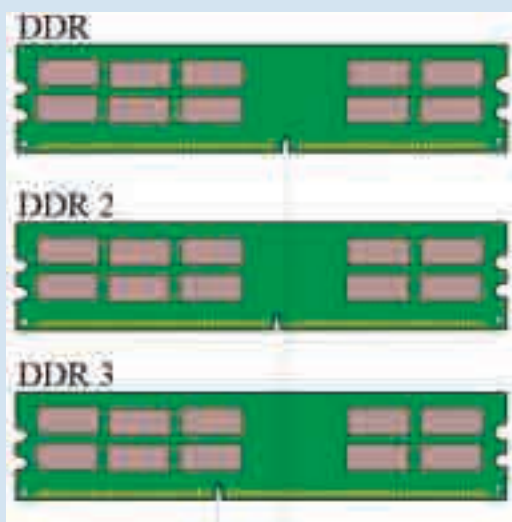
SD RAM – SD stands for Synchronous DRAM, this is an older type of RAM. New systems now come with a DDR RAM. An SD RAM is really easy to identify as it has two notches at the bottom and would only fit into an SD RAM slot.

DDR RAM – All new PCs are shipped with a double data SD RAM i.e. DDR RAM. Right now there are three standards of DDR RAM available in the market- DDR 1, DDR 2 and DDR 3. The fourth generation of DDR RAM is touted to

hit the market somewhere in 2012. To identify a DDR RAM all you have to do



DDR with a single notch



A comparison of notch positions in DDR, DDR2 and DDR3 RAM sticks

is to look for a single notch at the bottom of the RAM stick, if your stick has it then it's a DDR RAM. However identifying between the three DDRs can be a bit tricky. A DDR 1 RAM stick has rectangular chips whereas a DDR 2 RAM has square chips. The notch position on both these RAMs is slightly off from each other, but it's kind of hard to tell by just looking at the notch. A DDR 2 notch is slightly towards the left from the notch positioned on the DDR1. DDR 2 and DDR3 can be easily identified as its notch is on the extreme left when compared with the DDR1 and DDR 2.

Smart Social Networking tips

Send Twitter feeds to Buzz – You can allow your twitter feeds to show up on your Buzz account. Here's how to do it: click on Settings in your Gmail account. Go to Buzz. Select the second option, Your connected sites. Click on View and edit. Select Twitter from the list, type in your Twitter user name in the space provided and click save. Now every time you tweet the feed would show up on your Buzz account. You can select other options from the list as well like Flickr and Gmail chat status to synchronize them with your Buzz account.

Remove yourself from Facebook Public search – You can stop search engines from showing a preview of your FB profile each time someone searches for you on Google, you can change the setting by clicking on Account. Select Privacy Settings from the drop down menu. Select Apps and websites at the bottom left corner of the page click on Edit your settings, you would see Public search at the bottom of the page click on Edit settings button and uncheck Enable Public Search. Now your name wouldn't show up on search engines results page.

Types of USB ports

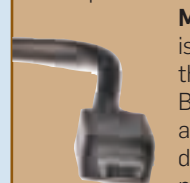


Type A- This is a standard USB connector and fits into the port of a computer.



Type B- Generally used for large devices like scanners and printers a type B USB port is square

from the bottom and slightly slants at the top.



Mini USB- A mini USB is a smaller version of the Type A and Type B connectors. These are commonly used on digital cameras and MP3 players.



Micro USB- Micro USB data cable is used to connect cell phones to a computer, micro USB is the smallest version of Type A where as micro B is inverted and flattened Type-B connector.

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- ▶ Prevents your personal data from being stolen
- ▶ Creates and stores strong passwords and auto-completes online forms for you
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- ▶ Enterprise-level security for your Home PC network

Available In
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