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GADGETSTM MAGAZINE

THE PHILIPPINES' FIRST TECH MAGAZINE

TOMORROW TECH

Our take on the future
of gadgetry

Laura Burčikaitė
Modern sophisticate



NIKON KEYMISSION 360
Capture more of the world

LOOKING FORWARD

A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE OF TECH

REVIEWED

- ASUS Zenfone 3 Max
- ASUS Strix GTX 1050 Ti
- Palit GTX 1060
- Transcend JetDrive Go 500G
- Playstation VR
- Fitbit Flex
- Alcatel Move Time SW10

PHP150



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FEB 2017 • VOLUME 17 • NUMBER 6




NO. 1

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MARIBELLE M. ALBA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The quintessential gadgets girl who loves all things Mac, red, and blingy. In a parallel universe, she organizes motorsports events and professional conferences.

@bellealba



PRESY ALBA
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

In a parallel universe, she'd be a travel writer. In this dimension, she's a multi-tasker who makes full use of her IT knowledge and her Apple devices to be productive and efficient. She also loves to listen to audiobooks while doing routine stuff like driving or shopping.

@presy1121



REN ALCANTARA
MANAGING EDITOR

Ren likes puppies, long walks in the park, and zombies. His idea of a perfect day would be a long walk in the park, with a puppy, during a zombie apocalypse.

@hisnameisren



EDITOR'S NOTE

2017 is in full swing, and with it is the first issue of Gadgets for this year. If the past is anything to go by, we're going to be in for a lot of tech. Technology is getting more and more affordable at the bottom end, and more new, exciting devices are coming in at the top tier. As new tech comes in, rest assured that we'll be right there with you, always with the freshest, most exciting news the industry has to offer. We've got a great calendar planned for 2017, and a few new things we'd like to try, so stick around. It's going to be a great ride!

Ren Alcantara, Managing Editor



MIA CARISSE BARRIENTOS
JUNIOR EDITOR

A bibliophile who reads fiction, dystopian, chick-lit, to just plainly weird novels in paperback or eBooks. Fascinated with gadgets and speaks fangirl lexicon and gibberish.

@miaissocoollike



BENEDICT ASAL
ART DIRECTOR

He likes going out with friends, meeting new ones, playing Marvel and Tekken games at the arcade, listening to music, and playing on his keyboard and guitar.

@julyabirdkaliper



CHRIS NOEL HIDALGO
SENIOR EDITORIAL STAFF

(٧٠٠) ٧٠٠٧٠٠

@cnnhidalgo



THERESA ELORIAGA
GRAPHIC ARTIST

An introvert with a happy soul who loves food and cats more than life.

@theresaeloriaga



GREAT MINDS MEDIA, INC.

PRESIDENT & CEO Maribelle Alba

SALES MANAGER Marisa Consuelo
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Carol Agabin

ACCOUNTING MANAGER Maritess Pascua-Maulion
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Clifford Dela Paz

PR & MARKETING STAFF Jonah Mendoza

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ROBBY VAFLO
STAFF WRITER

I always have my *eating pants* on.

@emotioncensor



JAEL MENDOZA
GRAPHIC ARTIST

Spreading lines and colors for our Creator.

@jaella_m



JONAH MENDOZA
CONTRIBUTOR

When my daughter turns 18, I'll be mistaken as her sister.

@jonahmendoza



JOSE ALVAREZ
CONTRIBUTOR

You'll never find Jose without a controller in his hand—in fact, the WASD keys on his keyboard have been worn out over the years. Aside from games, he also religiously follows several sports, especially soccer, and always has a joke ready to lighten any mood and put a smile on someone's face.

@awperative

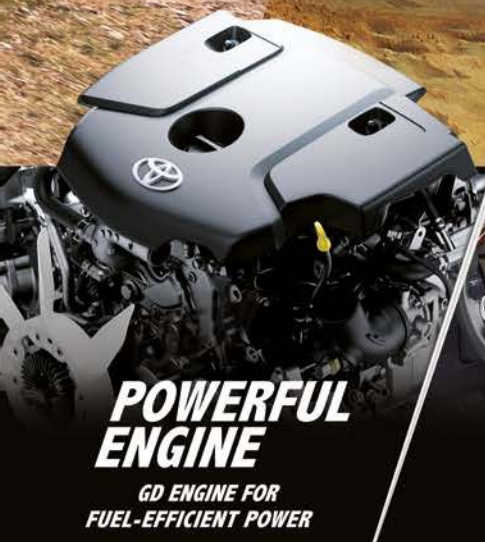


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A taste of what is to come



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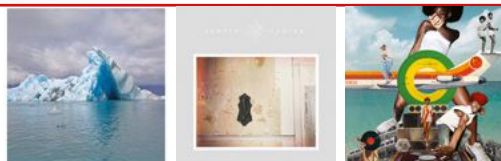
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See what Epson's been brewing

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RAILROADS

The little train that was





Asus ROG Claymore ▲

Mechanical Keyboard

Need a mechanical tenkeyless keyboard *and* a numpad? Purchasing the two separately can be a pain as mechanical numpads can be pretty rare; not to mention you'll throw aesthetics out the window with two separate units. The Asus ROG Claymore avoids the above scenario by having a full-sized standard layout with a detachable numpad. That's right. This Cherry MX-equipped plank has a removable numpad that can also be used as a macro pad. The eye candy also doesn't stop with the black-etched shroud. Its 50-million keystroke, anti-ghosting, and full N-Key rollover keys are Aura RGB backlit, because if there's one thing that makes hardware better, it's its programmable RGB LEDs.

PHP 9,310



◀ Asus FX502

Gaming Notebook

The Asus FX502 is one of the most affordable gaming laptops strutting an Nvidia GeForce GTX 1060 graphics card. Paired with the video driver is either an Intel Core i5-6300HQ or an Intel Core i7-6700HQ processor, a 15.6 inch Full HD display, a 1 TB hard drive plus an additional 256 GB M.2 SSD for the top tier model, and 8 GB of DDR4 RAM, with a Hyper Duo-Copper Cooling system keeping thermals in check. And even though it should look like a back-breaking notebook on paper, it manages to come in at just 23.5 mm thin and 2.2 kg light.

PHP 69,995 (FX502VM-DM092T)
PHP 79,995 (FX502VM-DM120T)



Lenovo ThinkPad X1 Carbon ▲ Notebook

The ThinkPad X1 Carbon offers users the best possible personalized computing experience. The fifth and the latest from the ThinkPad X series, the X1 is much more compact and built for on-the-go productivity than its older siblings. Lenovo claims that it is the lightest notebook in its class at under 2.5 pounds (1.14kg) and also the smallest. It comes fitted with a high quality 14-inch IPS and comes with a full complement of ports, an infrared camera, connectivity and security to ensure the X1 Carbon delivers maximum performance on all fronts. The X1 Carbon promises a better typing experience with its six-row ThinkPad keyboard with an improved Microsoft Precision Touchpad (with physical buttons) and iconic TrackPoint. Available in classic ThinkPad black and a new silver color, it is under the hood that the X1 Carbon comes into its own. Improvements incorporated into the X1 Carbon include an up to 15.5-hour battery life, Qualcomm Snapdragon X7 LTE-A Wireless WAN and Wi-Fi CERTIFIED WiGig, enhanced biometric authentication via IR camera with face recognition support for Windows Hello login, match-on-Chip touch fingerprint, and FIDO-enabled biometric authentication support for PayPal.

◀ GAMDIAS ZEUS P1 Gaming mouse



When you want to up your game, but you're still all about that flashy stuff, GAMDIAS has your back with the ZEUS P1 gaming mouse. It has 13 different, individually programmable LEDs with a 16.8 million dual level RGB customizable stream lighting design, giving gamers a near-infinite number of light combinations through the HERA app. After hours of choosing the right color scheme for your mouse, you can save up to five of your favorites so you can use them again and again. The ZEUS P1 is great on the inside as well, with a 12,000 DPI optical sensor for extra accurate tracking. The mouse also has eight configurable buttons so you can always stay at the top of your game.



Dell Inspiron 15 7000 Series ▲ Gaming Notebook

Looking for a decent gaming notebook without breaking the bank, at least not too much? Behold the Dell Inspiron 15 7000 Series. It struts a true quad-core processor in either an Intel Core i5-6300HQ or Intel Core i7-6700HQ chip, a dated but still capable Nvidia GeForce GTX 960M 4 GB GDDR5 graphics card, 8 GB of DDR4 RAM, a sizeable 15.6 inch display with up to 4K resolution, and up to a 1 TB hard disk and 256 GB solid state dual drive config. It also has two speakers with Waves MaxxAudio Pro tuning and a subwoofer for gaming audio bliss.

PHP 49,990 (Inspiron 15 7566 i5)
PHP 69,990 (Inspiron 15 7566 i7)

◀ Epson EB-L1000 series Projector



Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week: that's the kind of endurance Epson's new high-end line of projectors can handle. Sporting a laser light source with the company's legendary 3LCD technology, the EB-L1000 series of projectors have brightness ranging from 6,000 to 12,000 lumens, depending on the model. The new laser light source enables up to 20,000 hours of maintenance-free operation without the need to replace the bulb. The EB-L1000 series is also the first to incorporate inorganic 3LCD panels and an inorganic phosphor wheel for increased heat resistance just to make the projectors extra durable. All models have 4K image resolution enhancement, auto image calibration and flexible projection options built in.



◀ Transcend JetDrive Go 500G Storage Device

For the people that find themselves suddenly out of storage space on their phones, Transcend's JetDrive Go 500G is a flash drive specifically designed for iOS devices. Users can easily connect the drive into an iPhone, an iPad, or an iPod touch through the device's Lightning port. Backing up files are a breeze thanks to the JetDrive Go app that enables quick and easy organizing of photos, videos, music and other files and transferring them to a maximum of 128GB depending on the flash drive model. The app also features quick one-tap commands to easily transfer files from the Camera Roll or Contacts, and can even backup the whole phone. To transfer them to a personal computer, the JetDrive Go 500G has a USB 3.1 Gen 1 Type A connector that is backwards compatible with USB 3.0 or 2.0.

PHP 6,500 (32 GB)
PHP 8,500 (64 GB)

Samsung Galaxy A7 ▶ Smartphone

Samsung aims to win you over with its newest smartphone, the Galaxy A7 2017 edition. This smartphone boasts simple elegance that instantly grabs your attention. Its minimalist aesthetic paired with highly resistant 3D glass rear and outstanding 5.7-inch Super AMOLED display are enough to make you want to take a closer look. Available in colors gold sand, black sky, and blue mist, the A7 is more than just a pretty face. It's built water- and dust-resistant with its IP68 certification, giving you the assurance that it is ready for adventures no matter the scale. The handset also comes equipped with 16MP high-resolution front and rear cameras for taking crisp and finely detailed photos, 32 GB of internal storage expandable up to 256 GB for storing your entertainment needs, dual SIM slots, reversible USB type C port, 3 GB RAM, 3600 mAh battery, and octa-core processor to capably tackle all the tasks you throw at it.

PHP 23,990



Jabra Elite Sport ► Bluetooth Headset

The Jabra Elite Sport is one of the most technically advanced true wireless sports earbuds in the market today. It offers superior quality sound for calls and music, comfortable and secure cord-free fit, iOS and Android compatibility. Catch every call while you're exercising with these waterproof Jabra Elite Sport earbuds. These wireless earpieces have three hours of battery time and an additional six hours when topped up with the included charging case. They have an in-ear heart rate monitor and an integrated app for fitness analysis and coaching.



◀ Starmobile Engage Aura Notebook

Did you haul in some cash from your *ninongs* and *ninangs* during the holidays and are you now looking to spend it on an affordable, entry-level notebook? Then you should definitely consider the Starmobile Engage Aura. Under its polycarbonate hood is a Cherry Trail-based Intel Atom Z8350 quad-core processor, 2 GB of RAM, a 9000 mAh battery pack rated for up to seven hours of video playback time, as well as a large 14 inch HD screen—specs good enough for some non-graphically demanding games, slight multimedia editing, and general everyday tasks such as browsing and document encoding. It comes in silver and limited edition gold color variants.

PHP 10,990 (Silver regular price)
PHP 7,990 (Silver, Lazada discounted price)
PHP 9,990 (Limited edition gold)

Kingston DataTraveler Ultimate GT ▶ Storage device

Memory products manufacturer Kingston Digital, Inc. decided to go big for this year's CES: big, not in physical size (far from it), but in capacity. The DataTraveler Ultimate GT is the world's highest capacity thumb drive, able to hold two terabytes' worth of files. Yes. Two terabytes. That is one or two modern computers' memory crammed into a stick of gum. The Ultimate GT doubles the capacity of its 2013 predecessor allowing up to 70 hours of 4K videos in one flash drive. To add shock resistance, the drive is encased in a zinc alloy and transfers files through a USB 3.1 gen 1 port.



◀ Gionee M2017 Smartphone

Take that Apple and Samsung: Chinese smartphone manufacturer Gionee just released the M2017 luxury phone. Design-wise, the M2017 is really meant to be classy with gold edges and accents, and a special Android-based Amigo UI that sports all-gold icons and a wristwatch-style time indicator. It features a dual-curved 5.7-inch AMOLED display and runs on the Qualcomm Snapdragon 653 chipset with eight cores, 6 GB of RAM, and 128 GB of readable memory. The main camera is a dual-cam 12+1.3-megapixel setup while the front-facing camera is eight megapixels. But the M2017's strongest feature is its monstrous 7000 mAh battery that boasts of up to 915 hours of standby time on a full charge of battery. Being a luxury phone, the M2017 is priced at USD 1,000. Yes, 1,000 in US legal tender. That will run you about 50,000 in domestic coin, so start saving up.

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Oppo A39 ▶ Smartphone

Can't take enough selfies? Snap your next social media display photo with the Oppo A39. The recently introduced Oppo A39 enables users to capture crystal-clear selfies with its 5 MP-front camera that is crafted with extra large 1.4um pixels and 1/4-inch sensor. On its rear is a 13-MP camera that is able to produce 50-MP ultra-high definition images with its extra-large 1/3.06 inch sensor. This integration maximizes the amount of captured light making for brilliant low-light and nighttime shots. Apart from its undeniably capable shutters, the A39 boasts of advanced features that make the perfect daily driver for the young and the not so young. It ships with a 2900 mAh lithium polymer battery, 3 GB RAM, octa-core 64-bit processor, 32 GB internal storage, and more at just 5.2 inches.

PHP 10,990



◀ SanDisk Ultra Dual Drive m3.0 Flash Drive



A new memory solution for Android devices wants to give a run for their money. The SanDisk Ultra Dual Drive m3.0 is a USB OTG flash drive that features a retractable design that reveals a micro-USB on one end and a USB 3.0 connector on the other. This design provides a convenient way for customers to manage their files between different devices and easily free up space on their phone on the fly. The SanDisk Ultra Dual Drive m3.0 flash drive is available in capacities ranging from 16 GB to 128 GB. In addition to higher storage capacity, SanDisk has improved the performance of the device's USB 3.0 connector, which can now achieve speeds up to 150MB/s, making file transfers quick as a wink. Additionally, this flash drive is compatible with the SanDisk Memory Zone app, an application designed for Android devices that helps in organizing files. The SanDisk Ultra Dual Drive m3.0 comes with a five year warranty.

PHP 499 (16 GB)
PHP 799 (32 GB)
PHP 1,399 (64 GB)
PHP 2,699 (128 GB)



MiVue 658 Wi-Fi▶ Dash Cam

The MiVue 658 Wi-Fi serves as your third eye on the road with its built-in features that enable it to capture more than what meets the eye during your daily commutes all in high definition. Serving as your watcher on the road, this dash cam will start recording with a simple tap on its display. It produces high definition output thanks to its 4 million pixel sensor and H.264 technology that allows you to save high quality videos at a smaller file size. Its integrated Wi-Fi enables you to transfer your footages on to your phone for sharing with friends and family or for documentation purposes in a breeze. The complementary *MiVue app*—available on *Google Play* and the *App Store*—serves as an avenue on which you can quickly share your videos on Facebook or on other platforms without the hassles of having to transfer files via cables or SD card readers. Additionally, the MiVue 658 Wi-Fi also comes built with microSD support for up to 128 GB, a 360-degree rotating mount design, and GPS to track your route and whatnot, helping you drive with total ease, no matter where you're headed.

PHP 9,990



◀ Nikon KeyMission 170 Action Camera

Meant to be the mid-range model in Nikon's KeyMission line of action cameras is the 170. It is capable of taking 4K video at 30 frames a second and has a wide 170-degree view angle lens coupled with a bigger-than-average 8.3-megapixel CMOS sensor. It has an ISO range of 100 to 1600 and shutter speeds between 1/16000 of a second to half a second. The KeyMission 170 has a 1.5-inch LCD screen and can connect to a smartphone wirelessly through Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. The action camera is also waterproof, shockproof and freezeproof, without the need of external housing.

PHP 20,900

Lenovo Phab 2 Pro ▶ Smartphone

The Phab 2 Pro is touted as the world's first Tango-enabled smartphone. This integration allows users an out-of-this world augmented reality experience through computer vision. To put it simply, through Tango, the phone can detect the user's position relative to the surroundings without using GPS or other external signals. When the Tango app is launched, you can hold your phone up and see the world around you overlaid with real-time virtual effects. Users of the Phab 2 Pro are also able to track objects, map indoor spaces, and perceive depth. All these allow for the development of new types of apps, experiments, and designs that couldn't be carried out on other AR-enabled phablets in the market. Apart from being the first Tango-enabled smartphone, the Phab 2 Pro is filled to the brim with features that'll give you a run for your money. It comes with a beautiful 6.4-inch quad-HD display, 1440 x 2560 resolution with a 2.5D curved glass, a powerful Qualcomm Snapdragon 652, octa-core processor, generous 4 GBs of RAM, capable 16 MP rear camera, fingerprint sensor, and a huge 4050 mAh non-removable battery.



PHP 24,999



Lenovo Phab 2 Plus ▶ Smartphone

One of the main selling points of the Phab line of smartphones, apart from its generous screen real estate and sophisticated design, is its budget-friendly price. These same characteristics abound in the Phab 2 Plus and more. The Phab 2 Plus makes heads turn with its beautiful build and a whopping 6.4-inch display. Among the highlights of this phone-bordering-tablet-territory is its dual 13 MP f/2.0 rear cameras. The cameras, which, work together with a Milbeaut image processor, promises to deliver images with accurate detail even in poorly-lit shooting conditions. The Phab 2 Plus is also big in processing features including a Mediatek MT8783, octa-core processor, and 3 GB RAM. Security is courtesy of a fingerprint sensor and an impeccable user experience is offered by its Android 6.0 Marshmallow OS. The Phab 2 Plus is available in champagne gold and gunmetal grey.

PHP 14,999

Canon EOS M5 ▶

Mirrorless Interchangeable Lens Camera

Get DSLR-like control and output in a relatively small form factor with the latest mirrorless camera from Canon. The EOS M is a mirrorless interchangeable lens camera that is aimed at professional photographers who want a light yet powerful photography companion. This flagship mirrorless shooter has a set of features that support discerning users who desire superior image quality with the versatility of interchangeable lenses. The EOS M5 sports a 24 MP APS-C CMOS sensor, 3.2-inch tilting touch panel, and Wi-Fi/NFC/Bluetooth support. Key technologies introduced in this model, and a first in the EOS M series, include Dual Pixel CMOS AF technology drawn from the EOS DSLR range, the cutting-edge DIGIC 7 image processor, a high-resolution electronic viewfinder, in-camera RAW conversion, and more.

PHP 60,498 for EOS M5 Body

PHP 66,498 for EOS M5 with EF-M 15-45mm

PHP 82,998 for EOS M5 with EF-M 18-150mm



◀ Steadicam Volt

Camera Stabilizer

Loved by filmmakers both indie and mainstream, Steadicam's line of camera stabilizers have produced some awesome sequences coupling mobility with image tracking smoothness. The Tiffen Company subsidiary now wants to bring their camera stabilization expertise to smartphones with the Steadicam Volt. The motorized, three-axis camera stabilizer is lightweight and foldable, with support for phones weighing anything from 100 to 200 grams and with widths between 58 to 88 mm. The haptic or touch-perceptive control utilizes Simulated Inertia which makes moving around the camera in the Volt feels a lot more natural compared to regular gimbals and other camera stabilizers. The Volt also has a downloadable app that uses the phone's built-in instruments to fine-tune the rig as well as giving users full control over image framing and composition.

LG OLED77W7P ▶

Television

Another standout from CES is LG's OLED77W7P smart television, or the Signature OLED TV W. Even less obtrusive to the living room aesthetic than a picture frame, the OLED77W7P is only an astounding 2.5 mm thick. It's so thin and light it can be attached directly to the wall. The TV is 77 inches diagonally and has 4K resolution and HDR. It is also the first to combine the Dolby Vision HDR technology with Dolby Atmos immersive audio for a truly exquisite experience. To make contrasts even starker, the OLED77W7P makes use of LG's OLED technology, achieving perfect, pitch black levels with nil light bleed. All wired connections will be through LG's sound bar with a thin and flexible proprietary cable connected to the TV that can easily be hidden from plain sight.



◀ Gigabyte Aorus Z270X-Gaming 7

Motherboard

The Intel Kaby Lake chips are officially here. Take advantage of the series' boosted capabilities by getting a feature-packed board such as the Gigabyte Aorus Z270X-Gaming 7. This mobo boasts goodies such as the fastest NVMe PCIe, M.2, and Thunderbolt standards, support for DDR4 sticks with up to 4000+ MHz XMP profiles, Creative Sound Core3D with SB Pro Studio audio suite, along with the "Z" marque's reliable overclocking potential. It is also Intel Optane-ready for the snappiest PC experience yet. Of course, it also has embedded RGB modules because nowadays, the package just isn't complete without a drool-worthy lightshow.

Leica M10 ▶ Camera

Pegged as having a “unique balance of heritage and technical innovation,” the M10 is Leica’s newest entry to its M series of cameras. The M-System lineage represents high engineering standards and the utmost in mechanical beauty. Being the slimmest digital M camera yet, the M10 marks a return to the ergonomics of its analogue predecessors with nearly the same design and thickness as the M4 film camera. Inside the all-metal magnesium alloy body and Corning Gorilla Glass screen is the latest Maestro-II processor coupled with a full-frame 24 MP CMOS sensor giving detailed photos without the slightest hint of noise from ISO 100 to 50,000 (yes, it maxes out at 50,000). The camera can also shoot at lightning fast speeds of up to five frames per second with 2 GB of buffer memory. And the cherry topping this classic sundae is built-in Wi-Fi connectivity for easy sharing between devices.



BenQ W1090 ▲ Projector

Take the cinematic experience home with the W1090. This projector from BenQ features various Sport Modes that, when activated, takes the thrill of watching games at sports bars right into every sports enthusiast’s home. It boasts up to 100 inches of crystal-clear 1080p high-definition projection that is paired with a built-in 10-watt speaker enhanced with Waves audio, making every detail more life-like and sound heart-thumping. Among the W1090’s selling points are its simple installation, short-throw projection, MHL connectivity, and more, all of which you can enjoy for price that won’t break the bank.



◀ Sony MDR-XB50BS

Wireless Sports In-Ear Headphones

New year's here and we all know what that means: resolutions that include working out and being healthier this 2017. Keep yourself on track of this goal by having a reliable workout partner like the Sony MDR-XB50BS. This pair of wireless in-ear headphones are tuned for heart-thumping EDM, meaning you have all the bass you need for that extra surge of energy. This IPX4-rated splash-proof device is also designed with arc supporters for a comfortable fit that holds even during the most vigorous sessions, both in wet and dry conditions. It's able to run for 8.5 hours straight, so you always have your tunes before, during, and after your workout.



Sony FDR-X3000 ▶

Action Camera

The Sony FDR-X3000 is a dependable action cam that's built for both the thrill-seeking daredevil and the everyman adventurer. The 4K shooter features a slim, non-distracting profile with an 8.2 MP 1/2.5 type back-illuminated Exmor R CMOS sensor that shoots great-looking 4K videos. The Zeiss Tessar lens up front also ensures that images aren't distorted out of proportion. Slotted into its underwater housing, the FDR-X3000 can go as deep as 60 meters underwater, all while being dustproof and shockproof. For added convenience, it comes with a live view remote that acts as a Wi-Fi-enabled monitor, as well as an optional finger grip which allows you to easily go handheld without any bulky accessories.

Dell Canvas ▶

Workplace peripheral

The Canvas, a part of Dell's Precision line of devices, is a smart workplace accessory that is designed with the same uses in mind as the Microsoft Surface Studio, but rather than being a standalone device, works as an extension of "virtually any" computer running Windows 10. Working in partnership with Microsoft to develop the Canvas, the device, along with the rest of the product line will be compatible with the new features coming with the Windows 10 Creators Update including 3D content (which includes *Office* and *Paint*) and a new Hologram interface. The 27-inch QHD display can be operated through touch, a pen, or through Microsoft's Totem peripheral and supports partnered third-party software such as the Adobe Suite, Autodesk, Avid, Solidworks and Microsoft.



Sony MP-CL1A ▶

Pico Projector

With the Sony MP-CL1A, you can stop lugging around that incredibly bulky projector for unexpected presentations. An upgrade from the MP-CL1, this 210 g device offers enhanced features and accessories including Bluetooth audio out connectivity, a kickstand that doubles as a lens cover, and a carrying pouch. It uses Laser Beam Scanning technology to project 1920 x 720 images with an 80,000:1 contrast ratio. It can also throw 40 inch images from just 1.15 meters and up to 120 inches from 3.45 meters for reliability both in cramped and wide open spaces. Just connect your device via HDMI, MHL, or WiFi and it's already good to go.

PHP 20,999



**ENHANCED
SMART POWER**



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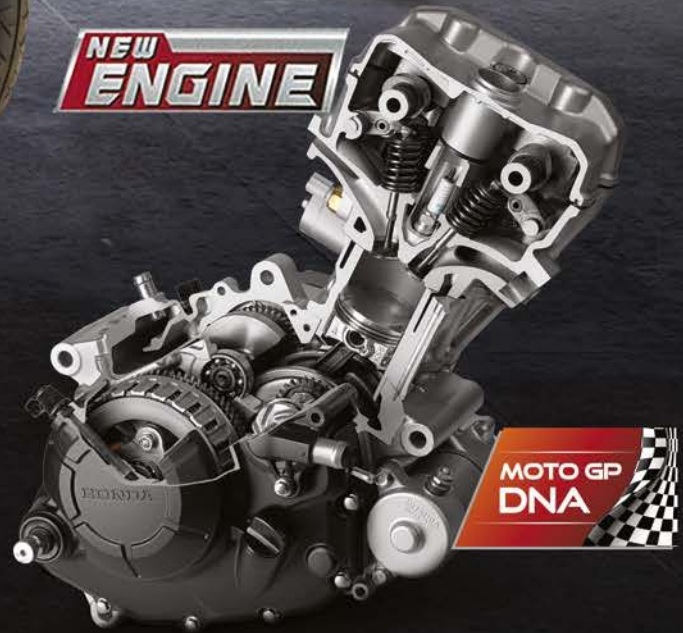
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Asus Zenfone 3 Max

Reviewed by Ren Alcantara

The modern smartphone is one of the greatest feats of human engineering. Just a few decades ago, to be able to do the things you could on a current-generation smartphone required quite an investment in desktop technology. Now, you can pick a perfectly capable phone up for less that it would take to gas up an SUV for a month. The fact remains, however, that it's essentially a pocket computer, and as such, is bound by the constraints a computer has, foremost being that relies on electricity. To add insult to injury, battery technology hasn't progressed nearly at the same rate the rest of the device. This is great for powerbank manufacturers, but for the rest of us, it blows. You'll be lucky to get an honest day's worth of use from a mobile phone these days.

That is, unless you use the Asus Zenfone 3 Max.

DESIGN ★★★★★☆

Building on the success of the previous generation's Zenfone Max, Asus has seen it fit to come up with an updated version, both more powerful, and much better-looking. Beautiful rounded edges on the metal frame and slick curved glass on the front give it a premium feel. The buttons on the side of the device have the trademark Asus concentric circle design, leaving no doubt as to the device's lineage. There is no questioning that the taiwanese brand took more than a few cues from other manufacturers, notably the seventh iteration of Cupertino's cash cow. Matte metal, with an occasional polished accent really make the Zenfone 3 Max look special, and makes it more pleasing than the plastic body of the first Max.

Still, it separates itself enough by putting the fingerprint sensor on the back of the camera rather than the front, and keeping it a nice, rounded-off square, right in reach of your index finger, when you hold it in your hand. Ports and connectors are kept down to a single microUSB port at the bottom edge, and a 3.5mm jack at the top that just makes sense. Overall, the Zenfone 3 Max comes in a package that you'd be more than happy to be seen using.

HARDWARE ★★★★★☆

The hardware on the Zenfone 3 Max is something of a mixed bag. There are several versions available, but what we have for review here is the 2GB RAM, 32GB expandable storage version. This comes with an octacore processor running at a cheerful 1.4 GHz. It's not breaking any speed records, but it's no slouch either. It's helped along by a healthy 2GB serving of RAM, so it's not left behind even by some of the more recent entries in the smartphone game.

The screen on the Zenfone 3 Max is right at the edge of practicality in the world of smartphones. 5.5 inches, with a bevel that isn't excessive on any edge, makes for an overall footprint that makes the most of available real-estate, and staying small enough to stay completely in the hip pocket of your jeans.

You also get a capable 16MP main camera with flash, as well as an 8MP front snapper for the inevitable selfies and video calls.

A phone isn't very useful without the ability to get you connected, and here, the Zenfone 3 Max doesn't disappoint. With all the usual options from Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0, LTE and even dual-SIM capability, it's not a phone that will leave you offline. For days.

The cherry on top of this impressive cake is the massive battery Asus has crammed into the device. While the 4100mAh battery isn't quite as large as the absurdly large 5000mAh battery found on the previous iteration, it's still quite a bit larger than the average smartphone battery in the market right now. It's non-removable, sure, but hey, 4100mAh.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

The main problem I have with these large-capacity phones is that they tend to be plain-looking and on the chubby side. The Zenfone 3 Max is, admittedly a little thick, but the design is such that you really don't notice the thickness. The 2.5D glass, mostly metal construction, and clean lines make for a handsome device that feels great to boot. Really, it's a phone that's hard to put down.

The first thing I wanted to try out was the seed of the fingerprint sensor. Located below the camera, on the rear of the phone, the sensor is within easy reach, even while pulling it out of your pocket. It's fast, about at par with the faster devices here. If I had to give a number as to the time it takes to unlock, gun to my head, I would put it at about the .3 second mark. Tapping the sensor as you pull it out of your jeans should see it unlocked the time you bring it into your line of sight. It also has pleasantly good accuracy. There were no false negatives the whole time I was using it, though water is, of course, going to mess it up.

As I mentioned early on, I'm also a big fan of the size of this device's screen. It's large enough to watch movies and even read books comfortably, but not so large as to cause it to be inconvenient to handle. Clarity and sharpness is also fairly solid, with a resolution of 1280x720, for a pixel density of about 280PPI, or more than enough to keep you entertained on the move.



VALUE ★★★★★☆

At a price of less than PHP 9,000, this is a phone that is worth more than just a second glance. Class-leading battery life, a superb design, and hardware that puts it well within the midrange category all add up to a phone that is more than just a one trick pony. There are some things it could do better, but none of those are reason enough to leave the Zenfone Max 3 out of your shortlist.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Dimensions 5.96 x 3.00 x 0.33 in
Weight: 175 g
SIM: Dual SIM (Nano-SIM, dual stand-by)
Size: 5.5 inches (~72.3% screen-to-body ratio)
Resolution: 1080 x 1920 pixels (~401 ppi pixel density)
Chipset: Qualcomm MSM8937 Snapdragon 430
CPU: Octa-core 1.4 GHz Cortex-A53
GPU: Adreno 505 microSD, up to 256 GB (uses SIM 2 slot)
Internal: 32 GB, 2 GB RAM
CAMERA: 16 MP, f/2.0, phase detection & laser autofocus, dual-LED (dual tone) flash
Features: 1/3" sensor size, geo-tagging, touch focus, face detection, panorama, HDR
Secondary: 8 MP, f/2.2
Connectivity: WLAN, Wi-Fi 802.11 b/g/n, Wi-Fi Direct, hotspot
Bluetooth: v4.1, A2DP, LE
USB: microUSB v2.0, USB On-The-Go
BATTERY: Non-removable Li-Ion 4100 mAh battery

What's Hot:

- That massive battery
- Great design
- Solid performance

What's Not:

- Camera could be better



BOTTOMLINE

This is a worthy bearer of both the Zenfone and Max badges.

Asus ROG Strix GeForce GTX 1050 Ti 4 GB

Reviewed by Chris Noel Hidalgo

The Nvidia GTX 1050 Ti was an expected and very welcome announcement when it broke last October. It has some big shoes to fill though. Its predecessor, the 750 Ti, was the bang for the buck card back in 2014, offering budget builders and those with ageing prebuilt systems decent 1080p performance for not that much dough. However, today's newer titles have seen the 750 Ti's performance lacking, and that's where the 1050 Ti steps in. Is it the rightful heir to the budget throne? Or is the bar set too high? Let's jump in with the card's Asus ROG Strix variant.

DESIGN ★★★★★

We reviewed the Asus ROG Strix RX 470 last issue and the Asus ROG Strix GTX 1050 Ti looks 90 percent like it. The Strix ensemble is back again, from the edgy, owl-shaped, black plastic shroud, to the owl-like 0db Wing Blade dual fans. Heck, even the cooling solution is the same DirectCU II system, with two nickel-coated, direct-contact 8 mm heat pipes and horizontally finned aluminum heat sink.

The card is also open on the top, side, and bottom for more efficient cooling. Extra heat dissipation capabilities can be added via the 4-pin GPU-controlled Asus FanConnect header.

A 6-pin connector is required to power the card and is located at the top-right edge. Meanwhile, the I/O hub contains the two DVI-D, single HDMI 2.0, and single DisplayPort outputs.

If they're the same, why did I give this one five points? The Strix 1050 Ti has a backplate, that's why! It's not a necessity, but it's really nice when affordable products such as this get the premium treatment. For that, it deserves all the brownie points it can get.

HARDWARE ★★★★★☆

The heart of the GTX 1050 Ti is the new 14 nm, Samsung-manufactured GP107 process with 768 CUDA cores. While the stock 1050 Ti has a clock of a low 1290 MHz and high of 1392 MHz, the Strix version comes in humming at a low 1379 MHz and a high 1506 MHz. The high factory overclock means this one draws more power, specifically up to 150 W, making the 6-pin power connector unavoidable. On the memory side of things, you're looking at 4 GB of GDDR5 memory with an effective memory speed of 7 Gbps, bandwidth of 112 GB/s, and a 128-bit wide memory bus.



USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

I threw the card on my usual test rig with the following innards: an Intel Core i5-4460 processor humming at 3.2 GHz, stock Intel cooler, an Asus Z87i-Pro motherboard, 8 GB of single channel DDR3 G.Skill RAM, a 120 GB boot SSD, a 1 TB WD Blue HDD, and a 520 W Seasonic S12II 80+ Bronze power supply, all in a Fractal Define Nano S mini-ITX case with two front intake fans and one rear exhaust fan. All tests were done at 1080p.

For titles that are highly demanding such as *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided* and *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, the card performs sluggishly with high-ultra settings. However, dialing down the settings to medium-high produced frame rates around the 45 fps mark. For well-optimized games such as *Fallout 4* and *Grand Theft Auto V*, the card can hit the 60 fps mark without sacrificing too much in the graphics quality department. However, for resource intensive titles such as *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate*, don't expect anything higher than 30 fps unless you're rolling with bare minimum settings. Outdoor areas with far draw distances will also punish the card. Expect noticeable frame drops in those scenarios.

VALUE ★★★★★☆

The Asus ROG Strix GTX 1050 Ti is admittedly quite expensive at PHP 9,620, though you're getting a fancy backplate and beefy cooler for the price. While the likes of the RX 460 and 1050 duke it out in the ultra entry-level market, the 1050 Ti offers significantly more performance for a little bit more money. This right here is the card for you if you want decent bang for your and don't want to look at jagged pixels all day.

SPECIFICATIONS:

CUDA Cores: 768
Base Core Speed: 1392 MHz (OC Mode); 1379 MHz (Gaming Mode)
Boost Clock Speed: 1506 MHz (OC Mode); 1493 MHz (Gaming Mode)
VRAM: 4 GB GDDR5
Effective Memory Speed: 7 Gbps
Memory Bus: 128-bit
Memory Bandwidth: 112 GB/s
Power Requirement: 6-pin connector
Output: 2x DVI-D, 1x HDMI 2.0, 1x DisplayPort 1.4
Others: Asus GPU Tweak II and Asus Aura Utility
Dimensions: Dual slot; 241 x 129 x 40 mm

What's Hot:

- Great compromise between price, graphics quality, and frame rates.
- Backplate!
- 4 GB VRAM

What's Not:

- More expensive than other 1050 Ti models.



BOTTOMLINE

The 1080p crown may be heavy, but the Strix 1050 Ti is ready for it.

Palit GeForce GTX 1060 Dual 3 GB

GADGETS
MAGAZINE
EDITOR'S PICK

Reviewed by Chris Noel Hidalgo

Sometimes, you just have to get the most out of your money, and that means sacrificing some extras for the bare necessities. For instance, you might just go with a very basic smartphone because you know you're only going to use it for calls and texts. You might order *a la carte* because sodas are highway robbery at restaurants. Or you might get a graphics card that does what it needs to do—render frames and render them quickly—without any bling. That's basically the idea behind the Palit GeForce GTX 1060 Dual 3 GB. But does being bare mean it sucks? Find out below.

DESIGN ★★★★★

The Palit GeForce GTX 1060 Dual proves that you really shouldn't judge a book by its cover, or in this case, a graphics card by its shroud. Design-wise, it is pretty plain. While most rigs will have the shroud pointed down towards the bottom of the case—so you'll only be seeing its top edge and back—it would have still been nice to see a custom shroud that screams gaming. The card also felt quite light. Almost toyish, actually.

Taking a look around the card, you'll find the two 90 mm fans on its face, the 6-pin power connector along its top right edge, the DVI-D, HDMI, and DisplayPort I/O on the honeycombed bracket, and a whole lot of circuits and chokes on its rear. The shroud wraps around the top, bottom, and right edges of the card, almost entirely concealing the horizontal running aluminum-finned heat sink and copper heat pipes.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

Running the show is the Pascal-based GP106 GPU, a 16 nm chip produced by TSMC from Taiwan. The GTX 1060 comes in two memory variants (6 GB trims are available), and the more modest 3 GB version comes with 1152 CUDA cores humming at 1506 and 1708 MHz for the base and boost clocks, respectively. Palit's Dual take on the 1060 runs with these stock clocks.

Besides the difference in frame buffer, all 1060s will have an effective memory speed of 8 Gbps, a 192-bit-wide memory bus, and a maximum memory bandwidth of 192 GB/s.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

Now that we got the ugly out of the way, let's get started with the Palit GTX 1060 Dual's good side. I

slapped it on the bench with an Intel Core i5-4460 processor clocked at 3.2 GHz, stock Intel cooler and heatsink, an Asus Z87i-Pro motherboard, single 8 GB stick of DDR3 G.Skill RAM, a 120 GB solid state boot drive, a 1 TB WD Blue platter drive, and a 520 W Seasonic S12II 80+ Bronze PSU, all in a Fractal Define Nano S mini-ITX case with a single exhaust and two front intakes. All tests were at 1080p resolution.

Just wow. For a card to be this affordable—you know what, I'll call it what it is, cheap—and still be able to perform so well across a variety of titles is really something special. On high settings across my standard test suite which includes *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate*, *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided*, *Fallout 4*, and *Grand Theft Auto V*, the Palit GTX 1060 Dual 3 GB is able to easily achieve 60 fps gameplay. It even has enough performance to spare for a little more graphics eye candy; useful if you don't have a high refresh rate monitor. While it does dip into the 40 fps mark when loading new scenes or when in far draw distance environments, the stutters don't take too much from the immersion.

VALUE ★★★★★

This dual fan variant of the GTX 1060 is one of the most affordable in the market, retailing for a little under PHP 10,000 for the 3 GB version. What it lacks in flair, it makes up for in where it counts—gaming. If you just want a solid performer and don't care about physical appearances, fancy features, strong overlocks, and brand wars, this card should be your cup of tea.



SPECIFICATIONS:

CUDA Cores: 1152
Base Core Speed: 1506 MHz
Boost Clock Speed: 1708 MHz
VRAM: 3 GB GDDR5
Effective Memory Speed: 8 Gbps
Memory Bus: 192-bit
Memory Bandwidth: 192 GB/s
Power Requirement: 6-pin connector
Output: 1x DVI-D, 1x HDMI 2.0b, 3x DisplayPort 1.4
Dimensions: Dual slot; 252 x 112 mm

What's Hot:

- No frills, no gimmicks
- Offers nothing extra, ergo it's cheap

What's Not:

- It's cheap, ergo it offers nothing extra
- 3 GB of RAM won't be enough in the near future



BOTTOMLINE

The pumpkin spice latte of 1060s

TRANSCEND JETDRIVE GO 500G

Reviewed by Maribelle Alba

Designed specifically for iOS devices, this USB flash drive gives you additional storage for all those photos, videos, and music that you absolutely must have at your fingertips but are taking up valuable storage space on your iPhone or iPad.

DESIGN ★★★★★

The Transcend JetDrive Go 500G is a beautiful accessory that perfectly complements the premium Apple iOS devices for which it was designed. One of the smallest MFi certified flash drives available in the market, it measures only 36.55 x 14.3 x 9.01 mm, and weighs only 5 grams. Encased in gold or silver zinc alloy, one end has the Lightning connector and the other a USB 3.1 Gen 1 Type A connector.

The Lightning connector has been thoughtfully extended by 4 mm so you can properly connect it to your iPhone/iPad even when these are in bulky cases. A mini lanyard is also included in the box so you can secure the JetDrive Go 500G to a keychain to avoid losing it.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

The JetDrive Go 500G is equipped with the latest connection interfaces, particularly the SuperSpeed USB 3.1 (Gen 1), which supports transfer speeds of up to 130 MB/s. In real terms, it will take only 28 seconds to transfer a 4 GB HD movie. The Lightning connector, on the other hand, delivers maximum performance of 20 MB/s. Available storage capacities range from 32 GB, 64 GB, and 128 GB.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

You will need the JetDrive Go app to make full use of this flash drive. Each time you insert the device into your iPhone/iPad, you get a prompt asking you to allow the app to communicate with the drive. For added security, you can also set up Password Protection for the drive. A word of caution, though. Don't forget your password; otherwise, you will need to reformat

the JetDrive Go to factory settings, thereby losing all your data. If your iOS device supports it, a better alternative would be to use Touch ID to unlock the drive.

With the JetDrive Go 500G connected to your iPhone/iPad and using the app, you can save audio and video recordings as well as photos directly to the drive without taking up space on your iPhone/iPad. You can also perform backup functions for photos, videos, contacts, and iCloud photos.

Files stored in the drive's memory bank can be conveniently shared and viewed even without an internet connection. Also, the dual connectors let you transfer and share files not only with iOS devices but also with computers, laptops, and the like.

For me, the JetDrive Go 500G's strength is also its weakness. It's so compact you can quickly slip it into your purse or loop it into a keychain so you always have it handy. At the same time, though, whenever I use it, I always end up in a tizzy locating it as it's so tiny it can be easily overlooked.

VALUE ★★★★★

The Transcend JetDrive Go 500G is listed at PHP 6,500 for 32 GB model and PHP 8,500 for the 64 GB version. Even discounted at some online sites, the pricing is still rather steep—I'm not sure I want to pay that much for a tiny device that I might easily misplace.

But, if you can find enough reasons to justify the expense, this is a very useful and beautifully-designed accessory to complement your iPhone or iPad.



SPECIFICATIONS:

Dimensions: 36.55 x 14.3 x 9.01 mm
Weight: 5 g
Capacity: Available in 32 GB, 64 GB, 128 GB
Color: Silver, gold
Connection interface: Lightning and USB 3.1 Gen 1 Type A
Maximum performance: Lightning – 20 MB/s; USB 3.1 Gen 1 – 130 MB/s
File system: FAT 32 / exFAT

What's Hot:

- Compact size makes it very handy
- Easy to use app

What's Not:

- Compact size makes it easy to lose
- Premium priced



BOTTOMLINE

Never leave home without it.

PlayStation VR

Reviewed by Ren Alcantara

Does anyone in the crowd remember the movie *Lawnmower Man*? I'm reasonably sure it's the one thing that brought Virtual Reality as a concept to public knowledge, and while it was cutting-edge for its time, it's several decades old at this point. Fortunately, we're now living in the future, and anyone who wants a piece of the VR pie can actually jump in without the need for difficult-to-find hardware, thanks to Sony. This month, we're going to take a look at the PS VR platform.

DESIGN ★★★★★☆

The PS VR system is a combination of VR headset, processor box, PS4 Move camera, and the accompanying controllers. Everything is made to look sleek, and fit well with your existing gear. The headset is a nice glacier white, with bright blue tracking lights, and wires running from the back. It's adjustable for head fit, as well as lens distance, and even works with glasses. The main concern though, is the wiring. There's quite a bit, and it just can't be avoided. It's designed well though, and the manual gets you through setup fairly painlessly. You really can't see yourself when you're using the headset, but trust us when we say it looks pretty awesome from the outside.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

There's really nothing that's both easily accessible and capable of doing the things this system does. It's quite standard, as far as VR goes—a screen, lenses, and all the wires and cables you need to plug it into the PS4, which does all the heavy lifting. The main difference though, is that motion tracking, a key element in making the whole VR thing work, is done thanks to lights on the headset, on top of internal accelerometers. It's a simple, elegant solution that works great with all the hardware the PS4 has to begin with.

Audio is handled via a 3.5mm audio jack that's in-line with the main cables running from the headset to the PS4. This sort of eliminates any additional cables running from the machine, and will keep you from yanking earphones out of your ears while you VR around your space.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

After the whole thing is put together, it's a quick few steps, with the help of a visual guide included in the box. For those who aren't using the headset, the system doesn't negate the use of an external display, which shows everything the player sees, as they see it. This is a great way to include people in the action, and a lot of the time, when we were using it, everyone else in the room was having about as much fun watching, as the player did playing.

Putting the headset on is no problem. There is a lot of room in there, and Sony has made sure to give multiple points of adjustment. There's a band that goes across the back of your head, which ratchets and locks into place very securely, but releases with a quick press of a button.

Getting a clear, bifocal image isn't difficult on the headset. It's a simple matter of moving the

eyepiece forward or back enough to get things nice and sharp. The locking system is robust and more than solid enough to keep in it place, even with the movement VR headsets go through. This is an important step to get right, as eyestrain becomes a factor much faster with bad focus.

For the purposes of testing, we downloaded the *Resident Evil 7* preview. If you don't already know, RE 7 is going to be playable on VR from start to finish. This demo uses the regular PS4 controller to move around the environment, and despite a little getting used to at the start, everyone who tried it adjusted quickly to playing in virtual reality. Being able to investigate things by moving your head closer, or walking around to get a better view is amazingly immersive. The PS4 is capable of rendering terrifyingly realistic video, and the VR headset is more than sharp enough to pull you into the world. Details, such as shadows falling and moving, parallax, and the subtle increases in scale as you walk through a hallway feel just like the real world after a few minutes to acclimatize.

The audio rendered by the system is binaural, and changes appropriately as your head moves through the scene at hand. It's perfectly synchronized with the visuals, so as you move your head around a sound source, the intensity of the sounds change appropriately, with frightening results.

Even after perhaps an hour of play, I still felt comfortable enough to keep going. Switching the lights off in the room seems to help make the whole experience better, though the headset does create a great seal against outside light. It was only as I approached the second hour of play that my eyes started to complain, and I felt what might have been the start of a headache. I didn't wait to find out.

Should you be so inclined, you can use the headset with any title you have available, and it'll look as though you're alone in a large theater, playing your game, or watching a video. It's an interesting way to play a game or tear through your Netflix shows, but you do experience the same eye fatigue as you would playing a VR game, so it might not be a compelling way to use the VR system.

Which brings us to the elephant in the room: there aren't a lot of titles. The system comes with a demo disc, which shows off a few titles available, but the whole games are at the horizon yet. Visible, but not quite here. Once they do arrive though, it'll be quite the experience. Cinema mode, while interesting, really isn't any different

from watching on your regular TV, but with eye strain. Do yourself a favor, and find a place you can try the PS VR.

VALUE ★★★★★☆

This is a bit tricky. On one hand, and in practical terms, this is one-of-a-kind, especially at the price point of just a hair under PHP 23,000. On the other hand, there isn't a lot to do with it at the moment, though that is steadily changing. There are already a number of titles available online, a few full games present, and more than a few titles just around the corner. Whether or not this is worth it is entirely up to how eager you are to get your hands on VR, though it wouldn't hurt to wait a couple of months to get your own.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Dimensions: VR headset: Approx. 187×185×277 mm (width × height × length, excludes largest projection, headband at the shortest), Processor unit: Approx. 143×36×143 mm (width × height × length, excludes largest projection)
Weight:
VR headset: Approx. 610g
Display: OLED
Panel Size: 5.7 inches
Panel Resolution: 1920×RGB×1080 (960×RGB×1080 per eye)
Refresh Rate: 120Hz, 90Hz
Field of View: Approximately 100 degrees
Connections: VR headset: HDMI, AUX, Stereo Headphone Jack
Processor unit: HDMI TV, HDMI PS4, USB, HDMI, AUX

What's Hot:

- VR! For the masses! Finally!
- Will have a lot of support from Sony
- Seriously, VR! It's so cool!

What's Not:

- Not for the easily nauseated
- Expensive yet.



BOTTOMLINE

This is the future, and it's awesome.



Fitbit Flex 2

Reviewed by Maribelle Alba

Fitbit, the leading wearables company, has reinvented its iconic tracker into a versatile, swim-proof fitness wristband, the Fitbit Flex 2.

DESIGN ★★★★★

The Fitbit Flex 2 is 30 percent smaller than its predecessor, with the tracker itself measuring only 31.7 x 8.9 x 6.8 mm and weighing 23.4 g. The black plastic tracker has five LED notification lights in front and three charging pins at the back. The removable tracker is inserted into a slim classic band made of a flexible, durable elastomer material with a modern herringbone design. The bands come in a variety of colors—black, lavender, magenta, and navy—to suit individual tastes.

With its minimalist design and slim classic band, the Flex 2 can be worn alone, or along with other jewelry, or next to a watch. Unless you choose a bright-colored band, it is discreet and unobtrusive, suitable for almost all occasions. When the classic 3-pack fitness accessory bands become available in the market, you can choose to expand your color options with the Sport Pack which includes navy, gray, and yellow bands, or the Pink Pack with magenta, lavender, and blush pink colors.

For the more fashion-conscious, the Flex 2 can be accessorized with a stainless steel bangle in silver, gold or rose gold, or a pendant that's available in silver or gold. Fitbit has also announced that designer collections from Tory Burch and PUBLIC SCHOOL will be available in 2017.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

The Fitbit Flex 2 was redesigned with custom components to fit its slim, narrow, symmetrical design, but the hardware itself is quite basic. Housed inside the tiny black plastic casing are the 3-axis accelerometer, vibration motor, Bluetooth antenna, motherboard and memory chip, lithium-polymer battery, charging pins, and LED lights.

The accelerometer tracks movement, the vibration motor and LED lights provide notifications, and the Bluetooth 4.0 antenna syncs to the Fitbit app. The on-board memory records 7-days of detailed minute-by-minute motion data and saves daily totals for the past 30-days. Depending on use, the battery can last up to five days for each full charge.

The Flex 2 is also water-resistant up to 50 meters, and can be worn in the shower, pool, or ocean (but is not recommended for use in a hot tub or sauna).

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

The functionality of the Flex 2 is tied up to the Fitbit app that tracks your essential health and fitness data. Out of the box, the first thing you're asked to do is to set up your Fitbit account and sync the Flex 2 to



your smartphone via Bluetooth. On the app, you configure your preferences such as which wrist you'll be wearing the tracker, as well as preferences for silent alarms, notifications, reminders to move, your main goal (whether steps, distance, calories burned, or active minutes), and syncing. You also asked about your goals for activity, exercise, nutrition & body, and sleep.

Once that's done, you start wearing the Flex 2, and it automatically starts tracking your activities. You see your progress on the app dashboard, which shows steps taken, distance, active minutes, and floors climbed.

The device can automatically recognize and track selected exercises such as walking, running, rides, aerobic workouts, and swims. It reminds you to move every hour so you don't forget to get up and take a break from sitting at your desk for too long. Set up a sleep schedule and it reminds you when it's time for bed and also wakes you up with vibrating notifications on your wrist. The app tracks how well you slept by showing when you were in deep sleep, and how many times you were restless or awake. If you've set up notifications, it lets you know when you get a call or text message on your phone (provided it is within Bluetooth range).

The notifications are color-coded with a magenta LED light for move reminders, a yellow light for the wake-up alarm, and blue for calls/texts, but I can never remember what the colors and vibrations mean, so I end up not exactly ignoring but not really responding to the notifications.

Back to the Fitbit app, compulsive types will also appreciate being able to record weight, as well as food and water intake.

My one biggest issue with Fitbit is that it refuses to sync automatically with the *Apple Health* app, an annoying inconvenience that many other Fitbit users complain about.

VALUE ★★★★★

With a suggested retail price of PHP 5,499, the Flex 2 is not the cheapest tracker in the market. However, if you're looking for a proven presence and update support both on firmware and software, then you can't go wrong with the market leader.



SPECIFICATIONS:

Dimensions: 31.7 x 8.9 x 6.8 mm

Weight: 23.5 g

Display: 5 LED indicator lights

Sensors & components: 3-axis accelerometer; vibration motor

Connectivity: Bluetooth 4.0

Memory: 7 days of detailed motion; 30 days of daily totals

Material: Elastomer wristband with stainless steel clasp

Battery: Lithium-polymer

Charge time: 1-2 hours

Battery life: Up to 5 days

Water resistance: Up to 50 meters

What's Hot:

- Small and discreet
- Comfortable wristband for 24/7 use
- Long battery life; quick charging
- Swim-proof

What's Not:

- Hard to remember what color-coded lights and vibration notifications mean
- Fitbit app does not sync with the Apple Health
- Accessories—like color wristbands, bangles, pendants—not available in local stores



BOTTOMLINE

No bells and whistles, but so indispensable the only time I take it off is when I need to charge it.

Alcatel Move Time SW10

Reviewed by Mia Carisse Barrientos

What better way to introduce technology to your tiny tots than with a wearable smart device that'll teach them how to tell time and encourage them to be more active. Alcatel sent over a review unit of their smartwatch/activity tracker designed for kids and here's what we think of it.



DESIGN ★★★★★

At first glance, you can tell right off the bat which market this smartwatch is aimed at. In terms of design, the watch is devoid of sharp corners and is aesthetically structured with just the right curves that make it very child-friendly. Our review unit came with a smooth, blue-colored, silicon rubber strap and sub-inch, single color OLED display bordered with plastic material in orange.

Like most smartwatch-activity tracker combo, the Move Time presents few but easy-to-manage controls. There are four tactile buttons: the two on the right are labeled as the SOS and power buttons, respectively. Meanwhile, buttons on the left side are for controlling volume. The buttons also serve as gateway to other functions I'll be going over later.

The back is where you'll find the pogo pin charging port and a nano sim slot located right under a flap that's secured in place with a screw. The package ships with a tiny screwdriver to help you in setting up the watch.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

The Move Time's 0.95-inch OLED display is nothing spectacular but will grab your child's attention with its animated icons, specifically when a parent is calling. At just 40 g, the watch is lightweight and feels like it's barely there. This is great for kids who are first time watch owners and get easily irritated by wrist accessories.

Powering the watch is a 380 mAh battery that tops up easily and promises to last up to four days when on stand by. In use, the battery holds up well and will be able to serve its function for at least two days.

There's a speaker on top of the display for listening to voice messages or taking calls. A microphone is also in place to record the user's voice or for calling registered numbers.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

Although the watch is on the child, parents have total control over who gets to contact their tot and vice versa. Once the SIM card and

Move Time app are installed, the parent can begin setting up the watch. Pairing information that's to be entered in the app can be found on the watch itself or the package. The app's interface shows your kid's current location, location history, contact numbers programmed in on the watch (limited to 10), messages, school time, and more.

The app-watch pairing offers various features for parents who constantly worry about their child's safety. The monitor function allows you to stealthily listen to the sounds surrounding the watch through your paired phone. Meanwhile, the electronic fence feature enables you to set a range on the map as a "safe area." When your child leaves this zone, you will immediately be notified.

For the kids, this GPS-enabled smartwatch shows on its display the steps they've taken daily and is pretty accurate in recording authentic movements. The watch has support for 2G networks, which lets your child place outgoing calls to numbers the administering parent has programmed in. By holding the volume key for three seconds, the child can start recording a voice message that will be sent to all contacts. The watch can also be switched to airplane mode, send SOS alerts and ping the paired phone when the owner arrives home.

VALUE ★★★★★

Parents who want to keep tabs on their child when they play in the neighborhood playground or participate in after-school activities will take delight in this genius creation. It has an IP65 certification, meaning it is water-resistant and remains intact even when your kid randomly jumps in puddles or when they sweat it out during PE. Moreover, the smartphone app gives you total peace by constantly updating you of your child's whereabouts through a pinpoint icon that moves as your child travels.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Display: 0.95-inch OLED display, 94 x 64 pixel resolution
Connectivity: GPS, GSM, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0, and 2G
Battery: 380 mAh
Design: IP65 rated
OS compatibility: Android and iOS

What's Hot:

- Easy-to-use controls
- Efficient supplementary app
- Lightweight

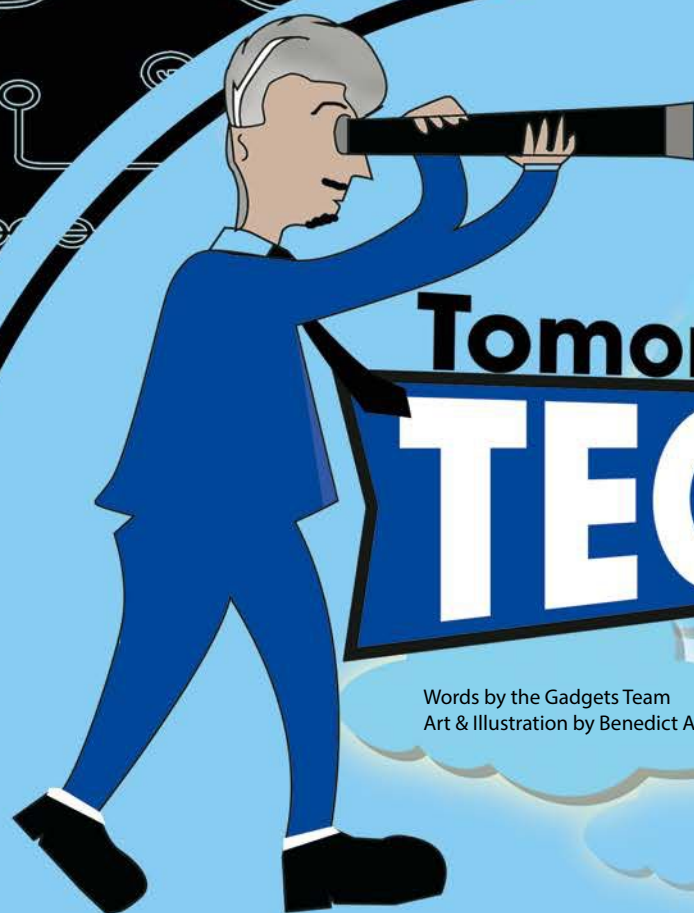
What's Not:

- Display could have been a touchscreen



BOTTOMLINE

Got an active kid who's always on the move? You might want to consider this.



Words by the Gadgets Team
Art & Illustration by Benedict Asal

It's the start of a new year, and along with the prospect of another three hundred or so days of possibility, we have the tantalizing promise of even more tech. In the first Cover Story of 2017, we take a look at what 2017 holds for the technologically minded consumer. We have it all: personal electronics, entertainment, a little bit of gaming—everything bright, shiny, and battery-powered for you to drool over. Strap in, we've got a lot of ground to cover.



The Future of Home Entertainment

Words by Ren Alcantara

Consumer entertainment is one of the driving forces in tech. Developments in screen technology, refinements in audio, games, and even file formats we use today happen because of our need to stay entertained. In this part of our Cover Story, we're going to be taking a look at how home entertainment is going to be this year.

The rise of 4K

There was a time when we weren't entirely sure if 4K was going to stand on its own legs. That time has passed, and 4K video has finally, totally, hit the mainstream. With 4K TV penetration in the US hovering around the 16 million mark, and possibly 88 million standalone Blu-Ray players sold, there's little doubt that 4K has hit its stride. As with everything, the hardware is useless with nothing to play, and possibly the one thing that has pushed 4K over the tipping point is the broadening acceptance of the format content producers. In 2016 alone, over a hundred Blu-Ray titles were released by various studios.

What we can look forward to in 2017 thanks to the broadening penetration of 4K is lower UHD TV prices. It's the way of tech. Even now, you can get last season's UHD TVs at a significantly lower price than at launch, so

if you're not one to be at the absolute cutting edge of technology, this is a great way to go. The idea is made doubly attractive given that the price of some of these TVs pushes well past what it would cost to make a downpayment on a car. As even more homes start jumping on the bandwagon, more and more content will be available, furthering the cycle. If there was ever a time to go UHD, it is now. The first consumer 8K TVs are also starting to peek in from the fringes, with the first showfloor-ready devices appearing at CES.

HDR for TVs is also starting to become prevalent, thanks to newer display technologies such as Quantum Dot display technology. This allows images that are closer to real-world images, thanks to more evenly balanced lights and darks, and a more balanced contrast range that's much easier on the eyes.





Let there be light

Projectors are likewise changing for the better. From old, power-hungry lamps with limited lifespans, projector manufacturers are starting to push laser light sources into the mainstream. Offering advantages such as instant power-on, virtually maintenance-free operation, and superior contrast over traditional projectors. Switching to the newer tech is a no-brainer.

Virtually real

Virtual reality is finally making its way into our homes. While PS VR has been around for a little while now, we haven't had a lot of content to go with it. There have been a few titles here and there, but this month sees the start of VR in

earnest. With Capcom's *Resident Evil 7*, we're seeing the beginning of top-tier titles being playable on VR from start to finish. It's not so much a gamble as it is an acceptance by Capcom of the reality of gaming, and it might just be the push people need to plunk down on a device that's still a little beyond the price range of many people. It's encouraging to see a blockbuster franchise make the most of such new tech, though to be honest, we're a little afraid of the prospect of survival-horror in VR. ConsoVR has also started its inexorable entree, with a more focused development cycle overall, seems better poised to deliver on the VR promise than the PC, and we're finally starting to see it happen.

This can only be the start of the VR trend. There are more than a few titles we'd love to see in VR, and with the kind of power current-generation gaming hardware can deliver, it's starting to look like VR is finally starting to be in the reach of the common person (though maybe with a little bit of penny-pinching first.)

Nintendo has also announced the region-free Switch—their next generation portable/

home gaming console. The announcement brings with it announcement of some highly anticipated titles, such as *Mario Kart*, a new *Zelda*, and what is essentially a bundle of games that's meant to be as engaging as Wii Sports was when the Wii was fresh and new.

Audio, unfettered

Wireless audio beyond the simple Bluetooth speakers of old are starting to take over home entertainment. WiSA, an association devoted to making wireless audio devices and manufacturers play nice, and perform according to standards, is making sure the world of wireless audio is going to be a thing we can all enjoy with no problems. This year will see more, better, and easier-to-use wireless audio that can deliver high-def quality. Audiophiles will likely still go for the traditional wired options, but for the rest of that world that is perfectly happy with above-average wireless audio quality, this is a godsend. With all the usual names putting their R&D resources in their own wireless solutions, we're going to have a great answer to the formerly tangled mess that is our home entertainment system. As with the rest of the tech in this section, prices will drop, and even today, you can pick up an excellent Bluetooth/Wi-Fi wireless speaker for less than PHP 10,000, so things are looking up for the home entertainment enthusiast.

2017 has just started, but already, we're looking at a lot of devices that'll keep us entertained in the comfort of our own homes. There are bound to be a lot more as the months roll by, so stay tuned. This is going to be a great year for tech.





The Future of Home

Words by Mia Carisse Barrientos

This year's Consumer Electronics Show (CES), as it is annually, was a launch pad for many new and some out of this world tech innovations. As the name suggests, most of the technology introduced in this grand event, albeit some just concepts, are all aimed at and will be in the market for regular people with regular needs. CES 2017 was bursting with new mobile devices and entertainment systems but it is also equally affluent of forward-looking devices for the home.

From the devices unveiled, we managed to come up with a blueprint of what would possibly take up space in the homes of the future.

IoT is set to shake up our way of life

Last time we checked, the Internet of Things (IoT) was the main trend that drives future homes forward and we can safely say that remains to be the reality. The increasing awareness and coming out of more and more connected devices meant for home use are textbook indicators that IoT is well upon us and it shows no signs of slowing down. Who would shut out the idea of home automation when it would make life more convenient, anyway?

Industry observers have expressed that the IoT trend is bound to grow more significant and turn into the "The Internet of Everything." Smart connectivity will extend to practically any endpoint in the home or workplace, possibly blurring the lines between the digital and the physical world—it's a dream come true for all the sci-fi geeks out there.

The show floor of CES had no shortage of home automation things. One that took the spotlight was Amazon's Alexa. There wasn't an Amazon booth to begin with, but its intelligent voice-activated assistant was everywhere, which can be attributed to the availability of the Alexa developer kit. Its integration into various types of devices shows that Alexa works well as an entry point for connected home control—or could also be that we take delight in the idea of bossing this virtual assistant around to do tasks on our behalf.

What else is there for the home of the future? More. Better home automation hubs are to be expected and with this comes more adept data security solutions. Home devices, not so far from now, will ship with built-in artificial intelligence, predictive algorithms, voice control, and all sorts of sensors. In a nutshell, everything will be plenty smarter and promises to make life more comfortable. There are loose ends, but it looks as if all that's about to be tied into a tight knot sooner than you think.





For now, here are some devices you might see in the homes of the future:

Lenovo Smart Assistant

One of the world's largest PC makers, Lenovo, was 'inspired' by Amazon's Alexa in creating its Smart Assistant. This Smart Assistant speaker takes after a typical tumbler but has integrated features that allows the owner to ask it to play music, search terms and facts, read books, set alarms, and whatnot by voice. It's basically an Alexa made by Lenovo—in any case, it is powered by Amazon's Alexa cloud-based voice services. What's different is, it will retail in eye-catching colors and comes adorned with aesthetic elements. Inside, there's an Intel Atom processor in charge of running tasks and eight far-field microphones to capture the user's voice.

For consumers who want more kick in their audio, Lenovo's also releasing a Harman Kardon version of this Smart Assistant speaker.

LG Smart InstaView Door-in-Door Refrigerator

The Alexa integration continues in the LG Smart InstaView Refrigerator. This is probably the coolest smart refrigerator we have seen so far. It highlights a 29-inch touch screen InstaView panel upfront. The panel is able to turn translucent to show the contents of the fridge when you knock on it and also into a touchscreen display where you can do anything you'd normally do on a smartphone like play music, search for recipes, make shopping lists, shop online, and more. With webOS and Alexa integration, you can also opt to talking to your fridge instead. How cool is that.

Additionally, LG has also introduced the Hub Robot which also borrows skills from Amazon's Alexa. This little robot that resembles Eve from *Wall-e* can connect smart LG devices in the home and communicate with family members through its built-in speaker and camera.

Samsung Family Hub 2.0 Refrigerator

This smart fridge from Samsung has the same selling points as the LG's smart fridge. On its right door is a stunning 21.5-inch touchscreen LED display, which is a wee bit larger than last year's model. The Family Hub 2.0 also comes with an improved interface and a range of apps to make

fridge organization and cooking much easier. What's more, you could also play music on it, mirror a TV screen, and ask it to do things via voice activation care of the company's own S-Voice proprietary system.

Like its other Korean tech giant rival, Samsung also introduced its POWERbot VR7000 Robot vacuum at the recently concluded CES. The latest in the company's POWERbot line of vacuum cleaners, this intelligent cleaning unit features powerful suction and a sleek design perfect for modern homes.

Whirlpool Smart Care Washer/Dryer

Washer and dryers in one machine is not news but when you throw in Wi-Fi and other smart features into the loot, it becomes a device worth looking at. Come Whirlpool's Smart Care Washer and Dryer combo. You get the gist, it's a washer and dryer in one with Wi-Fi support and works with the supplementary Whirlpool app to give you more control over your laundry.

Whirlpool has also announced that most of its smart appliances will soon be Alexa-enabled.

While everyone wants to get in on the voice activation fanfare, some chose not to. CES 2017 was also a platform for the introduction of products such as smart windows that can sense weather changes and can be controlled through one's phone, robots that are actually functional, smart lamps, air purifiers, automated trash cans, smart hair brush, smart hubs that can learn the usage behaviour of people at home, and more.

Most of these new devices are gearing up for availability in the consumer market soon. Meanwhile, some probably will be on the chopping block, so you might as well check these devices while you can. You might even spot a thing or two for your future home.





The Future of Computers

Words by Chris Noel Hidalgo

It takes three words to sum up this entire article: more crazy computers. Crazy in terms of scale, power, form factor, and technology. Most of these debuted during the recently concluded Consumer Electronics Show, and boy, "Show" does not do it justice.

Though there were many things that vied for the spotlight during the CES, most of the exciting reveals took place in the computer industry. There hasn't been a dead year for computers in quite a while, and this year won't be any different. The future is now, and here's what we should look forward to.

I'll ask you a question first. What do you get when your tech company has a gamer CEO firmly living his brand's slogan "For Gamers. By Gamers."? Crazy stuff that's what. We've seen Razer's style before—rolling up to tech trade shows with innovative, sometimes excessive, doodads such as the Switchblade portable gaming device, Blade Stealth ultrabook, the modular Project Christine computer, and the Razer Core graphics enclosure. This year, they unleashed two new kickers: Project Valerie and Ariana.

Both are equally amazing concepts. Valerie is essentially a 17.3-inch Razer Blade Pro with two additional 4K screens flanking the main display.

To preserve the notebook's portability, the extra screens automatically slide out within a few seconds, saving future owners the hassle of setting and aligning everything up. They can be used integrated together for purposes such as 12K (!!!) gaming, or independently for multiple applications per window—all on-the-go.

Meanwhile, Ariana is a projection system which extends the game environment beyond a monitor. It's pitched to work with any room as it is intelligent enough to scan its surroundings to detect walls, boundaries, and even furniture. The idea around it is that while the human eye can focus on just what's in front of it, there's a subconscious part of you that still detects and recognizes the periphery. The concept product projects usually unseen game assets onto your display's immediate environment to further up the immersion. Ariana's pretty grand, eh?

Razer's not the only one cooking up crazy laptops, though. Take Acer. Calling the brand's Predator





21X a laptop is a bit too generous. Seriously. You'd need to be having leg day everyday at the gym if you want to put this giant on your lap. Its size is due to its 21-inch G-Sync screen, dual GTX 1080 GPUs, 7th generation Intel Core HK processor, Cherry MX RGB mechanical keyboard, and a whack ton of others features crammed into a "notebook" body. Perhaps it's time to create another segment for these puppies. I propose the term "desktop".

Almost as desktop-y is the Asus GX800. While it isn't as monstrous as the Predator 21X, it is quite eye-catching in its own right. It struts pretty much the same powerful and up-to-date innards, sans the curved screen, mechanical keyboard, and a few drives. What makes it unique is its liquid-cooling dock that can be attached and detached to the main notebook with just a slide and a lift, even if the computer is powered on. Keeping with the theme of

massive scale, we were also graced with the Dell 32-inch 8K monitor. To be clear, you probably won't be seeing this in just any office or computer shop unless the owner is a completely ballin' dude/dudette. Heck, the technology to drive its 7680 x 4320 resolution (a grand total of over 33 million pixels) hasn't even trickled down to the consumer market yet. You'd need a hefty professional workstation-grade graphics card for this one. It also boasts great color reproduction capabilities on top of its mind-blowing pixel density.

Scaling things down a bit, Dell also released a new 2-in-1 version of its XPS 13 ultrabook. It's thinner and lighter than its predecessor, with a hinge that allows it to be used in tablet mode, hence the name. The familiar InfinityEdge display makes

its return, as well as the keyboard with satisfying travel, though the latter does give the XPS 13 2-in-1 a little more depth. Frankly, I'd take a great typing experience over razor thinness anyway. The change in form factor comes at a price though, mainly in the processor SKU. Compared to the original XPS 13's Intel U chips, the 2-in-1 is powered by weaker Intel Y chips. The good news is that they're able to perform *close* to what you would experience with the U, thanks to Dell's power optimization.

But if you thought that the XPS 13 2-in-1 is already thin and light enough, then take a gander at the second generation LG Gram. The new one solves the old unit's battery life problem, while updating the innards to the latest Intel Kaby Lake processors, as well as adding backlighting to its keyboard. Even with all the improvements, it remains firmly under 1 kg, coming in at precisely 980 grams.

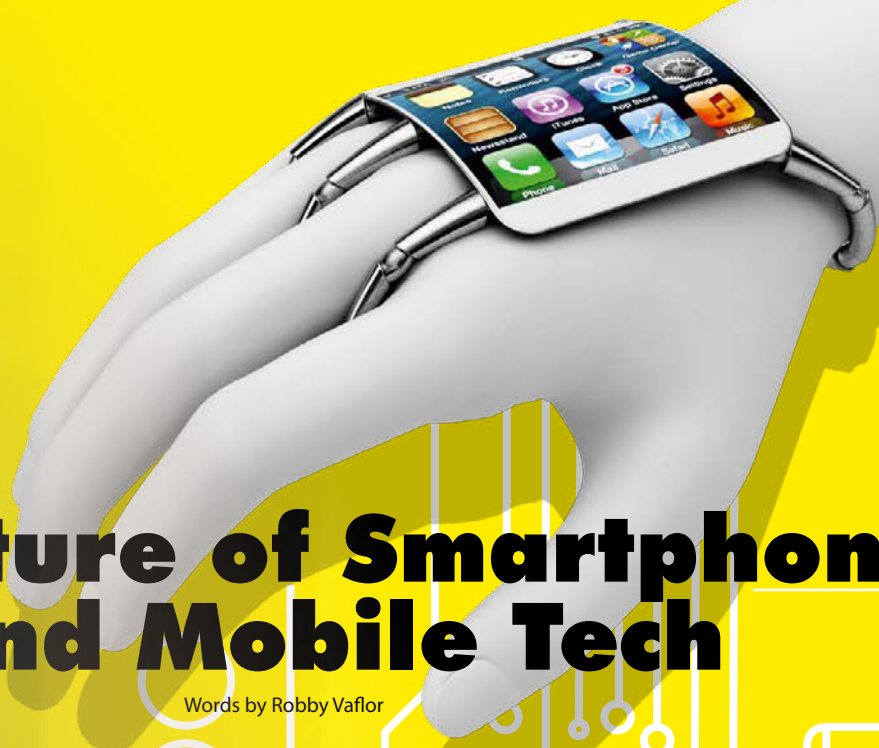
And now, perhaps the most exciting news out of the hardware side of CES: AMD is finally back with its new Ryzen processors and Vega graphics chips. It's about dang time the CPU and GPU industry saw some real competition. Better yet, the new architectures look like they can live up to the hype.

There's already a third-party benchmark making its rounds on the internet, and it reveals that the Ryzen chips perform just as well as Intel Skylake chips in single-threaded applications—something AMD has been relatively weak at. All Ryzen CPUs are also unlocked and overclocking ready out of the box. ALL. It's a very bold move, and it reveals just how confident AMD is with their newest product.

On the other hand, Vega is shaping up to be a major upgrade over the current-gen Polaris GPUs. It has a new cache architecture, new geometry pipeline for even more polygons, the new Next-Generation Compute Unit for future HDR applications, as well as a new pixel engine which renders only what the player is seeing on-screen. It's still a couple of months away though, so there's still a lot under wraps.

As you can see, there are a lot of things going on in the PC market, all of which should bode well for both geeks and non-geeks alike. Competition is definitely back on, and even long-standing household names are feeling the pressure of innovation. From the ultra thin to the ultra insane and everything in between, we're definitely spoiled for possibilities.





The Future of Smartphones and Mobile Tech

Words by Robby Vafflor

We live in pretty exciting times. Ever seen Spike Jonze's *Her*? That was a little over three years ago. It feels a bit scary to think how spot on it was about the future (hopefully not the part about the heartache); it's even scarier knowing how short of a hop it was to get from speculation to reality. I mean, have you taken a look around lately?

Speculative fiction has had a pretty decent track record with foreshadowing future technology whether they were borne out of educated hypotheses or products of fancy that inspired generations of engineers and scientists to materialize sci-fi imagery from their childhood.

And while we are a long way away from the all-knowing, sentient operating systems of that terribly depressing film, Spike Jonze's imagined near-future was able to encapsulate the confluence of innovations from AI to AR to VR that is driving technology of the future, at the heart of which is the beloved smartphone.

Phones are getting more and more powerful. For example, ASUS revealed the ZenFone AR at this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas which runs on the brand spanning new Snapdragon 821 processor with a whopping 8 GB of RAM. Most office computers do not even possess memory half that size.

While pocketing a device that strong may seem absurd at the moment, this will be the new trend for smartphones from here on out, and for good reason.

In the future, present-day new tech will start to converge, in one way or another, syncing with your smartphone which will ultimately demand more computing power. ASUS says the ZenFone AR will have Google's Tango augmented reality (AR) and Daydream virtual reality (VR) platforms built in, justifying the RAM capacity.

New Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI) innovations also made a big impression on CES-goers like smart appliances (there was even an IoT toothbrush) and AI personal assistants like Google Assistant and Amazon's Alexa.

Why is this important? If the trends are anything to go by, engineers and developers are racing





towards combining AI, AR, VR, and IoT to create a fully immersive digital experience. When this technological convergence becomes fully realized, the world will be changed forever.

The digital layer of the physical world will become more tangible, allowing us to interact with our environment in new ways, further increasing productivity and minimizing effort. The smartphone will be the key with which people could access all of this from turning on the TV with a remote app to browsing through furniture projecting AR images of them in living room corners they would look best in, perhaps using Microsoft's holographic platform.

To help reach this seamless and immersive experience, tech giants and third-party partners

are creating additional hardware and peripherals that aim to make the whole thing feel natural and more convenient. Sony developed the Xperia Ear, fully wireless earbuds with a built-in AI personal assistant, while Motorola released the more Jonze-esque VerveOnes that does not have a personal assistant, but has many practical features like audio pass through and weatherproofing. The mission here is to make the system of phone, smart devices and accessories feel more organic and less like carrying added baggage. And perhaps this is why in the past couple of years the world has seen wild and admittedly very imaginative devices that changed the general public's perception of what can be done with a phone and what should be put into it. For the most part, consumers have embraced them such as the fingerprint scanner, multiple camera systems, and even built-in projectors.

It should not be forgotten that invention has an ingredient of trial and error: letting people try out revolutionary, or, if it all goes south, eccentric ideas that can either change the world or be remembered as that thing that happened one time and should never be repeated.

However, while the prospect of controlling your house through your very own JARVIS or running through an AR exercise course that you've devised a la *Batman* are very exciting, one should take note of the risks involved. Being more connected means an increase in the number of ways security threats can strike.

Leaving the smartphone game as an in-house designer and manufacturer, Blackberry's executives have expressed their intent to focus on developing security solutions for increasing mobile connectivity by way of the IoT. Security giants like Symantec and invested companies like IBM and Google are also investing in keeping interconnected devices as secure as possible.

The mobile phone sure has come a long way from the very expensive hunk of metal and plastic that could do one thing decades ago to the very expensive hunk of metal and plastic that could do everything today. While we are far away from the future mentioned, this period of growing pains is still a pretty fun era to be in; although perhaps try not to fall in love with Alexa 2.0.





Revolutions, big or small, are what drives human progress through steps and leaps. The essence of humanity lies in creation. Rather than to adapt physically to the changing world, humans craft devices to overcome challenges that they face.

From the discovery of fire—to the birth of agriculture—the smart devices of the present day, the spirit of human ingenuity lives on, driven by a constant curiosity for the unknown, and a desire to improve life.

Our last issue looked at the year that passed and the innovations that led to this point where we now speculate on the future, and the technology that will drive us towards it. We run through recent developments in smart devices, new and upcoming releases, and give our fearless predictions for the gadgets of tomorrow.

With a rapidly shrinking world, and new problems to conquer, revolutions will not cease. It is a constant that rides in the wave of time that only moves forward.

Art Direction by Jael Mendoza
Photography by Carlo Dans Isidoro
HMUA by Patricia Aquino
Styling by Jonah Mendoza
Assisted by Ma. Theresa Eloriaga
Benedict Asal

Model: Laura Burcikaite of Women's Folio Management
Cover Credits: Outfits from Zalora Philippines



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LAURA BURČIKAITĖ

Interviewed by Robby Vaflor

There is, perhaps, no one better suited to be on the cover of our future-gazing issue than Laura Burčikaitė. Hailing from Lithuania, she possesses a youthfulness with a touch of classic elegance you rarely see these days outside of 35 mm celluloid. But apart from her natural beauty and the way she carries herself, her personality makes her a standout to represent the kind of forward-looking individuals that this month's issue is for.

At only 19 years, Laura has already been modelling for five years (since she was 14, if one can believe it). She has been travelling for the gig since she was 16 years old.

She arrived in the country a month ago fresh from the Shanghai Fashion Week, and has already been to New York, Milan, Beijing, Taiwan and Brazil before that.

"I'm happy. I mean, it's not easy to be on your own and taking care of yourself, but everyday you're learning," she said on her experience as a jet-setting teenage model. She added that most of her life was in her phone, being able to contact family, and

friends who were either back home or modelling elsewhere.

According to Laura, in every country she visited, she found something that she liked, and she is excited to go to more places in the future to experience different cultures and environments. She is currently on a gap year, taking the time to explore her modelling career and the world, having graduated from high school last year.

Apart from travelling, Laura enjoys music, dance, art, and biology, hoping to go to college next year to become a nutritionist (as if she was not interesting enough). She says that she is unsure of what she would want to do in the future, but is hopeful, adding that she would continue to do whichever made her happy.

With a curious mind, a boldness to explore new horizons, and a willingness to embrace change, Laura stands as a personification of her generation's traits and aspirations, optimistic for the future, but with feet firmly planted in the present.

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Way of Life!

First-ever Sony Fair Shows Off the Best of the Brand



Last December, Sony hosted its inaugural Sony Fair, a ten-day event that featured interactive displays, community activities, and workshops that enabled customers to envision the way Sony devices can fuel their lifestyle. The event, which ran from December 9 to 18, brought together some of Sony's flagship products in the spaces of mobile, digital imaging, home entertainment, personal audio, and gaming for customers to enjoy.

Among the stunning display of products many looked forward to at the Sony Fair, included the Sony Bravia X93000D and the 75-inch Z9D 4K HDR TV. Together with the HT-ST9 Soundbar with Wi-Fi/Bluetooth, Sony demonstrated how it has redefined audio and entertainment through its slim and elegant profile that blends into any living environment. Sony's Bravia Movie Nights during the evenings let consumers enjoy the best of Sony TVs as they watched family-friendly films such as *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2*, *Hotel Transylvania*, *The Amazing Spiderman 2*, and *Arthur Christmas* while being among the first in the country to experience the 100-inch Z9D 4K HDR TV.

An unforgettable experience awaited audiophiles as they immersed in rich, vibrant sound at the Hi-Res Audio Workshop conducted by Sony Ambassador Juno Oebanda. An engaging and enticing crowd arrived at Sony Extra Bass' Feel the Passion Dance Clinic featuring Upeepz Dance Crew as well as DJ Rammy Bitong's Silent Party and DJ Workshop where he shared advice to young and aspiring DJs. The Sony Fair also brought the most discerning ears up and close with Sony's top-of-the-line personal audio Bluetooth devices such as the MDR-XB650BT EXTRA BASS Headphones, MDR-1000X Noise-Canceling Headphones, SRS-XB3 Portable Wireless Speaker, and MDR-Z1R. The MDR-Z1R headphones boasts of the utmost standard in materials and design. The Fibonacci-patterned grille guarantees a cleaner, more authentic Hi-Res sound.

Mobile photography took center stage as Xperia Ambassadors Pierre Guevarra, Linus Banaag and Marvin Conanan conducted workshops where they tried out some of today's hottest mobile devices

from the Xperia X Series, including the Xperia XZ flagship mobile phone. A first for a smartphone, the Xperia XZ brings triple image sensing technology to its cameras to deliver the best experience in mobile photography. Select Xperia fans got the chance to win some of these devices through an on-the-spot mobile photography contest.

At the Sony Digital Imaging booth, exhilarating on-site activities including a bar tending and flaring demonstration and a BMX bike and skateboard exhibition put today's latest Alpha and Cyber-Shot cameras to the test. Workshops featuring renowned photographers and cinematographers Pilar Trigo Bonnin, Paco Guerrero, Nina Sandejas, and Mayad Studios gathered professional and hobbyists for sharing of pro tips and tricks. Meanwhile, Sony Ambassadors Kimi Juan, Jelito de Leon, Sheng Gonzales, and Charisma Lico demonstrated mastery of their craft as they taught travel, flat lay, toy, and fashion photography workshops to their followers and fans.

The Sony PlayStation booth, which exhibited some of this year's lauded games, including *Final Fantasy XV*, *Just Dance*, and *NBA2K17*, definitely thrilled gamers. Many were simply delighted

to finally get the chance to experience the wonderful world of virtual reality as they played some of today's hottest VR-ready games with the PlayStation VR Headset in tow.

The inaugural Sony Fair was truly a celebration of the brand's relentless pursuit of innovation and commitment to continue delivering more firsts that will inspire and spark curiosity among consumers. Beyond this, it is a testament of how far gadgets have transcended from simple functional tools to personal devices that serve as canvases to express one's creativity and deliver one-of-a-kind experiences that enhance our lives.



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ISUZU D-MAX 3.0L 4x2 LS AT

Review and Photos by Robby Vaflor

As a city kid who did not have a single adventurous bone in his body, anything larger than a Corolla had very little appeal to me growing up. As my mind began to catch up on adult practicality, I started to appreciate the merits of having a larger vehicle. My preference still leans towards compacts though. Will this change with the D-MAX?

DESIGN ★★★★★☆

The D-MAX is a manly man's truck. One look at its robust and imposing profile causes one to imagine driving off to Home Depot to purchase several two-by-fours for a new woodworking project with Merle Haggard playing low in the background.

The large and lengthy size, high ground clearance, and squarish shape make it look like it was meant to take punishment, and to a fair extent, it can if it must. The chrome accents on the exterior coupled with the black paint job on my loaner make for a clean but not bland look, that is, until you drive this bad boy through rain, dust, and dirt (which makes it look even radder in my opinion).

The macho aesthetic still continues inside the truck with hardly a frill to be seen, which is not an entirely bad thing in this case. The black leather seats are lined with prominent stitchwork, and the dash is mostly constructed with matte plastic. Do not be put off by it though, everything feels rock solid. In front and at the back, there is no lack of space. It feels comfortable enough to sit in all the seats with your passengers' knees being a couple of inches away from the front seat or the glove compartment.

The only issue I had with how the pickup was built is how it feels basic: maybe a little too basic. I understand that Isuzu really was going for a workhorse that is built to last, but it would have been great to have door handles that didn't require that extra bit of elbow grease to open or to have cup-holders that could accommodate drinks bigger than a medium. Still, overall, a very solidly designed truck.

HARDWARE ★★★★★☆

Isuzu prides itself on its diesel engines, and I am quite glad that I got to ride the newer 3.0 liter

variant. The engine is a four-cylinder in-line DOHC diesel engine with a Turbo Intercooler.

The engine has a maximum power output of 163 ps or 120 kW at 3200 revs per minute while its maximum torque is at 380 Nm or 38.7 kg-m at 1800-2200 revs a minute. Being a rear-wheel drive model, all that torque comes from the back and it's quite a fun experience to give the engine more juice when I got a clear path, in that push-you-back-to-your-headrest kind of deal.

Being a pickup truck, the rear suspension is a more rigid semi-elliptical leaf spring set-up while the front suspension eases that rigidity for the driver and passenger with an independent double wishbone with coil springs and stabilizer.

The cargo bed is nice and large lined with a sturdy bed liner. The projector headlamps on the other hand have LED daytime running lamps.

Inside, all the essentials are present: an entertainment system with navigation, Bluetooth and wired connectivity, air-conditioning with automatic climate control, six-way adjustable front seats, and two glove compartments among several storage options within the vehicle. The D-MAX also supports passive entry and has a push start or stop ignition system.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

What's great about the D-MAX is the lack of pretension: it's a truck that feels like a truck. When I drive I want to have an idea of the size and weight of what I'm driving. I want to feel it when steering and when I step on the gas and the brakes; and the response and feel for both are excellent.

It also came as a welcomed surprise how well it was able to transition from city driving with

varying frequencies of stopping and maneuvering depending on the traffic, to countryside drives cruising through rolling hills and winding roads.

The pickup handles turns very well, and the torque makes easy game of inclines while driving through Tanay, Antipolo, and other parts of Rizal. And once you get it going, it can get to a fair amount of speed. Being a 4x2, though, do not expect it to grip onto more slippery terrain that well as it is a heavy vehicle without a front axle to pull it out quickly.

I was a bit apprehensive in terms of the suspension set-up, but it actually was quite a good, smooth experience for the most part. One can do a whole lot worse with some sedans, to be honest.

However, while the speed and handling are all well and good, the highlight of driving the D-MAX





was its fuel efficiency. Driving for the whole work week through holiday season rush hour traffic from Quezon City to Antipolo and then driving around for hours over the weekend along the Marilaque highway and the range estimates read a whopping 600-plus kilometers that I could have still driven, with the needle barely pointing to the three-quarter-mark on the fuel gauge. Insane.

VALUE ★★★★★

Priced at around PHP 1.2 million for the 4x2, 3.0-liter engine LS model, the Isuzu D-MAX is a competitively priced pickup truck considering that it is already one-upping the competition with a 3.0-liter turbo engine built for longevity. And what makes the D-MAX even more of a standout in the market in terms of value is its fuel efficiency, which brings running costs down in the long run.

What's Hot:

- Insanely fuel efficient
- Rugged

What's Not:

- Design is maybe a bit too basic

BOTTOMLINE:

In terms of fuel efficiency and overall quality and sturdiness of the truck, the D-MAX is a reliable pick-up that is sure to take you further without doing much damage to your wallet.



All-New Hyundai Elantra 2.0 GLS AT

Review and Photos by Ren Alcantara

With the traffic we face, there are few things worse than having to endure it in a sub-standard ride. Hyundai has consistently given us vehicles that perform wonderfully, so we expected no less from the all-new Elantra. We got to take it around for a few weeks, and here's what we thought of the experience.

DESIGN ★★★★★☆

The all-new Hyundai Elantra is gorgeous. It perfectly brings together stately and sporty, with an elegance to the lines, without detracting from a distinct muscular stance. The large, hexagonal front grille flows smoothly into the slim HID headlight assembly with daytime running lights, and onto the broad hood. That line carries over along the Elantra's profile, sweeping upwards and back, all the way to the rear lights. A broad, low-slung roof makes it appear to hug the road closely, further reinforcing the sporty exterior. The combination of sharp lines up front, and elegant, flowing lines to the rear give it a stance that makes it seem like it's more than capable of tearing up

the road, while remaining refined enough to hold back. It's a head-turner, there's no doubt there. 18-inch alloy wheels are the icing on the cake, and give it that little kick that separates it from the plane Jane sedans you'll see plying the roads of the metro.

HARDWARE ★★★★★★

The image of a restrained monster holds true once you look under the hood. The heart of this beast is a 2.0-liter engine that's capable of putting out an impressive 152 ps at 6200 rpm, and 19.6 kg-m of torque at 4000 rpm. That's enough to propel the car to a max speed of 202 kph in short order. This is mated to a 6-speed automatic

transmission that shifts smooth, and surely. Keeping the rubber on the road is a MacPherson strut-type suspension on the front and rear, and keeping that power in check are disc brakes also on the front and rear.

Inside, you have a leather tilt and telescoping steering wheel with Bluetooth call and audio controls, and a 5-inch, full-color, touch-sensitive head unit to control your entertainment functions, and the six-speaker setup you have at your disposal. This complements the rest of the uncluttered center console, with rotary temperature and fan knobs, and large buttons for all the additional functions for the entertainment and climate controls. The engine start button is



in its own place, well within the driver's sight line, and out of the way of any other buttons you might be hunting for. Mirrors, doors, and windows are all powered, though seat position and height are manual—no big deal though, considering all the other creature comforts you get.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

If you're trying to get somewhere, this is a car that will take you there in a hurry. The beefy engine doesn't hesitate to pick up, and power transfer to the wheels is smooth and free from shift shock. Seriously, a quick tap with your right foot pushes you snugly back into your seat in short order. While top speed isn't likely (or legal) on our roads, know that you'll run out of road well before you run out of go. Should the car need a little push, just pop the shifter to the side, and you can downshift as much as the situation warrants.

The Elantra has steering to match. It's wonderfully agile, much more so than a car its size might make you think. You can make the most of gaps in traffic, or change lanes with ease, even while going at a reasonable clip. This was surprising given just how plush the transmission was. I'm used to what others might call a sportier feel to my suspension, and while the

Elantra does a great job sticking to the asphalt, it does so while remaining wonderfully comfortable over the many bumps our roads are plagued with. Those of you who have small children, easily frightened pets, or creaky backs are going to appreciate the ride.



Comfort levels are raised even higher thanks to a surprisingly quiet interior. Road noise is reduced to a low rumble, and the outside is kept squarely where it belongs. More than once, I had to be careful to keep myself occupied with driving music lest I get drowsy at the wheel. Back passengers even get rear vents to battle the oppressive tropical heat.

Road warriors have a lot to like about the all-new Elantra. Apart from a truly massive trunk space, the back seats fold down flat, allowing you to load up particularly large or long cargo. Bags, groceries, sporting equipment, they'll all fit, no problem.

That zip does come at a bit of a price. Driving in traffic drains the 50-liter tank rather quickly. During our tests in Christmastime traffic, we were pulling just under 8 km/l. Not terrible, but not the most frugal fuel-wise either. Either way, it's to be expected from all that muscle under the hood.

VALUE ★★★★★☆

At PHP 1.158M, this is a car that will take a bit to take home. Still, given its outstanding performance, comfort, and jaw-dropping style, it's well worth the price of admission. It's a car that'll be just as happy zipping around the city as it will be tackling some winding mountain roads, and it's got the looks to boot.

What's Hot:

- Plenty of power
- Comfortable suspension
- Great looks

What's Not:

- Drinks up petrol
- Price isn't for everyone

BOTTOMLINE:

It's as good a car to drive as it is to be seen in.



Honda CBR150R

Review and Photos by Ren Alcantara

The 150 cc category represents a unique category in the local motorcycle market. It's both practical as a daily commuter, and has enough zip to it to let your average rider have a little fun with more spirited riding on the weekends. Of the 150 cc backbones, Honda's own CBR150R is one that we had been waiting for since its launch last year. I was lucky enough to get my hands on it, and here's what I found out riding it around in various conditions.

DESIGN ★★★★★

The CBR150R is a handsome bike. Getting its looks from its larger brothers, this little 150 is unmistakably of the same lineage. From the dual LED headlights, aggressive, rearward-sweeping lines, and wasp-like profile, it's a Honda sportbike, no doubt. Only the raised handlebar and thinner tires would clue you in to its sub-200 displacement. Still, it's a good looking bike. It manages to look much larger than it actually is—an illusion that it manages to hold until you sit on the bike, and find that it is pleasantly pint-sized, like a perfectly scaled-down GP racer. All the same, it's a nice bike to see, and be seen in. The

seat is low, somewhere around 30 inches off the ground, and more than low enough to allow even shorter riders to touch the ground.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

Where you would expect to see a liter-class engine, you'll find a happy little thumper of a heart. The single-cylinder, 150 cc engine is more than enough to propel the light little bike along at a good clip. The bike had been tuned to give a little less power, but more torque, making it even better for the city. This is mated to a 6-speed transmission, which drives power to the rear wheel via chain. Coming to a halt is achieved

with help from single discs up front and to the rear. LED headlights keep nighttime driving safe, and the gauge cluster is completely digital, and evenly backlit, so your speed, tach, and fuel levels are easy to read both in broad daylight, and pitch blackness. For those who will be taking a passenger along, the bike has a rear pillion seat and passenger footpegs. That same seat comes off to reveal a surprising amount of storage—not enough for a helmet, but maybe enough to keep rain gear for one.

The bike only offers electric starting, and, unfortunately, no kill switch—you'll have to turn the key to shut the engine off. The frame has also



changed from the previous iteration, and the bike now has a diamond truss frame, with a longer wheelbase than before, while being a little smaller overall. Both models have 100/80-17 tires up front, and 130/70-17 tires in the rear.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

The walkaround is one of the first things I enjoyed about the bike. Less muscular than the previous version but no less mean-looking, the current CBR150R looks just as good in person as it does in ads. Sitting on the bike is a little strange at first, since it's smaller than it looks. That's not a bad thing. It's low enough for a small person such as myself to straddle and touch the ground, and almost light enough to very easily push around.

Being fuel injected, the bike always starts on the first click. It pops easily and positively into first, and the clutch pull is light, making it great for Manila traffic. It's a shame neither brake nor clutch lever is adjustable, as both levers are far from the grip, with relatively shallow engagement. The throttle responds readily to right hand inputs, and a little give on the clutch sends you forward. It doesn't take a lot of torque to get you moving, but the bike has plenty. Gearing is right there with you though, and while you can push it almost to redline if you really need to get going, it's perfectly happy staying around the 3000-4000 rpm range in the city. It'll chug along okay on higher gears, owing both to the light weight and extra oomph from the powerplant.

Riding position is very vertical, and the narrow tank doesn't really encourage a full racing tuck.



You could do it, but you'd have to really get in there to make the most of the low, small windscreen. And while the bike is fully faired, there isn't a lot to go around, so you're going to feel the wind a bit at speed. It deflects most of the air away though, so it's not as bad as you might think when you first sit.

A little quirk I experienced with the transmission was that the bike would frequently get stuck between gears. Cycling down through the

gearbox would sometimes come to a halt, because it would fail to drop into the lower gear until you'd ease up on the clutch a little bit. It's not a problem really, and if you know what's going on, you'll eventually do so without thinking.

Even with all that power, the little 150 cc powerplant sips fuel in a very dignified manner. I barely made the gauge move in the week of commuting from BGC to West Avenue, through moderate traffic. Being slim enough to be able to filter through traffic allowed me to stay off lower gears.

Punching the engine for more spirited runs shows that it's happiest upwards of 7000 rpm, where you get max torque. Even though you mostly feel like you're on, rather than in the bike, it gives great feedback, hugs the road well, and responds readily to user input. If this fails to put a smile on your face after some twisties, you might need medication.

VALUE ★★★★★☆

For a bike that costs PHP 150,000, this is one that represents quite some value. Easy on the street, and fun on the twisties, it's a bike that delivers what you need, when you need it, and does so with style. To recap: looks, performance, and value. I think we have a winner.

What's Hot:

- Gorgeous
- Light
- Fun!

What's Not:

- Better levers are necessary
- Price tag

BOTTOMLINE:

I'm in talks to keep the little sportbike just a liiiiitle longer.



Suzuki and Des Marketing Open First 3S Shop in Ormoc City

On December 8, 2016, Suzuki Philippines in partnership with Des Marketing opened its first 3S (sales, spare parts, and service) Specialty shop in Ormoc City.

The recently inaugurated 3S shop is the second under Suzuki and Des Marketing's more than 16 years of partnership--the first is in Consolacion, Cebu. The 171 sqm establishment sits along the hustling street of Lilia Ave. in Cogon, making it an accessible one-stop shop for motorheads and just about anyone in the city.

As a 3S shop, it is neatly divided into three parts where customers can expect excellent service whether they're in to purchase a new Suzuki motorbike, get authentic spare parts, or have their wheels serviced.

Greeting customers as they come in is the main showroom. It is designed in colors white, black, silver, and blue which altogether gives the space a sophisticated air. It is also adorned with the brand's latest campaign "Para sa lahat ng trip mo" featuring Liza Soberano and Enrique Gil. A glass window separates the showroom and the service area. There are chairs and a long table installed right in front of the window so that customers can get a glimpse of the work area while remaining comfortable and sweat-free inside the main showroom.

On display in this 3S shop are the much loved Suzuki Smash in its recently made available fashion colors frenetic purple and frenetic magenta, the global scooter Address, the Raider



R1150, the Raider J115 Fi, and the Shooter which all will soon be offered in matte black, the speedy Skydrive, the exhilarating Gixxer, the budget-friendly GD110, and lastly the advanced X4-AX4.

During the inauguration of the shop, Suzuki and Des Marketing treated its first customers to discounts, a *Noche Buena* package worth PHP

1,000, and free service to Suzuki motorcycle owners. The whole day was crammed with fun activities such as singing and dance competitions, custom bike contest, stunts show, games, and raffle draw for Suzuki riders and customers within the vicinity. Model-actress Sam Pinto also graced the event and performed songs for the crowd.

MNTC Supports SPMJ Driven To Serve CSR Awards

The Manila North Tollways Corporation (MNTC) recently signed a memorandum of agreement with the Society of Philippine Motoring Journalists (SPMJ) to support the latter's Driven To Serve CSR Awards as a cooperating sponsor.

The Driven To Serve CSR Awards was conceived to recognize the most outstanding CSR projects undertaken by automotive manufacturers and distributors in the Philippines.

The awards hope to cast light on the heartwarming efforts that automotive industry players have put into community development, protection of the environment, education, and road safety. The SPMJ adopted this new advocacy in order to spur more corporate entities to follow in their footsteps as well as encourage those already engaged in such projects to soldier on.



In photo (L-R): SPMJ founding president and chairman Ray Butch Gamboa; MNTC president Rodrigo Franco; and SPMJ president Pinky Concha Colmenares.

Applicable entries for the event have already been fielded and have recently undergone judging by some of the luminaries in the field of Corporate

Social Responsibility. The most outstanding projects were announced during the awards ceremony held in February 2017.



Suzuki Asian Challenge is a one make race among Asian riders featuring the Raider R150



The Philippine flag waving proudly at the Chang International Circuit in Buriram, Thailand

TEAM SUZUKI PILIPINAS

Celebrates a Year of Victories

Team Suzuki Pilipinas has had a great year filled with new milestones and stunning victories all throughout the 2016 Suzuki Asian Challenge (SAC).

To celebrate their achievements, Suzuki Motorcycles Philippines threw a victory party at the F1 Hotel in Bonifacio Global City last December 14, 2016.

Among the team's greatest achievements this year is pulling a one-two finish at an international race, the first for any Filipino motorcycle racing team, at the Suzuka International Circuit in Japan



Team Suzuki Pilipinas leading the race



Team Suzuki Pilipinas' riders, mechanics and team manager with Suzuki Philippines Marketing Manager Monch Bontogon

for the third round of the SAC. Eane Jaye Sobretodo bagged the top podium win, a first for the Philippines at the ARRC while Mario Borbon, Jr tailed him for the second spot. In the same race, April King Mascardo also became the first Filipino pole sitter in an international racing event. For round one in Johor Circuit in Malaysia, Mascardo placed second in race number two. Sobretodo went on to finish third at the Chang International Circuit in Thailand for the first race of the second round.

The fourth round held in Sentul Indonesia Circuit saw Mascardo place third at the second race. The team closed out the year's competition with a top podium finish by Borbon in the second race of round five, making him the first ever Filipino to finish first at the Chang International Circuit. Mascardo, Sobretodo and Borbon took the fifth, sixth and seventh overall spots, respectively.

As part of the celebration, the trio received plaques of appreciation from Suzuki Philippines led by company president Hiroshi Suzuki.



Industry partners and media friends came to celebrate Team Suzuki Pilipinas success on the stage



Suzuki President Hiroshi Suzuki getting wacky with EJ, April and Mario during the 2016 Victory Party



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WHEELTEK OPENS THE FIRST SUZUKI WORLD IN CABANATUAN CITY!



L-R: Suzuki Philippines GM for Motorcycle Sales and Marketing Jun Bulot and Regional Sales Manager Erick Fernancez with Wheeltek VP for Sales and Marketing Roscoe Odulio

Suzuki celebrates with Wheeltek as it opened the first ever Suzuki World in the Philippines on December 3, 2016. Suzuki World is a one-stop shop for all your small or big motorcycle and automobile needs.



Roscoe Odulio receiving the Suzuki 3S Shop Certification from Hiroshi Suzuki

This 4,000 sqm establishment is comprised of a Motorcycle 3S Shop, a Big Bikes Center, and an Automobile 3S Store. The shop also presents a service center with trained mechanics who will surely take care of your Suzuki vehicle. With its high-end showroom, tastefully designed display area and exceptional customer service, customers are ensured to experience the true meaning of Suzuki's Way of Life.

The opening ceremonies were attended by more than 300 spectators with over 200 big bike riders from more than a dozen clubs. It was a festive evening as Wheeltek and Suzuki executives filled the area together with media friends and partners in the industry. The event was made even more special with the lovely celebrity guests: host Roxy B. and Yam Concepcion.



Leading the opening ceremonies were Wheeltek Motor Sales Corporation president Reynaldo Odulio, Sr. with wife and vice president Teresita Odulio and vice president for Sales and Marketing Roscoe Odulio with Suzuki Philippines President Hiroshi Suzuki and Motorcycle Sales and Marketing GM Jun Bulot

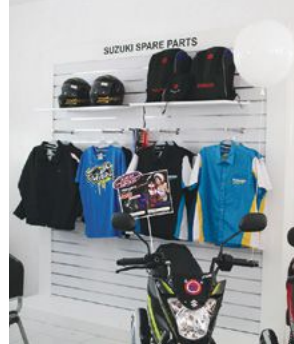




Suzuki Information



Motorcycle Display



Apparel Corner



Service Bay as seen from inside the store



The lovely and talented Roxy B. and Yam Concepcion sizzled the night with their stunning performances



Suzuki Big Bikes Information



Suzuki Big Bikes Display



Suzuki Big Bikes Accessories and Apparel



Suzuki Service Bay



Team Wheeltek-Suzuki Family

SUZUKI

LIVE!

IN 2017 PROMO

FREE
SUZUKI HELMET &
SUZUKI BACKPACK



Helmet also comes in MotoGP blue color; Bag comes in Orange / Blue color.

RAIDER 115FI

SUZUKI FI FUEL INJECTION



SUZUKI

LIVE!

IN 2017 PROMO

FREE
SUZUKI HELMET



Helmet also comes in MotoGP blue color.

SHOOTER 115FI



Now in Matte Black color

SUZUKI

LIVE!

IN 2017 PROMO

FREE
SKYDRIVE
FULL FACE
HELMET



SKYDRIVE 125



SUZUKI

LIVE!

— IN 2017 PROMO —





Chairman of GUD Moto Trading Corporation George Du and Suzuki Philippines President Hiroshi Suzuki during the opening ceremonies

Suzuki Philippines continues its string of store openings as the motorcycle giant opened a 3S (Sales, Spare parts, Service Shop) in Dumaguete City last November 28.

The shop is adorned with the brand's latest campaign Suzuki, Para sa Lahat ng Trip Mo, featuring the hottest young icons Liza Soberano and Enrique Gil with the very stylish Smash 115 in purple and magenta as well as the global scooter Address.

The Suzuki 3S Shop in Dumaguete, often called "university city," aims to address the needs of the young generation as well as the commuters of the area. The brand offers the perfect companion for the youth's very active and dynamic lifestyle by providing the best motorcycle for them to do whatever they want to do and go wherever they want to go.

Alongside this, Suzuki and GUD Moto will be staging a series of activities for the students such as free Riding Clinic and Test Rides in the coming months.

GUD MOTO OPEN SUZUKI 3S SHOP IN DUMAGUETE



Leading the opening ceremonies were GUD Moto VP for Finance Helen Du with Suzuki Philippines president Hiroshi Suzuki



GUD Moto President Justin Du with HR and Marketing Manager Diane Tiffany Du



Team GUD Moto-Suzuki Family

SUZUKI 3S SHOP - SALES, SPARE PARTS, AND SERVICE



The shop in Dumaguete is a four-storey building with a selling floor area of 94 square meters while the upper floors are used for office space. On display at the showroom are Suzuki's much loved motorcycles like the Raider R150, the Gixxer, and the Skydrive. Special deals were also offered to customers including discounts and freebies upon the purchase of any Suzuki motorcycle. Free servicing was offered to Suzuki motorcycle owners for a two-day period beginning at the shop opening.

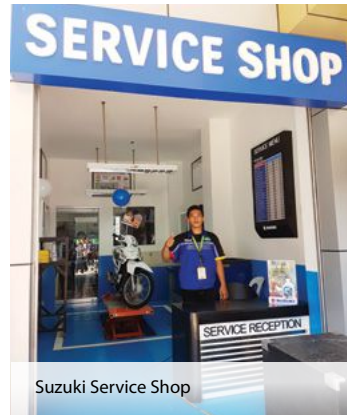
The opening marks an extension of the over a decade-long partnership with GUD Moto Trading Inc. and is the dealer's third 3S shop with one in Cebu and another in Bayawan. The event was well attended by both GUD Moto Trading, Inc. and Suzuki Philippines executives as well as no less than 70 riders who joined the motorcade and the fun activities of the event.



Apparel Corner



Spare Parts Counter



Suzuki Service Shop



TEAM GUD MOTO-SUZUKI 3S SHOP DUMAGUETE READY TO SERVE THE CUSTOMERS!



The team behind the GUD Moto-Suzuki 3S Shop Dumaguete



GUD Moto-Suzuki 3S Shop Dumaguete is located at
Perdices St. Dumaguete City
CP No. 09066960772

ALL-NEW SUBARU IMPREZA



LAUNCHED FOR ASIA MARKETS

Words by Maribelle Alba

Winner of the 2016-2017 Japan Car of the Year, the all-new Subaru Impreza was launched at the Singapore Motorshow 2017 by Motor Image, the exclusive distributor of Subaru vehicles in nine Asian countries.



"The all-new Subaru Impreza features the new Subaru Global Platform that is engineered to make a new type of driving possible. With a host of improvements to its interior, styling, handling performance, and an improved CVT transmission, the new Impreza is set to be the first to pave the way for the next generation of Subaru vehicles to deliver a superior driving experience like no other," noted Glenn Tan, executive director of Tan Chong International Ltd, which has a partnership with Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd for the assembly of Subaru vehicles in Malaysia and is also the mother company of Motor Image.





Officials from the Subaru product planning department of Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd. answer questions from Filipino motoring media.



Glenn Tan (left), executive director of Tan Chong International Ltd., with Michael Ramon Luyun (right), general manager of Motor Image Pilipinas Inc.

The all-new Subaru Impreza delivers an elevated driving experience with less vibration and noise, combined with precise vehicle control—all made possible by the revolutionary Subaru Global Platform underpinning the unique combination of Subaru's Boxer engine with all-wheel drive system. Increased use of high-tensile steel in the frame structure have resulted in enhanced body strength and a 40 percent increase in collision energy absorption, thus vastly improving passive safety. Another safety feature, Steering Responsive Headlights, allow the headlight beam to move according to the direction of how the car is steered, for better dusk visibility. The new platform lowers the center of gravity by 5 mm which, alongside major improvements in structural rigidity and the suspension system, delivers sharper, more responsive steering for outstanding hazard avoidance.

Subaru's DYNAMIC x SOLID design philosophy is embodied in the new Impreza, which now has extended fender flares, a hexagonal grille, and the brand's iconic C-shaped headlights. Inside are sophisticated details like stitching on the instrument panels and an 8-inch infotainment system display as well as excellent all-around visibility and a spacious cabin.



The all-new Subaru Impreza is available in the following variants: 1.6i-S featuring a 1.6L port injection naturally aspirated engine producing 114 ps at 5600 rpm, and 2.0i-S with a 2.0L direct injection naturally aspirated engine producing 153 ps at 6000 rpm. Four-door and five-door options are available for both the 1.6i-S and 2.0i-S.

For the Philippine market, the all-new Subaru Impreza 2.0i-S (4-door) is available for reservation at Subaru dealerships nationwide.



SHOPPING ABROAD TAX-FREE

Words by Presy Alba

When traveling abroad, shopping is an inevitable activity. If you do not consciously plan how you will spend your money, you might be missing on big savings like a tax refund of up to 20 percent depending on which country you are visiting.

For example, in Singapore, a minimum spend of SGD 100 in a participating store on the same day qualifies your purchases for a 7 percent tax refund at the airport. In Europe, a minimum spend of EUR 175 is eligible for a 20 percent tax refund.

Not all stores participate in the tax-refund program, so you should always ask if they offer tax-free shopping, and the minimum spend for eligibility before you start piling your cart with goodies. If you are traveling with friends or family members, it will be to your advantage to combine your items and pay for them altogether so you can avail of the tax refund.

It is also very important to remember to process your purchases for a tax refund at the store, otherwise, you will lose your opportunity to claim it even if you bought more than the minimum amount.

Tax refund-processing sometimes vary from store to store. At some big department stores, they will tell you that you can shop and pay for your items and then process the tax refund at the customer service counter before you leave the store. Smaller stores will let you walk around collecting items and then pay for everything all at once, and they will process the tax refund at the point of sale.

The store will ask for your passport when they prepare the tax rebate, so remember to bring it along when you go shopping. The clerk will also ask if you want the rebate refunded to your credit card or if you want to get cash at the airport. This really depends on your personal choice, but I like getting cash at the airport because although the credit card option can be faster to process, it can take up to almost a month before you receive the rebate on your credit card, and there's always the possibility of your claim being denied because of some technicality.

In Europe, you can only claim your tax refund once – when you exit the Schengen area. So if you visit several countries, process the tax refund before exiting the last country on your way home.

Pack all items for tax-refund in just one bag, so that if the customs inspector asks to see the items in, you only need to open one bag. If you plan to check the bag containing your tax-free items in, make sure to go to the airport early and process your tax refund before you drop-off your bags. Remember that if the customs officer elects to inspect the items you are claiming for the refund, he may deny your claim if you cannot present the items or if the items are not sealed in their original packaging.

Having said that, in most cases, processing tax refunds at the airport these days is as easy as 1-2-3 with electronic kiosks at most airports:

1. Locate the Tax Refund kiosks – these are usually well indicated or you can always ask any passing airport personnel or the information booth.
2. Once you find the nearest kiosk, just follow the instructions on the screen, starting with selecting the form language. You will need to enter your passport details and either scan the barcode on the receipts or enter the receipt code into the system, and wait for it to give you the receipt validation and claim confirmation.
3. The last step is to present your claim to the currency exchange teller, which is usually within the vicinity and get your refund in your preferred currency.



Find your Tribe

Words by Mia Carisse Barrientos
Photos by Jael Laura Mendoza

As the English dictionary defines it, a group of people who share the same interest qualifies as a tribe—case in point, people who can't get enough of Korean dramas and eSports tourneys.

Lovers of shows and movies of various genres can find their tribe in this newest over-the-top (OTT) video streaming service to hit our shores.

This year has proven that streaming services are more than just a trend in the Philippines, what with the arrival of the biggest SVOD and the continued success of the latter's alternatives in the country. These services offer streaming of a wide variety of content through their easy to use platform whenever, wherever. However, most of these services lack Asian content and network-building features. Tribe brings to the table what these streaming services are short of.

► What is Tribe?

Tribe is a mobile-first, over-the-top (OTT) video streaming service that is a one-stop shop for live and on-demand content including the most sought-after genres in Korean entertainment,

anime, e-Sports, Asian thrillers, fight shows, international programs and movies, and other niche content.

Pegged at video consumers in the ASEAN market, Tribe was recently launched in Indonesia and now places its bet on the Philippine internet TV market.

► More than just a video streaming app

Tribe has integrated features that allow its community of users to interact and connect. Subscribers can create their profile, curate their own watchlist, and follow users who share similar interests as them.

What we found interesting in this app is that it streams several channels such as KBS World, tvN K-entertainment, Aniplus anime, KIX360 action thriller and fight shows, and 24/7 eGG eSports. Through this feature, fans will be able to catch shows on the aforementioned networks including same-day airing programs whenever they please.

► Uniting Fans

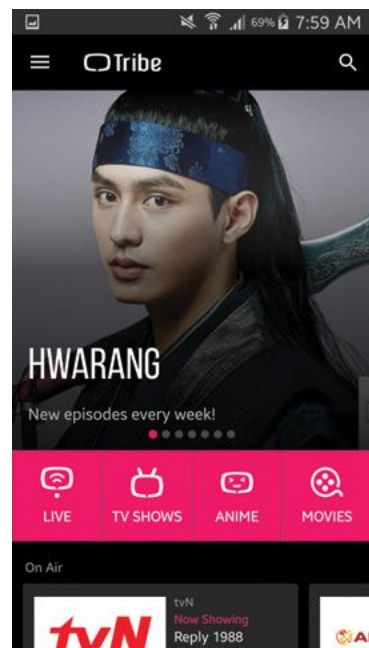
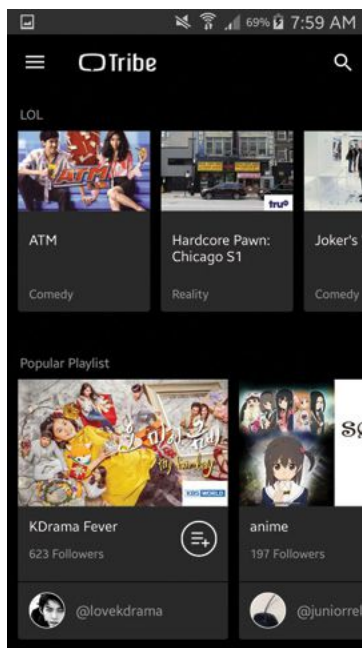
Beyond content, Tribe also hopes to reach communities online and on-ground through fan gatherings, exclusive promos, and contests where users of the app can meet and rub shoulders with

influencers and like-minded fans and get a chance to take home exclusive merchandise.

Tribe launched in the country through the viewing party of the 2016 Mnet Asian Music Awards (MAMA) last December 2, 2016 at Mango Tree in BGC. There, the service gathered fans of K-pop groups, influencers, and people from the press to party. During the event, Tribe also introduced its ambassadors Glaiza de Castro and Alodia Gosiengfiao and announced its partnership with Globe. The partnership with one of the country's largest telco service providers signifies more relevant content, events, and gatherings fans can look forward to in the coming months.

Subscription to Tribe is at PHP 69 a month and PHP 30 a week. Interested? Download the Tribe app now via Google Play or App Store to enjoy a 30-day free trial.

For more information on Tribe and event updates, log on to: <http://www.tribenow.tv>. Join the Tribe on Facebook via [facebook.com/Tribe.ph](https://www.facebook.com/Tribe.ph) and on Twitter and Instagram (@tribe_ph).



iMobile Anytrans

Words by Presy Alba

Developed by iMobile as an alternative to iTunes, Anytrans is an App that will allow you to manage your iOS devices—and in my opinion, it can replace iTunes and has a lot more to offer.

Anytrans does what iTunes can do like you to accessing your iTunes Library, backing up your device to iTunes, downloading your iCloud backup, and accessing the content of your iOS devices. In addition, it lets you merge, clone, backup, transfer content to your Mac or PC including iTunes, add content to your iOS device and transfer content from one iOS device to another.

Managing your audio and video files

If you have a large music collection saved in your computer, on your home NAS or an external drive, and you also want to change the music on your iOS devices from time to time, Anytrans makes moving files from device to computer and vice-versa as simple as copying files in Finder.

You can transfer music files two different ways: from the iTunes Library or by the device's quick start shortcuts. If you connect two iOS devices to your PC or Mac, you can even move files between them with ease.

What is especially great about Anytrans is that when you copy video files that are not compatible with iOS devices like mkv or avi, Anytrans automatically converts them to a file format that your iOS device can play like mp4.

Downloading your iCloud backup

You can download the backup files of your iOS devices from iCloud to your computer or an external storage. You will need to login to your iCloud account to do it, and if you have the 2-step verification turned on, you have to turn it off first temporarily to be able to login to your iCloud account from Anytrans.

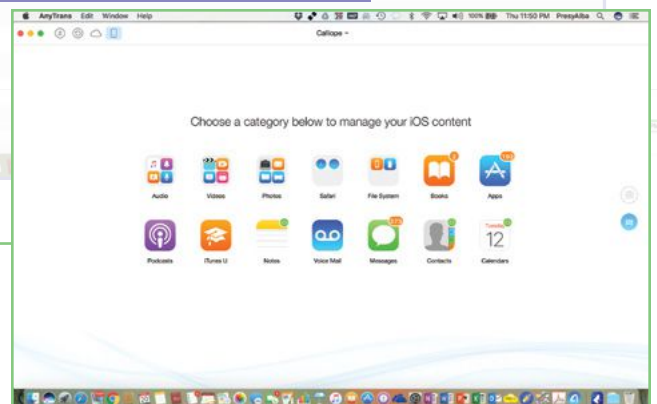
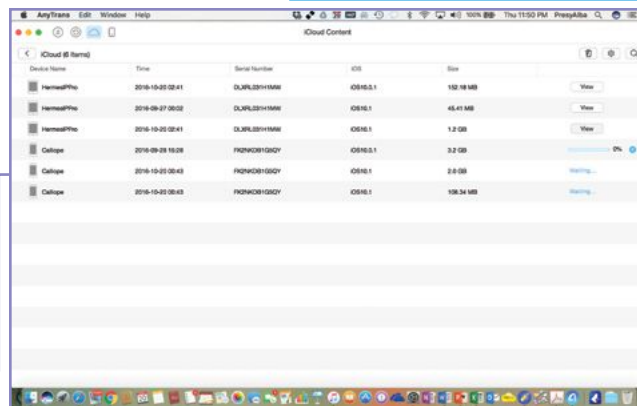
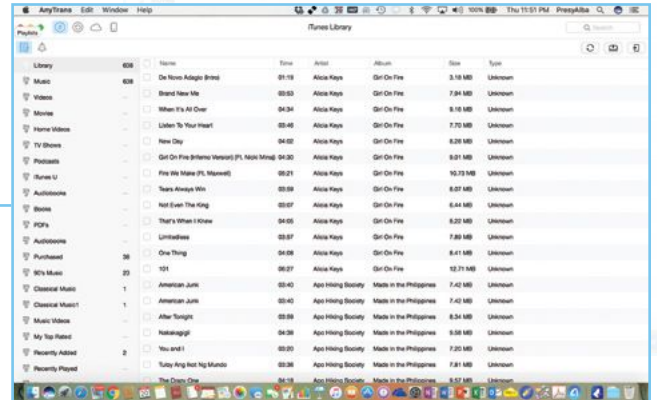
Content backups

More than iTunes, Anytrans can create backups of your content. For example, if you want to save particular messages, you can do so by selecting which app you want to manage and it's a matter of selecting the messages you want to backup. You can do this to notes, reminders, contacts, etc.

Merging and cloning devices

Setting up a new iPhone from an iCloud backup can take a long time. With Anytrans you can just clone the content from old to new a lot faster. If you have contacts on your iPad that's not on your iPhone, you can merge content between the two devices and have a complete set on both devices.

Paying USD 39.99 for a personal license that can be installed in just one computer may seem pricey but for all the things that it can do, I guarantee that you will have your money's worth. You'll get a better deal if you purchase the family license for USD 59.99, which can be installed to up to five Mac or PC computers.





Going Prime

Words and Photos by Chris Noel Hidalgo

I recently outgrew my newly-bought-but-used Canon EOS M's EF-M 18-55 mm f/3.5-5.6 IS STM kit lens. Don't get me wrong: it's a wonderful piece of equipment that's good for a wide variety of situations. However, I felt that it limited me, both in terms of what I can shoot and the image quality of my final output. I knew then that it was time to buy my first aftermarket lens. It was only a matter of choosing between a prime or a zoom. Spoiler alert: I bought a 50 mm prime, and here are a couple of reasons why.

Canon EF-M 18-55 mm f/3.5-5.6 IS STM on a Canon EOS M



Canon EF 50 mm f/1.8 STM with EF-M-EF lens adapter on a Canon EOS M



With the zoom and the prime at the same 50 mm focal length, the zoom is noticeably much longer. Take away the lens adapter and the 50 mm prime will be even shorter.

Canon EF 50 mm f/1.8 STM with EF-M-EF lens adapter @ 50 mm, 1/640, f/1.8, ISO 100



Compact and lightweight

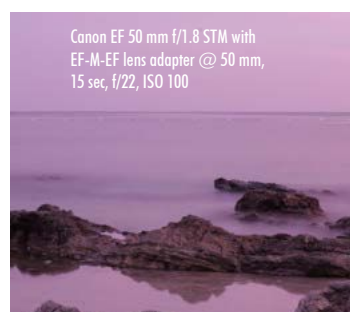
Typical zooms have tons of optics in them, all mechanically moved in order to achieve the desired focal length. All those moving parts need space and they add up to the total weight of your camera. It may not seem noticeable nor at first, but start walking around with a hefty shooter and one of your arms will grow larger in the long run. You don't want people thinking the wrong idea.

Prime lenses on the other hand, only have one focal length. As they have minimal moving parts

and optical elements, they can do away with the convoluted zoom mechanism and all its quirks.

Additionally, primes are smaller. A 50 mm prime and an 18-55 mm zoom at the same focal length will always have the former shorter than the latter. It takes up less space in the bag, has lesser chances of accidentally bumping into something, and make for a lower profile camera. And in some scenarios—like street photography—the more covert you are, the better.

Canon EF 50 mm f/1.8 STM with EF-M-EF lens adapter @ 50 mm, 15 sec, f/22, ISO 100





Better optics at a lower price

Of course, having less materials used in primes also notches them a lower price tag. So much so that you can actually get important focal lengths such as 24, 50, and 85 mm, all for just a little over the cost of something like a 24-105 mm. But why should you even bother with having three



Canon EF 50 mm f/1.8 STM with EF-M-EF lens adapter @ 50 mm, 1/60, f/1.8, ISO 800



different lenses when you can have a jack of all trades?

First, it's easier on the wallet. Instead of having to shell out PHP 50,000 in one go, you can buy one focal length now, go gung-ho with it, and when money comes back around, you buy another one. That time spent practicing on one focal length is really invaluable. We'll get to that in a bit.

Second, you're getting better optical performance at a lower price—a sure draw for beginners and hobbyists. Because there are less elements inside the barrel of a prime lens, light can strike your camera's sensor rawer and more accurately. In the case of zooms, light often has to travel through a variety of materials before hitting the sensor, degrading overall image quality. This is also why primes generally suffer less from image imperfections such as chromatic aberration, fuzziness, and distortion.

Faster aperture

Ever notice how in all but the most expensive of zoom lenses, there are two apertures stated? One for the wide end and one for the telephoto end? Let's use a kit lens as an example. For most 18-55 mm glass, you can expect aperture to be widest at f/3.5 and f/5.6. Compare that to a prime 24, 35, or 50 mm with general maximum apertures ranging anywhere from f/1.2 to f/1.8 (give or take a stop or two). Even though you can go through all those focal lengths with a zoom, its aperture will always be much slower.

Generally, you need a bigger diaphragm to get a lower f-number and a faster aperture. That means the lens must be physically bigger and have larger optical elements in it. The size increase will also tip the scales and the price tag more. The complicated mechanism of zooms restrict this as they can only get the diaphragm so large before it interferes with the other elements. Such isn't the case with primes.

Fast aperture works wonders. You can use faster shutter speeds to freeze critical moments even when on the move, as well as utilize slower ISO for noise-free images. This makes primes, well, prime for low-light scenarios. Faster apertures will also allow shallower depth of field for that sexy bokeh or background blur we all love.

Forces you to think more of your shot

Because you can't just zoom in and out to get the composition you want, prime lenses will force

Canon EF-M 18-55 mm f/3.5-5.6 IS STM @ 50 mm, 1/60, f/5.6, ISO 800



you to move and shuffle around like a restless monkey. You can think of that as a downside, but in reality, it trains you to consider all factors before pressing the shutter. Through this process, you'll sharpen your instinct on what definitive moments are. The alternative is burst-capturing the entire moment, but unless you're into sports or wildlife photography, a good majority of your shots will likely end up in the Recycle Bin.

With my case, I use a 50 mm on an APS-C sensor—closer to the field of view of an 85mm lens, or in simpler terms, too zoomed in. Initially, I found it frustrating that I had to move around a lot and decide between this style and that style, and this scene and that scene. I eventually grew to appreciate it though. The experience allowed me to look at everyday scenarios in a whole different light. Or angle, rather.

To be fair, there is no right or wrong choice between primes and zooms. Each has its own advantages and pitfalls. We'll be discussing the perks of the latter in the next issue so stay tuned.

Oppo F1s Takes Over Sinulog

2017

Words & Photos by Mia Carisse Barrientos | Additional Photos by Oppo

Launching an awesome smartphone through a grand event is something, but flying in a fleet of tech journalists and bloggers to one of the biggest festivals in the country to experience the phone's selfie-taking capabilities is taking things to a whole new level.

Oppo loves to bring out the fun even in the simplest things and that is exactly what ensued when the smartphone manufacturer took us to the Queen city of the South, Cebu, to witness and immerse ourselves in the Festival Sinulog and get acquainted with the Oppo F1s.

Day 1: Reliable battery and low-light camera expertise

Before we left for Cebu, each of us got loaner units of the F1s—except for those who already own one—to use as primary phones during the entire trip. The unit I got, with its factory-charged battery, was hard at work when I queued app downloads as soon as I got my hands on it. It chugged along quite smoothly and still had a fair amount of juice when we arrived in Cebu despite a three-hour delayed flight.

The sky was overcast and cold drizzling rain fell the afternoon we landed at the Mactan Airport, but the Oppo welcoming team greeted us with warm smiles and flashy cardboard signs that served as guides to which van we're supposed to board. It's a scene you can't help but capture.



An Oppo social media influencer takes a selfie with Sinulog parade contingents.

Our first destination from the airport was to Rico's restaurant for a late lunch and briefing. Despite the gloomy weather, a lively ensemble of Sinulog music filled the air along with a dancing Ollie (the Oppo mascot) put a smile on our faces. Rico's tasty lechon was enough to get everyone's spirits high and ready for the rest of the day.

The Sinulog spirit was very much alive everywhere we went including the lobby area of Azia Suites, our home for the entire trip. As the welcome drinks came pouring in, a band was playing in the background and there, Ollie danced to cheer us on.

We were given ample time to freshen up before we travelled to Golden Cowrie for a sumptuous

dinner. We then traversed the busy streets of Cebu to visit the national historical landmark Basilica del Santo Nino. But before we got to our destination, we passed by the iconic Magellan's Cross to take photos.

The church was very picturesque and peppered with colourful buntings that matched the area's warm lighting. It was brimming with devotees coming in and out; their passion was so strong that it somehow rubbed off on us. There, we took the opportunity to capture this vibrant energy emanating from the Cebuanos and also explored the area to capture our most gorgeous selfies.

To cap off day one, we experienced the warmest Cebu welcome thanks to the folks at LIV

Superclub with whom we partied the night away. Surprisingly, my unit still had enough juice for taking a couple more pictures inside the booming events place. The F1s, with its huge sensor, capably captured moments from the eventful night, undeterred by the smoke and lack of light inside the club.

Day 2: Responsive display

The second day of our Sinulog escapade was as eventful as the first day and thankfully, the Oppo F1s was there to capture it all.

Around an hour after breakfast, we were called to the hotel lobby for the start of a long day. Our first stop was lunch at the scenic Circa 1900. There, we were serenaded with beautiful renditions of pop tracks using a flute and saxophone whilst we dined and interacted with one another. The sumptuous lunch powered us to hike the steep entrance to the Temple of Leah. The majestic Greek-like temple, structured with Doric columns, was a tribute of love of Teodorico Adarna for his late wife Leah Villa Albino-Adarna and serves as an ancestral home to the Adarnas—kin of model/actress Ellen Adarna.

The area was brimming with photogenic elements that would make anyone think they're no longer in the Philippines. Since majority of central Cebu's network signals were cut off for security purposes, we were delighted when the area offered 4G signals. The photo-enthusiasts soon flooded the event tag with images of how we saw the Temple of Leah through the lens of the Oppo F1s.

We briefly stopped by TOPs, to take photos as we please: the overlooking city served as backdrop to most of the pictures along with the area's famous spherical design.

we were given an Oppo goodie bag, in which a waterproof case was included. During the event, where water and paint were forces to be reckoned with, I was a bit worried that the F1s might break or slow down given the circumstances. But it

performed beyond my expectations. Touch response was fast albeit it was inside a plastic case. Pictures also came out nicely even if there was a wet layer of plastic over the lens and the night offered very little light.



Colorful photographs from 2017's Sinulog parade



Day 3: Vibrant Camera and seamless multitasking

The day of the parade was where the Oppo F1s truly shined. It accurately captured the many colors of the Sinulog floats and dancing contingents while working double time to accommodate its user's whims. Moreover, its processing power didn't back down to my incessant switching between selfie and main camera mode. Back at the hotel, the unit was busy uploading my photos onto my various social media accounts and coping with my irregular browsing habits.

The trip concluded on day four where the wittiest selfies were recognized and we unfortunately

had to bid goodbye to our F1s units and newfound friends. Through this trip, the Oppo F1s established itself as a foolproof phone for the shutter-happy crowd who loves to go on colourful adventures.

Check out the #OPPOF1sSinulog to see more of what went on this epic trip.



Ollie, the official Oppo mascot, takes over Cebu.

WORLD FOOD TOUR

Words and Photos by Jonah Mendoza
Artwork by Theresa Eloriaga

Ding! Lunch time! If you're anything like the rest of the working world, you spend a lot of time picking a place to eat, ultimately settling for fast food. Break that habit. Join us on a quick food tour and broaden your horizons!

CYMA

Cyma recently celebrated 10 years in the business, and if in those 10 years you haven't quite figured out how to pronounce their name, it's "see-ma." You're welcome. Translated to English, that means "to flourish."

Chef Robby Goco came up with the idea when he traveled to Greece and was exposed to the rich flavors of Greek cuisine. The first branch opened in 2005 in Boracay island, and now, more than a decade later, they have eight branches nationwide.



To start the meal off, we were served a chopped salad with mixed greens, walnuts, caramelized pears, crumbled blue cheese, tomato, and grated Parmigiano Reggiano topped with their signature herb vinaigrette.

If there's one thing I learned, Greek food is known for having five staple ingredients: salt, pepper, olive oil, oregano and lemon. Greek cuisine brings out the natural flavor of the ingredients without over doing it.

As for the salad, I loved it so much as the tangy dressing brought zing to the crisp vegetables. The blue cheese gave richness that rounded the dish out nicely. It was also my first time eating caramelized

pears - it was delightful.

Next up was Lamb Yiouvetsi which was baked lamb with orzo (a kind of pasta), served with grated kefalotiri, parsley and olive oil.

Writer's tip: I really had a great time experiencing Greek food for the first time. This definitely will not be my last visit.

Location: Shangri-la Plaza Mall, Level 6, Mandaluyong, 1552 Metro Manila

Contact no: (02) 637 3090

The subtle flavor of the orzo was an interesting experience for a first-timer such as myself, and was the perfect complement to the strong flavor of the lamb. For the main course, we were treated to Kreatika (a meat platter) consisting of Lamb Keftedes (meatballs), porkchop, Kalamaki sticks and lamb shoulders. This platter is a carnivore's dream. The generous portions of meat provide enough for a family of four. The porkchop is my personal favorite because it was cooked perfectly—juicy and tender. I love the combination of tzatziki sauce and Greek chimichurri. I could literally put these dressings in my food.

To keep the authenticity of the dishes and the quality of the food as close to that which you might get if the Mediterranean was outside your window, some of Cyma's ingredients are sourced directly from Greece.

Experience: Seeing Cyma's branch at Shangri-La feels like being transported straight to Greece. Its blue and white color scheme is refreshing and welcoming. Simple details from Greek mythology, and details that would not look out of place on Mykonos add to the place's serene vibe.



This two-year-old restaurant is the product of a post-honeymoon experience of Valerie and Mark Anthony Tan. The idea of starting a business came about when the couple toured Europe to celebrate their honeymoon. Having been caught up in the experience of travel, the two decided to bring Europe back home with them. After a year and a half of consulting, market research, and product development, they finally established their dream business at the heart of Tomas Morato.

Experience: I was excited to go to this restaurant because I don't usually get to try European dishes often and I wanted to try their famous Schneeball, a dessert you literally hammer inside a bag before eating. I met the owners and they were very accommodating. We ended up trying almost 80 percent of their menu—it's a good thing this writer really knows how to put it away!

First up, we tried their appetizers. The Jamon Serrano Croquettes and Arancini al Margherita, which is essentially potato and risotto balls. I love the crunchiness outside and the rich flavor on the inside. The margherita sauce complemented the risotto perfectly. The pastas we were served were Cacio E Pepe Classic and Cacio E Pepe Mushroom Truffle. For those who love simple flavors, I recommend Cacio E Pepe Classic, and its more subtle, refined flavor. The Cacio E Pepe Mushroom Truffle was amazing in its own right. There was no shortage of truffles in the dish, so each bite was an intense burst of flavor. It can be very easy to go overboard with truffles, but this was done just right. It'll have you dreaming about it. Our entrees were Pollo ai Funghi sul Riso which is chicken and mushroom rice, and Schweinekotelett with Mustard Cream Sauce, a dish that is reminiscent of our own crispy liempo. This was my favorite of everything we ordered. The cut of meat cut were quite thick, but superbly tender, and the skin, goodness, the skin was so crisp! To end the meal, we were served the Peanut Brittle Schneeball, Trio of Cannoli, Red Velvet, Maple Bacon and Tradicionale Hot Churro. You might not think so, but that Schneeball is tough. You really have to put some strength behind your swings to get to that dessert, but it's all worth it, of course. One would order it as much for the experience as the dish itself, and I do suggest you do so yourself. Churros are a tricky beast to tame, but fortunately, theirs is done perfectly, with the right crunch, and no soggy, oily feeling after the last bite.

Writer's tip: Forget your dream European tour, we've got our own here.

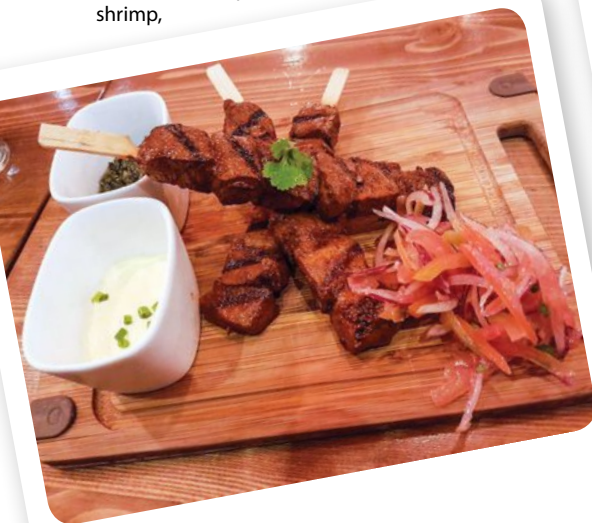
Location: 100 Scout De Guia Corner Tomas Morato Avenue, Tomas Morato, Quezon City
Contact no: (02) 954 0401





Cocina Peruvia is owned by Mother Spice Food Corporation, the same group that owns Slappy Cakes, Genki Sushi and Mango Tree Bistro. As seems to be the case with these things, Mr. Eric Teng got the idea of creating a Peruvian restaurant after a trip down to Peru. Captivated by the complex taste of Peruvian dishes, he worked with Celebrity Chef Him Uy de Baron to create a fantastic menu for the local food scene. In just the span of about two years, they gained traction as one of the better-known Peruvian restaurants in Manila. They even source some of their ingredients directly from Peru to live up to its name. With its 24/6 operation, the restaurant's target market are the BPOs surrounding the busy streets of Bonifacio Global City.

Experience: The vibrant orange and green color scheme of the restaurant makes it the center of attention in its corner, nestled between the skyscrapers of Bonifacio Global City. The relaxing vibe of the restaurant keeps the customers chill, and is an inviting place to stay and have a meal and a drink with your friends. To start off, we tried their appetizer, Causa con Avocado, a dish of mashed potatoes, shrimp,



avocado, and aji Amarillo, with a lemon mayo sauce. I don't often have cold appetizers, but this is something I could go for more frequently. The shrimp are so fresh, you can almost hear the sea just around the corner. We next tried the Anti Cuchos de Corazon (Beef heart). Yes, it was a little unnerving to learn that it was heart, and while I am not a fan of innards, when the chef himself approaches you to recommend it, well why not? I was not disappointed—it was delicious. The texture is very much like beef, and it took in all the flavor of the marinade. Forget what you might think about what the dish is made of. You owe it to

yourself to try this dish at least once. For the main course, we tried Lomo Saltado – beef tenderloin with spices, onions and tomatoes. It's everything you'd hope to have when you see the description on the menu. The beef is tender and bursting with flavor, which makes it difficult not to want to have this with lots and lots of rice. Their Arroz Verde con Pollo, or cilantro chicken rice, went with it excellently. Trust me not to exaggerate when

I say this might be the best rice dish that I've tasted, bar none.

I love cilantro so much and this dish is made with plenty. It's something I want to try and make at home, though it's going to be a tough act to follow. Next was Adobo Peruvia. It is basically our own adobo with cream instead of vinegar. It might seem a little odd on paper, but try to just have one bite. It's just impossible not to. To cleanse our palette with all the savory dishes, we tried Alfajores for dessert. It is Dulce de Leche with Pulvoron and ice cream. It was a great end to our Peruvian journey—light, sweet, and refreshing.

Writer's tip: Peruvian cuisine has now upstaged every other type of food in my book. Yes, it's that good.

Location: Ground Floor, Bonifacio One Technology Tower, Rizal Drive Corner 31st Street, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City

Contact no: (02) 9559975





6 Ways Watch OS 3 Can Make Your Life Easier

Words by Presy Alba

I'm not the Apple early adopter in our family—that title is shared by my two sisters. I'm more likely to wait for the next version. That is why I've always bought the S model iPhone starting with the iPhone 4S and every other year after that.

When the Apple Watch running on Watch OS was first released in 2015, the reviews were not all that great and other activity trackers seemed more useful. The Watch OS 2 update wasn't much better either.

But when I got an Apple Watch for Christmas running on Watch OS 3, I was surprisingly pleased with how it has helped me become more organized and how it is making my life a bit easier.

I would like to share the six ways the Apple Watch running on Watch OS 3 can make your life easier too:



1. Unlock your Mac

Make sure you upgrade to macOS Sierra first and that you have activated the 2-step verification on your iCloud account. Once that is done, all you need to do is go to System Preferences in your Mac, go to Security & Privacy > General and then click the option to allow your Apple Watch to unlock your Mac. It's that easy. After that, you won't have to type your password to access your Mac.

2. Breathe

This is a new Watch OS native app. It reminds you to pause for a minute during your busy day and take a few deep breaths to relax and calm down. From the Watch settings on your iPhone, you can customize how often you want a Breathe reminder—anywhere from never, to every hour, to every seven hours. You can also adjust how many breaths you want to take for the one minute you do this exercise.

3. Scribble Message replies

You don't have to reach for your iPhone to read and reply to an SMS message. Even on Silent Mode, with haptics on, you will feel the vibration notifying you that you received a message. You can then simply read the message and reply by scribbling on the screen; the scribble pane will cleverly translate each letter you scribble—no matter how rough—into text.



4. Customizable Dock

The Dock will allow you to access 10 of your most used apps by just pressing the side button of the Watch and scrolling through. You can customize it from the Watch App on your iPhone by selecting Dock and then editing the list of apps. There's also an 11th slot in the Dock which shows you the most recent app (that's not in the dock) that you used, just in case you want to access it again.

5. Control Center

The Control Center is accessed by swiping up after you wake up the Apple Watch. The Control Center shows you how much battery your Watch has, let's you turn on Silent Mode, allows you to locate your Phone by letting it ping, Toggle Airplane Mode and Do Not Disturb, as well as Lock your Apple Watch. You will need to enter your passcode to unlock your watch.

6. Medical ID and Emergency SOS

a long press on the side button will let you access three things at once: the power off button, your Medical ID, and the Emergency SOS. The Medical ID syncs medical information that you enter on your Health app. You can access the data by swiping on the Medical ID tab. The Emergency SOS is also activated by swiping it to the right—it automatically calls the local emergency service, so if you find yourself in a dangerous situation, you don't have to reach for your phone to call for help.

Projecting the Future: Epson's EB-L1000 Series

Words by Robby Vaflor
Photos by Theresa Eloriaga

Epson has been at the top of the projector game worldwide for 15 years running, and, according to FutureSource, has been in the number one position in the Philippines for two consecutive years now.

The company owes its success in large part to its proprietary 3LCD technology, providing excellent image quality throughout its lengthy arsenal of products. But instead of playing it safe, the top spot has driven Epson to continuously better itself, innovating its product line based on the needs of customers both new and old, and ambitioning new applications for its projectors.

We got to talk to Lyn Lizarondo, Epson's product manager for business and home visual instruments (what the company calls projectors) about the EB-L1000 series, a testament to Epson's pioneering spirit, shunning the much dreaded stagnation.

Lyn Lizarondo
Product Manager
Business and Home Visual Instruments





Having worked at Epson for 13 years, handling projectors for six or seven-odd-years, she has seen first-hand the company's commitment to building upon its already strong foundation with better and more exciting innovations. As the company looks to the future, the EB-L1000 series of laser projectors give a glimpse of what's to come.

Still using the signature 3LCD technology, the EB-L1000 series projectors make use of a laser light source. "Instead of the conventional lamp, we're now using the laser light source which has a longer lifespan," Lizarondo said.

Projectors that use conventional lamps can only last between 5000 to 10000 hours without replacement depending on the model of the projector and the brightness of the lamp. The EB-L1000 series, on the other hand, promises up to 20000 hours of maintenance-free operation without having to replace the light source.

Intended for high-end consumers and commercial use, the line of projectors have been made to perform according to customer demand, being able to work 24 hours, seven days a week without dedicated external cooling.

"For this series, we're the first to incorporate the inorganic 3LCD panel and the inorganic phosphor wheel. The components of the inorganic phosphor wheel and the inorganic 3LCD panel are more light and heat resistant," she mentioned.

To achieve this high level of performance, Epson's engineers performed rigorous testing that simulate the most demanding usage in real-world situations such as in indoor concerts, outdoors, in office buildings and so on.

"Before we introduce the product to the market, we make sure of the product's quality. We do research, testing, even comparisons with competitors," Lizarondo added.

Aside from the laser light source and the new heat-resistant components that allow 20000 hours of continuous operation, the line of projectors all have 4K resolution enhancement technology, optional lenses for any space requirement from ultra-short throw to long throw and flexible installation for different projection surfaces.

The projectors have built-in cameras that allow them to adjust the image based on the distance and dimensions of the surface. They have edge-blending capabilities which allow multiple projectors to display a single, larger image. The EB-L1000 series also has curve projection and a corner wall function for even more flexible installations.

There are four models in the line: the L1100U which has a brightness of 6000 lumens; the L1200U at 7000 lumens; the L1405U at 8000 lumens; and the L1505U at 12000 lumens. All models have the aforementioned features with

the L1405U and the L1505U having additional wireless connectivity through embedded WLAN. The EB-L1000 series also supports projection mapping, or projecting a full image on large uneven surfaces usually on building facades. Recently, for example, Epson did a projection mapping installation at Indonesia's National Museum in Yogyakarta as well as in three major malls in the Philippines.

"We continue to innovate our projectors, making sure we can cope with the requirements of the market; so we are looking into those kinds of applications, going beyond schools and offices," Lizarondo said.

With the widest range of projectors of any company, that have various industry applications and all the new advances in technology, Lizarondo feels that the company's 15 years in the number one spot can be owed to its core innovation.

"It's our 3LCD technology. It's our core technology for the projector, and we just continue to innovate what the market needs. We are known for the quality of the images. I think that's what drives us to achieve the number one position worldwide," she said.

Going into 2017 and beyond, the company is poised for a bright future thanks to its underlying technology and the revolutions that led up to this point.

UPCOMING 2017 RELEASES TO BE EXCITED ABOUT (SO FAR)

Words by Robby Vafloor

2017 somehow managed to be an excellent year for music already: Tycho came out with "Epoch", Sohn with "Rennen", and The xx released the solid-throughout "I See You" so that's your summer playlist pretty much locked in. Over the next few months there will be a lot of potentially good records that are going to come out, and listed below are some of the albums you should look forward to.



Surfer Blood, *Snowdonia* **February 3**

By the time you read this, "Snowdonia" would have been out already, but the band's first song offering from the record, "Six Flags in F or G", is enough to warrant a special mention on this list. It's certainly new-sounding compared to their old work, which, oddly enough sounds a lot more like classic surf rock as opposed to the indie surf tracks that the band is known for. There might be some irony in there, but I am too lazy to flesh it out. Anyway, "Snowdonia" is the band's first album since the departure of bassist Kevin Williams and the tragic death of guitarist Thomas Fekete from cancer last May.



Laura Marling, *Semper Femina* **March 10**

Once you hear that sexy jazz bassline, you know that if "Soothing" is anything to go by, Laura Marling's "Semper Femina" will be unlike anything we have ever heard before from the folk musician (is it still safe to call her that?). Using 2015's "Short Movie" as a jumping off point, this follow-up is poised to explore even more complex music both melodically and lyrically.



Teen Daze, *Themes for Dying Earth* **February 10**

Give the first track entitled "Cycle" from the record and you'll understand why we are excited for Jamison Isaak's return as Teen Daze. Exploring new themes, "Themes for Dying Earth" features several collaborations throughout the album and more personal lyrical material. Done listening to "Cycle?" Listen to "First Rain" featuring Bon Iver's Sean Carey (known as S. Carey). Done with that? Well, I know it's tough, but you're just gonna have to wait until it comes out. Be strong.



Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, *The Tourist* **February 24**

Alec Ounsworth returns as the sole member of Clap Your Hands Say Yeah after the rest of the band departed in 2014. Ounsworth released the first song under the previously-a-band-and-now-merely-a-monicker entitled "Fireproof". Working with new styles and lyrical tones, with no one to debate over musical direction with, it will be interesting to see how the new Clap Your Hands Say Yeah will differ from its old iteration.



Thievery Corporation, *The Temple of I & I*
February 10

The DJ collective Thievery Corporation has a knack for making trip-hop that sounds as fresh as the genre did two decades ago. The new album borrows from different musical genres like jazz, hip-hop and ethnic music to create some tasty jams. Several tracks from *The Temple of I & I* are circling around the interwebs. They are really great for chill house parties or even just for your daily morning routine.



Dirty Projectors, *Dirty Projectors*
February 24

Finally, after five long years, we'll get to hear new music from Dirty Projectors after the band's critically-acclaimed "Swing Lo Magellan" back in 2012. They recently shared a third track entitled "Up in Hudson" off of the new self-titled record. It showcases the classic Dirty Projectors art pop sound, but now featuring David Longstreth on lead vocals prominently compared to the band's female vocals-driven efforts in the past.



Minus the Bear, *VOIDS*
March 3

2017 will be the comeback of classic, eclectic indie rock; we're calling it. Following the string of returning bands with new releases for this year, Minus the Bear gives us "VOIDS" which is their first full-length release since "Infinity Overhead" which was released all the way back in 2012. The song "Invisible" from the upcoming record sounds as fresh as when we first heard the band fifteen years ago. This will be a great year for indie rock. End of discussion.



The Shins, *Heartworms*
March 10

New material from The Shins is always welcome; this is a rule I live by. The 20-year-old band has set out to prove that age is just a number with "Heartworms" coming out in March. The latest song off of the album is entitled "Name for You" and is a very youthful track that can easily get 50 plays in a week if you're not too careful. I was not careful, and I have no regrets.

Didn't I just say this will be a great year for indie rock? It feels like 2007 again and everything is great.



British Sea Power, *Let the Dancers Inherit the Party*
March 31

The resuscitative properties of 2017 continues with British Sea Power's "Let the Dancers Inherit the Party." The last record that the English band released with fully original material was "Machineries of Joy" back in 2013. To coincide with the announcement of a new album, the band shared the song "Bad Bohemian" off the new album. Listen to it. You really should.

Photo from <http://britishseapower.co.uk/>



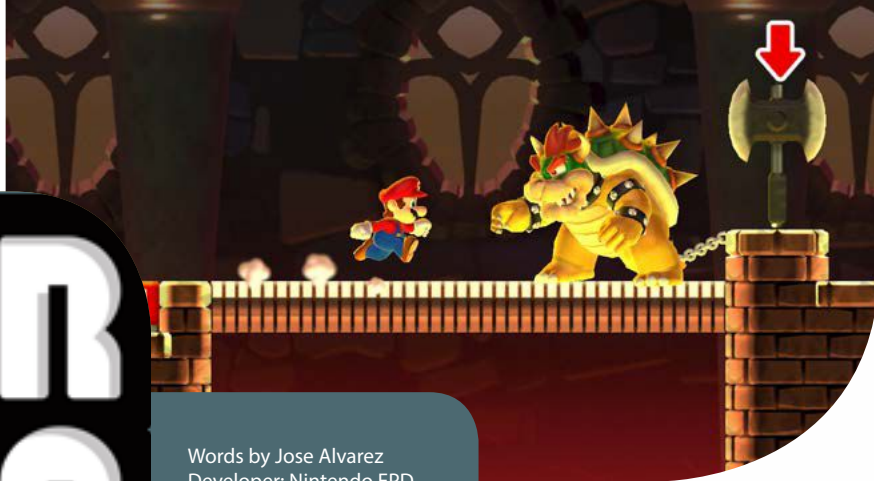
The Jesus and Mary Chain, *Damage and Joy*
March 24

The list HAS to end with probably the biggest thing in music this year: The Jesus and Mary Chain is giving the world new music. It's been a whole 18 years since the band's last LP "Munki" back in 1998. Nineties cultural references are pretty much in now so we were probably due a new record from the noise pop group anyway. The first track, "Amputation", sounds so nostalgic that it kind of makes you want to grab a cassette and make a mixtape with a crummy bootlegged copy of the song in it.

SUPER MARIO RUN

Words by Jose Alvarez
Developer: Nintendo EPD
Publisher: Nintendo
Platforms: iOS, Android
(March 2017)

The idea of Mario, Nintendo's long-serving mascot, appearing on a non-Nintendo console is not a new idea—Mario has appeared on a PC game, 1991's *Mario Teaches Typing* and 1994's *Hotel Mario* for the Philips CD-i. While some gamers believe that the Italian plumber is forever tied to Nintendo, the latest developments at the company show that it is willing to shift over to mobile devices in an attempt to increase revenue and bring their games to mobile audiences.





Super Mario Run is only the third *Mario* game to be released on a non-Nintendo console, and the premise is simple: players control Mario as he runs from left to right automatically. The player has to tap the screen to make Mario jump over obstacles. The player must safely get Mario through the level all while killing enemies and collecting coins, much like other classic games in the franchise. An additional challenge is to find five pink coins in each level. Finding all five pink coins unlocks five purple coins, and collecting all five purple coins unlocks five black coins.

Another mode, Toad Rally mode, allows players to challenge ghost versions of other players who played through the levels, much like the Time Attack mode in *Mario Kart*. Toad Rally requires players to use the Rally Ticket, which can be earned through completing levels, trading in My Nintendo coins, or other tasks in the game. Another form of currency is introduced for players who want to create their own version of the Mushroom Kingdom, and the player can gain or lose Toads that populate the Mushroom Kingdom. Players can also unlock additional characters that appear in other *Mario* games, such as Luigi, Princess Peach, Toad, Toadette, and Yoshi. One can still play Toad Rally mode without a Rally Ticket, but it can only be done once per day and does not give any coins for winning.

Shigeru Miyamoto, one of the most visible employees at Nintendo who created not only the Mario character, but other Nintendo characters such as Donkey Kong, Star Fox, Zelda, Link, and Pikmin, stated, "The longer you continue to make a series, the more complex the gameplay becomes, and the harder it becomes for new players to be able to get into the series." Using mobile games with simpler controls, Miyamoto noted that this would introduce a whole new generation to Mario and the Nintendo franchise in general.

This is the first attempt to pivot onto a non-Nintendo console, and perhaps we can see more Nintendo games on mobile devices in the future. While the gameplay is rather simplistic, the replayability level is high and will entertain both old and new *Mario* fans alike.





1 Amazon Rekognition

Image Recognition And Analysis
Powered By Deep Learning

Generally Available Today

AWS re: Invent 2016

Words by Ren Alcantara

At the close of 2016, Amazon gathered software developers, members of the press, industry innovators, and market leaders in the one event that showed off everything Amazon Web Services has to offer. This most recent re:Invent was the largest ever, with tens of thousands of participants from all over the globe, and for good reason: they had a lot to share.

With more than two million customers monthly, AWS saw Q3 growth increase almost 55 percent, to USD 3.2 Billion. Their marketplace, which offers different software solutions to users, has something for everyone: with 35 categories, offering more than 3,500 software listings from 1,100 independent software vendors. As AWS grows, they also want their customers to grow with them. Since their launch in 2006, and as of re:Invent 2016, AWS has lowered prices 58 times.

Through the whole conference, we found that the secret behind the success of AWS is actually pretty simple: modularity. By offering tools to customers, they're able to pick the ones they need, and solve their particular pain points. This, along with security, agility, and the elimination of capital expenses makes it as attractive an option to the small business as it is to large multinationals.

There's so much ground to cover, so we'll be talking about some of what we learned and saw at re:Invent over a few issues. The

most interesting to this writer was Amazon's announcement of three new AI services for AWS users. The services, from intelligent conversational user interfaces, to smart image recognition, and human-like text to speech, all allow AWS customers to engage their users in a way that is straight out of science fiction.

We've been poking, prodding, and swiping at our phones and laptops for far too long. The next big thing in tech is going to be voice in a deeper, more meaningful, and more intuitive manner than we've seen to wit. Moving speech recognition to the Cloud allows much more compute power to be brought to bear, and if the Amazon Echo is any indication, it's going to be amazing. This brings us to the first of Amazon's new AI services: Lex.

Amazon Lex provides the tools needed for creating conversational interfaces with voice and text through automatic speech recognition, and natural language understanding. To put it in less technically, Lex allows your interface to

understand speech the way an actual person decodes speech. By deriving the meaning behind your speech, rather than forcing you to adhere to a particular syntax, Lex makes voice and text interaction as simple as talking to a human being. It also allows layered conversations that can reference previous levels, just like an actual human agent, so you don't always have to keep repeating yourself.

Twilio, a huge, global company that is behind the automated messages from a lot of services, such as Uber, eBay, WhatsApp, eHarmony, and many others, had nothing but praises for the new service.

"Developers and businesses use Twilio to build apps that can communicate with customers in virtually every corner of the world," said Benjamin Stein, director of Messaging Products, Twilio. "Amazon Lex will provide developers with an easy-to-use modular architecture and comprehensive APIs to enable building and deploying conversational bots on mobile



Introducing Amazon AI

Bringing Powerful Artificial Intelligence To All Developers



2 Amazon Polly

Text To Speech Powered By Deep Learning

Generally Available Today

AWS Is Transforming The IT Industry



platforms. We look forward to seeing what our customers build using Twilio and Amazon Lex.”

Complementary to Lex is Amazon Polly. Where the former allows for understanding human speech and letting a machine understand a string of it the way humans do, Polly is a service that lets the machines talk back to us in a natural-sounding way. From mobile apps, devices, appliances, and other interfaces, Polly lets developers input text that can then be streamed as audio. With 47 convincingly human-sounding voices across 24 languages, in both male and female voices, and a variety of accents, it's the simplest, most effective way to engage consumers via voice. The speed, consistency, and quality of Polly is unparalleled, and charging, as with most all of the Amazon Cloud services, is based solely on the amount of text converted.

As a widely respected, reliable, and far-reaching organization, The Washington Post needs no introduction. With an output of more than

1200 stories a day, Polly is of particular value to them. “We’ve long been interested in providing audio versions of our stories, but have found that existing text-to-speech solutions are not cost-effective for the speech quality they offer,” said Joseph Price, senior product manager, The Washington Post. “With the arrival of Amazon Polly and its high-quality voices, we look forward to offering readers more rich and versatile ways to experience our content.”

The last of the three AI services launched at this year’s massive re:Invent was Amazon Rekognition. This lets devs create applications with strikingly effective image recognition capabilities through deep learning. The service looks at image borders, colors, shapes, and other characteristics, and applies deep learning algorithms to tell you whether you’re looking at a face, a forest, a temple, or a giraffe. One of the more interesting applications of Rekognition shown off at the launch was integration with a travel app that gave you photo suggestions for destinations the user may be interested in

based on a series of questions, without the use of previously embedded tags or image names.

It also has value with facial search and recognition. SmugMug, whose customers store billions of photos daily, has obvious use for Rekognition. Rather than have their customers spend most of their time searching and tagging manually, the Rekognition service does all that quickly and accurately. This allows them to focus on sharing and reliving the memories, rather than slogging through endless thumbnails and folders.

In addition to these services, AWS recently announced that it is investing significantly in MXNet, an open-source distributed deep learning framework, initially developed by Carnegie Mellon and other top universities, by contributing code and improving the developer experience. MXNet will enable machine learning engineers to build scalable deep learning models that can significantly reduce the training time for their applications.



3 Amazon ALEXA

(It's what's inside Alexa)

Natural Language Understanding (NLU) &
Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) Powered By Deep Learning

Preview Available Today

PICKING AN EDC KNIFE

Words by Ren Alcantara

As with everything in life, picking an EDC blade is all about compromise. The key here is to compromise on the correct aspects. I've made my share of mistakes picking blades, so today, let's take a look at some of the things I feel should be looked at closely when picking an EDC knife.

Going beyond your budget

Don't get me wrong. I love me an expensive knife. With high price tags, you can usually expect quality, exclusivity, or generally a really awesome design or feature, or great steel. If you're anything like the majority of people in the world though, you'll end up babying the knife, and either opting not to use it, or leaving it at home. There is absolutely nothing wrong with getting a knife just because it's pretty; that's a legitimate thing. Since we're talking about EDC blades though, it might not be the best idea. I generally carry knives that cost less than PHP 5,000. When the time comes to bring that knife to bear on some tough task, I generally don't feel bad to beat it up. If you baby your knives, you might want to skip the next sentence. I've used my EDC knives to open cans, cut heavy cardboard, and pry things (very carefully, of course), and while I do mess up the edge, I don't feel bad about it because I know I didn't devalue a pricey knife, and I know I can just take a few minutes to bring it up to a keen edge, put it back in my pocket, and be done with it. Knives are meant to be used, and cheap knives just love to be used. Just the same, respect the blade.

The thing here is that your budget, and consequently, your idea of a "beater" knife, is going to be different from the next guy in the shop. As long as you go for a blade that you aren't going to be afraid to put through the wringer, you're one step closer to making a great EDC choice.

Going overboard

Say what you will about the brand, but the Cold Steel Recon Tanto is a monster of a knife. 11 inches OAL, with a seven-inch blade, it's plenty of knife for a lot of meat for a lot of tasks. Would I carry it

as a daily? I did! Would I do it again? Probably not. Would a seven-inch blade be useful? Sure, for more than a few things. Are you likely to use it every day? If you are, you don't need to read this article, and I hope you stay safe wherever you find yourself deployed. As fun as it might be to know you have all that knife on you at a given point, in practical terms, it's not necessarily the best idea. Take an honest look at your daily use scenarios--you'll know what to do based on that. Besides, all that steel gets to you after a while.

Weight comes into play here as well. You might not notice it at first, but you're going to be carrying your knife around constantly. With a light, your wallet, phone, keys, coins, and whatever else you have on your person, the weight adds up and can start to interfere with how you run your day. It's easy to overlook weight, but you'll appreciate a knife that doesn't really bother you with its presence.

The pocket clip

A knife is an important thing to have. This is true, though not everyone thinks so. A well-executed pocket clip not only keeps out of sight of wandering eyes, it'll also make it more difficult to lose your blade. Multiple clip locations are also great for lefties, or those who prefer something other than right-hand, tip-up carry. Something tight, low-profile, and sturdy is a must for a daily carry.

Locking system

As long as you pick a brand that has a solid reputation, you shouldn't agonize too much about the kind of locking system the knife has. For example, I have recommended knives to people that would otherwise have been just

what they were looking for, save for the locking system. They then go with some blade with a proprietary system that's solid in its own right, but not quite what they were looking for in other aspects. In short, they compromised blade shape, weight, performance, or even style because of a perceived flaw that isn't really a big deal. Everyone will have their preferences. Liner, backlock, or proprietary system, but as long as it's tested and done by a brand that you trust, you should have no problem.

Maintenance

One of the things you'll be doing with your EDC blade is keeping it in good shape, and that goes beyond just keeping a keen edge. Keeping a folder in your pocket tends to attract all sorts of crud, which gets into the nooks and crannies of the knife and its mechanism. This will eventually cause the knife to bind, or deploy sluggishly. Worse still, moisture can accumulate in the little gaps, and rust the steel in the liners or blade itself, causing more of a headache. Blades with a skeletonized or flow-through design will be easier to keep clean on a daily basis, but you'll also routinely want to take the knife apart for a good, deep cleaning. Springs, complex locking mechanisms, and lots of small parts will make the process more difficult, and is something you must keep in mind.

I'm quite picky about my daily carry blades, and there are quite a few things I look for, but these are some of the most important. A great blade to look for is one that will be a great all-rounder which will help you accomplish most of the tasks you will encounter on a daily basis. Don't worry, the knife you are looking for is out there. You just have to go find it.



Inexpensive, lightweight with the FRN scales, and with a tough, easy-to-sharpen edge, the Byrd Cara Cara 2 is a great beater knife.

While a little heavy, the deep-carry pocket clip, rock-solid lockup and gorgeous styling made the Heiho my go-to knife for when I was at formal events.



The least practical of the knives I ever carried, the Cold Steel Recon Tanto was too large, heavy, and ridiculous as an EDC option for a civvy like me. It was a great conversation piece though.

The knife I carry most often (as testified by the wear on the blade), the Ontario RAT 1 gives me a lot of what I need and few things I don't: practical blade shape, reliable lock, and good hand feel, all at a reasonable price.



Canon Celebrates 20th Year in the Philippines Exciting Plans, Promos, and Products Await Filipinos in 2017!

In celebration of its 20th year milestone in the country, Canon Marketing Philippines, Inc. (CMPI) has announced several products, promos, and plans that Filipinos can expect in the year ahead.

"We are grateful for the unwavering support of Filipinos to our brand in the last 20 years. We were able to get this far because of their trust on us in helping them achieve their imaging and printing needs through our expertise in technology," said Lim Kok Hin, CMPI President & CEO. "As we celebrate this milestone, we also remember our commitment to our Filipino customers and clients to provide them only the best quality of service and products that they deserve—and that is what we have planned out for the year ahead."

Among the key highlights that the company announced for the year were:

- Canon Inc. will celebrate in March the 30th anniversary of the launch of the company's EOS System, which includes EOS-series interchangeable lens cameras and a diverse range of system accessories, beginning with interchangeable EF Lenses.
- The Canon #getMpowered campaign that launched last year continues in 2017. It aims to inspire more individuals to capture their life's passion through photography, then share and express themselves to the world effortlessly with the help of Canon's EOS M mirrorless cameras—the EOS M5, EOS M3, and EOS M10.

In addition to these, this year, Filipinos can expect several new products from Canon including the following:

- Designed for lifestyle photographers, the new PowerShot G9 X Mark II is an addition to

the PowerShot G Series line of premium digital compact cameras that features the latest DIGIC 7 image processor to produce high quality images and new levels of performance for accurate detection and precision tracking of subjects.

- Expanding the PowerShot SX and IXUS range are the new PowerShot SX430 IS, which is a high zoom compact camera perfect for landscape and distance photography, and the ultra-compact IXUS 190 and IXUS 185, which are perfect for everyday photography.



- The PIXMA Ink Efficient G4000 with WIFI & FAX is an upgrade to the G series printers with its integrated ink tank design. This brings Canon further in the game of low-cost, high-volume, multi-function printing that makes home offices and small businesses more efficient, more cost-effective and consequently, more profitable.
- Lastly, the newest additions to the line of Ink Efficient All-In-One printers are the PIXMA Ink Efficient E410 and E470. These are the latest printers equipped with low-cost, high yield ink cartridges to ensure affordable cost of operation.

Along with these new products, Canon will be rolling out a series of special 20th anniversary

promos this year as its way of giving back to its valued clients and consumers.

Meanwhile, as Canon gears up for a full year ahead, it announced new assignments and additions to its local management team. Kristine Dacanay, previously CMPI's Marketing Manager for Business Imaging Solutions and Production Printing Group (BPG), now oversees the overall marketing communication initiatives of CMPI's Consumer Group and BPG alongside Lim. Dacanay has been with CMPI for ten years now, and has been instrumental in optimizing Canon's marketing efforts throughout the years.

In addition to this, Benny Yu joins in as the new head of CMPI's Consumer Group. His role promises more aggressive efforts to bring Canon's consumer portfolio forward and beyond in the Philippines.

"In Canon, we delight in bringing to our customers and clients the right products and services they need to help improve their lives and enable them to achieve their image of success," said Dacanay. "You can only expect that this year and in the years to come, we will only strive to be better and offer nothing less of what Filipinos deserve from our brand of crisp and vivid images."

For updates on promos and new products, visit www.canon.com.ph and www.canon.com.ph/imagenation.

PLDT and Globe Agree on Lower Inter-network Voice Call Rates

Two telco giants, PLDT and Globe, have agreed to make inter-network voice calls more affordable, both for mobile phones and fixed lines. The lower rates were announced last November 28 and are being implemented as of writing.

"We are supporting the government's efforts to bring down the cost of telecom services in the country. This agreement will translate in different ways to more affordable voice call rates for our subscribers," said PLDT director and head of regulatory affairs and policy office Ray Espinosa.

The voice call interconnection rate between PLDT (Smart, Sun, and TNT) and Globe will be lowered by as much as 40 percent, specifically down to PHP 2.50 per minute across the board starting January 1, 2017. Currently, mobile-to-mobile and

landline-to-mobile voice calls are charged four pesos per minute, while mobile to landline calls are charged three pesos per minute.

PLDT chief revenue officer Eric Alberto said both operators are also committed in maintaining the highest quality of connection for voice calls between the two networks even as they endeavor to reduce interconnection charges.

He added that improving voice services will provide customers more options to connect with their family and friends, at home or on the go.



Vivo Launches the V5 Plus, and Stephen Curry as Brand Ambassador

Vivo, the fifth largest smartphone manufacturer globally, launched the selfie-centric V5 Plus to fanfare at the SM Mall of Asia last month.

The phone boasts a very impressive 20MP dual front camera setup that allows users to achieve a dramatic bokeh effect, keeping the subject in focus, while blurring the background behind them, allowing users to take their selfie game up to the next level.

The Vivo V5 Plus features a 1/2.8-inch 16-megapixel sensor rear camera with ultra HD mode, boosting photo quality to 64 megapixels, and a professional mode for manual configuration of camera settings before taking photos.

The device comes with 4GB RAM and 64GB ROM, and a Qualcomm Snapdragon 625 chipset, to make short work of multiple processes at the same time. The phone runs on Vivo's very own Funtouch 3.0 OS, based on Android 6.0.

The phone's style values both sophistication and convenience, with a 5.5-inch display and an ultra-slim bezel, allowing users to enjoy a large display

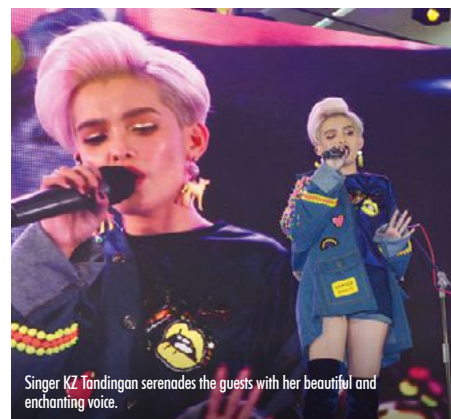


Fashion and lifestyle bloggers (From L-R) Rodel Flordeliz, Ana Gonzales, David Guison, Michael Macalos, Mikyle Quizon, Earth Rulan and Sarah Tirona

while letting them operate the phone with only one hand.

Powering the device is a 3160mAh battery with a fast-charging feature, ideal for highly mobile people, and upgraded fingerprint reader technology, that securely unlocks the phone in just 0.2 seconds.

The big reveal also reintroduced NBA superstar Stephen Curry as the official endorser and brand ambassador of all Vivo phones, including the Vivo V5 Plus perfect selfie phone.



Singer KZ Tandingan serenades the guests with her beautiful and enchanting voice.



Vivo Philippines CEO Jai Xiong and brand director Annie Lim with the brand marketing team and Vivo dub ambassadors, after a successful Vivo V5 Plus launch at the SM Mall of Asia Atrium.

Kaspersky Lab Launches 2017 Flagship Security Solution in PH

Kaspersky Lab aims to spread awareness and protect you from the perils of the World Wide Web through its new flagship security solution.

The Kaspersky Internet Security 2017 provides protection for Windows, Mac, and Android users against malware, dangerous sites, online tracking, fraud, and theft.

The 2017 security solution from Kaspersky Lab provides the same tested protection as its previous products, but now comes with several new functions for Windows. In this version, users can protect their data from being intercepted even when on an unsafe internet connection with the help of Secure Connection. This feature encrypts all data sent and received through a network. This comes in handy when making financial transactions, authorization on sites, or transferring confidential information. The Kaspersky Lab protection component, Secure Connection, can be launched from the main window of Kaspersky Internet Security. It can also be activated automatically when the device is connected to public Wi-Fi or when the user is inputting confidential information online.

Within the security product's license, users are given 200 MB of encrypted traffic at their disposal, daily. Additionally, they can opt for unlimited volume of traffic for a fee. The new version also allows users to effortlessly patch "holes" in their device through Software Updater and Software Cleaner.



Software Updater automatically finds applications that need to be updated and, if the user agrees, install the latest versions from vendor sites on their computer. The user can also request the update of an application manually or add any of them to the list of applications that should not be updated.

Meanwhile, Software Cleaner scans all applications installed on the computer and marks those that pose potential risk. It will also inform users if a program has been installed without them knowing, slows down the user's device, provides incomplete or incorrect information about its functions, operates in the background,

shows banners and messages without permission (e.g. advertising), or if it is rarely used. The user can then either remove or leave the application in question.

In addition to the new functions, Kaspersky Internet Security has been enhanced with improved advanced technologies such as the multi-level protection of financial transactions (with Safe Money), the prevention of the installation of unwanted applications (with Application Manager, part of the former Change Control feature) and the blocking of advertising banners in the browser (with Anti-Banner).

Epson's B2B Marketing and CSR Efforts Recognized at Marketing Excellence Awards

Global digital imaging and printing solutions provider Epson won two awards at the prestigious Marketing Excellence Awards 2016—bronze awards for Excellence in B2B Marketing in Singapore for its ENGAGE2WIN Regional Dealers Program and for excellence in Corporate Social Responsibility for its initiative to sponsor youth footballers from the National Football Academy on holistic overseas training stints.

The Marketing Excellence Awards organized by Marketing Magazine, is Singapore's main event recognizing excellence across the marketing communications services industry.

The ENGAGE2WIN dealer program is a point-based reward program for Epson's dealers for its large format printers across five countries, enabling dealers to redeem rewards through an online catalog. Dealers from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines are awarded points based on the sales of large-format printers they make.

Additionally, Epson provided a series of training stints to Singapore's young footballers, with one of Japan's J2 League teams, Matsumoto Yamaga FC in June 2015. In December 2015, Epson Singapore offered Singapore national goalkeeper Izwan Mahbud the opportunity to train and be scouted by the region's best football managers at Yamaga FC.



"Both the awards are recognition of our strength and success of our regional marketing efforts and local CSR outreach. We would like to highlight that collaboration with the local football community and youth development is one of the ways we give back to the community

and is integrated with our marketing efforts. We look to continue building the Epson brand in Singapore and the region, and to seek to support and inspire our youths to pursue their passions," said Toshimitsu Tanaka, managing director (Southeast Asia), Epson Singapore.

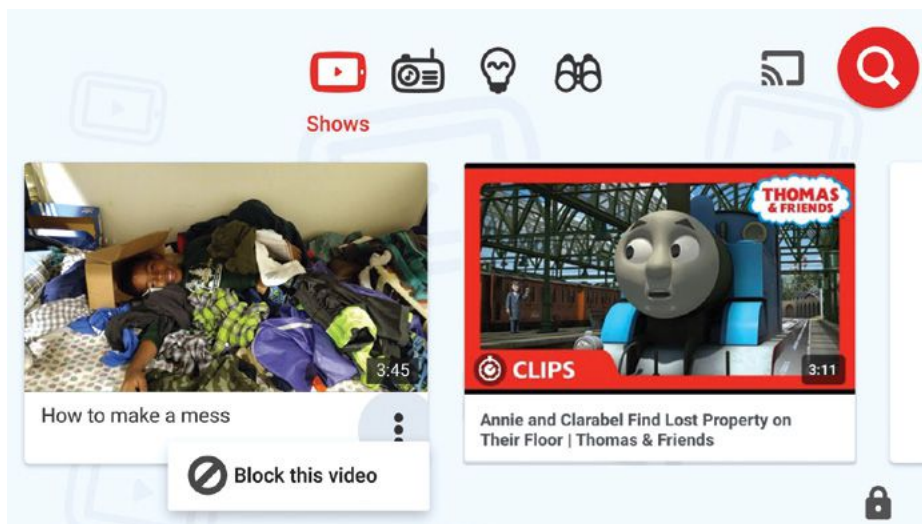
YouTube Kids Gives Parents Content Control

The almost-two-year-old YouTube Kids app has seen an immense following from families across the globe, currently with over 10 million downloads on Google Play, ranking consistently as one of the top five apps in the Apple App Store, and notching an overall 4+ rating on the Play Store.

It boasts features such as: an in-depth tutorial on how the system recommends content and how to flag videos; a timer that allows parents to specify how long the kids' screen time is; compatibility with smart TVs, Chromecast, Apple TV, and game consoles; and age-based home screen content customization.

The app rolled out a new feature which allows parents to block certain channels, videos, and content from their children. This includes potentially messy ones such as goo- and slime-making tutorials.

In order to do so, parents must go to the YouTube Kids app, tap the Three-Dot menu next to any video or channel, and choose the block option. They will then be prompted to verify the decision through a parental consent email.



All the blocked videos and channels on YouTube Kids will also sync across all devices so parents don't have to repetitively go through the same process of blocking and verifying. Should they change their mind, they can also easily unblock restricted videos or channels.

The new feature is available in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Malaysia, Philippines, India, and Singapore.



Asia's Accelerating Cloud "App-vancement"

Words by Oscar Visaya

Oscar Visaya

Country Manager
F5 Networks

In Asia, the application economy is an unstoppable juggernaut advancing at full speed. Wielding the power to make or break the customer-brand relationship, applications that fail to deliver a positive user experience risk losing about a third of their customer base. Recognizing the potential of this digital strategy, today, F5 has found that organizations across this region depend on about 200 applications each, to streamline and introduce efficiencies in functionalities ranging from enterprise productivity, IT deployment to supply chain management.

This number is however set to rise as digital workplaces become commonplace. More employees want to, and are given the autonomy of choosing the apps and processes to work with to maintain a high intensity of corporate functionality anytime, anywhere, across any device.

In spite of its diverse and uniquely fragmented economies where technological maturity is polarized across developed and developing nations from Singapore to Myanmar, one common technology denominator stands out in Asia: mobile. The strong growth of mobile use is ubiquitous across countries in the region, further driving the demand for applications and creating a level playing field for businesses in this increasingly app-centric landscape.

With the surging demand for applications, IT departments are facing increased pressure to deploy them more rapidly, leading to more complex infrastructure and an increase in new attack vectors for malicious actors. What businesses need today, therefore are solutions that enable them to deploy, scale and manage the growth of their application population—quickly and securely—while creating a seamless experience between the application and the end user.

Asia's Cloud-y Outlook

The industry has come a long way from the time when security and performance concerns hindered companies from migrating even basic applications to the cloud. Today, the cloud acceleration is

tangible as CIOs are already prioritizing the move of business critical applications, such as ERP and HR functions, to the cloud as their top agenda.

The cloud is transforming the way businesses deploy and manage applications by improving agility, automating processes and increasing speed to market in ways traditional IT infrastructure cannot achieve. Value points include:

Flexibility: The Cloud provides organizations the flexibility to scale up or down their Cloud capacity on demand. This level of elasticity enables businesses to be more agile and perform better.

Improved mobility: Applications are available to employees anytime and anywhere. Employees can access apps across smart phones and tablets catering to the demands of the increasingly mobile-savvy population.

Cost savings: As companies do not have to purchase equipment and operate a data center, they have reduced expenses on hardware, facilities, and other operational aspects. The Cloud enables organizations to reduce operational costs while increasing IT effectiveness.

To Cloud Or Not To Cloud?

However, Asian businesses still remain cautious. A survey by F5 Networks revealed that the Asia Pacific market lags behind the rest of the world in tapping the Cloud for application development and operations. The study also revealed that businesses

in Asia remain hesitant about deploying Cloud projects that are mission-critical and production-grade, and instead only deploy non-critical low-risk applications, such as email, collaboration tools and static websites.

The inherent challenges in cloud migration such as determining which workloads are suitable for the Cloud, the lack of control and visibility, the application delivery and security capabilities of the Cloud provider, and the real possibility of rewriting your entire application to take advantage of the capabilities provided by the Cloud provider, can give pause to even the most digitally mature businesses. In Asia Pacific in particular, integration between a provider's Cloud technology and on-premises systems stand out as key factors in weighing the adoption of the service.

In addressing these challenges, organizations need advanced and programmable application delivery services which span across data centers and cloud providers, and provide business flexibility to enable a smooth and successful Cloud migration. Organizations require a unified platform that enables them to deliver and manage application services consistently across different application environments for existing as well as new cCloud-native applications.

Companies cannot ignore the rise of the Cloud; however, what they can do is to ensure that their individual journeys to the Cloud are secure and successful, by ensuring that the application delivery service that they choose provides the following three key considerations for every app regardless of deployment model:

Availability – Especially for mission critical workloads, businesses need to ensure that application delivery services can provide persistent app availability across disparate environments.

Performance – With the increased urgency to deliver on-demand content to a variety of devices, app delivery needs to be optimized regardless of the deployment model in order to enhance end-user experience.

Security – The increasing frequency with which organizations experience attacks and vulnerabilities, drive security needs as one of the core app services necessary to ensure the survival of apps and business today.

Imagine application developers and IT coming together to rapidly develop and launch an application on the Cloud that helps scale a line of business from hundreds to millions of customers—all with the same reliability, security and control of a traditional data center deployment. Every company has a Cloud journey unique to its own needs. As a leading provider of application delivery services, F5 is enabling this future today, without compromises, empowering organizations to power their digital transitions without challenges.

ePDS Reports Paper Documentation Still Prevalent Despite Digitization



Even though the world is experiencing a drastic rise in digitization, ePDS, Inc., a document management services and customer communication management solutions provider, notes that consumers still prefer physical copies of documents such as account statements over electronic ones.

"The demand for data printing continues to be strong despite the growing presence of digital media," said Minetta Tangco, executive vice president and general manager of ePDS. "This is particularly true for financial institutions, banks, and credit companies, as well as utility companies handling telecommunications, power, and water where majority of their clients expect to receive statements of their accounts via physical

documents. Additionally, when it comes to bills, consumers value physical mail as a record-keeping tool, thereby serving as payment reminders."

Although digital workspaces are more efficient, traditional filing systems still have the security most businesses crave for. Tangco noted, "Though most Filipinos appreciate the benefits and advantages of shifting to digital storage of their documents, obviously to save on physical storage space and amount of time accessing these in its physical form, including the convenience of mobile accessibility anytime, anywhere, the thought of jeopardizing the security of sensitive and confidential information over digital access and making them vulnerable to hacking is still a factor."

Due to the merits of both document-keeping methods, businesses should strike a balance between convenience and control. And in order to make them blend seamlessly, a proper document management system—which identifies, preserves, and secures data for institutional accountability and timely access to information—is needed.

"With the consumer's preference of physical documents and many companies making the digital shift, we are now seeing a convergence of both traditional and digital document management systems," concluded Tangco. "Companies should consider this as an opportunity to develop both their physical and digital document management systems to boost efficiency and profitability."

Locally-Brewed Ai1 Enterprise Software Launches Awareness Campaign



Gatesoft Corporation advisory board of directors Gilbert Remulla and Paolo Bediones, vice president Mac Murray, and President and CEO George Ariel Llorente.

After over 20 years of quietly making a name for itself in the revenue, inventory, labor, and accounting scenes of enterprises, Gatesoft Corporation's All-In-One (Ai1) Software Solutions officially launched in December last year. The launch—which aims to connect the solutions provider with more medium-sized businesses—also served as the announcement platform of

its power-packed board of directors and its international expansion plans.

Gatesoft began as a payroll and timekeeping software systems provider. Due to client demand for inventory, accounting, point of sale, asset management, and property management software systems, Gatesoft CEO and software architect George Llorente realized that there is no commercially available single software solution that allows for the digital management of all business aspects. Thus, Ai1 was developed, removing the need for a mishmash of unintegrated and unoptimized solutions from different providers.

Conventional financial reports are generated within one to three months, depending on the size and complexity of the industry. Ai1 boasts an

over 10 times faster report generation thanks to its all-in-one platform. The quick turnaround time allows owners to immediately gain insight into the financial status of their business for timely and impactful decisions. And though Ai1 is a very comprehensive management platform, its license cost is only a fraction of its competitors'.

Climbing aboard for the company's local and international expansion plans are Apa Ongpin, former ABS-CBN news anchor and former president of Alphaland Development Corporation; Gilbert Remulla, former ABS-CBN journalist, former congressman, and Island Cove managing director; and Paolo Bediones, TV5 newscaster, GoNegosyo superstar, and owner of Punta Mandala restaurant. The three will be using their influence and personal experiences with Ai1 in their advisory board of directors role.

Emerson Network Power Rebrands as Vertiv



VERTIV

The business formerly known as Emerson Network Power will now be called Vertiv and will be under the leadership of new CEO Rob Johnson. The news follows the enterprise's sale to Platinum Equity in a transaction valued at over USD 4 billion. "It's a fresh start for a business that already has so much going for it. I look forward to working with my new colleagues at Vertiv as we begin this transformational chapter in the company's history," said Johnson. "As an independent company, Vertiv will operate with great freedom to make business strategy and investment decisions, move more quickly like a startup, and focus on innovative solutions for our customers,

including those in the growing Cloud computing, mobile, and IoT networks."

Johnson's most recent venture was being an operating partner at Kleiner Perkins Caufield and Byers. He also spent 10 years at American Power Conversion, rising to the rank of President and CEO during his tenure there. While at APC, he also served as general manager of the company's availability enhancement group.

Vertiv will build on the broad portfolio of products and services for power, thermal, and IT management capabilities it previously offered as Emerson Network Power, including its industry-

leading flagship brands ASCO, Chloride, Liebert, NetSure, and Trellis.

Platinum Equity partner Jacob Kotzubei said that the company's M&A and operational resources, and the firm's strong relationship with Emerson, will benefit Vertiv in the short and long term.

"We will support Vertiv's growth and product innovation every step of the way, both organically and through prospective add-on acquisitions," commented Kotzubei. "This is our second partnership with Emerson and we have had great success together. We look forward to a seamless transition and an exciting future for Vertiv and the customers it serves."

SAP SE Launches HANA 2 Platform



SAP SE has announced the release of the SAP HANA 2 in-memory computing platform, featuring better database and data management, analytical intelligence, and application development performance.

"SAP pioneered in-memory computing with the launch of SAP HANA in 2010 and throughout our journey we have driven breakthrough innovation on a highly stable core data platform for our

customers," said Bernd Leukert, member of the executive board, Products and Innovation, SAP SE. "The release of SAP HANA 2 marks a milestone in the industry, as it represents the next generation of SAP HANA that will propel customers toward a successful and prosperous digital future."

Improvements in analytical intelligence and application development has been implemented into SAP HANA 2 to allow developers to

easily examine rich insight into applications, including text, spatial, graph, and streaming data. In terms of database management, SAP HANA 2 will allow organizations to leverage secondary systems to off-load read-intensive workloads for improved operations. Data management will also be made more efficient with the new edition of the SAP Enterprise Architecture Designer Web application that works with and is powered by SAP HANA. Not only does it allow for the management of complex information architectures, it also allows enterprises to visualize the impact of new technologies before they are implemented.

"SAP HANA 2 represents a continuation of technology innovation by SAP, designed to enable organizations to address

the fast-changing aspects of digital business," said Carl Olofson, research vice president, IDC. "SAP HANA 2 features new and enhanced functions that can enhance data management and accelerate application development for digital transformation. In addition, new SAP HANA microservices in the cloud, accessible through SAP Hybris as a Service, are expected to increase innovation of insight-driven applications to deliver competitive advantage for SAP customers."

Railroad



Words by Jose Alvarez

The invention of the wheel is considered one of the biggest breakthroughs in history. It is not known when the wheel was invented or who invented it (some place it around the late Neolithic around 9000 to 6000 BC), but it revolutionized other breakthroughs such as agriculture and made labor significantly easier for ancient peoples. The railroad, on the other hand, revolutionized land transport like no other, and significantly cut travel times from one place to another.

The railroad is a lot older than one might think. The ancient Greeks invented the Diolkos wagonway, which served to transport boats across the isthmus of Corinth during the 6th century BC. Slaves pushed these trucks, which ran through limestone grooves. This was considered one of the earliest railways in existence, and this operated for 600 years. However, it would take almost 2,000 years for the railway to reappear in civilization. By the 16th century, a funicular railway called the Reisszug appeared. Cardinal Matthäus Lang, the future Archbishop of Salzburg, documented this railway, which runs to this day (but with more modern technology) and is supposedly the oldest railway still in operation in the world.

Mining was one of the first industries to benefit from the railroad. In 1550, narrow gauge railways were common in European mines, and were used to transport coal from mines to load onto boats. The world's oldest working narrow gauge railway was built in 1758, called the Middleton Railway located in Leeds, England.

Many other improvements were made to the railway in the 18th century, such as the iconic iron plate railway (which is a typical railroad feature to this day), which featured iron plates on top of wooden rails, as well as horse-drawn railways, where horses would pull a cart that traveled on rails.

The Industrial Revolution would see the railway explode in use and popularity. Although the steam engine was developed as early as 1712, it was not until 1804 when Richard Trevithick developed the high-pressure steam engine that could help pull

heavy loads. It would take until 1830 when the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened, which was the first intercity route for railways in the world. The standard gauge of 1,435 mm (four feet, 8.5 inches) became known as the standard gauge and is still used by about 60 percent of railways today. By 1850, Great Britain had over 11,000 kilometers (7,000 miles) of railway.

In the United States, railroads had a far greater purpose. The vast size of the country necessitated linking many of the country's cities by train. The completion of the first transcontinental railroad shifted emigration to the West significantly, replacing the wagon trains with a safer, more pleasant journey. Between 1850 and 1890, it was estimated that the United States alone constituted a third of the world's rail mileage. Another country that became famous for the railroad was India, then a colony of the British Empire, and by 1880, over 25,495 km (15,842 mi) of track was laid in the country, and by 1896, India had started building their own locomotives.

Electric railways were first experimented with as early as 1838, but the German Gross-Lichterfelde Tramway was the first route to feed electricity into the trains en route when it was opened in 1881. The first fully completely electrified railway mainline was the Valtellina line, which opened in Italy in 1902. Many large cities such as New York City, Paris and London began to use electrical railways to transport people around, a trend that also continues to the present day.

World War II once again revolutionized the development of the railroad. Advances in internal

combustion engine technology made diesel trains cheaper and more effective than steam, but at the same time, air transport and automobiles had stolen the power of the railroad. By 1964, Japan developed the Shinkansen high-speed rail, more popularly known as the "bullet train" outside of the country. These electrified trains significantly reduced the wear and tear on railways as well as allowed fast acceleration and deceleration, significantly cutting the travel time between cities. For densely populated regions in Japan, this became a model for the rest of the world's train systems, and high-speed rail is utilized extensively in Europe and Asia, where governments are encouraging the use of mass transit.

An innovation that is currently in development for the railroad is the magnetic levitation (maglev) train, already in use in China, Japan, and South Korea. These trains use magnetic levitation to reduce friction and allow for extremely high speeds. It has been reported that maglev trains are far more efficient than even air travel, which could be something to consider for the future. Another proposal to revolutionize the railroad is the Hyperloop, which has theoretical top speeds of 760 mph, and a study showed that it could cover the 560 km (350 mi) distance between the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles, California in only 35 minutes.

The railroad made travel more efficient across the world. Using its efficient method of transporting passengers and goods, it allowed civilization to thrive and prosper. Despite the presence of automobiles and air transport, the railroad is still considered one of the safest and most enjoyable ways to travel.

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MARIBELLE M. ALBA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The quintessential gadgets girl who loves all things Mac, red, and blingy. In a parallel universe, she organizes motorsports events and professional conferences.

@bellealba



PRESY ALBA
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

In a parallel universe, she'd be a travel writer. In this dimension, she's a multi-tasker who makes full use of her IT knowledge and her Apple devices to be productive and efficient. She also loves to listen to audiobooks while doing routine stuff like driving or shopping.

@presy1121



REN ALCANTARA
MANAGING EDITOR

Ren likes puppies, long walks in the park, and zombies. His idea of a perfect day would be a long walk in the park, with a puppy, during a zombie apocalypse.

@hisnameisren



EDITOR'S NOTE

2017 is in full swing, and with it is the first issue of Gadgets for this year. If the past is anything to go by, we're going to be in for a lot of tech. Technology is getting more and more affordable at the bottom end, and more new, exciting devices are coming in at the top tier. As new tech comes in, rest assured that we'll be right there with you, always with the freshest, most exciting news the industry has to offer. We've got a great calendar planned for 2017, and a few new things we'd like to try, so stick around. It's going to be a great ride!

Ren Alcantara, Managing Editor



MIA CARISSE BARRIENTOS
JUNIOR EDITOR

A bibliophile who reads fiction, dystopian, chick-lit, to just plainly weird novels in paperback or eBooks. Fascinated with gadgets and speaks fangirl lexicon and gibberish.

@miaissocoollike



BENEDICT ASAL
ART DIRECTOR

He likes going out with friends, meeting new ones, playing Marvel and Tekken games at the arcade, listening to music, and playing on his keyboard and guitar.

@julyabirdkaliper



CHRIS NOEL HIDALGO
SENIOR EDITORIAL STAFF

(٧٠٠) ٧٠٠٧٠٠

@cnhidalgo



THERESA ELORIAGA
GRAPHIC ARTIST

An introvert with a happy soul who loves food and cats more than life.

@theresaeloriaga



GREAT MINDS MEDIA, INC.

PRESIDENT & CEO Maribelle Alba

SALES MANAGER Marisa Consuelo
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Carol Agabin

ACCOUNTING MANAGER Maritess Pascua-Maulion
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Clifford Dela Paz

PR & MARKETING STAFF Jonah Mendoza

LEGAL COUNSEL Alba Law Office

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ROBBY VAFLO
STAFF WRITER

I always have my *eating pants* on.

@emotioncensor



JAEL MENDOZA
GRAPHIC ARTIST

Spreading lines and colors for our Creator.

@jaella_m



JONAH MENDOZA
CONTRIBUTOR

When my daughter turns 18, I'll be mistaken as her sister.

@jonahmendoza



JOSE ALVAREZ
CONTRIBUTOR

You'll never find Jose without a controller in his hand—in fact, the WASD keys on his keyboard have been worn out over the years. Aside from games, he also religiously follows several sports, especially soccer, and always has a joke ready to lighten any mood and put a smile on someone's face.

@awperative



INNOVA

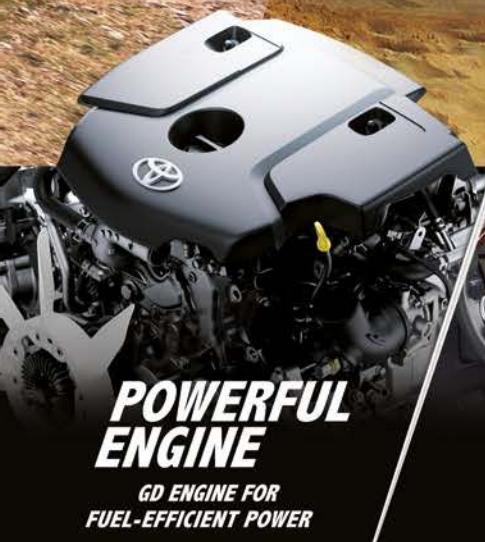


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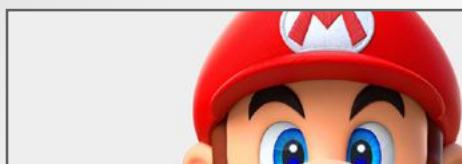
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PROJECTING THE FUTURE: EPSON'S EB-L1000 SERIES

See what Epson's been brewing

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RAILROADS

The little train that was





Asus ROG Claymore ▲

Mechanical Keyboard

Need a mechanical tenkeyless keyboard *and* a numpad? Purchasing the two separately can be a pain as mechanical numpads can be pretty rare; not to mention you'll throw aesthetics out the window with two separate units. The Asus ROG Claymore avoids the above scenario by having a full-sized standard layout with a detachable numpad. That's right. This Cherry MX-equipped plank has a removable numpad that can also be used as a macro pad. The eye candy also doesn't stop with the black-etched shroud. Its 50-million keystroke, anti-ghosting, and full N-Key rollover keys are Aura RGB backlit, because if there's one thing that makes hardware better, it's its programmable RGB LEDs.

PHP 9,310



◀ Asus FX502

Gaming Notebook

The Asus FX502 is one of the most affordable gaming laptops strutting an Nvidia GeForce GTX 1060 graphics card. Paired with the video driver is either an Intel Core i5-6300HQ or an Intel Core i7-6700HQ processor, a 15.6 inch Full HD display, a 1 TB hard drive plus an additional 256 GB M.2 SSD for the top tier model, and 8 GB of DDR4 RAM, with a Hyper Duo-Copper Cooling system keeping thermals in check. And even though it should look like a back-breaking notebook on paper, it manages to come in at just 23.5 mm thin and 2.2 kg light.

PHP 69,995 (FX502VM-DM092T)
PHP 79,995 (FX502VM-DM120T)



Lenovo ThinkPad X1 Carbon ▲ Notebook

The ThinkPad X1 Carbon offers users the best possible personalized computing experience. The fifth and the latest from the ThinkPad X series, the X1 is much more compact and built for on-the-go productivity than its older siblings. Lenovo claims that it is the lightest notebook in its class at under 2.5 pounds (1.14kg) and also the smallest. It comes fitted with a high quality 14-inch IPS and comes with a full complement of ports, an infrared camera, connectivity and security to ensure the X1 Carbon delivers maximum performance on all fronts. The X1 Carbon promises a better typing experience with its six-row ThinkPad keyboard with an improved Microsoft Precision Touchpad (with physical buttons) and iconic TrackPoint. Available in classic ThinkPad black and a new silver color, it is under the hood that the X1 Carbon comes into its own. Improvements incorporated into the X1 Carbon include an up to 15.5-hour battery life, Qualcomm Snapdragon X7 LTE-A Wireless WAN and Wi-Fi CERTIFIED WiGig, enhanced biometric authentication via IR camera with face recognition support for Windows Hello login, match-on-Chip touch fingerprint, and FIDO-enabled biometric authentication support for PayPal.

◀ GAMDIAS ZEUS P1 Gaming mouse



When you want to up your game, but you're still all about that flashy stuff, GAMDIAS has your back with the ZEUS P1 gaming mouse. It has 13 different, individually programmable LEDs with a 16.8 million dual level RGB customizable stream lighting design, giving gamers a near-infinite number of light combinations through the HERA app. After hours of choosing the right color scheme for your mouse, you can save up to five of your favorites so you can use them again and again. The ZEUS P1 is great on the inside as well, with a 12,000 DPI optical sensor for extra accurate tracking. The mouse also has eight configurable buttons so you can always stay at the top of your game.



Dell Inspiron 15 7000 Series ▲ Gaming Notebook

Looking for a decent gaming notebook without breaking the bank, at least not too much? Behold the Dell Inspiron 15 7000 Series. It struts a true quad-core processor in either an Intel Core i5-6300HQ or Intel Core i7-6700HQ chip, a dated but still capable Nvidia GeForce GTX 960M 4 GB GDDR5 graphics card, 8 GB of DDR4 RAM, a sizeable 15.6 inch display with up to 4K resolution, and up to a 1 TB hard disk and 256 GB solid state dual drive config. It also has two speakers with Waves MaxxAudio Pro tuning and a subwoofer for gaming audio bliss.

PHP 49,990 (Inspiron 15 7566 i5)
PHP 69,990 (Inspiron 15 7566 i7)

◀ Epson EB-L1000 series Projector



Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week: that's the kind of endurance Epson's new high-end line of projectors can handle. Sporting a laser light source with the company's legendary 3LCD technology, the EB-L1000 series of projectors have brightness ranging from 6,000 to 12,000 lumens, depending on the model. The new laser light source enables up to 20,000 hours of maintenance-free operation without the need to replace the bulb. The EB-L1000 series is also the first to incorporate inorganic 3LCD panels and an inorganic phosphor wheel for increased heat resistance just to make the projectors extra durable. All models have 4K image resolution enhancement, auto image calibration and flexible projection options built in.



◀ Transcend JetDrive Go 500G Storage Device

For the people that find themselves suddenly out of storage space on their phones, Transcend's JetDrive Go 500G is a flash drive specifically designed for iOS devices. Users can easily connect the drive into an iPhone, an iPad, or an iPod touch through the device's Lightning port. Backing up files are a breeze thanks to the JetDrive Go app that enables quick and easy organizing of photos, videos, music and other files and transferring them to a maximum of 128GB depending on the flash drive model. The app also features quick one-tap commands to easily transfer files from the Camera Roll or Contacts, and can even backup the whole phone. To transfer them to a personal computer, the JetDrive Go 500G has a USB 3.1 Gen 1 Type A connector that is backwards compatible with USB 3.0 or 2.0.

PHP 6,500 (32 GB)
PHP 8,500 (64 GB)

Samsung Galaxy A7 ▶ Smartphone

Samsung aims to win you over with its newest smartphone, the Galaxy A7 2017 edition. This smartphone boasts simple elegance that instantly grabs your attention. Its minimalist aesthetic paired with highly resistant 3D glass rear and outstanding 5.7-inch Super AMOLED display are enough to make you want to take a closer look. Available in colors gold sand, black sky, and blue mist, the A7 is more than just a pretty face. It's built water- and dust-resistant with its IP68 certification, giving you the assurance that it is ready for adventures no matter the scale. The handset also comes equipped with 16MP high-resolution front and rear cameras for taking crisp and finely detailed photos, 32 GB of internal storage expandable up to 256 GB for storing your entertainment needs, dual SIM slots, reversible USB type C port, 3 GB RAM, 3600 mAh battery, and octa-core processor to capably tackle all the tasks you throw at it.

PHP 23,990



Jabra Elite Sport ►

Bluetooth Headset

The Jabra Elite Sport is one of the most technically advanced true wireless sports earbuds in the market today. It offers superior quality sound for calls and music, comfortable and secure cord-free fit, iOS and Android compatibility. Catch every call while you're exercising with these waterproof Jabra Elite Sport earbuds. These wireless earpieces have three hours of battery time and an additional six hours when topped up with the included charging case. They have an in-ear heart rate monitor and an integrated app for fitness analysis and coaching.



◀ Starmobile Engage Aura Notebook

Did you haul in some cash from your *ninongs* and *ninangs* during the holidays and are you now looking to spend it on an affordable, entry-level notebook? Then you should definitely consider the Starmobile Engage Aura. Under its polycarbonate hood is a Cherry Trail-based Intel Atom Z8350 quad-core processor, 2 GB of RAM, a 9000 mAh battery pack rated for up to seven hours of video playback time, as well as a large 14 inch HD screen—specs good enough for some non-graphically demanding games, slight multimedia editing, and general everyday tasks such as browsing and document encoding. It comes in silver and limited edition gold color variants.

PHP 10,990 (Silver regular price)
PHP 7,990 (Silver, Lazada discounted price)
PHP 9,990 (Limited edition gold)

Kingston DataTraveler Ultimate GT ▶ Storage device

Memory products manufacturer Kingston Digital, Inc. decided to go big for this year's CES: big, not in physical size (far from it), but in capacity. The DataTraveler Ultimate GT is the world's highest capacity thumb drive, able to hold two terabytes' worth of files. Yes. Two terabytes. That is one or two modern computers' memory crammed into a stick of gum. The Ultimate GT doubles the capacity of its 2013 predecessor allowing up to 70 hours of 4K videos in one flash drive. To add shock resistance, the drive is encased in a zinc alloy and transfers files through a USB 3.1 gen 1 port.



◀ Gionee M2017 Smartphone

Take that Apple and Samsung: Chinese smartphone manufacturer Gionee just released the M2017 luxury phone. Design-wise, the M2017 is really meant to be classy with gold edges and accents, and a special Android-based Amigo UI that sports all-gold icons and a wristwatch-style time indicator. It features a dual-curved 5.7-inch AMOLED display and runs on the Qualcomm Snapdragon 653 chipset with eight cores, 6 GB of RAM, and 128 GB of readable memory. The main camera is a dual-cam 12+1.3-megapixel setup while the front-facing camera is eight megapixels. But the M2017's strongest feature is its monstrous 7000 mAh battery that boasts of up to 915 hours of standby time on a full charge of battery. Being a luxury phone, the M2017 is priced at USD 1,000. Yes, 1,000 in US legal tender. That will run you about 50,000 in domestic coin, so start saving up.



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Oppo A39 ▶ Smartphone

Can't take enough selfies? Snap your next social media display photo with the Oppo A39. The recently introduced Oppo A39 enables users to capture crystal-clear selfies with its 5 MP-front camera that is crafted with extra large 1.4um pixels and 1/4-inch sensor. On its rear is a 13-MP camera that is able to produce 50-MP ultra-high definition images with its extra-large 1/3.06 inch sensor. This integration maximizes the amount of captured light making for brilliant low-light and nighttime shots. Apart from its undeniably capable shutters, the A39 boasts of advanced features that make the perfect daily driver for the young and the not so young. It ships with a 2900 mAh lithium polymer battery, 3 GB RAM, octa-core 64-bit processor, 32 GB internal storage, and more at just 5.2 inches.

PHP 10,990



◀ SanDisk Ultra Dual Drive m3.0 Flash Drive



A new memory solution for Android devices wants to give a run for their money. The SanDisk Ultra Dual Drive m3.0 is a USB OTG flash drive that features a retractable design that reveals a micro-USB on one end and a USB 3.0 connector on the other. This design provides a convenient way for customers to manage their files between different devices and easily free up space on their phone on the fly. The SanDisk Ultra Dual Drive m3.0 flash drive is available in capacities ranging from 16 GB to 128 GB. In addition to higher storage capacity, SanDisk has improved the performance of the device's USB 3.0 connector, which can now achieve speeds up to 150MB/s, making file transfers quick as a wink. Additionally, this flash drive is compatible with the SanDisk Memory Zone app, an application designed for Android devices that helps in organizing files. The SanDisk Ultra Dual Drive m3.0 comes with a five year warranty.

PHP 499 (16 GB)
PHP 799 (32 GB)
PHP 1,399 (64 GB)
PHP 2,699 (128 GB)



MiVue 658 Wi-Fi▶ Dash Cam

The MiVue 658 Wi-Fi serves as your third eye on the road with its built-in features that enable it to capture more than what meets the eye during your daily commutes all in high definition. Serving as your watcher on the road, this dash cam will start recording with a simple tap on its display. It produces high definition output thanks to its 4 million pixel sensor and H.264 technology that allows you to save high quality videos at a smaller file size. Its integrated Wi-Fi enables you to transfer your footages on to your phone for sharing with friends and family or for documentation purposes in a breeze. The complementary *MiVue app*—available on *Google Play* and the *App Store*—serves as an avenue on which you can quickly share your videos on Facebook or on other platforms without the hassles of having to transfer files via cables or SD card readers. Additionally, the MiVue 658 Wi-Fi also comes built with microSD support for up to 128 GB, a 360-degree rotating mount design, and GPS to track your route and whatnot, helping you drive with total ease, no matter where you're headed.

PHP 9,990



◀ Nikon KeyMission 170 Action Camera

Meant to be the mid-range model in Nikon's KeyMission line of action cameras is the 170. It is capable of taking 4K video at 30 frames a second and has a wide 170-degree view angle lens coupled with a bigger-than-average 8.3-megapixel CMOS sensor. It has an ISO range of 100 to 1600 and shutter speeds between 1/16000 of a second to half a second. The KeyMission 170 has a 1.5-inch LCD screen and can connect to a smartphone wirelessly through Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. The action camera is also waterproof, shockproof and freezeproof, without the need of external housing.

PHP 20,900

Lenovo Phab 2 Pro ▶ Smartphone

The Phab 2 Pro is touted as the world's first Tango-enabled smartphone. This integration allows users an out-of-this world augmented reality experience through computer vision. To put it simply, through Tango, the phone can detect the user's position relative to the surroundings without using GPS or other external signals. When the Tango app is launched, you can hold your phone up and see the world around you overlaid with real-time virtual effects. Users of the Phab 2 Pro are also able to track objects, map indoor spaces, and perceive depth. All these allow for the development of new types of apps, experiments, and designs that couldn't be carried out on other AR-enabled phablets in the market. Apart from being the first Tango-enabled smartphone, the Phab 2 Pro is filled to the brim with features that'll give you a run for your money. It comes with a beautiful 6.4-inch quad-HD display, 1440 x 2560 resolution with a 2.5D curved glass, a powerful Qualcomm Snapdragon 652, octa-core processor, generous 4 GBs of RAM, capable 16 MP rear camera, fingerprint sensor, and a huge 4050 mAh non-removable battery.



PHP 24,999



Lenovo Phab 2 Plus ▶ Smartphone

One of the main selling points of the Phab line of smartphones, apart from its generous screen real estate and sophisticated design, is its budget-friendly price. These same characteristics abound in the Phab 2 Plus and more. The Phab 2 Plus makes heads turn with its beautiful build and a whopping 6.4-inch display. Among the highlights of this phone-bordering-tablet-territory is its dual 13 MP f/2.0 rear cameras. The cameras, which, work together with a Milbeaut image processor, promises to deliver images with accurate detail even in poorly-lit shooting conditions. The Phab 2 Plus is also big in processing features including a Mediatek MT8783, octa-core processor, and 3 GB RAM. Security is courtesy of a fingerprint sensor and an impeccable user experience is offered by its Android 6.0 Marshmallow OS. The Phab 2 Plus is available in champagne gold and gunmetal grey.

PHP 14,999

Canon EOS M5 ▶

Mirrorless Interchangeable Lens Camera

Get DSLR-like control and output in a relatively small form factor with the latest mirrorless camera from Canon. The EOS M is a mirrorless interchangeable lens camera that is aimed at professional photographers who want a light yet powerful photography companion. This flagship mirrorless shooter has a set of features that support discerning users who desire superior image quality with the versatility of interchangeable lenses. The EOS M5 sports a 24 MP APS-C CMOS sensor, 3.2-inch tilting touch panel, and Wi-Fi/NFC/Bluetooth support. Key technologies introduced in this model, and a first in the EOS M series, include Dual Pixel CMOS AF technology drawn from the EOS DSLR range, the cutting-edge DIGIC 7 image processor, a high-resolution electronic viewfinder, in-camera RAW conversion, and more.

PHP 60,498 for EOS M5 Body

PHP 66,498 for EOS M5 with EF-M 15-45mm

PHP 82,998 for EOS M5 with EF-M 18-150mm



◀ Steadicam Volt

Camera Stabilizer

Loved by filmmakers both indie and mainstream, Steadicam's line of camera stabilizers have produced some awesome sequences coupling mobility with image tracking smoothness. The Tiffen Company subsidiary now wants to bring their camera stabilization expertise to smartphones with the Steadicam Volt. The motorized, three-axis camera stabilizer is lightweight and foldable, with support for phones weighing anything from 100 to 200 grams and with widths between 58 to 88 mm. The haptic or touch-perceptive control utilizes Simulated Inertia which makes moving around the camera in the Volt feels a lot more natural compared to regular gimbals and other camera stabilizers. The Volt also has a downloadable app that uses the phone's built-in instruments to fine-tune the rig as well as giving users full control over image framing and composition.

LG OLED77W7P ▶

Television

Another standout from CES is LG's OLED77W7P smart television, or the Signature OLED TV W. Even less obtrusive to the living room aesthetic than a picture frame, the OLED77W7P is only an astounding 2.5 mm thick. It's so thin and light it can be attached directly to the wall. The TV is 77 inches diagonally and has 4K resolution and HDR. It is also the first to combine the Dolby Vision HDR technology with Dolby Atmos immersive audio for a truly exquisite experience. To make contrasts even starker, the OLED77W7P makes use of LG's OLED technology, achieving perfect, pitch black levels with nil light bleed. All wired connections will be through LG's sound bar with a thin and flexible proprietary cable connected to the TV that can easily be hidden from plain sight.



◀ Gigabyte Aorus Z270X-Gaming 7

Motherboard

The Intel Kaby Lake chips are officially here. Take advantage of the series' boosted capabilities by getting a feature-packed board such as the Gigabyte Aorus Z270X-Gaming 7. This mobo boasts goodies such as the fastest NVMe PCIe, M.2, and Thunderbolt standards, support for DDR4 sticks with up to 4000+ MHz XMP profiles, Creative Sound Core3D with SB Pro Studio audio suite, along with the "Z" marque's reliable overclocking potential. It is also Intel Optane-ready for the snappiest PC experience yet. Of course, it also has embedded RGB modules because nowadays, the package just isn't complete without a drool-worthy lightshow.

Leica M10 ▶ Camera

Pegged as having a “unique balance of heritage and technical innovation,” the M10 is Leica’s newest entry to its M series of cameras. The M-System lineage represents high engineering standards and the utmost in mechanical beauty. Being the slimmest digital M camera yet, the M10 marks a return to the ergonomics of its analogue predecessors with nearly the same design and thickness as the M4 film camera. Inside the all-metal magnesium alloy body and Corning Gorilla Glass screen is the latest Maestro-II processor coupled with a full-frame 24 MP CMOS sensor giving detailed photos without the slightest hint of noise from ISO 100 to 50,000 (yes, it maxes out at 50,000). The camera can also shoot at lightning fast speeds of up to five frames per second with 2 GB of buffer memory. And the cherry topping this classic sundae is built-in Wi-Fi connectivity for easy sharing between devices.



BenQ W1090 ▲ Projector

Take the cinematic experience home with the W1090. This projector from BenQ features various Sport Modes that, when activated, takes the thrill of watching games at sports bars right into every sports enthusiast’s home. It boasts up to 100 inches of crystal-clear 1080p high-definition projection that is paired with a built-in 10-watt speaker enhanced with Waves audio, making every detail more life-like and sound heart-thumping. Among the W1090’s selling points are its simple installation, short-throw projection, MHL connectivity, and more, all of which you can enjoy for price that won’t break the bank.



◀ Sony MDR-XB50BS

Wireless Sports In-Ear Headphones

New year's here and we all know what that means: resolutions that include working out and being healthier this 2017. Keep yourself on track of this goal by having a reliable workout partner like the Sony MDR-XB50BS. This pair of wireless in-ear headphones are tuned for heart-thumping EDM, meaning you have all the bass you need for that extra surge of energy. This IPX4-rated splash-proof device is also designed with arc supporters for a comfortable fit that holds even during the most vigorous sessions, both in wet and dry conditions. It's able to run for 8.5 hours straight, so you always have your tunes before, during, and after your workout.



Sony FDR-X3000 ▶

Action Camera

The Sony FDR-X3000 is a dependable action cam that's built for both the thrill-seeking daredevil and the everyman adventurer. The 4K shooter features a slim, non-distracting profile with an 8.2 MP 1/2.5 type back-illuminated Exmor R CMOS sensor that shoots great-looking 4K videos. The Zeiss Tessar lens up front also ensures that images aren't distorted out of proportion. Slotted into its underwater housing, the FDR-X3000 can go as deep as 60 meters underwater, all while being dustproof and shockproof. For added convenience, it comes with a live view remote that acts as a Wi-Fi-enabled monitor, as well as an optional finger grip which allows you to easily go handheld without any bulky accessories.

Dell Canvas ▶

Workplace peripheral

The Canvas, a part of Dell's Precision line of devices, is a smart workplace accessory that is designed with the same uses in mind as the Microsoft Surface Studio, but rather than being a standalone device, works as an extension of "virtually any" computer running Windows 10. Working in partnership with Microsoft to develop the Canvas, the device, along with the rest of the product line will be compatible with the new features coming with the Windows 10 Creators Update including 3D content (which includes *Office* and *Paint*) and a new Hologram interface. The 27-inch QHD display can be operated through touch, a pen, or through Microsoft's Totem peripheral and supports partnered third-party software such as the Adobe Suite, Autodesk, Avid, Solidworks and Microsoft.



Sony MP-CL1A ▶

Pico Projector

With the Sony MP-CL1A, you can stop lugging around that incredibly bulky projector for unexpected presentations. An upgrade from the MP-CL1, this 210 g device offers enhanced features and accessories including Bluetooth audio out connectivity, a kickstand that doubles as a lens cover, and a carrying pouch. It uses Laser Beam Scanning technology to project 1920 x 720 images with an 80,000:1 contrast ratio. It can also throw 40 inch images from just 1.15 meters and up to 120 inches from 3.45 meters for reliability both in cramped and wide open spaces. Just connect your device via HDMI, MHL, or WiFi and it's already good to go.

PHP 20,999



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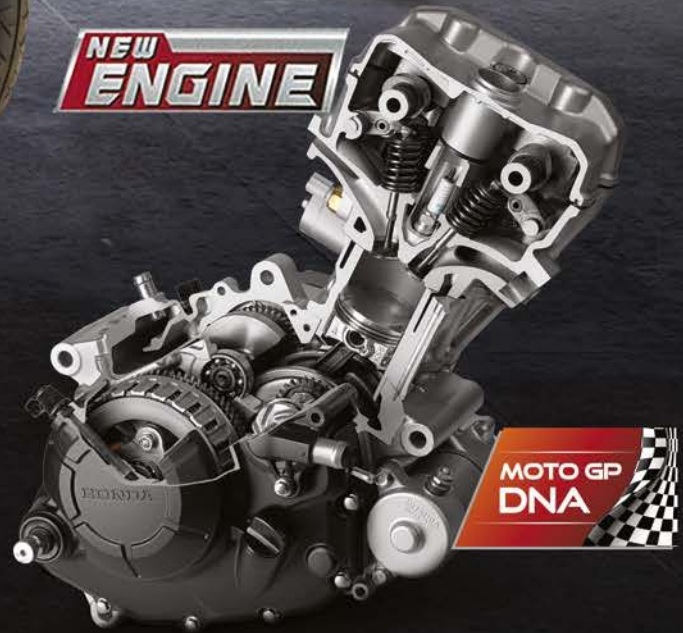
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Asus Zenfone 3 Max

Reviewed by Ren Alcantara

The modern smartphone is one of the greatest feats of human engineering. Just a few decades ago, to be able to do the things you could on a current-generation smartphone required quite an investment in desktop technology. Now, you can pick a perfectly capable phone up for less that it would take to gas up an SUV for a month. The fact remains, however, that it's essentially a pocket computer, and as such, is bound by the constraints a computer has, foremost being that relies on electricity. To add insult to injury, battery technology hasn't progressed nearly at the same rate the rest of the device. This is great for powerbank manufacturers, but for the rest of us, it blows. You'll be lucky to get an honest day's worth of use from a mobile phone these days.

That is, unless you use the Asus Zenfone 3 Max.

DESIGN ★★★★★☆

Building on the success of the previous generation's Zenfone Max, Asus has seen it fit to come up with an updated version, both more powerful, and much better-looking. Beautiful rounded edges on the metal frame and slick curved glass on the front give it a premium feel. The buttons on the side of the device have the trademark Asus concentric circle design, leaving no doubt as to the device's lineage. There is no questioning that the taiwanese brand took more than a few cues from other manufacturers, notably the seventh iteration of Cupertino's cash cow. Matte metal, with an occasional polished accent really make the Zenfone 3 Max look special, and makes it more pleasing than the plastic body of the first Max.

Still, it separates itself enough by putting the fingerprint sensor on the back of the camera rather than the front, and keeping it a nice, rounded-off square, right in reach of your index finger, when you hold it in your hand. Ports and connectors are kept down to a single microUSB port at the bottom edge, and a 3.5mm jack at the top that just makes sense. Overall, the Zenfone 3 Max comes in a package that you'd be more than happy to be seen using.

HARDWARE ★★★★★☆

The hardware on the Zenfone 3 Max is something of a mixed bag. There are several versions available, but what we have for review here is the 2GB RAM, 32GB expandable storage version. This comes with an octacore processor running at a cheerful 1.4 GHz. It's not breaking any speed records, but it's no slouch either. It's helped along by a healthy 2GB serving of RAM, so it's not left behind even by some of the more recent entries in the smartphone game.

The screen on the Zenfone 3 Max is right at the edge of practicality in the world of smartphones. 5.5 inches, with a bevel that isn't excessive on any edge, makes for an overall footprint that makes the most of available real-estate, and staying small enough to stay completely in the hip pocket of your jeans.

You also get a capable 16MP main camera with flash, as well as an 8MP front snapper for the inevitable selfies and video calls.

A phone isn't very useful without the ability to get you connected, and here, the Zenfone 3 Max doesn't disappoint. With all the usual options from Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0, LTE and even dual-SIM capability, it's not a phone that will leave you offline. For days.

The cherry on top of this impressive cake is the massive battery Asus has crammed into the device. While the 4100mAh battery isn't quite as large as the absurdly large 5000mAh battery found on the previous iteration, it's still quite a bit larger than the average smartphone battery in the market right now. It's non-removable, sure, but hey, 4100mAh.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

The main problem I have with these large-capacity phones is that they tend to be plain-looking and on the chubby side. The Zenfone 3 Max is, admittedly a little thick, but the design is such that you really don't notice the thickness. The 2.5D glass, mostly metal construction, and clean lines make for a handsome device that feels great to boot. Really, it's a phone that's hard to put down.

The first thing I wanted to try out was the seed of the fingerprint sensor. Located below the camera, on the rear of the phone, the sensor is within easy reach, even while pulling it out of your pocket. It's fast, about at par with the faster devices here. If I had to give a number as to the time it takes to unlock, gun to my head, I would put it at about the .3 second mark. Tapping the sensor as you pull it out of your jeans should see it unlocked the time you bring it into your line of sight. It also has pleasantly good accuracy. There were no false negatives the whole time I was using it, though water is, of course, going to mess it up.

As I mentioned early on, I'm also a big fan of the size of this device's screen. It's large enough to watch movies and even read books comfortably, but not so large as to cause it to be inconvenient to handle. Clarity and sharpness is also fairly solid, with a resolution of 1280x720, for a pixel density of about 280PPI, or more than enough to keep you entertained on the move.



VALUE ★★★★★☆

At a price of less than PHP 9,000, this is a phone that is worth more than just a second glance. Class-leading battery life, a superb design, and hardware that puts it well within the midrange category all add up to a phone that is more than just a one trick pony. There are some things it could do better, but none of those are reason enough to leave the Zenfone Max 3 out of your shortlist.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Dimensions 5.96 x 3.00 x 0.33 in
Weight: 175 g
SIM: Dual SIM (Nano-SIM, dual stand-by)
Size: 5.5 inches (~72.3% screen-to-body ratio)
Resolution: 1080 x 1920 pixels (~401 ppi pixel density)
Chipset: Qualcomm MSM8937 Snapdragon 430
CPU: Octa-core 1.4 GHz Cortex-A53
GPU: Adreno 505 microSD, up to 256 GB (uses SIM 2 slot)
Internal: 32 GB, 2 GB RAM
CAMERA: 16 MP, f/2.0, phase detection & laser autofocus, dual-LED (dual tone) flash
Features: 1/3" sensor size, geo-tagging, touch focus, face detection, panorama, HDR
Secondary: 8 MP, f/2.2
Connectivity: WLAN, Wi-Fi 802.11 b/g/n, Wi-Fi Direct, hotspot
Bluetooth: v4.1, A2DP, LE
USB: microUSB v2.0, USB On-The-Go
BATTERY: Non-removable Li-Ion 4100 mAh battery

What's Hot:

- That massive battery
- Great design
- Solid performance

What's Not:

- Camera could be better



BOTTOMLINE

This is a worthy bearer of both the Zenfone and Max badges.

Asus ROG Strix GeForce GTX 1050 Ti 4 GB

Reviewed by Chris Noel Hidalgo

The Nvidia GTX 1050 Ti was an expected and very welcome announcement when it broke last October. It has some big shoes to fill though. Its predecessor, the 750 Ti, was the bang for the buck card back in 2014, offering budget builders and those with ageing prebuilt systems decent 1080p performance for not that much dough. However, today's newer titles have seen the 750 Ti's performance lacking, and that's where the 1050 Ti steps in. Is it the rightful heir to the budget throne? Or is the bar set too high? Let's jump in with the card's Asus ROG Strix variant.

DESIGN ★★★★★

We reviewed the Asus ROG Strix RX 470 last issue and the Asus ROG Strix GTX 1050 Ti looks 90 percent like it. The Strix ensemble is back again, from the edgy, owl-shaped, black plastic shroud, to the owl-like 0db Wing Blade dual fans. Heck, even the cooling solution is the same DirectCU II system, with two nickel-coated, direct-contact 8 mm heat pipes and horizontally finned aluminum heat sink.

The card is also open on the top, side, and bottom for more efficient cooling. Extra heat dissipation capabilities can be added via the 4-pin GPU-controlled Asus FanConnect header.

A 6-pin connector is required to power the card and is located at the top-right edge. Meanwhile, the I/O hub contains the two DVI-D, single HDMI 2.0, and single DisplayPort outputs.

If they're the same, why did I give this one five points? The Strix 1050 Ti has a backplate, that's why! It's not a necessity, but it's really nice when affordable products such as this get the premium treatment. For that, it deserves all the brownie points it can get.

HARDWARE ★★★★★☆

The heart of the GTX 1050 Ti is the new 14 nm, Samsung-manufactured GP107 process with 768 CUDA cores. While the stock 1050 Ti has a clock of a low 1290 MHz and high of 1392 MHz, the Strix version comes in humming at a low 1379 MHz and a high 1506 MHz. The high factory overclock means this one draws more power, specifically up to 150 W, making the 6-pin power connector unavoidable. On the memory side of things, you're looking at 4 GB of GDDR5 memory with an effective memory speed of 7 Gbps, bandwidth of 112 GB/s, and a 128-bit wide memory bus.



USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

I threw the card on my usual test rig with the following innards: an Intel Core i5-4460 processor humming at 3.2 GHz, stock Intel cooler, an Asus Z87i-Pro motherboard, 8 GB of single channel DDR3 G.Skill RAM, a 120 GB boot SSD, a 1 TB WD Blue HDD, and a 520 W Seasonic S12II 80+ Bronze power supply, all in a Fractal Define Nano S mini-ITX case with two front intake fans and one rear exhaust fan. All tests were done at 1080p.

For titles that are highly demanding such as *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided* and *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, the card performs sluggishly with high-ultra settings. However, dialing down the settings to medium-high produced frame rates around the 45 fps mark. For well-optimized games such as *Fallout 4* and *Grand Theft Auto V*, the card can hit the 60 fps mark without sacrificing too much in the graphics quality department. However, for resource intensive titles such as *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate*, don't expect anything higher than 30 fps unless you're rolling with bare minimum settings. Outdoor areas with far draw distances will also punish the card. Expect noticeable frame drops in those scenarios.

VALUE ★★★★★☆

The Asus ROG Strix GTX 1050 Ti is admittedly quite expensive at PHP 9,620, though you're getting a fancy backplate and beefy cooler for the price. While the likes of the RX 460 and 1050 duke it out in the ultra entry-level market, the 1050 Ti offers significantly more performance for a little bit more money. This right here is the card for you if you want decent bang for your and don't want to look at jagged pixels all day.

SPECIFICATIONS:

CUDA Cores: 768
Base Core Speed: 1392 MHz (OC Mode); 1379 MHz (Gaming Mode)
Boost Clock Speed: 1506 MHz (OC Mode); 1493 MHz (Gaming Mode)
VRAM: 4 GB GDDR5
Effective Memory Speed: 7 Gbps
Memory Bus: 128-bit
Memory Bandwidth: 112 GB/s
Power Requirement: 6-pin connector
Output: 2x DVI-D, 1x HDMI 2.0, 1x DisplayPort 1.4
Others: Asus GPU Tweak II and Asus Aura Utility
Dimensions: Dual slot; 241 x 129 x 40 mm

What's Hot:

- Great compromise between price, graphics quality, and frame rates.
- Backplate!
- 4 GB VRAM

What's Not:

- More expensive than other 1050 Ti models.



BOTTOMLINE

The 1080p crown may be heavy, but the Strix 1050 Ti is ready for it.

Palit GeForce GTX 1060 Dual 3 GB

GADGETS
MAGAZINE
EDITOR'S PICK

Reviewed by Chris Noel Hidalgo

Sometimes, you just have to get the most out of your money, and that means sacrificing some extras for the bare necessities. For instance, you might just go with a very basic smartphone because you know you're only going to use it for calls and texts. You might order *a la carte* because sodas are highway robbery at restaurants. Or you might get a graphics card that does what it needs to do—render frames and render them quickly—without any bling. That's basically the idea behind the Palit GeForce GTX 1060 Dual 3 GB. But does being bare mean it sucks? Find out below.

DESIGN ★★★★★

The Palit GeForce GTX 1060 Dual proves that you really shouldn't judge a book by its cover, or in this case, a graphics card by its shroud. Design-wise, it is pretty plain. While most rigs will have the shroud pointed down towards the bottom of the case—so you'll only be seeing its top edge and back—it would have still been nice to see a custom shroud that screams gaming. The card also felt quite light. Almost toyish, actually.

Taking a look around the card, you'll find the two 90 mm fans on its face, the 6-pin power connector along its top right edge, the DVI-D, HDMI, and DisplayPort I/O on the honeycombed bracket, and a whole lot of circuits and chokes on its rear. The shroud wraps around the top, bottom, and right edges of the card, almost entirely concealing the horizontal running aluminum-finned heat sink and copper heat pipes.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

Running the show is the Pascal-based GP106 GPU, a 16 nm chip produced by TSMC from Taiwan. The GTX 1060 comes in two memory variants (6 GB trims are available), and the more modest 3 GB version comes with 1152 CUDA cores humming at 1506 and 1708 MHz for the base and boost clocks, respectively. Palit's Dual take on the 1060 runs with these stock clocks.

Besides the difference in frame buffer, all 1060s will have an effective memory speed of 8 Gbps, a 192-bit-wide memory bus, and a maximum memory bandwidth of 192 GB/s.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

Now that we got the ugly out of the way, let's get started with the Palit GTX 1060 Dual's good side. I

slapped it on the bench with an Intel Core i5-4460 processor clocked at 3.2 GHz, stock Intel cooler and heatsink, an Asus Z87i-Pro motherboard, single 8 GB stick of DDR3 G.Skill RAM, a 120 GB solid state boot drive, a 1 TB WD Blue platter drive, and a 520 W Seasonic S12II 80+ Bronze PSU, all in a Fractal Define Nano S mini-ITX case with a single exhaust and two front intakes. All tests were at 1080p resolution.

Just wow. For a card to be this affordable—you know what, I'll call it what it is, cheap—and still be able to perform so well across a variety of titles is really something special. On high settings across my standard test suite which includes *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate*, *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided*, *Fallout 4*, and *Grand Theft Auto V*, the Palit GTX 1060 Dual 3 GB is able to easily achieve 60 fps gameplay. It even has enough performance to spare for a little more graphics eye candy; useful if you don't have a high refresh rate monitor. While it does dip into the 40 fps mark when loading new scenes or when in far draw distance environments, the stutters don't take too much from the immersion.

VALUE ★★★★★

This dual fan variant of the GTX 1060 is one of the most affordable in the market, retailing for a little under PHP 10,000 for the 3 GB version. What it lacks in flair, it makes up for in where it counts—gaming. If you just want a solid performer and don't care about physical appearances, fancy features, strong overlocks, and brand wars, this card should be your cup of tea.



SPECIFICATIONS:

CUDA Cores: 1152
Base Core Speed: 1506 MHz
Boost Clock Speed: 1708 MHz
VRAM: 3 GB GDDR5
Effective Memory Speed: 8 Gbps
Memory Bus: 192-bit
Memory Bandwidth: 192 GB/s
Power Requirement: 6-pin connector
Output: 1x DVI-D, 1x HDMI 2.0b, 3x DisplayPort 1.4
Dimensions: Dual slot; 252 x 112 mm

What's Hot:

- No frills, no gimmicks
- Offers nothing extra, ergo it's cheap

What's Not:

- It's cheap, ergo it offers nothing extra
- 3 GB of RAM won't be enough in the near future



BOTTOMLINE

The pumpkin spice latte of 1060s

TRANSCEND JETDRIVE GO 500G

Reviewed by Maribelle Alba

Designed specifically for iOS devices, this USB flash drive gives you additional storage for all those photos, videos, and music that you absolutely must have at your fingertips but are taking up valuable storage space on your iPhone or iPad.

DESIGN ★★★★★

The Transcend JetDrive Go 500G is a beautiful accessory that perfectly complements the premium Apple iOS devices for which it was designed. One of the smallest MFi certified flash drives available in the market, it measures only 36.55 x 14.3 x 9.01 mm, and weighs only 5 grams. Encased in gold or silver zinc alloy, one end has the Lightning connector and the other a USB 3.1 Gen 1 Type A connector.

The Lightning connector has been thoughtfully extended by 4 mm so you can properly connect it to your iPhone/iPad even when these are in bulky cases. A mini lanyard is also included in the box so you can secure the JetDrive Go 500G to a keychain to avoid losing it.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

The JetDrive Go 500G is equipped with the latest connection interfaces, particularly the SuperSpeed USB 3.1 (Gen 1), which supports transfer speeds of up to 130 MB/s. In real terms, it will take only 28 seconds to transfer a 4 GB HD movie. The Lightning connector, on the other hand, delivers maximum performance of 20 MB/s. Available storage capacities range from 32 GB, 64 GB, and 128 GB.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

You will need the JetDrive Go app to make full use of this flash drive. Each time you insert the device into your iPhone/iPad, you get a prompt asking you to allow the app to communicate with the drive. For added security, you can also set up Password Protection for the drive. A word of caution, though. Don't forget your password; otherwise, you will need to reformat

the JetDrive Go to factory settings, thereby losing all your data. If your iOS device supports it, a better alternative would be to use Touch ID to unlock the drive.

With the JetDrive Go 500G connected to your iPhone/iPad and using the app, you can save audio and video recordings as well as photos directly to the drive without taking up space on your iPhone/iPad. You can also perform backup functions for photos, videos, contacts, and iCloud photos.

Files stored in the drive's memory bank can be conveniently shared and viewed even without an internet connection. Also, the dual connectors let you transfer and share files not only with iOS devices but also with computers, laptops, and the like.

For me, the JetDrive Go 500G's strength is also its weakness. It's so compact you can quickly slip it into your purse or loop it into a keychain so you always have it handy. At the same time, though, whenever I use it, I always end up in a tizzy locating it as it's so tiny it can be easily overlooked.

VALUE ★★★★★

The Transcend JetDrive Go 500G is listed at PHP 6,500 for 32 GB model and PHP 8,500 for the 64 GB version. Even discounted at some online sites, the pricing is still rather steep—I'm not sure I want to pay that much for a tiny device that I might easily misplace.

But, if you can find enough reasons to justify the expense, this is a very useful and beautifully-designed accessory to complement your iPhone or iPad.



SPECIFICATIONS:

Dimensions: 36.55 x 14.3 x 9.01 mm
Weight: 5 g
Capacity: Available in 32 GB, 64 GB, 128 GB
Color: Silver, gold
Connection interface: Lightning and USB 3.1 Gen 1 Type A
Maximum performance: Lightning – 20 MB/s; USB 3.1 Gen 1 – 130 MB/s
File system: FAT 32 / exFAT

What's Hot:

- Compact size makes it very handy
- Easy to use app

What's Not:

- Compact size makes it easy to lose
- Premium priced



BOTTOMLINE

Never leave home without it.

PlayStation VR

Reviewed by Ren Alcantara

Does anyone in the crowd remember the movie *Lawnmower Man*? I'm reasonably sure it's the one thing that brought Virtual Reality as a concept to public knowledge, and while it was cutting-edge for its time, it's several decades old at this point. Fortunately, we're now living in the future, and anyone who wants a piece of the VR pie can actually jump in without the need for difficult-to-find hardware, thanks to Sony. This month, we're going to take a look at the PS VR platform.

DESIGN ★★★★★☆

The PS VR system is a combination of VR headset, processor box, PS4 Move camera, and the accompanying controllers. Everything is made to look sleek, and fit well with your existing gear. The headset is a nice glacier white, with bright blue tracking lights, and wires running from the back. It's adjustable for head fit, as well as lens distance, and even works with glasses. The main concern though, is the wiring. There's quite a bit, and it just can't be avoided. It's designed well though, and the manual gets you through setup fairly painlessly. You really can't see yourself when you're using the headset, but trust us when we say it looks pretty awesome from the outside.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

There's really nothing that's both easily accessible and capable of doing the things this system does. It's quite standard, as far as VR goes—a screen, lenses, and all the wires and cables you need to plug it into the PS4, which does all the heavy lifting. The main difference though, is that motion tracking, a key element in making the whole VR thing work, is done thanks to lights on the headset, on top of internal accelerometers. It's a simple, elegant solution that works great with all the hardware the PS4 has to begin with.

Audio is handled via a 3.5mm audio jack that's in-line with the main cables running from the headset to the PS4. This sort of eliminates any additional cables running from the machine, and will keep you from yanking earphones out of your ears while you VR around your space.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

After the whole thing is put together, it's a quick few steps, with the help of a visual guide included in the box. For those who aren't using the headset, the system doesn't negate the use of an external display, which shows everything the player sees, as they see it. This is a great way to include people in the action, and a lot of the time, when we were using it, everyone else in the room was having about as much fun watching, as the player did playing.

Putting the headset on is no problem. There is a lot of room in there, and Sony has made sure to give multiple points of adjustment. There's a band that goes across the back of your head, which ratchets and locks into place very securely, but releases with a quick press of a button.

Getting a clear, bifocal image isn't difficult on the headset. It's a simple matter of moving the

eyepiece forward or back enough to get things nice and sharp. The locking system is robust and more than solid enough to keep in it place, even with the movement VR headsets go through. This is an important step to get right, as eyestrain becomes a factor much faster with bad focus.

For the purposes of testing, we downloaded the *Resident Evil 7* preview. If you don't already know, RE 7 is going to be playable on VR from start to finish. This demo uses the regular PS4 controller to move around the environment, and despite a little getting used to at the start, everyone who tried it adjusted quickly to playing in virtual reality. Being able to investigate things by moving your head closer, or walking around to get a better view is amazingly immersive. The PS4 is capable of rendering terrifyingly realistic video, and the VR headset is more than sharp enough to pull you into the world. Details, such as shadows falling and moving, parallax, and the subtle increases in scale as you walk through a hallway feel just like the real world after a few minutes to acclimatize.

The audio rendered by the system is binaural, and changes appropriately as your head moves through the scene at hand. It's perfectly synchronized with the visuals, so as you move your head around a sound source, the intensity of the sounds change appropriately, with frightening results.

Even after perhaps an hour of play, I still felt comfortable enough to keep going. Switching the lights off in the room seems to help make the whole experience better, though the headset does create a great seal against outside light. It was only as I approached the second hour of play that my eyes started to complain, and I felt what might have been the start of a headache. I didn't wait to find out.

Should you be so inclined, you can use the headset with any title you have available, and it'll look as though you're alone in a large theater, playing your game, or watching a video. It's an interesting way to play a game or tear through your Netflix shows, but you do experience the same eye fatigue as you would playing a VR game, so it might not be a compelling way to use the VR system.

Which brings us to the elephant in the room: there aren't a lot of titles. The system comes with a demo disc, which shows off a few titles available, but the whole games are at the horizon yet. Visible, but not quite here. Once they do arrive though, it'll be quite the experience. Cinema mode, while interesting, really isn't any different

from watching on your regular TV, but with eye strain. Do yourself a favor, and find a place you can try the PS VR.

VALUE ★★★★★☆

This is a bit tricky. On one hand, and in practical terms, this is one-of-a-kind, especially at the price point of just a hair under PHP 23,000. On the other hand, there isn't a lot to do with it at the moment, though that is steadily changing. There are already a number of titles available online, a few full games present, and more than a few titles just around the corner. Whether or not this is worth it is entirely up to how eager you are to get your hands on VR, though it wouldn't hurt to wait a couple of months to get your own.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Dimensions: VR headset: Approx. 187×185×277 mm (width × height × length, excludes largest projection, headband at the shortest), Processor unit: Approx. 143×36×143 mm (width × height × length, excludes largest projection)
Weight:
VR headset: Approx. 610g
Display: OLED
Panel Size: 5.7 inches
Panel Resolution: 1920×RGB×1080 (960×RGB×1080 per eye)
Refresh Rate: 120Hz, 90Hz
Field of View: Approximately 100 degrees
Connections: VR headset: HDMI, AUX, Stereo Headphone Jack
Processor unit: HDMI TV, HDMI PS4, USB, HDMI, AUX

What's Hot:

- VR! For the masses! Finally!
- Will have a lot of support from Sony
- Seriously, VR! It's so cool!

What's Not:

- Not for the easily nauseated
- Expensive yet.



BOTTOMLINE

This is the future, and it's awesome.



Fitbit Flex 2

Reviewed by Maribelle Alba

Fitbit, the leading wearables company, has reinvented its iconic tracker into a versatile, swim-proof fitness wristband, the Fitbit Flex 2.

DESIGN ★★★★★

The Fitbit Flex 2 is 30 percent smaller than its predecessor, with the tracker itself measuring only 31.7 x 8.9 x 6.8 mm and weighing 23.4 g. The black plastic tracker has five LED notification lights in front and three charging pins at the back. The removable tracker is inserted into a slim classic band made of a flexible, durable elastomer material with a modern herringbone design. The bands come in a variety of colors—black, lavender, magenta, and navy—to suit individual tastes.

With its minimalist design and slim classic band, the Flex 2 can be worn alone, or along with other jewelry, or next to a watch. Unless you choose a bright-colored band, it is discreet and unobtrusive, suitable for almost all occasions. When the classic 3-pack fitness accessory bands become available in the market, you can choose to expand your color options with the Sport Pack which includes navy, gray, and yellow bands, or the Pink Pack with magenta, lavender, and blush pink colors.

For the more fashion-conscious, the Flex 2 can be accessorized with a stainless steel bangle in silver, gold or rose gold, or a pendant that's available in silver or gold. Fitbit has also announced that designer collections from Tory Burch and PUBLIC SCHOOL will be available in 2017.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

The Fitbit Flex 2 was redesigned with custom components to fit its slim, narrow, symmetrical design, but the hardware itself is quite basic. Housed inside the tiny black plastic casing are the 3-axis accelerometer, vibration motor, Bluetooth antenna, motherboard and memory chip, lithium-polymer battery, charging pins, and LED lights.

The accelerometer tracks movement, the vibration motor and LED lights provide notifications, and the Bluetooth 4.0 antenna syncs to the Fitbit app. The on-board memory records 7-days of detailed minute-by-minute motion data and saves daily totals for the past 30-days. Depending on use, the battery can last up to five days for each full charge.

The Flex 2 is also water-resistant up to 50 meters, and can be worn in the shower, pool, or ocean (but is not recommended for use in a hot tub or sauna).

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

The functionality of the Flex 2 is tied up to the Fitbit app that tracks your essential health and fitness data. Out of the box, the first thing you're asked to do is to set up your Fitbit account and sync the Flex 2 to



your smartphone via Bluetooth. On the app, you configure your preferences such as which wrist you'll be wearing the tracker, as well as preferences for silent alarms, notifications, reminders to move, your main goal (whether steps, distance, calories burned, or active minutes), and syncing. You also asked about your goals for activity, exercise, nutrition & body, and sleep.

Once that's done, you start wearing the Flex 2, and it automatically starts tracking your activities. You see your progress on the app dashboard, which shows steps taken, distance, active minutes, and floors climbed.

The device can automatically recognize and track selected exercises such as walking, running, rides, aerobic workouts, and swims. It reminds you to move every hour so you don't forget to get up and take a break from sitting at your desk for too long. Set up a sleep schedule and it reminds you when it's time for bed and also wakes you up with vibrating notifications on your wrist. The app tracks how well you slept by showing when you were in deep sleep, and how many times you were restless or awake. If you've set up notifications, it lets you know when you get a call or text message on your phone (provided it is within Bluetooth range).

The notifications are color-coded with a magenta LED light for move reminders, a yellow light for the wake-up alarm, and blue for calls/texts, but I can never remember what the colors and vibrations mean, so I end up not exactly ignoring but not really responding to the notifications.

Back to the Fitbit app, compulsive types will also appreciate being able to record weight, as well as food and water intake.

My one biggest issue with Fitbit is that it refuses to sync automatically with the *Apple Health* app, an annoying inconvenience that many other Fitbit users complain about.

VALUE ★★★★★

With a suggested retail price of PHP 5,499, the Flex 2 is not the cheapest tracker in the market. However, if you're looking for a proven presence and update support both on firmware and software, then you can't go wrong with the market leader.



SPECIFICATIONS:

Dimensions: 31.7 x 8.9 x 6.8 mm

Weight: 23.5 g

Display: 5 LED indicator lights

Sensors & components: 3-axis accelerometer; vibration motor

Connectivity: Bluetooth 4.0

Memory: 7 days of detailed motion; 30 days of daily totals

Material: Elastomer wristband with stainless steel clasp

Battery: Lithium-polymer

Charge time: 1-2 hours

Battery life: Up to 5 days

Water resistance: Up to 50 meters

What's Hot:

- Small and discreet
- Comfortable wristband for 24/7 use
- Long battery life; quick charging
- Swim-proof

What's Not:

- Hard to remember what color-coded lights and vibration notifications mean
- Fitbit app does not sync with the Apple Health
- Accessories—like color wristbands, bangles, pendants—not available in local stores



BOTTOMLINE

No bells and whistles, but so indispensable the only time I take it off is when I need to charge it.

Alcatel Move Time SW10

Reviewed by Mia Carisse Barrientos

What better way to introduce technology to your tiny tots than with a wearable smart device that'll teach them how to tell time and encourage them to be more active. Alcatel sent over a review unit of their smartwatch/activity tracker designed for kids and here's what we think of it.



DESIGN ★★★★★

At first glance, you can tell right off the bat which market this smartwatch is aimed at. In terms of design, the watch is devoid of sharp corners and is aesthetically structured with just the right curves that make it very child-friendly. Our review unit came with a smooth, blue-colored, silicon rubber strap and sub-inch, single color OLED display bordered with plastic material in orange.

Like most smartwatch-activity tracker combo, the Move Time presents few but easy-to-manage controls. There are four tactile buttons: the two on the right are labeled as the SOS and power buttons, respectively. Meanwhile, buttons on the left side are for controlling volume. The buttons also serve as gateway to other functions I'll be going over later.

The back is where you'll find the pogo pin charging port and a nano sim slot located right under a flap that's secured in place with a screw. The package ships with a tiny screwdriver to help you in setting up the watch.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

The Move Time's 0.95-inch OLED display is nothing spectacular but will grab your child's attention with its animated icons, specifically when a parent is calling. At just 40 g, the watch is lightweight and feels like it's barely there. This is great for kids who are first time watch owners and get easily irritated by wrist accessories.

Powering the watch is a 380 mAh battery that tops up easily and promises to last up to four days when on stand by. In use, the battery holds up well and will be able to serve its function for at least two days.

There's a speaker on top of the display for listening to voice messages or taking calls. A microphone is also in place to record the user's voice or for calling registered numbers.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

Although the watch is on the child, parents have total control over who gets to contact their tot and vice versa. Once the SIM card and

Move Time app are installed, the parent can begin setting up the watch. Pairing information that's to be entered in the app can be found on the watch itself or the package. The app's interface shows your kid's current location, location history, contact numbers programmed in on the watch (limited to 10), messages, school time, and more.

The app-watch pairing offers various features for parents who constantly worry about their child's safety. The monitor function allows you to stealthily listen to the sounds surrounding the watch through your paired phone. Meanwhile, the electronic fence feature enables you to set a range on the map as a "safe area." When your child leaves this zone, you will immediately be notified.

For the kids, this GPS-enabled smartwatch shows on its display the steps they've taken daily and is pretty accurate in recording authentic movements. The watch has support for 2G networks, which lets your child place outgoing calls to numbers the administering parent has programmed in. By holding the volume key for three seconds, the child can start recording a voice message that will be sent to all contacts. The watch can also be switched to airplane mode, send SOS alerts and ping the paired phone when the owner arrives home.

VALUE ★★★★★

Parents who want to keep tabs on their child when they play in the neighborhood playground or participate in after-school activities will take delight in this genius creation. It has an IP65 certification, meaning it is water-resistant and remains intact even when your kid randomly jumps in puddles or when they sweat it out during PE. Moreover, the smartphone app gives you total peace by constantly updating you of your child's whereabouts through a pinpoint icon that moves as your child travels.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Display: 0.95-inch OLED display, 94 x 64 pixel resolution
Connectivity: GPS, GSM, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0, and 2G
Battery: 380 mAh
Design: IP65 rated
OS compatibility: Android and iOS

What's Hot:

- Easy-to-use controls
- Efficient supplementary app
- Lightweight

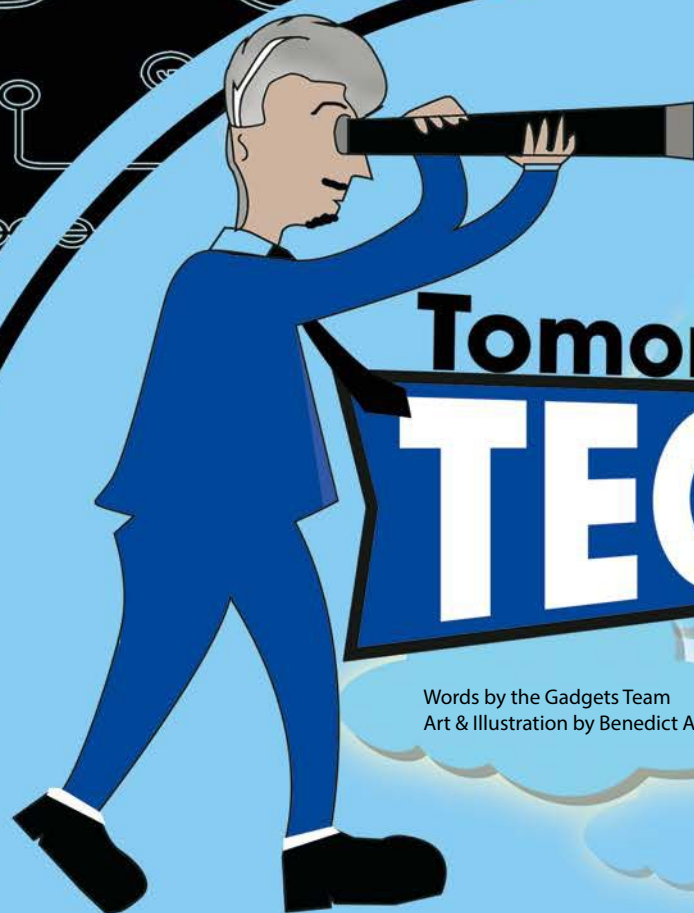
What's Not:

- Display could have been a touchscreen



BOTTOMLINE

Got an active kid who's always on the move? You might want to consider this.



Words by the Gadgets Team
Art & Illustration by Benedict Asal

It's the start of a new year, and along with the prospect of another three hundred or so days of possibility, we have the tantalizing promise of even more tech. In the first Cover Story of 2017, we take a look at what 2017 holds for the technologically minded consumer. We have it all: personal electronics, entertainment, a little bit of gaming—everything bright, shiny, and battery-powered for you to drool over. Strap in, we've got a lot of ground to cover.



The Future of Home Entertainment

Words by Ren Alcantara

Consumer entertainment is one of the driving forces in tech. Developments in screen technology, refinements in audio, games, and even file formats we use today happen because of our need to stay entertained. In this part of our Cover Story, we're going to be taking a look at how home entertainment is going to be this year.

The rise of 4K

There was a time when we weren't entirely sure if 4K was going to stand on its own legs. That time has passed, and 4K video has finally, totally, hit the mainstream. With 4K TV penetration in the US hovering around the 16 million mark, and possibly 88 million standalone Blu-Ray players sold, there's little doubt that 4K has hit its stride. As with everything, the hardware is useless with nothing to play, and possibly the one thing that has pushed 4K over the tipping point is the broadening acceptance of the format content producers. In 2016 alone, over a hundred Blu-Ray titles were released by various studios.

What we can look forward to in 2017 thanks to the broadening penetration of 4K is lower UHD TV prices. It's the way of tech. Even now, you can get last season's UHD TVs at a significantly lower price than at launch, so

if you're not one to be at the absolute cutting edge of technology, this is a great way to go. The idea is made doubly attractive given that the price of some of these TVs pushes well past what it would cost to make a downpayment on a car. As even more homes start jumping on the bandwagon, more and more content will be available, furthering the cycle. If there was ever a time to go UHD, it is now. The first consumer 8K TVs are also starting to peek in from the fringes, with the first showfloor-ready devices appearing at CES.

HDR for TVs is also starting to become prevalent, thanks to newer display technologies such as Quantum Dot display technology. This allows images that are closer to real-world images, thanks to more evenly balanced lights and darks, and a more balanced contrast range that's much easier on the eyes.





Let there be light

Projectors are likewise changing for the better. From old, power-hungry lamps with limited lifespans, projector manufacturers are starting to push laser light sources into the mainstream. Offering advantages such as instant power-on, virtually maintenance-free operation, and superior contrast over traditional projectors. Switching to the newer tech is a no-brainer.

Virtually real

Virtual reality is finally making its way into our homes. While PS VR has been around for a little while now, we haven't had a lot of content to go with it. There have been a few titles here and there, but this month sees the start of VR in

earnest. With Capcom's *Resident Evil 7*, we're seeing the beginning of top-tier titles being playable on VR from start to finish. It's not so much a gamble as it is an acceptance by Capcom of the reality of gaming, and it might just be the push people need to plunk down on a device that's still a little beyond the price range of many people. It's encouraging to see a blockbuster franchise make the most of such new tech, though to be honest, we're a little afraid of the prospect of survival-horror in VR. ConsoVR has also started its inexorable entree, with a more focused development cycle overall, seems better poised to deliver on the VR promise than the PC, and we're finally starting to see it happen.

This can only be the start of the VR trend. There are more than a few titles we'd love to see in VR, and with the kind of power current-generation gaming hardware can deliver, it's starting to look like VR is finally starting to be in the reach of the common person (though maybe with a little bit of penny-pinching first.)

Nintendo has also announced the region-free Switch—their next generation portable/

home gaming console. The announcement brings with it announcement of some highly anticipated titles, such as *Mario Kart*, a new *Zelda*, and what is essentially a bundle of games that's meant to be as engaging as Wii Sports was when the Wii was fresh and new.

Audio, unfettered

Wireless audio beyond the simple Bluetooth speakers of old are starting to take over home entertainment. WiSA, an association devoted to making wireless audio devices and manufacturers play nice, and perform according to standards, is making sure the world of wireless audio is going to be a thing we can all enjoy with no problems. This year will see more, better, and easier-to-use wireless audio that can deliver high-def quality. Audiophiles will likely still go for the traditional wired options, but for the rest of that world that is perfectly happy with above-average wireless audio quality, this is a godsend. With all the usual names putting their R&D resources in their own wireless solutions, we're going to have a great answer to the formerly tangled mess that is our home entertainment system. As with the rest of the tech in this section, prices will drop, and even today, you can pick up an excellent Bluetooth/Wi-Fi wireless speaker for less than PHP 10,000, so things are looking up for the home entertainment enthusiast.

2017 has just started, but already, we're looking at a lot of devices that'll keep us entertained in the comfort of our own homes. There are bound to be a lot more as the months roll by, so stay tuned. This is going to be a great year for tech.





The Future of Home

Words by Mia Carisse Barrientos

This year's Consumer Electronics Show (CES), as it is annually, was a launch pad for many new and some out of this world tech innovations. As the name suggests, most of the technology introduced in this grand event, albeit some just concepts, are all aimed at and will be in the market for regular people with regular needs. CES 2017 was bursting with new mobile devices and entertainment systems but it is also equally affluent of forward-looking devices for the home.

From the devices unveiled, we managed to come up with a blueprint of what would possibly take up space in the homes of the future.

IoT is set to shake up our way of life

Last time we checked, the Internet of Things (IoT) was the main trend that drives future homes forward and we can safely say that remains to be the reality. The increasing awareness and coming out of more and more connected devices meant for home use are textbook indicators that IoT is well upon us and it shows no signs of slowing down. Who would shut out the idea of home automation when it would make life more convenient, anyway?

Industry observers have expressed that the IoT trend is bound to grow more significant and turn into the "The Internet of Everything." Smart connectivity will extend to practically any endpoint in the home or workplace, possibly blurring the lines between the digital and the physical world—it's a dream come true for all the sci-fi geeks out there.

The show floor of CES had no shortage of home automation things. One that took the spotlight was Amazon's Alexa. There wasn't an Amazon booth to begin with, but its intelligent voice-activated assistant was everywhere, which can be attributed to the availability of the Alexa developer kit. Its integration into various types of devices shows that Alexa works well as an entry point for connected home control—or could also be that we take delight in the idea of bossing this virtual assistant around to do tasks on our behalf.

What else is there for the home of the future? More. Better home automation hubs are to be expected and with this comes more adept data security solutions. Home devices, not so far from now, will ship with built-in artificial intelligence, predictive algorithms, voice control, and all sorts of sensors. In a nutshell, everything will be plenty smarter and promises to make life more comfortable. There are loose ends, but it looks as if all that's about to be tied into a tight knot sooner than you think.





For now, here are some devices you might see in the homes of the future:

Lenovo Smart Assistant

One of the world's largest PC makers, Lenovo, was 'inspired' by Amazon's Alexa in creating its Smart Assistant. This Smart Assistant speaker takes after a typical tumbler but has integrated features that allows the owner to ask it to play music, search terms and facts, read books, set alarms, and whatnot by voice. It's basically an Alexa made by Lenovo—in any case, it is powered by Amazon's Alexa cloud-based voice services. What's different is, it will retail in eye-catching colors and comes adorned with aesthetic elements. Inside, there's an Intel Atom processor in charge of running tasks and eight far-field microphones to capture the user's voice.

For consumers who want more kick in their audio, Lenovo's also releasing a Harman Kardon version of this Smart Assistant speaker.

LG Smart InstaView Door-in-Door Refrigerator

The Alexa integration continues in the LG Smart InstaView Refrigerator. This is probably the coolest smart refrigerator we have seen so far. It highlights a 29-inch touch screen InstaView panel upfront. The panel is able to turn translucent to show the contents of the fridge when you knock on it and also into a touchscreen display where you can do anything you'd normally do on a smartphone like play music, search for recipes, make shopping lists, shop online, and more. With webOS and Alexa integration, you can also opt to talking to your fridge instead. How cool is that.

Additionally, LG has also introduced the Hub Robot which also borrows skills from Amazon's Alexa. This little robot that resembles Eve from *Wall-e* can connect smart LG devices in the home and communicate with family members through its built-in speaker and camera.

Samsung Family Hub 2.0 Refrigerator

This smart fridge from Samsung has the same selling points as the LG's smart fridge. On its right door is a stunning 21.5-inch touchscreen LED display, which is a wee bit larger than last year's model. The Family Hub 2.0 also comes with an improved interface and a range of apps to make

fridge organization and cooking much easier. What's more, you could also play music on it, mirror a TV screen, and ask it to do things via voice activation care of the company's own S-Voice proprietary system.

Like its other Korean tech giant rival, Samsung also introduced its POWERbot VR7000 Robot vacuum at the recently concluded CES. The latest in the company's POWERbot line of vacuum cleaners, this intelligent cleaning unit features powerful suction and a sleek design perfect for modern homes.

Whirlpool Smart Care Washer/Dryer

Washer and dryers in one machine is not news but when you throw in Wi-Fi and other smart features into the loot, it becomes a device worth looking at. Come Whirlpool's Smart Care Washer and Dryer combo. You get the gist, it's a washer and dryer in one with Wi-Fi support and works with the supplementary Whirlpool app to give you more control over your laundry.

Whirlpool has also announced that most of its smart appliances will soon be Alexa-enabled.

While everyone wants to get in on the voice activation fanfare, some chose not to. CES 2017 was also a platform for the introduction of products such as smart windows that can sense weather changes and can be controlled through one's phone, robots that are actually functional, smart lamps, air purifiers, automated trash cans, smart hair brush, smart hubs that can learn the usage behaviour of people at home, and more.

Most of these new devices are gearing up for availability in the consumer market soon. Meanwhile, some probably will be on the chopping block, so you might as well check these devices while you can. You might even spot a thing or two for your future home.





The Future of Computers

Words by Chris Noel Hidalgo

It takes three words to sum up this entire article: more crazy computers. Crazy in terms of scale, power, form factor, and technology. Most of these debuted during the recently concluded Consumer Electronics Show, and boy, "Show" does not do it justice.

Though there were many things that vied for the spotlight during the CES, most of the exciting reveals took place in the computer industry. There hasn't been a dead year for computers in quite a while, and this year won't be any different. The future is now, and here's what we should look forward to.

I'll ask you a question first. What do you get when your tech company has a gamer CEO firmly living his brand's slogan "For Gamers. By Gamers."? Crazy stuff that's what. We've seen Razer's style before—rolling up to tech trade shows with innovative, sometimes excessive, doodads such as the Switchblade portable gaming device, Blade Stealth ultrabook, the modular Project Christine computer, and the Razer Core graphics enclosure. This year, they unleashed two new kickers: Project Valerie and Ariana.

Both are equally amazing concepts. Valerie is essentially a 17.3-inch Razer Blade Pro with two additional 4K screens flanking the main display.

To preserve the notebook's portability, the extra screens automatically slide out within a few seconds, saving future owners the hassle of setting and aligning everything up. They can be used integrated together for purposes such as 12K (!!!) gaming, or independently for multiple applications per window—all on-the-go.

Meanwhile, Ariana is a projection system which extends the game environment beyond a monitor. It's pitched to work with any room as it is intelligent enough to scan its surroundings to detect walls, boundaries, and even furniture. The idea around it is that while the human eye can focus on just what's in front of it, there's a subconscious part of you that still detects and recognizes the periphery. The concept product projects usually unseen game assets onto your display's immediate environment to further up the immersion. Ariana's pretty grand, eh?

Razer's not the only one cooking up crazy laptops, though. Take Acer. Calling the brand's Predator





21X a laptop is a bit too generous. Seriously. You'd need to be having leg day everyday at the gym if you want to put this giant on your lap. Its size is due to its 21-inch G-Sync screen, dual GTX 1080 GPUs, 7th generation Intel Core HK processor, Cherry MX RGB mechanical keyboard, and a whack ton of others features crammed into a "notebook" body. Perhaps it's time to create another segment for these puppies. I propose the term "desktop".

Almost as desktop-y is the Asus GX800. While it isn't as monstrous as the Predator 21X, it is quite eye-catching in its own right. It struts pretty much the same powerful and up-to-date innards, sans the curved screen, mechanical keyboard, and a few drives. What makes it unique is its liquid-cooling dock that can be attached and detached to the main notebook with just a slide and a lift, even if the computer is powered on. Keeping with the theme of

massive scale, we were also graced with the Dell 32-inch 8K monitor. To be clear, you probably won't be seeing this in just any office or computer shop unless the owner is a completely ballin' dude/dudette. Heck, the technology to drive its 7680 x 4320 resolution (a grand total of over 33 million pixels) hasn't even trickled down to the consumer market yet. You'd need a hefty professional workstation-grade graphics card for this one. It also boasts great color reproduction capabilities on top of its mind-blowing pixel density.

Scaling things down a bit, Dell also released a new 2-in-1 version of its XPS 13 ultrabook. It's thinner and lighter than its predecessor, with a hinge that allows it to be used in tablet mode, hence the name. The familiar InfinityEdge display makes

its return, as well as the keyboard with satisfying travel, though the latter does give the XPS 13 2-in-1 a little more depth. Frankly, I'd take a great typing experience over razor thinness anyday. The change in form factor comes at a price though, mainly in the processor SKU. Compared to the original XPS 13's Intel U chips, the 2-in-1 is powered by weaker Intel Y chips. The good news is that they're able to perform *close* to what you would experience with the U, thanks to Dell's power optimization.

But if you thought that the XPS 13 2-in-1 is already thin and light enough, then take a gander at the second generation LG Gram. The new one solves the old unit's battery life problem, while updating the innards to the latest Intel Kaby Lake processors, as well as adding backlighting to its keyboard. Even with all the improvements, it remains firmly under 1 kg, coming in at precisely 980 grams.

And now, perhaps the most exciting news out of the hardware side of CES: AMD is finally back with its new Ryzen processors and Vega graphics chips. It's about dang time the CPU and GPU industry saw some real competition. Better yet, the new architectures look like they can live up to the hype.

There's already a third-party benchmark making its rounds on the internet, and it reveals that the Ryzen chips perform just as well as Intel Skylake chips in single-threaded applications—something AMD has been relatively weak at. All Ryzen CPUs are also unlocked and overclocking ready out of the box. ALL. It's a very bold move, and it reveals just how confident AMD is with their newest product.

On the other hand, Vega is shaping up to be a major upgrade over the current-gen Polaris GPUs. It has a new cache architecture, new geometry pipeline for even more polygons, the new Next-Generation Compute Unit for future HDR applications, as well as a new pixel engine which renders only what the player is seeing on-screen. It's still a couple of months away though, so there's still a lot under wraps.

As you can see, there are a lot of things going on in the PC market, all of which should bode well for both geeks and non-geeks alike. Competition is definitely back on, and even long-standing household names are feeling the pressure of innovation. From the ultra thin to the ultra insane and everything in between, we're definitely spoiled for possibilities.





The Future of Smartphones and Mobile Tech

Words by Robby Vaflor

We live in pretty exciting times. Ever seen Spike Jonze's *Her*? That was a little over three years ago. It feels a bit scary to think how spot on it was about the future (hopefully not the part about the heartache); it's even scarier knowing how short of a hop it was to get from speculation to reality. I mean, have you taken a look around lately?

Speculative fiction has had a pretty decent track record with foreshadowing future technology whether they were borne out of educated hypotheses or products of fancy that inspired generations of engineers and scientists to materialize sci-fi imagery from their childhood.

And while we are a long way away from the all-knowing, sentient operating systems of that terribly depressing film, Spike Jonze's imagined near-future was able to encapsulate the confluence of innovations from AI to AR to VR that is driving technology of the future, at the heart of which is the beloved smartphone.

Phones are getting more and more powerful. For example, ASUS revealed the ZenFone AR at this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas which runs on the brand spanning new Snapdragon 821 processor with a whopping 8 GB of RAM. Most office computers do not even possess memory half that size.

While pocketing a device that strong may seem absurd at the moment, this will be the new trend for smartphones from here on out, and for good reason.

In the future, present-day new tech will start to converge, in one way or another, syncing with your smartphone which will ultimately demand more computing power. ASUS says the ZenFone AR will have Google's Tango augmented reality (AR) and Daydream virtual reality (VR) platforms built in, justifying the RAM capacity.

New Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI) innovations also made a big impression on CES-goers like smart appliances (there was even an IoT toothbrush) and AI personal assistants like Google Assistant and Amazon's Alexa.

Why is this important? If the trends are anything to go by, engineers and developers are racing





towards combining AI, AR, VR, and IoT to create a fully immersive digital experience. When this technological convergence becomes fully realized, the world will be changed forever.

The digital layer of the physical world will become more tangible, allowing us to interact with our environment in new ways, further increasing productivity and minimizing effort. The smartphone will be the key with which people could access all of this from turning on the TV with a remote app to browsing through furniture projecting AR images of them in living room corners they would look best in, perhaps using Microsoft's holographic platform.

To help reach this seamless and immersive experience, tech giants and third-party partners

are creating additional hardware and peripherals that aim to make the whole thing feel natural and more convenient. Sony developed the Xperia Ear, fully wireless earbuds with a built-in AI personal assistant, while Motorola released the more Jonze-esque VerveOnes that does not have a personal assistant, but has many practical features like audio pass through and weatherproofing. The mission here is to make the system of phone, smart devices and accessories feel more organic and less like carrying added baggage. And perhaps this is why in the past couple of years the world has seen wild and admittedly very imaginative devices that changed the general public's perception of what can be done with a phone and what should be put into it. For the most part, consumers have embraced them such as the fingerprint scanner, multiple camera systems, and even built-in projectors.

It should not be forgotten that invention has an ingredient of trial and error: letting people try out revolutionary, or, if it all goes south, eccentric ideas that can either change the world or be remembered as that thing that happened one time and should never be repeated.

However, while the prospect of controlling your house through your very own JARVIS or running through an AR exercise course that you've devised a la *Batman* are very exciting, one should take note of the risks involved. Being more connected means an increase in the number of ways security threats can strike.

Leaving the smartphone game as an in-house designer and manufacturer, Blackberry's executives have expressed their intent to focus on developing security solutions for increasing mobile connectivity by way of the IoT. Security giants like Symantec and invested companies like IBM and Google are also investing in keeping interconnected devices as secure as possible.

The mobile phone sure has come a long way from the very expensive hunk of metal and plastic that could do one thing decades ago to the very expensive hunk of metal and plastic that could do everything today. While we are far away from the future mentioned, this period of growing pains is still a pretty fun era to be in; although perhaps try not to fall in love with Alexa 2.0.





Revolutions, big or small, are what drives human progress through steps and leaps. The essence of humanity lies in creation. Rather than to adapt physically to the changing world, humans craft devices to overcome challenges that they face.

From the discovery of fire—to the birth of agriculture—the smart devices of the present day, the spirit of human ingenuity lives on, driven by a constant curiosity for the unknown, and a desire to improve life.

Our last issue looked at the year that passed and the innovations that led to this point where we now speculate on the future, and the technology that will drive us towards it. We run through recent developments in smart devices, new and upcoming releases, and give our fearless predictions for the gadgets of tomorrow.

With a rapidly shrinking world, and new problems to conquer, revolutions will not cease. It is a constant that rides in the wave of time that only moves forward.

Art Direction by Jael Mendoza
Photography by Carlo Dans Isidoro
HMUA by Patricia Aquino
Styling by Jonah Mendoza
Assisted by Ma. Theresa Eloriaga
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LAURA BURČIKAITĖ

Interviewed by Robby Vaflor

There is, perhaps, no one better suited to be on the cover of our future-gazing issue than Laura Burčikaitė. Hailing from Lithuania, she possesses a youthfulness with a touch of classic elegance you rarely see these days outside of 35 mm celluloid. But apart from her natural beauty and the way she carries herself, her personality makes her a standout to represent the kind of forward-looking individuals that this month's issue is for.

At only 19 years, Laura has already been modelling for five years (since she was 14, if one can believe it). She has been travelling for the gig since she was 16 years old.

She arrived in the country a month ago fresh from the Shanghai Fashion Week, and has already been to New York, Milan, Beijing, Taiwan and Brazil before that.

"I'm happy. I mean, it's not easy to be on your own and taking care of yourself, but everyday you're learning," she said on her experience as a jet-setting teenage model. She added that most of her life was in her phone, being able to contact family, and

friends who were either back home or modelling elsewhere.

According to Laura, in every country she visited, she found something that she liked, and she is excited to go to more places in the future to experience different cultures and environments. She is currently on a gap year, taking the time to explore her modelling career and the world, having graduated from high school last year.

Apart from travelling, Laura enjoys music, dance, art, and biology, hoping to go to college next year to become a nutritionist (as if she was not interesting enough). She says that she is unsure of what she would want to do in the future, but is hopeful, adding that she would continue to do whichever made her happy.

With a curious mind, a boldness to explore new horizons, and a willingness to embrace change, Laura stands as a personification of her generation's traits and aspirations, optimistic for the future, but with feet firmly planted in the present.

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Way of Life!

First-ever Sony Fair Shows Off the Best of the Brand



Last December, Sony hosted its inaugural Sony Fair, a ten-day event that featured interactive displays, community activities, and workshops that enabled customers to envision the way Sony devices can fuel their lifestyle. The event, which ran from December 9 to 18, brought together some of Sony's flagship products in the spaces of mobile, digital imaging, home entertainment, personal audio, and gaming for customers to enjoy.

Among the stunning display of products many looked forward to at the Sony Fair, included the Sony Bravia X93000D and the 75-inch Z9D 4K HDR TV. Together with the HT-ST9 Soundbar with Wi-Fi/Bluetooth, Sony demonstrated how it has redefined audio and entertainment through its slim and elegant profile that blends into any living environment. Sony's Bravia Movie Nights during the evenings let consumers enjoy the best of Sony TVs as they watched family-friendly films such as *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2*, *Hotel Transylvania*, *The Amazing Spiderman 2*, and *Arthur Christmas* while being among the first in the country to experience the 100-inch Z9D 4K HDR TV.

An unforgettable experience awaited audiophiles as they immersed in rich, vibrant sound at the Hi-Res Audio Workshop conducted by Sony Ambassador Juno Oebanda. An engaging and enticing crowd arrived at Sony Extra Bass' Feel the Passion Dance Clinic featuring Upeepz Dance Crew as well as DJ Rammy Bitong's Silent Party and DJ Workshop where he shared advice to young and aspiring DJs. The Sony Fair also brought the most discerning ears up and close with Sony's top-of-the-line personal audio Bluetooth devices such as the MDR-XB650BT EXTRA BASS Headphones, MDR-1000X Noise-Canceling Headphones, SRS-XB3 Portable Wireless Speaker, and MDR-Z1R. The MDR-Z1R headphones boasts of the utmost standard in materials and design. The Fibonacci-patterned grille guarantees a cleaner, more authentic Hi-Res sound.

Mobile photography took center stage as Xperia Ambassadors Pierre Guevarra, Linus Banaag and Marvin Conanan conducted workshops where they tried out some of today's hottest mobile devices

from the Xperia X Series, including the Xperia XZ flagship mobile phone. A first for a smartphone, the Xperia XZ brings triple image sensing technology to its cameras to deliver the best experience in mobile photography. Select Xperia fans got the chance to win some of these devices through an on-the-spot mobile photography contest.

At the Sony Digital Imaging booth, exhilarating on-site activities including a bar tending and flaring demonstration and a BMX bike and skateboard exhibition put today's latest Alpha and Cyber-Shot cameras to the test. Workshops featuring renowned photographers and cinematographers Pilar Trigo Bonnin, Paco Guerrero, Nina Sandejas, and Mayad Studios gathered professional and hobbyists for sharing of pro tips and tricks. Meanwhile, Sony Ambassadors Kimi Juan, Jelito de Leon, Sheng Gonzales, and Charisma Lico demonstrated mastery of their craft as they taught travel, flat lay, toy, and fashion photography workshops to their followers and fans.

The Sony PlayStation booth, which exhibited some of this year's lauded games, including *Final Fantasy XV*, *Just Dance*, and *NBA2K17*, definitely thrilled gamers. Many were simply delighted

to finally get the chance to experience the wonderful world of virtual reality as they played some of today's hottest VR-ready games with the PlayStation VR Headset in tow.

The inaugural Sony Fair was truly a celebration of the brand's relentless pursuit of innovation and commitment to continue delivering more firsts that will inspire and spark curiosity among consumers. Beyond this, it is a testament of how far gadgets have transcended from simple functional tools to personal devices that serve as canvases to express one's creativity and deliver one-of-a-kind experiences that enhance our lives.



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**SUZUKI SUPERIOR 150CC
CARBURETOR ENGINE,
DOHC, 4-VALVE & 6-SPEED
TRANSMISSION**

ISUZU D-MAX 3.0L 4x2 LS AT

Review and Photos by Robby Vaflor

As a city kid who did not have a single adventurous bone in his body, anything larger than a Corolla had very little appeal to me growing up. As my mind began to catch up on adult practicality, I started to appreciate the merits of having a larger vehicle. My preference still leans towards compacts though. Will this change with the D-MAX?

DESIGN ★★★★★☆

The D-MAX is a manly man's truck. One look at its robust and imposing profile causes one to imagine driving off to Home Depot to purchase several two-by-fours for a new woodworking project with Merle Haggard playing low in the background.

The large and lengthy size, high ground clearance, and squarish shape make it look like it was meant to take punishment, and to a fair extent, it can if it must. The chrome accents on the exterior coupled with the black paint job on my loaner make for a clean but not bland look, that is, until you drive this bad boy through rain, dust, and dirt (which makes it look even radder in my opinion).

The macho aesthetic still continues inside the truck with hardly a frill to be seen, which is not an entirely bad thing in this case. The black leather seats are lined with prominent stitchwork, and the dash is mostly constructed with matte plastic. Do not be put off by it though, everything feels rock solid. In front and at the back, there is no lack of space. It feels comfortable enough to sit in all the seats with your passengers' knees being a couple of inches away from the front seat or the glove compartment.

The only issue I had with how the pickup was built is how it feels basic: maybe a little too basic. I understand that Isuzu really was going for a workhorse that is built to last, but it would have been great to have door handles that didn't require that extra bit of elbow grease to open or to have cup-holders that could accommodate drinks bigger than a medium. Still, overall, a very solidly designed truck.

HARDWARE ★★★★★☆

Isuzu prides itself on its diesel engines, and I am quite glad that I got to ride the newer 3.0 liter

variant. The engine is a four-cylinder in-line DOHC diesel engine with a Turbo Intercooler.

The engine has a maximum power output of 163 ps or 120 kW at 3200 revs per minute while its maximum torque is at 380 Nm or 38.7 kg-m at 1800-2200 revs a minute. Being a rear-wheel drive model, all that torque comes from the back and it's quite a fun experience to give the engine more juice when I got a clear path, in that push-you-back-to-your-headrest kind of deal.

Being a pickup truck, the rear suspension is a more rigid semi-elliptical leaf spring set-up while the front suspension eases that rigidity for the driver and passenger with an independent double wishbone with coil springs and stabilizer.

The cargo bed is nice and large lined with a sturdy bed liner. The projector headlamps on the other hand have LED daytime running lamps.

Inside, all the essentials are present: an entertainment system with navigation, Bluetooth and wired connectivity, air-conditioning with automatic climate control, six-way adjustable front seats, and two glove compartments among several storage options within the vehicle. The D-MAX also supports passive entry and has a push start or stop ignition system.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

What's great about the D-MAX is the lack of pretension: it's a truck that feels like a truck. When I drive I want to have an idea of the size and weight of what I'm driving. I want to feel it when steering and when I step on the gas and the brakes; and the response and feel for both are excellent.

It also came as a welcomed surprise how well it was able to transition from city driving with

varying frequencies of stopping and maneuvering depending on the traffic, to countryside drives cruising through rolling hills and winding roads.

The pickup handles turns very well, and the torque makes easy game of inclines while driving through Tanay, Antipolo, and other parts of Rizal. And once you get it going, it can get to a fair amount of speed. Being a 4x2, though, do not expect it to grip onto more slippery terrain that well as it is a heavy vehicle without a front axle to pull it out quickly.

I was a bit apprehensive in terms of the suspension set-up, but it actually was quite a good, smooth experience for the most part. One can do a whole lot worse with some sedans, to be honest.

However, while the speed and handling are all well and good, the highlight of driving the D-MAX





was its fuel efficiency. Driving for the whole work week through holiday season rush hour traffic from Quezon City to Antipolo and then driving around for hours over the weekend along the Marilaque highway and the range estimates read a whopping 600-plus kilometers that I could have still driven, with the needle barely pointing to the three-quarter-mark on the fuel gauge. Insane.

VALUE ★★★★★

Priced at around PHP 1.2 million for the 4x2, 3.0-liter engine LS model, the Isuzu D-MAX is a competitively priced pickup truck considering that it is already one-upping the competition with a 3.0-liter turbo engine built for longevity. And what makes the D-MAX even more of a standout in the market in terms of value is its fuel efficiency, which brings running costs down in the long run.

What's Hot:

- Insanely fuel efficient
- Rugged

What's Not:

- Design is maybe a bit too basic

BOTTOMLINE:

In terms of fuel efficiency and overall quality and sturdiness of the truck, the D-MAX is a reliable pick-up that is sure to take you further without doing much damage to your wallet.



All-New Hyundai Elantra 2.0 GLS AT

Review and Photos by Ren Alcantara

With the traffic we face, there are few things worse than having to endure it in a sub-standard ride. Hyundai has consistently given us vehicles that perform wonderfully, so we expected no less from the all-new Elantra. We got to take it around for a few weeks, and here's what we thought of the experience.

DESIGN ★★★★★☆

The all-new Hyundai Elantra is gorgeous. It perfectly brings together stately and sporty, with an elegance to the lines, without detracting from a distinct muscular stance. The large, hexagonal front grille flows smoothly into the slim HID headlight assembly with daytime running lights, and onto the broad hood. That line carries over along the Elantra's profile, sweeping upwards and back, all the way to the rear lights. A broad, low-slung roof makes it appear to hug the road closely, further reinforcing the sporty exterior. The combination of sharp lines up front, and elegant, flowing lines to the rear give it a stance that makes it seem like it's more than capable of tearing up

the road, while remaining refined enough to hold back. It's a head-turner, there's no doubt there. 18-inch alloy wheels are the icing on the cake, and give it that little kick that separates it from the plane Jane sedans you'll see plying the roads of the metro.

HARDWARE ★★★★★☆

The image of a restrained monster holds true once you look under the hood. The heart of this beast is a 2.0-liter engine that's capable of putting out an impressive 152 ps at 6200 rpm, and 19.6 kg-m of torque at 4000 rpm. That's enough to propel the car to a max speed of 202 kph in short order. This is mated to a 6-speed automatic

transmission that shifts smooth, and surely. Keeping the rubber on the road is a MacPherson strut-type suspension on the front and rear, and keeping that power in check are disc brakes also on the front and rear.

Inside, you have a leather tilt and telescoping steering wheel with Bluetooth call and audio controls, and a 5-inch, full-color, touch-sensitive head unit to control your entertainment functions, and the six-speaker setup you have at your disposal. This complements the rest of the uncluttered center console, with rotary temperature and fan knobs, and large buttons for all the additional functions for the entertainment and climate controls. The engine start button is



in its own place, well within the driver's sight line, and out of the way of any other buttons you might be hunting for. Mirrors, doors, and windows are all powered, though seat position and height are manual—no big deal though, considering all the other creature comforts you get.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

If you're trying to get somewhere, this is a car that will take you there in a hurry. The beefy engine doesn't hesitate to pick up, and power transfer to the wheels is smooth and free from shift shock. Seriously, a quick tap with your right foot pushes you snugly back into your seat in short order. While top speed isn't likely (or legal) on our roads, know that you'll run out of road well before you run out of go. Should the car need a little push, just pop the shifter to the side, and you can downshift as much as the situation warrants.

The Elantra has steering to match. It's wonderfully agile, much more so than a car its size might make you think. You can make the most of gaps in traffic, or change lanes with ease, even while going at a reasonable clip. This was surprising given just how plush the transmission was. I'm used to what others might call a sportier feel to my suspension, and while the

Elantra does a great job sticking to the asphalt, it does so while remaining wonderfully comfortable over the many bumps our roads are plagued with. Those of you who have small children, easily frightened pets, or creaky backs are going to appreciate the ride.



Comfort levels are raised even higher thanks to a surprisingly quiet interior. Road noise is reduced to a low rumble, and the outside is kept squarely where it belongs. More than once, I had to be careful to keep myself occupied with driving music lest I get drowsy at the wheel. Back passengers even get rear vents to battle the oppressive tropical heat.

Road warriors have a lot to like about the all-new Elantra. Apart from a truly massive trunk space, the back seats fold down flat, allowing you to load up particularly large or long cargo. Bags, groceries, sporting equipment, they'll all fit, no problem.

That zip does come at a bit of a price. Driving in traffic drains the 50-liter tank rather quickly. During our tests in Christmastime traffic, we were pulling just under 8 km/l. Not terrible, but not the most frugal fuel-wise either. Either way, it's to be expected from all that muscle under the hood.

VALUE ★★★★★☆

At PHP 1.158M, this is a car that will take a bit to take home. Still, given its outstanding performance, comfort, and jaw-dropping style, it's well worth the price of admission. It's a car that'll be just as happy zipping around the city as it will be tackling some winding mountain roads, and it's got the looks to boot.

What's Hot:

- Plenty of power
- Comfortable suspension
- Great looks

What's Not:

- Drinks up petrol
- Price isn't for everyone

BOTTOMLINE:

It's as good a car to drive as it is to be seen in.



Honda CBR150R

Review and Photos by Ren Alcantara

The 150 cc category represents a unique category in the local motorcycle market. It's both practical as a daily commuter, and has enough zip to it to let your average rider have a little fun with more spirited riding on the weekends. Of the 150 cc backbones, Honda's own CBR150R is one that we had been waiting for since its launch last year. I was lucky enough to get my hands on it, and here's what I found out riding it around in various conditions.

DESIGN ★★★★★

The CBR150R is a handsome bike. Getting its looks from its larger brothers, this little 150 is unmistakably of the same lineage. From the dual LED headlights, aggressive, rearward-sweeping lines, and wasp-like profile, it's a Honda sportbike, no doubt. Only the raised handlebar and thinner tires would clue you in to its sub-200 displacement. Still, it's a good looking bike. It manages to look much larger than it actually is—an illusion that it manages to hold until you sit on the bike, and find that it is pleasantly pint-sized, like a perfectly scaled-down GP racer. All the same, it's a nice bike to see, and be seen in. The

seat is low, somewhere around 30 inches off the ground, and more than low enough to allow even shorter riders to touch the ground.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

Where you would expect to see a liter-class engine, you'll find a happy little thumper of a heart. The single-cylinder, 150 cc engine is more than enough to propel the light little bike along at a good clip. The bike had been tuned to give a little less power, but more torque, making it even better for the city. This is mated to a 6-speed transmission, which drives power to the rear wheel via chain. Coming to a halt is achieved

with help from single discs up front and to the rear. LED headlights keep nighttime driving safe, and the gauge cluster is completely digital, and evenly backlit, so your speed, tach, and fuel levels are easy to read both in broad daylight, and pitch blackness. For those who will be taking a passenger along, the bike has a rear pillion seat and passenger footpegs. That same seat comes off to reveal a surprising amount of storage—not enough for a helmet, but maybe enough to keep rain gear for one.

The bike only offers electric starting, and, unfortunately, no kill switch—you'll have to turn the key to shut the engine off. The frame has also



changed from the previous iteration, and the bike now has a diamond truss frame, with a longer wheelbase than before, while being a little smaller overall. Both models have 100/80-17 tires up front, and 130/70-17 tires in the rear.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★☆

The walkaround is one of the first things I enjoyed about the bike. Less muscular than the previous version but no less mean-looking, the current CBR150R looks just as good in person as it does in ads. Sitting on the bike is a little strange at first, since it's smaller than it looks. That's not a bad thing. It's low enough for a small person such as myself to straddle and touch the ground, and almost light enough to very easily push around.

Being fuel injected, the bike always starts on the first click. It pops easily and positively into first, and the clutch pull is light, making it great for Manila traffic. It's a shame neither brake nor clutch lever is adjustable, as both levers are far from the grip, with relatively shallow engagement. The throttle responds readily to right hand inputs, and a little give on the clutch sends you forward. It doesn't take a lot of torque to get you moving, but the bike has plenty. Gearing is right there with you though, and while you can push it almost to redline if you really need to get going, it's perfectly happy staying around the 3000-4000 rpm range in the city. It'll chug along okay on higher gears, owing both to the light weight and extra oomph from the powerplant.

Riding position is very vertical, and the narrow tank doesn't really encourage a full racing tuck.



You could do it, but you'd have to really get in there to make the most of the low, small windscreen. And while the bike is fully faired, there isn't a lot to go around, so you're going to feel the wind a bit at speed. It deflects most of the air away though, so it's not as bad as you might think when you first sit.

A little quirk I experienced with the transmission was that the bike would frequently get stuck between gears. Cycling down through the

gearbox would sometimes come to a halt, because it would fail to drop into the lower gear until you'd ease up on the clutch a little bit. It's not a problem really, and if you know what's going on, you'll eventually do so without thinking.

Even with all that power, the little 150 cc powerplant sips fuel in a very dignified manner. I barely made the gauge move in the week of commuting from BGC to West Avenue, through moderate traffic. Being slim enough to be able to filter through traffic allowed me to stay off lower gears.

Punching the engine for more spirited runs shows that it's happiest upwards of 7000 rpm, where you get max torque. Even though you mostly feel like you're on, rather than in the bike, it gives great feedback, hugs the road well, and responds readily to user input. If this fails to put a smile on your face after some twisties, you might need medication.

VALUE ★★★★★☆

For a bike that costs PHP 150,000, this is one that represents quite some value. Easy on the street, and fun on the twisties, it's a bike that delivers what you need, when you need it, and does so with style. To recap: looks, performance, and value. I think we have a winner.

What's Hot:

- Gorgeous
- Light
- Fun!

What's Not:

- Better levers are necessary
- Price tag

BOTTOMLINE:

I'm in talks to keep the little sportbike just a liiiiitle longer.



Suzuki and Des Marketing Open First 3S Shop in Ormoc City

On December 8, 2016, Suzuki Philippines in partnership with Des Marketing opened its first 3S (sales, spare parts, and service) Specialty shop in Ormoc City.

The recently inaugurated 3S shop is the second under Suzuki and Des Marketing's more than 16 years of partnership--the first is in Consolacion, Cebu. The 171 sqm establishment sits along the hustling street of Lilia Ave. in Cogon, making it an accessible one-stop shop for motorheads and just about anyone in the city.

As a 3S shop, it is neatly divided into three parts where customers can expect excellent service whether they're in to purchase a new Suzuki motorbike, get authentic spare parts, or have their wheels serviced.

Greeting customers as they come in is the main showroom. It is designed in colors white, black, silver, and blue which altogether gives the space a sophisticated air. It is also adorned with the brand's latest campaign "Para sa lahat ng trip mo" featuring Liza Soberano and Enrique Gil. A glass window separates the showroom and the service area. There are chairs and a long table installed right in front of the window so that customers can get a glimpse of the work area while remaining comfortable and sweat-free inside the main showroom.

On display in this 3S shop are the much loved Suzuki Smash in its recently made available fashion colors frenetic purple and frenetic magenta, the global scooter Address, the Raider



R1150, the Raider J115 Fi, and the Shooter which all will soon be offered in matte black, the speedy Skydrive, the exhilarating Gixxer, the budget-friendly GD110, and lastly the advanced X4-AX4.

During the inauguration of the shop, Suzuki and Des Marketing treated its first customers to discounts, a *Noche Buena* package worth PHP

1,000, and free service to Suzuki motorcycle owners. The whole day was crammed with fun activities such as singing and dance competitions, custom bike contest, stunts show, games, and raffle draw for Suzuki riders and customers within the vicinity. Model-actress Sam Pinto also graced the event and performed songs for the crowd.

MNTC Supports SPMJ Driven To Serve CSR Awards

The Manila North Tollways Corporation (MNTC) recently signed a memorandum of agreement with the Society of Philippine Motoring Journalists (SPMJ) to support the latter's Driven To Serve CSR Awards as a cooperating sponsor.

The Driven To Serve CSR Awards was conceived to recognize the most outstanding CSR projects undertaken by automotive manufacturers and distributors in the Philippines.

The awards hope to cast light on the heartwarming efforts that automotive industry players have put into community development, protection of the environment, education, and road safety. The SPMJ adopted this new advocacy in order to spur more corporate entities to follow in their footsteps as well as encourage those already engaged in such projects to soldier on.



In photo (L-R): SPMJ founding president and chairman Ray Butch Gamboa; MNTC president Rodrigo Franco; and SPMJ president Pinky Concha Colmenares.

Applicable entries for the event have already been fielded and have recently undergone judging by some of the luminaries in the field of Corporate

Social Responsibility. The most outstanding projects were announced during the awards ceremony held in February 2017.



Suzuki Asian Challenge is a one make race among Asian riders featuring the Raider R150



The Philippine flag waving proudly at the Chang International Circuit in Buriram, Thailand

TEAM SUZUKI PILIPINAS

Celebrates a Year of Victories

Team Suzuki Pilipinas has had a great year filled with new milestones and stunning victories all throughout the 2016 Suzuki Asian Challenge (SAC).

To celebrate their achievements, Suzuki Motorcycles Philippines threw a victory party at the F1 Hotel in Bonifacio Global City last December 14, 2016.

Among the team's greatest achievements this year is pulling a one-two finish at an international race, the first for any Filipino motorcycle racing team, at the Suzuka International Circuit in Japan



Team Suzuki Pilipinas leading the race



Team Suzuki Pilipinas' riders, mechanics and team manager with Suzuki Philippines Marketing Manager Monch Bontogon

for the third round of the SAC. Eane Jaye Sobretodo bagged the top podium win, a first for the Philippines at the ARRC while Mario Borbon, Jr tailed him for the second spot. In the same race, April King Mascardo also became the first Filipino pole sitter in an international racing event. For round one in Johor Circuit in Malaysia, Mascardo placed second in race number two. Sobretodo went on to finish third at the Chang International Circuit in Thailand for the first race of the second round.

The fourth round held in Sentul Indonesia Circuit saw Mascardo place third at the second race. The team closed out the year's competition with a top podium finish by Borbon in the second race of round five, making him the first ever Filipino to finish first at the Chang International Circuit. Mascardo, Sobretodo and Borbon took the fifth, sixth and seventh overall spots, respectively.

As part of the celebration, the trio received plaques of appreciation from Suzuki Philippines led by company president Hiroshi Suzuki.



Industry partners and media friends came to celebrate Team Suzuki Pilipinas success on the race



Suzuki President Hiroshi Suzuki getting wacky with EJ, April and Mario during the 2016 Victory Party



RAIDER

MATTE BLACK PREMIUM EDITION

RAIDER R150



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WHEELTEK OPENS THE FIRST SUZUKI WORLD IN CABANATUAN CITY!



L-R: Suzuki Philippines GM for Motorcycle Sales and Marketing Jun Bulot and Regional Sales Manager Erick Fernancez with Wheeltek VP for Sales and Marketing Roscoe Odulio

Suzuki celebrates with Wheeltek as it opened the first ever Suzuki World in the Philippines on December 3, 2016. Suzuki World is a one-stop shop for all your small or big motorcycle and automobile needs.



Roscoe Odulio receiving the Suzuki 3S Shop Certification from Hiroshi Suzuki

This 4,000 sqm establishment is comprised of a Motorcycle 3S Shop, a Big Bikes Center, and an Automobile 3S Store. The shop also presents a service center with trained mechanics who will surely take care of your Suzuki vehicle. With its high-end showroom, tastefully designed display area and exceptional customer service, customers are ensured to experience the true meaning of Suzuki's Way of Life.

The opening ceremonies were attended by more than 300 spectators with over 200 big bike riders from more than a dozen clubs. It was a festive evening as Wheeltek and Suzuki executives filled the area together with media friends and partners in the industry. The event was made even more special with the lovely celebrity guests: host Roxy B. and Yam Concepcion.



Leading the opening ceremonies were Wheeltek Motor Sales Corporation president Reynaldo Odulio, Sr. with wife and vice president Teresita Odulio and vice president for Sales and Marketing Roscoe Odulio with Suzuki Philippines President Hiroshi Suzuki and Motorcycle Sales and Marketing GM Jun Bulot

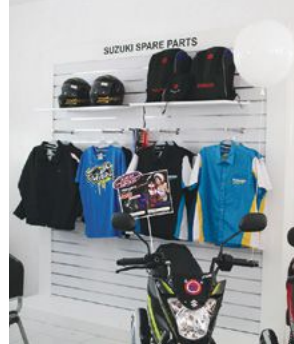




Suzuki Information



Motorcycle Display



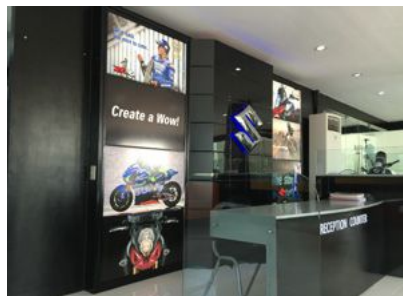
Apparel Corner



Service Bay as seen from inside the store



The lovely and talented Roxy B. and Yam Concepcion sizzled the night with their stunning performances



Suzuki Big Bikes Information



Suzuki Big Bikes Display



Suzuki Big Bikes Accessories and Apparel



Suzuki Service Bay



Team Wheeltek-Suzuki Family

SUZUKI

LIVE!

IN 2017 PROMO

FREE
SUZUKI HELMET &
SUZUKI BACKPACK



Helmet also comes in MotoGP blue color; Bag comes in Orange / Blue color.

RAIDER 115FI

SUZUKI FI FUEL INJECTION



SUZUKI

LIVE!

IN 2017 PROMO

FREE
SUZUKI HELMET



Helmet also comes in MotoGP blue color.

SHOOTER 115FI



Now in Matte Black color

SUZUKI

LIVE!

IN 2017 PROMO

FREE
SKYDRIVE
FULL FACE
HELMET



SKYDRIVE 125



SUZUKI

LIVE!

— IN 2017 PROMO —





Suzuki Philippines continues its string of store openings as the motorcycle giant opened a 3S (Sales, Spare parts, Service Shop) in Dumaguete City last November 28.

The shop is adorned with the brand's latest campaign Suzuki, Para sa Lahat ng Trip Mo, featuring the hottest young icons Liza Soberano and Enrique Gil with the very stylish Smash 115 in purple and magenta as well as the global scooter Address.

The Suzuki 3S Shop in Dumaguete, often called "university city," aims to address the needs of the young generation as well as the commuters of the area. The brand offers the perfect companion for the youth's very active and dynamic lifestyle by providing the best motorcycle for them to do whatever they want to do and go wherever they want to go.

Alongside this, Suzuki and GUD Moto will be staging a series of activities for the students such as free Riding Clinic and Test Rides in the coming months.

GUD MOTO OPEN SUZUKI 3S SHOP IN DUMAGUETE



Leading the opening ceremonies were GUD Moto VP for Finance Helen Du with Suzuki Philippines president Hiroshi Suzuki



GUD Moto President Justin Du with HR and Marketing Manager Diane Tiffany Du



Team GUD Moto-Suzuki Family

SUZUKI 3S SHOP - SALES, SPARE PARTS, AND SERVICE



The shop in Dumaguete is a four-storey building with a selling floor area of 94 square meters while the upper floors are used for office space. On display at the showroom are Suzuki's much loved motorcycles like the Raider R150, the Gixxer, and the Skydrive. Special deals were also offered to customers including discounts and freebies upon the purchase of any Suzuki motorcycle. Free servicing was offered to Suzuki motorcycle owners for a two-day period beginning at the shop opening.

The opening marks an extension of the over a decade-long partnership with GUD Moto Trading Inc. and is the dealer's third 3S shop with one in Cebu and another in Bayawan. The event was well attended by both GUD Moto Trading, Inc. and Suzuki Philippines executives as well as no less than 70 riders who joined the motorcade and the fun activities of the event.



Apparel Corner



Spare Parts Counter



Suzuki Service Shop



TEAM GUD MOTO-SUZUKI 3S SHOP DUMAGUETE READY TO SERVE THE CUSTOMERS!



The team behind the GUD Moto-Suzuki 3S Shop Dumaguete



GUD Moto-Suzuki 3S Shop Dumaguete is located at
Perdices St. Dumaguete City
CP No. 09066960772

ALL-NEW SUBARU IMPREZA



LAUNCHED FOR ASIA MARKETS

Words by Maribelle Alba

Winner of the 2016-2017 Japan Car of the Year, the all-new Subaru Impreza was launched at the Singapore Motorshow 2017 by Motor Image, the exclusive distributor of Subaru vehicles in nine Asian countries.



"The all-new Subaru Impreza features the new Subaru Global Platform that is engineered to make a new type of driving possible. With a host of improvements to its interior, styling, handling performance, and an improved CVT transmission, the new Impreza is set to be the first to pave the way for the next generation of Subaru vehicles to deliver a superior driving experience like no other," noted Glenn Tan, executive director of Tan Chong International Ltd, which has a partnership with Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd for the assembly of Subaru vehicles in Malaysia and is also the mother company of Motor Image.





Officials from the Subaru product planning department of Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd. answer questions from Filipino motoring media.



Glenn Tan (left), executive director of Tan Chong International Ltd., with Michael Ramon Luyun (right), general manager of Motor Image Pilipinas Inc.

The all-new Subaru Impreza delivers an elevated driving experience with less vibration and noise, combined with precise vehicle control—all made possible by the revolutionary Subaru Global Platform underpinning the unique combination of Subaru's Boxer engine with all-wheel drive system. Increased use of high-tensile steel in the frame structure have resulted in enhanced body strength and a 40 percent increase in collision energy absorption, thus vastly improving passive safety. Another safety feature, Steering Responsive Headlights, allow the headlight beam to move according to the direction of how the car is steered, for better dusk visibility. The new platform lowers the center of gravity by 5 mm which, alongside major improvements in structural rigidity and the suspension system, delivers sharper, more responsive steering for outstanding hazard avoidance.

Subaru's DYNAMIC x SOLID design philosophy is embodied in the new Impreza, which now has extended fender flares, a hexagonal grille, and the brand's iconic C-shaped headlights. Inside are sophisticated details like stitching on the instrument panels and an 8-inch infotainment system display as well as excellent all-around visibility and a spacious cabin.



The all-new Subaru Impreza is available in the following variants: 1.6i-S featuring a 1.6L port injection naturally aspirated engine producing 114 ps at 5600 rpm, and 2.0i-S with a 2.0L direct injection naturally aspirated engine producing 153 ps at 6000 rpm. Four-door and five-door options are available for both the 1.6i-S and 2.0i-S.

For the Philippine market, the all-new Subaru Impreza 2.0i-S (4-door) is available for reservation at Subaru dealerships nationwide.



SHOPPING ABROAD TAX-FREE

Words by Presy Alba

When traveling abroad, shopping is an inevitable activity. If you do not consciously plan how you will spend your money, you might be missing on big savings like a tax refund of up to 20 percent depending on which country you are visiting.

For example, in Singapore, a minimum spend of SGD 100 in a participating store on the same day qualifies your purchases for a 7 percent tax refund at the airport. In Europe, a minimum spend of EUR 175 is eligible for a 20 percent tax refund.

Not all stores participate in the tax-refund program, so you should always ask if they offer tax-free shopping, and the minimum spend for eligibility before you start piling your cart with goodies.

If you are traveling with friends or family members, it will be to your advantage to combine your items and pay for them altogether so you can avail of the tax refund.

It is also very important to remember to process your purchases for a tax refund at the store, otherwise, you will lose your opportunity to claim it even if you bought more than the minimum amount.

Tax refund-processing sometimes vary from store to store. At some big department stores, they will tell you that you can shop and pay for your items and then process the tax refund at the customer service counter before you leave the store. Smaller stores will let you walk around collecting items and then pay for everything all at once, and they will process the tax refund at the point of sale.

The store will ask for your passport when they prepare the tax rebate, so remember to bring it along when you go shopping. The clerk will also ask if you want the rebate refunded to your credit card or if you want to get cash at the airport. This really depends on your personal choice, but I like getting cash at the airport because although the credit card option can be faster to process, it can take up to almost a month before you receive the rebate on your credit card, and there's always the possibility of your claim being denied because of some technicality.

In Europe, you can only claim your tax refund once – when you exit the Schengen area. So if you visit several countries, process the tax refund before exiting the last country on your way home.

Pack all items for tax-refund in just one bag, so that if the customs inspector asks to see the items in, you only need to open one bag. If you plan to check the bag containing your tax-free items in, make sure to go to the airport early and process your tax refund before you drop-off your bags. Remember that if the customs officer elects to inspect the items you are claiming for the refund, he may deny your claim if you cannot present the items or if the items are not sealed in their original packaging.

Having said that, in most cases, processing tax refunds at the airport these days is as easy as 1-2-3 with electronic kiosks at most airports:

1. Locate the Tax Refund kiosks – these are usually well indicated or you can always ask any passing airport personnel or the information booth.
2. Once you find the nearest kiosk, just follow the instructions on the screen, starting with selecting the form language. You will need to enter your passport details and either scan the barcode on the receipts or enter the receipt code into the system, and wait for it to give you the receipt validation and claim confirmation.
3. The last step is to present your claim to the currency exchange teller, which is usually within the vicinity and get your refund in your preferred currency.



Find your Tribe

Words by Mia Carisse Barrientos
Photos by Jael Laura Mendoza

As the English dictionary defines it, a group of people who share the same interest qualifies as a tribe—case in point, people who can't get enough of Korean dramas and eSports tourneys.

Lovers of shows and movies of various genres can find their tribe in this newest over-the-top (OTT) video streaming service to hit our shores.

This year has proven that streaming services are more than just a trend in the Philippines, what with the arrival of the biggest SVOD and the continued success of the latter's alternatives in the country. These services offer streaming of a wide variety of content through their easy to use platform whenever, wherever. However, most of these services lack Asian content and network-building features. Tribe brings to the table what these streaming services are short of.

► What is Tribe?

Tribe is a mobile-first, over-the-top (OTT) video streaming service that is a one-stop shop for live and on-demand content including the most sought-after genres in Korean entertainment,

anime, e-Sports, Asian thrillers, fight shows, international programs and movies, and other niche content.

Pegged at video consumers in the ASEAN market, Tribe was recently launched in Indonesia and now places its bet on the Philippine internet TV market.

► More than just a video streaming app

Tribe has integrated features that allow its community of users to interact and connect. Subscribers can create their profile, curate their own watchlist, and follow users who share similar interests as them.

What we found interesting in this app is that it streams several channels such as KBS World, tvN K-entertainment, Aniplus anime, KIX360 action thriller and fight shows, and 24/7 eGG eSports. Through this feature, fans will be able to catch shows on the aforementioned networks including same-day airing programs whenever they please.

► Uniting Fans

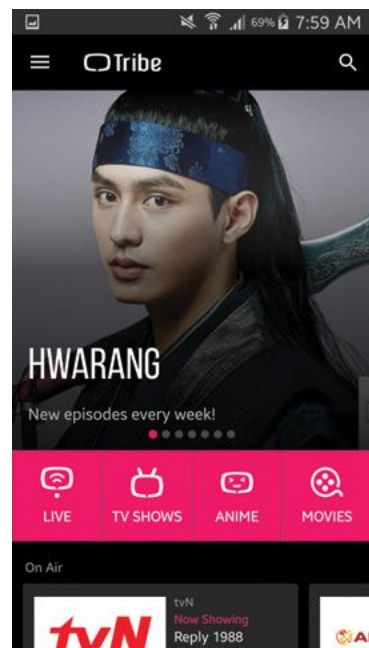
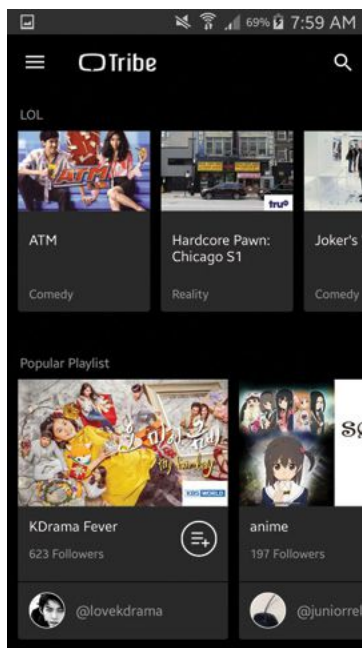
Beyond content, Tribe also hopes to reach communities online and on-ground through fan gatherings, exclusive promos, and contests where users of the app can meet and rub shoulders with

influencers and like-minded fans and get a chance to take home exclusive merchandise.

Tribe launched in the country through the viewing party of the 2016 Mnet Asian Music Awards (MAMA) last December 2, 2016 at Mango Tree in BGC. There, the service gathered fans of K-pop groups, influencers, and people from the press to party. During the event, Tribe also introduced its ambassadors Glaiza de Castro and Alodia Gosiengfiao and announced its partnership with Globe. The partnership with one of the country's largest telco service providers signifies more relevant content, events, and gatherings fans can look forward to in the coming months.

Subscription to Tribe is at PHP 69 a month and PHP 30 a week. Interested? Download the Tribe app now via Google Play or App Store to enjoy a 30-day free trial.

For more information on Tribe and event updates, log on to: <http://www.tribenow.tv>. Join the Tribe on Facebook via [facebook.com/Tribe.ph](https://www.facebook.com/Tribe.ph) and on Twitter and Instagram (@tribe_ph).



iMobile Anytrans

Words by Presy Alba

Developed by iMobile as an alternative to iTunes, Anytrans is an App that will allow you to manage your iOS devices—and in my opinion, it can replace iTunes and has a lot more to offer.

Anytrans does what iTunes can do like you to accessing your iTunes Library, backing up your device to iTunes, downloading your iCloud backup, and accessing the content of your iOS devices. In addition, it lets you merge, clone, backup, transfer content to your Mac or PC including iTunes, add content to your iOS device and transfer content from one iOS device to another.

Managing your audio and video files

If you have a large music collection saved in your computer, on your home NAS or an external drive, and you also want to change the music on your iOS devices from time to time, Anytrans makes moving files from device to computer and vice-versa as simple as copying files in Finder.

You can transfer music files two different ways: from the iTunes Library or by the device's quick start shortcuts. If you connect two iOS devices to your PC or Mac, you can even move files between them with ease.

What is especially great about Anytrans is that when you copy video files that are not compatible with iOS devices like mkv or avi, Anytrans automatically converts them to a file format that your iOS device can play like mp4.

Downloading your iCloud backup

You can download the backup files of your iOS devices from iCloud to your computer or an external storage. You will need to login to your iCloud account to do it, and if you have the 2-step verification turned on, you have to turn it off first temporarily to be able to login to your iCloud account from Anytrans.

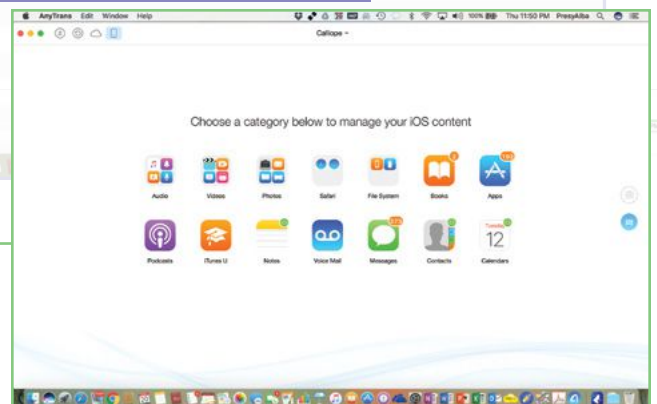
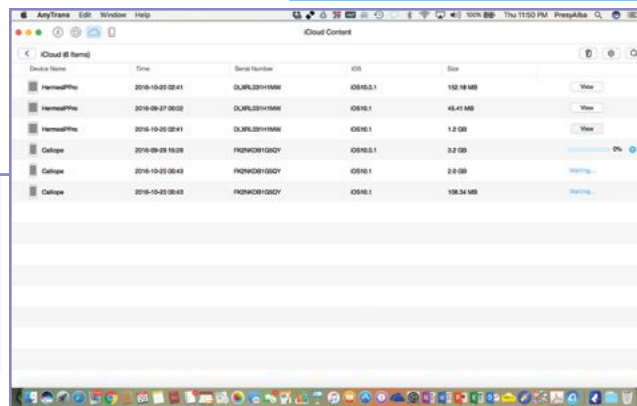
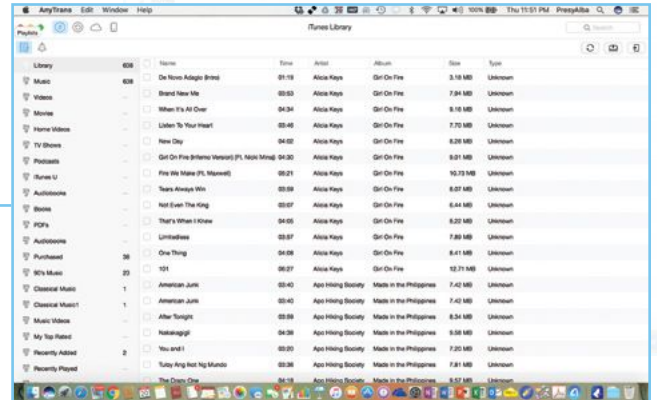
Content backups

More than iTunes, Anytrans can create backups of your content. For example, if you want to save particular messages, you can do so by selecting which app you want to manage and it's a matter of selecting the messages you want to backup. You can do this to notes, reminders, contacts, etc.

Merging and cloning devices

Setting up a new iPhone from an iCloud backup can take a long time. With Anytrans you can just clone the content from old to new a lot faster. If you have contacts on your iPad that's not on your iPhone, you can merge content between the two devices and have a complete set on both devices.

Paying USD 39.99 for a personal license that can be installed in just one computer may seem pricey but for all the things that it can do, I guarantee that you will have your money's worth. You'll get a better deal if you purchase the family license for USD 59.99, which can be installed to up to five Mac or PC computers.





Going Prime

Words and Photos by Chris Noel Hidalgo

I recently outgrew my newly-bought-but-used Canon EOS M's EF-M 18-55 mm f/3.5-5.6 IS STM kit lens. Don't get me wrong: it's a wonderful piece of equipment that's good for a wide variety of situations. However, I felt that it limited me, both in terms of what I can shoot and the image quality of my final output. I knew then that it was time to buy my first aftermarket lens. It was only a matter of choosing between a prime or a zoom. Spoiler alert: I bought a 50 mm prime, and here are a couple of reasons why.

Canon EF-M 18-55 mm f/3.5-5.6 IS STM on a Canon EOS M



Canon EF 50 mm f/1.8 STM with EF-M-EF lens adapter on a Canon EOS M



With the zoom and the prime at the same 50 mm focal length, the zoom is noticeably much longer. Take away the lens adapter and the 50 mm prime will be even shorter.

Canon EF 50 mm f/1.8 STM with EF-M-EF lens adapter @ 50 mm, 1/640, f/1.8, ISO 100



Compact and lightweight

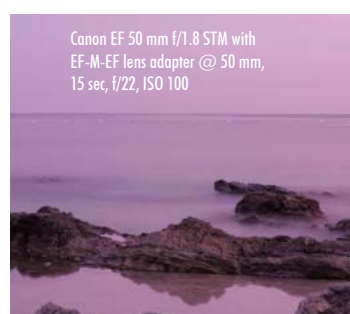
Typical zooms have tons of optics in them, all mechanically moved in order to achieve the desired focal length. All those moving parts need space and they add up to the total weight of your camera. It may not seem noticeable nor at first, but start walking around with a hefty shooter and one of your arms will grow larger in the long run. You don't want people thinking the wrong idea.

Prime lenses on the other hand, only have one focal length. As they have minimal moving parts

and optical elements, they can do away with the convoluted zoom mechanism and all its quirks.

Additionally, primes are smaller. A 50 mm prime and an 18-55 mm zoom at the same focal length will always have the former shorter than the latter. It takes up less space in the bag, has lesser chances of accidentally bumping into something, and make for a lower profile camera. And in some scenarios—like street photography—the more covert you are, the better.

Canon EF 50 mm f/1.8 STM with EF-M-EF lens adapter @ 50 mm, 15 sec, f/22, ISO 100





Better optics at a lower price

Of course, having less materials used in primes also notches them a lower price tag. So much so that you can actually get important focal lengths such as 24, 50, and 85 mm, all for just a little over the cost of something like a 24-105 mm. But why should you even bother with having three



Canon EF 50 mm f/1.8 STM with EF-M-EF lens adapter @ 50 mm, 1/60, f/1.8, ISO 800



different lenses when you can have a jack of all trades?

First, it's easier on the wallet. Instead of having to shell out PHP 50,000 in one go, you can buy one focal length now, go gung-ho with it, and when money comes back around, you buy another one. That time spent practicing on one focal length is really invaluable. We'll get to that in a bit.

Second, you're getting better optical performance at a lower price—a sure draw for beginners and hobbyists. Because there are less elements inside the barrel of a prime lens, light can strike your camera's sensor rawer and more accurately. In the case of zooms, light often has to travel through a variety of materials before hitting the sensor, degrading overall image quality. This is also why primes generally suffer less from image imperfections such as chromatic aberration, fuzziness, and distortion.

Faster aperture

Ever notice how in all but the most expensive of zoom lenses, there are two apertures stated? One for the wide end and one for the telephoto end? Let's use a kit lens as an example. For most 18-55 mm glass, you can expect aperture to be widest at f/3.5 and f/5.6. Compare that to a prime 24, 35, or 50 mm with general maximum apertures ranging anywhere from f/1.2 to f/1.8 (give or take a stop or two). Even though you can go through all those focal lengths with a zoom, its aperture will always be much slower.

Generally, you need a bigger diaphragm to get a lower f-number and a faster aperture. That means the lens must be physically bigger and have larger optical elements in it. The size increase will also tip the scales and the price tag more. The complicated mechanism of zooms restrict this as they can only get the diaphragm so large before it interferes with the other elements. Such isn't the case with primes.

Fast aperture works wonders. You can use faster shutter speeds to freeze critical moments even when on the move, as well as utilize slower ISO for noise-free images. This makes primes, well, prime for low-light scenarios. Faster apertures will also allow shallower depth of field for that sexy bokeh or background blur we all love.

Forces you to think more of your shot

Because you can't just zoom in and out to get the composition you want, prime lenses will force

Canon EF-M 18-55 mm f/3.5-5.6 IS STM @ 50 mm, 1/60, f/5.6, ISO 800



you to move and shuffle around like a restless monkey. You can think of that as a downside, but in reality, it trains you to consider all factors before pressing the shutter. Through this process, you'll sharpen your instinct on what definitive moments are. The alternative is burst-capturing the entire moment, but unless you're into sports or wildlife photography, a good majority of your shots will likely end up in the Recycle Bin.

With my case, I use a 50 mm on an APS-C sensor—closer to the field of view of an 85mm lens, or in simpler terms, too zoomed in. Initially, I found it frustrating that I had to move around a lot and decide between this style and that style, and this scene and that scene. I eventually grew to appreciate it though. The experience allowed me to look at everyday scenarios in a whole different light. Or angle, rather.

To be fair, there is no right or wrong choice between primes and zooms. Each has its own advantages and pitfalls. We'll be discussing the perks of the latter in the next issue so stay tuned.

Oppo F1s Takes Over Sinulog

2017

Words & Photos by Mia Carisse Barrientos | Additional Photos by Oppo

Launching an awesome smartphone through a grand event is something, but flying in a fleet of tech journalists and bloggers to one of the biggest festivals in the country to experience the phone's selfie-taking capabilities is taking things to a whole new level.

Oppo loves to bring out the fun even in the simplest things and that is exactly what ensued when the smartphone manufacturer took us to the Queen city of the South, Cebu, to witness and immerse ourselves in the Festival Sinulog and get acquainted with the Oppo F1s.

Day 1: Reliable battery and low-light camera expertise

Before we left for Cebu, each of us got loaner units of the F1s—except for those who already own one—to use as primary phones during the entire trip. The unit I got, with its factory-charged battery, was hard at work when I queued app downloads as soon as I got my hands on it. It chugged along quite smoothly and still had a fair amount of juice when we arrived in Cebu despite a three-hour delayed flight.

The sky was overcast and cold drizzling rain fell the afternoon we landed at the Mactan Airport, but the Oppo welcoming team greeted us with warm smiles and flashy cardboard signs that served as guides to which van we're supposed to board. It's a scene you can't help but capture.



An Oppo social media influencer takes a selfie with Sinulog parade contingents.

Our first destination from the airport was to Rico's restaurant for a late lunch and briefing. Despite the gloomy weather, a lively ensemble of Sinulog music filled the air along with a dancing Ollie (the Oppo mascot) put a smile on our faces. Rico's tasty lechon was enough to get everyone's spirits high and ready for the rest of the day.

The Sinulog spirit was very much alive everywhere we went including the lobby area of Azia Suites, our home for the entire trip. As the welcome drinks came pouring in, a band was playing in the background and there, Ollie danced to cheer us on.

We were given ample time to freshen up before we travelled to Golden Cowrie for a sumptuous

dinner. We then traversed the busy streets of Cebu to visit the national historical landmark Basilica del Santo Nino. But before we got to our destination, we passed by the iconic Magellan's Cross to take photos.

The church was very picturesque and peppered with colourful buntings that matched the area's warm lighting. It was brimming with devotees coming in and out; their passion was so strong that it somehow rubbed off on us. There, we took the opportunity to capture this vibrant energy emanating from the Cebuanos and also explored the area to capture our most gorgeous selfies.

To cap off day one, we experienced the warmest Cebu welcome thanks to the folks at LIV



Superclub with whom we partied the night away. Surprisingly, my unit still had enough juice for taking a couple more pictures inside the booming events place. The F1s, with its huge sensor, capably captured moments from the eventful night, undeterred by the smoke and lack of light inside the club.

Day 2: Responsive display

The second day of our Sinulog escapade was as eventful as the first day and thankfully, the Oppo F1s was there to capture it all.

Around an hour after breakfast, we were called to the hotel lobby for the start of a long day. Our first stop was lunch at the scenic Circa 1900. There, we were serenaded with beautiful renditions of pop tracks using a flute and saxophone whilst we dined and interacted with one another. The sumptuous lunch powered us to hike the steep entrance to the Temple of Leah. The majestic Greek-like temple, structured with Doric columns, was a tribute of love of Teodorico Adarna for his late wife Leah Villa Albino-Adarna and serves as an ancestral home to the Adarnas—kin of model/actress Ellen Adarna.

The area was brimming with photogenic elements that would make anyone think they're no longer in the Philippines. Since majority of central Cebu's network signals were cut off for security purposes, we were delighted when the area offered 4G signals. The photo-enthusiasts soon flooded the event tag with images of how we saw the Temple of Leah through the lens of the Oppo F1s.

We briefly stopped by TOPs, to take photos as we please: the overlooking city served as backdrop to most of the pictures along with the area's famous spherical design.

we were given an Oppo goodie bag, in which a waterproof case was included. During the event, where water and paint were forces to be reckoned with, I was a bit worried that the F1s might break or slow down given the circumstances. But it

performed beyond my expectations. Touch response was fast albeit it was inside a plastic case. Pictures also came out nicely even if there was a wet layer of plastic over the lens and the night offered very little light.



Day 3: Vibrant Camera and seamless multitasking

The day of the parade was where the Oppo F1s truly shined. It accurately captured the many colors of the Sinulog floats and dancing contingents while working double time to accommodate its user's whims. Moreover, its processing power didn't back down to my incessant switching between selfie and main camera mode. Back at the hotel, the unit was busy uploading my photos onto my various social media accounts and coping with my irregular browsing habits.

The trip concluded on day four where the wittiest selfies were recognized and we unfortunately

had to bid goodbye to our F1s units and new-found friends. Through this trip, the Oppo F1s established itself as a foolproof phone for the shutter-happy crowd who loves to go on colourful adventures.

**Check out the
#OPPOF1sSinulog
to see more of
what went on this
epic trip.**

WORLD FOOD TOUR

Words and Photos by Jonah Mendoza
Artwork by Theresa Eloriaga

Ding! Lunch time! If you're anything like the rest of the working world, you spend a lot of time picking a place to eat, ultimately settling for fast food. Break that habit. Join us on a quick food tour and broaden your horizons!

CYMA

Cyma recently celebrated 10 years in the business, and if in those 10 years you haven't quite figured out how to pronounce their name, it's "see-ma." You're welcome. Translated to English, that means "to flourish."

Chef Robby Goco came up with the idea when he traveled to Greece and was exposed to the rich flavors of Greek cuisine. The first branch opened in 2005 in Boracay island, and now, more than a decade later, they have eight branches nationwide.



To start the meal off, we were served a chopped salad with mixed greens, walnuts, caramelized pears, crumbled blue cheese, tomato, and grated Parmigiano Reggiano topped with their signature herb vinaigrette.

If there's one thing I learned, Greek food is known for having five staple ingredients: salt, pepper, olive oil, oregano and lemon. Greek cuisine brings out the natural flavor of the ingredients without over doing it.

As for the salad, I loved it so much as the tangy dressing brought zing to the crisp vegetables. The blue cheese gave richness that rounded the dish out nicely. It was also my first time eating caramelized

pears - it was delightful.

Next up was Lamb Yiouvetsi which was baked lamb with orzo (a kind of pasta), served with grated kefalotiri, parsley and olive oil.

Writer's tip: I really had a great time experiencing Greek food for the first time. This definitely will not be my last visit.

Location: Shangri-la Plaza Mall, Level 6, Mandaluyong, 1552 Metro Manila

Contact no: (02) 637 3090

The subtle flavor of the orzo was an interesting experience for a first-timer such as myself, and was the perfect complement to the strong flavor of the lamb. For the main course, we were treated to Kreatika (a meat platter) consisting of Lamb Keftedes (meatballs), porkchop, Kalamaki sticks and lamb shoulders. This platter is a carnivore's dream. The generous portions of meat provide enough for a family of four. The porkchop is my personal favorite because it was cooked perfectly—juicy and tender. I love the combination of tzatziki sauce and Greek chimichurri. I could literally put these dressings in my food.

To keep the authenticity of the dishes and the quality of the food as close to that which you might get if the Mediterranean was outside your window, some of Cyma's ingredients are sourced directly from Greece.

Experience: Seeing Cyma's branch at Shangri-La feels like being transported straight to Greece. Its blue and white color scheme is refreshing and welcoming. Simple details from Greek mythology, and details that would not look out of place on Mykonos add to the place's serene vibe.



This two-year-old restaurant is the product of a post-honeymoon experience of Valerie and Mark Anthony Tan. The idea of starting a business came about when the couple toured Europe to celebrate their honeymoon. Having been caught up in the experience of travel, the two decided to bring Europe back home with them. After a year and a half of consulting, market research, and product development, they finally established their dream business at the heart of Tomas Morato.

Experience: I was excited to go to this restaurant because I don't usually get to try European dishes often and I wanted to try their famous Schneeball, a dessert you literally hammer inside a bag before eating. I met the owners and they were very accommodating. We ended up trying almost 80 percent of their menu—it's a good thing this writer really knows how to put it away!

First up, we tried their appetizers. The Jamon Serrano Croquettes and Arancini al Margherita, which is essentially potato and risotto balls. I love the crunchiness outside and the rich flavor on the inside. The margherita sauce complemented the risotto perfectly. The pastas we were served were Cacio E Pepe Classic and Cacio E Pepe Mushroom Truffle. For those who love simple flavors, I recommend Cacio E Pepe Classic, and its more subtle, refined flavor. The Cacio E Pepe Mushroom Truffle was amazing in its own right. There was no shortage of truffles in the dish, so each bite was an intense burst of flavor. It can be very easy to go overboard with truffles, but this was done just right. It'll have you dreaming about it. Our entrees were Pollo ai Funghi sul Riso which is chicken and mushroom rice, and Schweinekotelett with Mustard Cream Sauce, a dish that is reminiscent of our own crispy liempo. This was my favorite of everything we ordered. The cut of meat cut were quite thick, but superbly tender, and the skin, goodness, the skin was so crisp! To end the meal, we were served the Peanut Brittle Schneeball, Trio of Cannoli, Red Velvet, Maple Bacon and Tradicionale Hot Churro. You might not think so, but that Schneeball is tough. You really have to put some strength behind your swings to get to that dessert, but it's all worth it, of course. One would order it as much for the experience as the dish itself, and I do suggest you do so yourself. Churros are a tricky beast to tame, but fortunately, theirs is done perfectly, with the right crunch, and no soggy, oily feeling after the last bite.

Writer's tip: Forget your dream European tour, we've got our own here.

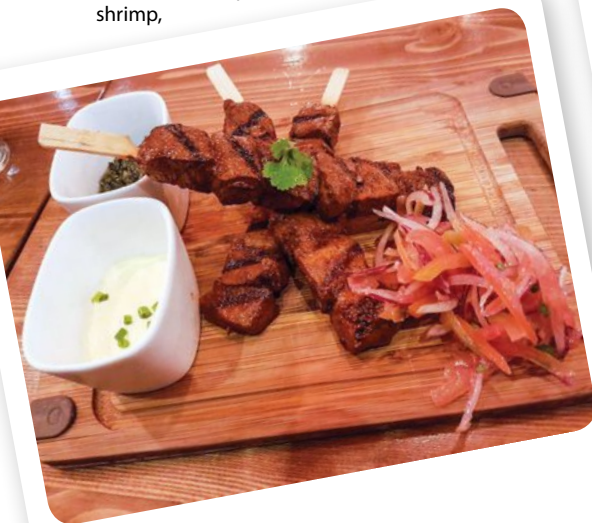
Location: 100 Scout De Guia Corner Tomas Morato Avenue, Tomas Morato, Quezon City
Contact no: (02) 954 0401





Cocina Peruvia is owned by Mother Spice Food Corporation, the same group that owns Slappy Cakes, Genki Sushi and Mango Tree Bistro. As seems to be the case with these things, Mr. Eric Teng got the idea of creating a Peruvian restaurant after a trip down to Peru. Captivated by the complex taste of Peruvian dishes, he worked with Celebrity Chef Him Uy de Baron to create a fantastic menu for the local food scene. In just the span of about two years, they gained traction as one of the better-known Peruvian restaurants in Manila. They even source some of their ingredients directly from Peru to live up to its name. With its 24/6 operation, the restaurant's target market are the BPOs surrounding the busy streets of Bonifacio Global City.

Experience: The vibrant orange and green color scheme of the restaurant makes it the center of attention in its corner, nestled between the skyscrapers of Bonifacio Global City. The relaxing vibe of the restaurant keeps the customers chill, and is an inviting place to stay and have a meal and a drink with your friends. To start off, we tried their appetizer, Causa con Avocado, a dish of mashed potatoes, shrimp,



avocado, and aji Amarillo, with a lemon mayo sauce. I don't often have cold appetizers, but this is something I could go for more frequently. The shrimp are so fresh, you can almost hear the sea just around the corner. We next tried the Anti Cuchos de Corazon (Beef heart). Yes, it was a little unnerving to learn that it was heart, and while I am not a fan of innards, when the chef himself approaches you to recommend it, well why not? I was not disappointed—it was delicious. The texture is very much like beef, and it took in all the flavor of the marinade. Forget what you might think about what the dish is made of. You owe it to

yourself to try this dish at least once. For the main course, we tried Lomo Saltado – beef tenderloin with spices, onions and tomatoes. It's everything you'd hope to have when you see the description on the menu. The beef is tender and bursting with flavor, which makes it difficult not to want to have this with lots and lots of rice. Their Arroz Verde con Pollo, or cilantro chicken rice, went with it excellently. Trust me not to exaggerate when

I say this might be the best rice dish that I've tasted, bar none.

I love cilantro so much and this dish is made with plenty. It's something I want to try and make at home, though it's going to be a tough act to follow. Next was Adobo Peruvia. It is basically our own adobo with cream instead of vinegar. It might seem a little odd on paper, but try to just have one bite. It's just impossible not to. To cleanse our palette with all the savory dishes, we tried Alfajores for dessert. It is Dulce de Leche with Pulvoron and ice cream. It was a great end to our Peruvian journey—light, sweet, and refreshing.

Writer's tip: Peruvian cuisine has now upstaged every other type of food in my book. Yes, it's that good.

Location: Ground Floor, Bonifacio One Technology Tower, Rizal Drive Corner 31st Street, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City
Contact no: (02) 9559975





6 Ways Watch OS 3 Can Make Your Life Easier

Words by Presy Alba

I'm not the Apple early adopter in our family—that title is shared by my two sisters. I'm more likely to wait for the next version. That is why I've always bought the S model iPhone starting with the iPhone 4S and every other year after that.

When the Apple Watch running on Watch OS was first released in 2015, the reviews were not all that great and other activity trackers seemed more useful. The Watch OS 2 update wasn't much better either.

But when I got an Apple Watch for Christmas running on Watch OS 3, I was surprisingly pleased with how it has helped me become more organized and how it is making my life a bit easier.

I would like to share the six ways the Apple Watch running on Watch OS 3 can make your life easier too:



1. Unlock your Mac

Make sure you upgrade to macOS Sierra first and that you have activated the 2-step verification on your iCloud account. Once that is done, all you need to do is go to System Preferences in your Mac, go to Security & Privacy > General and then click the option to allow your Apple Watch to unlock your Mac. It's that easy. After that, you won't have to type your password to access your Mac.

2. Breathe

This is a new Watch OS native app. It reminds you to pause for a minute during your busy day and take a few deep breaths to relax and calm down. From the Watch settings on your iPhone, you can customize how often you want a Breathe reminder—anywhere from never, to every hour, to every seven hours. You can also adjust how many breaths you want to take for the one minute you do this exercise.

3. Scribble Message replies

You don't have to reach for your iPhone to read and reply to an SMS message. Even on Silent Mode, with haptics on, you will feel the vibration notifying you that you received a message. You can then simply read the message and reply by scribbling on the screen; the scribble pane will cleverly translate each letter you scribble—no matter how rough—into text.



4. Customizable Dock

The Dock will allow you to access 10 of your most used apps by just pressing the side button of the Watch and scrolling through. You can customize it from the Watch App on your iPhone by selecting Dock and then editing the list of apps. There's also an 11th slot in the Dock which shows you the most recent app (that's not in the dock) that you used, just in case you want to access it again.

5. Control Center

The Control Center is accessed by swiping up after you wake up the Apple Watch. The Control Center shows you how much battery your Watch has, let's you turn on Silent Mode, allows you to locate your Phone by letting it ping, Toggle Airplane Mode and Do Not Disturb, as well as Lock your Apple Watch. You will need to enter your passcode to unlock your watch.

6. Medical ID and Emergency SOS

a long press on the side button will let you access three things at once: the power off button, your Medical ID, and the Emergency SOS. The Medical ID syncs medical information that you enter on your Health app. You can access the data by swiping on the Medical ID tab. The Emergency SOS is also activated by swiping it to the right—it automatically calls the local emergency service, so if you find yourself in a dangerous situation, you don't have to reach for your phone to call for help.

Projecting the Future: Epson's EB-L1000 Series

Words by Robby Vaflor
Photos by Theresa Eloriaga

Epson has been at the top of the projector game worldwide for 15 years running, and, according to FutureSource, has been in the number one position in the Philippines for two consecutive years now.

The company owes its success in large part to its proprietary 3LCD technology, providing excellent image quality throughout its lengthy arsenal of products. But instead of playing it safe, the top spot has driven Epson to continuously better itself, innovating its product line based on the needs of customers both new and old, and ambitioning new applications for its projectors.

We got to talk to Lyn Lizarondo, Epson's product manager for business and home visual instruments (what the company calls projectors) about the EB-L1000 series, a testament to Epson's pioneering spirit, shunning the much dreaded stagnation.

Lyn Lizarondo
Product Manager
Business and Home Visual Instruments





Having worked at Epson for 13 years, handling projectors for six or seven-odd-years, she has seen first-hand the company's commitment to building upon its already strong foundation with better and more exciting innovations. As the company looks to the future, the EB-L1000 series of laser projectors give a glimpse of what's to come.

Still using the signature 3LCD technology, the EB-L1000 series projectors make use of a laser light source. "Instead of the conventional lamp, we're now using the laser light source which has a longer lifespan," Lizarondo said.

Projectors that use conventional lamps can only last between 5000 to 10000 hours without replacement depending on the model of the projector and the brightness of the lamp. The EB-L1000 series, on the other hand, promises up to 20000 hours of maintenance-free operation without having to replace the light source.

Intended for high-end consumers and commercial use, the line of projectors have been made to perform according to customer demand, being able to work 24 hours, seven days a week without dedicated external cooling.

"For this series, we're the first to incorporate the inorganic 3LCD panel and the inorganic phosphor wheel. The components of the inorganic phosphor wheel and the inorganic 3LCD panel are more light and heat resistant," she mentioned.

To achieve this high level of performance, Epson's engineers performed rigorous testing that simulate the most demanding usage in real-world situations such as in indoor concerts, outdoors, in office buildings and so on.

"Before we introduce the product to the market, we make sure of the product's quality. We do research, testing, even comparisons with competitors," Lizarondo added.

Aside from the laser light source and the new heat-resistant components that allow 20000 hours of continuous operation, the line of projectors all have 4K resolution enhancement technology, optional lenses for any space requirement from ultra-short throw to long throw and flexible installation for different projection surfaces.

The projectors have built-in cameras that allow them to adjust the image based on the distance and dimensions of the surface. They have edge-blending capabilities which allow multiple projectors to display a single, larger image. The EB-L1000 series also has curve projection and a corner wall function for even more flexible installations.

There are four models in the line: the L1100U which has a brightness of 6000 lumens; the L1200U at 7000 lumens; the L1405U at 8000 lumens; and the L1505U at 12000 lumens. All models have the aforementioned features with

the L1405U and the L1505U having additional wireless connectivity through embedded WLAN. The EB-L1000 series also supports projection mapping, or projecting a full image on large uneven surfaces usually on building facades. Recently, for example, Epson did a projection mapping installation at Indonesia's National Museum in Yogyakarta as well as in three major malls in the Philippines.

"We continue to innovate our projectors, making sure we can cope with the requirements of the market; so we are looking into those kinds of applications, going beyond schools and offices," Lizarondo said.

With the widest range of projectors of any company, that have various industry applications and all the new advances in technology, Lizarondo feels that the company's 15 years in the number one spot can be owed to its core innovation.

"It's our 3LCD technology. It's our core technology for the projector, and we just continue to innovate what the market needs. We are known for the quality of the images. I think that's what drives us to achieve the number one position worldwide," she said.

Going into 2017 and beyond, the company is poised for a bright future thanks to its underlying technology and the revolutions that led up to this point.

UPCOMING 2017 RELEASES TO BE EXCITED ABOUT (SO FAR)

Words by Robby Vafloor

2017 somehow managed to be an excellent year for music already: Tycho came out with "Epoch", Sohn with "Rennen", and The xx released the solid-throughout "I See You" so that's your summer playlist pretty much locked in. Over the next few months there will be a lot of potentially good records that are going to come out, and listed below are some of the albums you should look forward to.



Surfer Blood, *Snowdonia* **February 3**

By the time you read this, "Snowdonia" would have been out already, but the band's first song offering from the record, "Six Flags in F or G", is enough to warrant a special mention on this list. It's certainly new-sounding compared to their old work, which, oddly enough sounds a lot more like classic surf rock as opposed to the indie surf tracks that the band is known for. There might be some irony in there, but I am too lazy to flesh it out. Anyway, "Snowdonia" is the band's first album since the departure of bassist Kevin Williams and the tragic death of guitarist Thomas Fekete from cancer last May.



Laura Marling, *Semper Femina* **March 10**

Once you hear that sexy jazz bassline, you know that if "Soothing" is anything to go by, Laura Marling's "Semper Femina" will be unlike anything we have ever heard before from the folk musician (is it still safe to call her that?). Using 2015's "Short Movie" as a jumping off point, this follow-up is poised to explore even more complex music both melodically and lyrically.



Teen Daze, *Themes for Dying Earth* **February 10**

Give the first track entitled "Cycle" from the record and you'll understand why we are excited for Jamison Isaak's return as Teen Daze. Exploring new themes, "Themes for Dying Earth" features several collaborations throughout the album and more personal lyrical material. Done listening to "Cycle?" Listen to "First Rain" featuring Bon Iver's Sean Carey (known as S. Carey). Done with that? Well, I know it's tough, but you're just gonna have to wait until it comes out. Be strong.



Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, *The Tourist* **February 24**

Alec Ounsworth returns as the sole member of Clap Your Hands Say Yeah after the rest of the band departed in 2014. Ounsworth released the first song under the previously-a-band-and-now-merely-a-monicker entitled "Fireproof". Working with new styles and lyrical tones, with no one to debate over musical direction with, it will be interesting to see how the new Clap Your Hands Say Yeah will differ from its old iteration.



Thievery Corporation, *The Temple of I & I*
February 10

The DJ collective Thievery Corporation has a knack for making trip-hop that sounds as fresh as the genre did two decades ago. The new album borrows from different musical genres like jazz, hip-hop and ethnic music to create some tasty jams. Several tracks from *The Temple of I & I* are circling around the interwebs. They are really great for chill house parties or even just for your daily morning routine.



Dirty Projectors, *Dirty Projectors*
February 24

Finally, after five long years, we'll get to hear new music from Dirty Projectors after the band's critically-acclaimed "Swing Lo Magellan" back in 2012. They recently shared a third track entitled "Up in Hudson" off of the new self-titled record. It showcases the classic Dirty Projectors art pop sound, but now featuring David Longstreth on lead vocals prominently compared to the band's female vocals-driven efforts in the past.



Minus the Bear, *VOIDS*
March 3

2017 will be the comeback of classic, eclectic indie rock; we're calling it. Following the string of returning bands with new releases for this year, Minus the Bear gives us "VOIDS" which is their first full-length release since "Infinity Overhead" which was released all the way back in 2012. The song "Invisible" from the upcoming record sounds as fresh as when we first heard the band fifteen years ago. This will be a great year for indie rock. End of discussion.



The Shins, *Heartworms*
March 10

New material from The Shins is always welcome; this is a rule I live by. The 20-year-old band has set out to prove that age is just a number with "Heartworms" coming out in March. The latest song off of the album is entitled "Name for You" and is a very youthful track that can easily get 50 plays in a week if you're not too careful. I was not careful, and I have no regrets.

Didn't I just say this will be a great year for indie rock? It feels like 2007 again and everything is great.



British Sea Power, *Let the Dancers Inherit the Party*
March 31

The resuscitative properties of 2017 continues with British Sea Power's "Let the Dancers Inherit the Party." The last record that the English band released with fully original material was "Machineries of Joy" back in 2013. To coincide with the announcement of a new album, the band shared the song "Bad Bohemian" off the new album. Listen to it. You really should.

Photo from <http://britishseapower.co.uk/>



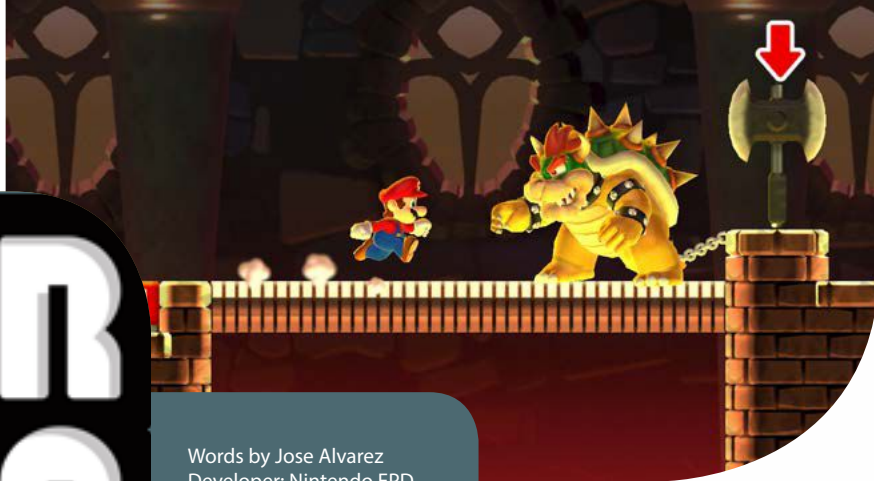
The Jesus and Mary Chain, *Damage and Joy*
March 24

The list HAS to end with probably the biggest thing in music this year: The Jesus and Mary Chain is giving the world new music. It's been a whole 18 years since the band's last LP "Munki" back in 1998. Nineties cultural references are pretty much in now so we were probably due a new record from the noise pop group anyway. The first track, "Amputation", sounds so nostalgic that it kind of makes you want to grab a cassette and make a mixtape with a crummy bootlegged copy of the song in it.

SUPER MARIO RUN

Words by Jose Alvarez
Developer: Nintendo EPD
Publisher: Nintendo
Platforms: iOS, Android
(March 2017)

The idea of Mario, Nintendo's long-serving mascot, appearing on a non-Nintendo console is not a new idea—Mario has appeared on a PC game, 1991's *Mario Teaches Typing* and 1994's *Hotel Mario* for the Philips CD-i. While some gamers believe that the Italian plumber is forever tied to Nintendo, the latest developments at the company show that it is willing to shift over to mobile devices in an attempt to increase revenue and bring their games to mobile audiences.





Super Mario Run is only the third *Mario* game to be released on a non-Nintendo console, and the premise is simple: players control Mario as he runs from left to right automatically. The player has to tap the screen to make Mario jump over obstacles. The player must safely get Mario through the level all while killing enemies and collecting coins, much like other classic games in the franchise. An additional challenge is to find five pink coins in each level. Finding all five pink coins unlocks five purple coins, and collecting all five purple coins unlocks five black coins.

Another mode, Toad Rally mode, allows players to challenge ghost versions of other players who played through the levels, much like the Time Attack mode in *Mario Kart*. Toad Rally requires players to use the Rally Ticket, which can be earned through completing levels, trading in My Nintendo coins, or other tasks in the game. Another form of currency is introduced for players who want to create their own version of the Mushroom Kingdom, and the player can gain or lose Toads that populate the Mushroom Kingdom. Players can also unlock additional characters that appear in other *Mario* games, such as Luigi, Princess Peach, Toad, Toadette, and Yoshi. One can still play Toad Rally mode without a Rally Ticket, but it can only be done once per day and does not give any coins for winning.

Shigeru Miyamoto, one of the most visible employees at Nintendo who created not only the Mario character, but other Nintendo characters such as Donkey Kong, Star Fox, Zelda, Link, and Pikmin, stated, "The longer you continue to make a series, the more complex the gameplay becomes, and the harder it becomes for new players to be able to get into the series." Using mobile games with simpler controls, Miyamoto noted that this would introduce a whole new generation to Mario and the Nintendo franchise in general.

This is the first attempt to pivot onto a non-Nintendo console, and perhaps we can see more Nintendo games on mobile devices in the future. While the gameplay is rather simplistic, the replayability level is high and will entertain both old and new *Mario* fans alike.





1 Amazon Rekognition

Image Recognition And Analysis
Powered By Deep Learning

Generally Available Today

AWS re: Invent 2016

Words by Ren Alcantara

At the close of 2016, Amazon gathered software developers, members of the press, industry innovators, and market leaders in the one event that showed off everything Amazon Web Services has to offer. This most recent re:Invent was the largest ever, with tens of thousands of participants from all over the globe, and for good reason: they had a lot to share.

With more than two million customers monthly, AWS saw Q3 growth increase almost 55 percent, to USD 3.2 Billion. Their marketplace, which offers different software solutions to users, has something for everyone: with 35 categories, offering more than 3,500 software listings from 1,100 independent software vendors. As AWS grows, they also want their customers to grow with them. Since their launch in 2006, and as of re:Invent 2016, AWS has lowered prices 58 times.

Through the whole conference, we found that the secret behind the success of AWS is actually pretty simple: modularity. By offering tools to customers, they're able to pick the ones they need, and solve their particular pain points. This, along with security, agility, and the elimination of capital expenses makes it as attractive an option to the small business as it is to large multinationals.

There's so much ground to cover, so we'll be talking about some of what we learned and saw at re:Invent over a few issues. The

most interesting to this writer was Amazon's announcement of three new AI services for AWS users. The services, from intelligent conversational user interfaces, to smart image recognition, and human-like text to speech, all allow AWS customers to engage their users in a way that is straight out of science fiction.

We've been poking, prodding, and swiping at our phones and laptops for far too long. The next big thing in tech is going to be voice in a deeper, more meaningful, and more intuitive manner than we've seen to wit. Moving speech recognition to the Cloud allows much more compute power to be brought to bear, and if the Amazon Echo is any indication, it's going to be amazing. This brings us to the first of Amazon's new AI services: Lex.

Amazon Lex provides the tools needed for creating conversational interfaces with voice and text through automatic speech recognition, and natural language understanding. To put it in less technically, Lex allows your interface to

understand speech the way an actual person decodes speech. By deriving the meaning behind your speech, rather than forcing you to adhere to a particular syntax, Lex makes voice and text interaction as simple as talking to a human being. It also allows layered conversations that can reference previous levels, just like an actual human agent, so you don't always have to keep repeating yourself.

Twilio, a huge, global company that is behind the automated messages from a lot of services, such as Uber, eBay, WhatsApp, eHarmony, and many others, had nothing but praises for the new service.

"Developers and businesses use Twilio to build apps that can communicate with customers in virtually every corner of the world," said Benjamin Stein, director of Messaging Products, Twilio. "Amazon Lex will provide developers with an easy-to-use modular architecture and comprehensive APIs to enable building and deploying conversational bots on mobile



Introducing Amazon AI

Bringing Powerful Artificial Intelligence To All Developers



2 Amazon Polly

Text To Speech Powered By Deep Learning

Generally Available Today

AWS Is Transforming The IT Industry



platforms. We look forward to seeing what our customers build using Twilio and Amazon Lex.”

Complementary to Lex is Amazon Polly. Where the former allows for understanding human speech and letting a machine understand a string of it the way humans do, Polly is a service that lets the machines talk back to us in a natural-sounding way. From mobile apps, devices, appliances, and other interfaces, Polly lets developers input text that can then be streamed as audio. With 47 convincingly human-sounding voices across 24 languages, in both male and female voices, and a variety of accents, it's the simplest, most effective way to engage consumers via voice. The speed, consistency, and quality of Polly is unparalleled, and charging, as with most all of the Amazon Cloud services, is based solely on the amount of text converted.

As a widely respected, reliable, and far-reaching organization, The Washington Post needs no introduction. With an output of more than

1200 stories a day, Polly is of particular value to them. “We’ve long been interested in providing audio versions of our stories, but have found that existing text-to-speech solutions are not cost-effective for the speech quality they offer,” said Joseph Price, senior product manager, The Washington Post. “With the arrival of Amazon Polly and its high-quality voices, we look forward to offering readers more rich and versatile ways to experience our content.”

The last of the three AI services launched at this year’s massive re:Invent was Amazon Rekognition. This lets devs create applications with strikingly effective image recognition capabilities through deep learning. The service looks at image borders, colors, shapes, and other characteristics, and applies deep learning algorithms to tell you whether you’re looking at a face, a forest, a temple, or a giraffe. One of the more interesting applications of Rekognition shown off at the launch was integration with a travel app that gave you photo suggestions for destinations the user may be interested in

based on a series of questions, without the use of previously embedded tags or image names.

It also has value with facial search and recognition. SmugMug, whose customers store billions of photos daily, has obvious use for Rekognition. Rather than have their customers spend most of their time searching and tagging manually, the Rekognition service does all that quickly and accurately. This allows them to focus on sharing and reliving the memories, rather than slogging through endless thumbnails and folders.

In addition to these services, AWS recently announced that it is investing significantly in MXNet, an open-source distributed deep learning framework, initially developed by Carnegie Mellon and other top universities, by contributing code and improving the developer experience. MXNet will enable machine learning engineers to build scalable deep learning models that can significantly reduce the training time for their applications.



3 Amazon ALEXA

(It's what's inside Alexa)

Natural Language Understanding (NLU) &
Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) Powered By Deep Learning

Preview Available Today



PICKING AN EDC KNIFE

Words by Ren Alcantara

As with everything in life, picking an EDC blade is all about compromise. The key here is to compromise on the correct aspects. I've made my share of mistakes picking blades, so today, let's take a look at some of the things I feel should be looked at closely when picking an EDC knife.

Going beyond your budget

Don't get me wrong. I love me an expensive knife. With high price tags, you can usually expect quality, exclusivity, or generally a really awesome design or feature, or great steel. If you're anything like the majority of people in the world though, you'll end up babying the knife, and either opting not to use it, or leaving it at home. There is absolutely nothing wrong with getting a knife just because it's pretty; that's a legitimate thing. Since we're talking about EDC blades though, it might not be the best idea. I generally carry knives that cost less than PHP 5,000. When the time comes to bring that knife to bear on some tough task, I generally don't feel bad to beat it up. If you baby your knives, you might want to skip the next sentence. I've used my EDC knives to open cans, cut heavy cardboard, and pry things (very carefully, of course), and while I do mess up the edge, I don't feel bad about it because I know I didn't devalue a pricey knife, and I know I can just take a few minutes to bring it up to a keen edge, put it back in my pocket, and be done with it. Knives are meant to be used, and cheap knives just love to be used. Just the same, respect the blade.

The thing here is that your budget, and consequently, your idea of a "beater" knife, is going to be different from the next guy in the shop. As long as you go for a blade that you aren't going to be afraid to put through the wringer, you're one step closer to making a great EDC choice.

Going overboard

Say what you will about the brand, but the Cold Steel Recon Tanto is a monster of a knife. 11 inches OAL, with a seven-inch blade, it's plenty of knife for a lot of meat for a lot of tasks. Would I carry it

as a daily? I did! Would I do it again? Probably not. Would a seven-inch blade be useful? Sure, for more than a few things. Are you likely to use it every day? If you are, you don't need to read this article, and I hope you stay safe wherever you find yourself deployed. As fun as it might be to know you have all that knife on you at a given point, in practical terms, it's not necessarily the best idea. Take an honest look at your daily use scenarios--you'll know what to do based on that. Besides, all that steel gets to you after a while.

Weight comes into play here as well. You might not notice it at first, but you're going to be carrying your knife around constantly. With a light, your wallet, phone, keys, coins, and whatever else you have on your person, the weight adds up and can start to interfere with how you run your day. It's easy to overlook weight, but you'll appreciate a knife that doesn't really bother you with its presence.

The pocket clip

A knife is an important thing to have. This is true, though not everyone thinks so. A well-executed pocket clip not only keeps out of sight of wandering eyes, it'll also make it more difficult to lose your blade. Multiple clip locations are also great for lefties, or those who prefer something other than right-hand, tip-up carry. Something tight, low-profile, and sturdy is a must for a daily carry.

Locking system

As long as you pick a brand that has a solid reputation, you shouldn't agonize too much about the kind of locking system the knife has. For example, I have recommended knives to people that would otherwise have been just

what they were looking for, save for the locking system. They then go with some blade with a proprietary system that's solid in its own right, but not quite what they were looking for in other aspects. In short, they compromised blade shape, weight, performance, or even style because of a perceived flaw that isn't really a big deal. Everyone will have their preferences. Liner, backlock, or proprietary system, but as long as it's tested and done by a brand that you trust, you should have no problem.

Maintenance

One of the things you'll be doing with your EDC blade is keeping it in good shape, and that goes beyond just keeping a keen edge. Keeping a folder in your pocket tends to attract all sorts of crud, which gets into the nooks and crannies of the knife and its mechanism. This will eventually cause the knife to bind, or deploy sluggishly. Worse still, moisture can accumulate in the little gaps, and rust the steel in the liners or blade itself, causing more of a headache. Blades with a skeletonized or flow-through design will be easier to keep clean on a daily basis, but you'll also routinely want to take the knife apart for a good, deep cleaning. Springs, complex locking mechanisms, and lots of small parts will make the process more difficult, and is something you must keep in mind.

I'm quite picky about my daily carry blades, and there are quite a few things I look for, but these are some of the most important. A great blade to look for is one that will be a great all-rounder which will help you accomplish most of the tasks you will encounter on a daily basis. Don't worry, the knife you are looking for is out there. You just have to go find it.



Inexpensive, lightweight with the FRN scales, and with a tough, easy-to-sharpen edge, the Byrd Cara Cara 2 is a great beater knife.

While a little heavy, the deep-carry pocket clip, rock-solid lockup and gorgeous styling made the Heiho my go-to knife for when I was at formal events.



The least practical of the knives I ever carried, the Cold Steel Recon Tanto was too large, heavy, and ridiculous as an EDC option for a civvy like me. It was a great conversation piece though.

The knife I carry most often (as testified by the wear on the blade), the Ontario RAT 1 gives me a lot of what I need and few things I don't: practical blade shape, reliable lock, and good hand feel, all at a reasonable price.



Canon Celebrates 20th Year in the Philippines Exciting Plans, Promos, and Products Await Filipinos in 2017!

In celebration of its 20th year milestone in the country, Canon Marketing Philippines, Inc. (CMPI) has announced several products, promos, and plans that Filipinos can expect in the year ahead.

"We are grateful for the unwavering support of Filipinos to our brand in the last 20 years. We were able to get this far because of their trust on us in helping them achieve their imaging and printing needs through our expertise in technology," said Lim Kok Hin, CMPI President & CEO. "As we celebrate this milestone, we also remember our commitment to our Filipino customers and clients to provide them only the best quality of service and products that they deserve—and that is what we have planned out for the year ahead."

Among the key highlights that the company announced for the year were:

- Canon Inc. will celebrate in March the 30th anniversary of the launch of the company's EOS System, which includes EOS-series interchangeable lens cameras and a diverse range of system accessories, beginning with interchangeable EF Lenses.
- The Canon #getMpowered campaign that launched last year continues in 2017. It aims to inspire more individuals to capture their life's passion through photography, then share and express themselves to the world effortlessly with the help of Canon's EOS M mirrorless cameras—the EOS M5, EOS M3, and EOS M10.

In addition to these, this year, Filipinos can expect several new products from Canon including the following:

- Designed for lifestyle photographers, the new PowerShot G9 X Mark II is an addition to

the PowerShot G Series line of premium digital compact cameras that features the latest DIGIC 7 image processor to produce high quality images and new levels of performance for accurate detection and precision tracking of subjects.

- Expanding the PowerShot SX and IXUS range are the new PowerShot SX430 IS, which is a high zoom compact camera perfect for landscape and distance photography, and the ultra-compact IXUS 190 and IXUS 185, which are perfect for everyday photography.



- The PIXMA Ink Efficient G4000 with WIFI & FAX is an upgrade to the G series printers with its integrated ink tank design. This brings Canon further in the game of low-cost, high-volume, multi-function printing that makes home offices and small businesses more efficient, more cost-effective and consequently, more profitable.
- Lastly, the newest additions to the line of Ink Efficient All-In-One printers are the PIXMA Ink Efficient E410 and E470. These are the latest printers equipped with low-cost, high yield ink cartridges to ensure affordable cost of operation.

Along with these new products, Canon will be rolling out a series of special 20th anniversary

promos this year as its way of giving back to its valued clients and consumers.

Meanwhile, as Canon gears up for a full year ahead, it announced new assignments and additions to its local management team. Kristine Dacanay, previously CMPI's Marketing Manager for Business Imaging Solutions and Production Printing Group (BPG), now oversees the overall marketing communication initiatives of CMPI's Consumer Group and BPG alongside Lim. Dacanay has been with CMPI for ten years now, and has been instrumental in optimizing Canon's marketing efforts throughout the years.

In addition to this, Benny Yu joins in as the new head of CMPI's Consumer Group. His role promises more aggressive efforts to bring Canon's consumer portfolio forward and beyond in the Philippines.

"In Canon, we delight in bringing to our customers and clients the right products and services they need to help improve their lives and enable them to achieve their image of success," said Dacanay. "You can only expect that this year and in the years to come, we will only strive to be better and offer nothing less of what Filipinos deserve from our brand of crisp and vivid images."

For updates on promos and new products, visit www.canon.com.ph and www.canon.com.ph/imagenation.

PLDT and Globe Agree on Lower Inter-network Voice Call Rates

Two telco giants, PLDT and Globe, have agreed to make inter-network voice calls more affordable, both for mobile phones and fixed lines. The lower rates were announced last November 28 and are being implemented as of writing.

"We are supporting the government's efforts to bring down the cost of telecom services in the country. This agreement will translate in different ways to more affordable voice call rates for our subscribers," said PLDT director and head of regulatory affairs and policy office Ray Espinosa.

The voice call interconnection rate between PLDT (Smart, Sun, and TNT) and Globe will be lowered by as much as 40 percent, specifically down to PHP 2.50 per minute across the board starting January 1, 2017. Currently, mobile-to-mobile and

landline-to-mobile voice calls are charged four pesos per minute, while mobile to landline calls are charged three pesos per minute.

PLDT chief revenue officer Eric Alberto said both operators are also committed in maintaining the highest quality of connection for voice calls between the two networks even as they endeavor to reduce interconnection charges.

He added that improving voice services will provide customers more options to connect with their family and friends, at home or on the go.



Vivo Launches the V5 Plus, and Stephen Curry as Brand Ambassador

Vivo, the fifth largest smartphone manufacturer globally, launched the selfie-centric V5 Plus to fanfare at the SM Mall of Asia last month.

The phone boasts a very impressive 20MP dual front camera setup that allows users to achieve a dramatic bokeh effect, keeping the subject in focus, while blurring the background behind them, allowing users to take their selfie game up to the next level.

The Vivo V5 Plus features a 1/2.8-inch 16-megapixel sensor rear camera with ultra HD mode, boosting photo quality to 64 megapixels, and a professional mode for manual configuration of camera settings before taking photos.

The device comes with 4GB RAM and 64GB ROM, and a Qualcomm Snapdragon 625 chipset, to make short work of multiple processes at the same time. The phone runs on Vivo's very own Funtouch 3.0 OS, based on Android 6.0.

The phone's style values both sophistication and convenience, with a 5.5-inch display and an ultra-slim bezel, allowing users to enjoy a large display



Fashion and lifestyle bloggers (From L-R) Rodel Flordeliz, Ana Gonzales, David Guison, Michael Macalos, Mikyle Quizon, Earth Rulan and Sarah Tirona

while letting them operate the phone with only one hand.

Powering the device is a 3160mAh battery with a fast-charging feature, ideal for highly mobile people, and upgraded fingerprint reader technology, that securely unlocks the phone in just 0.2 seconds.

The big reveal also reintroduced NBA superstar Stephen Curry as the official endorser and brand ambassador of all Vivo phones, including the Vivo V5 Plus perfect selfie phone.



Singer KZ Tandingan serenades the guests with her beautiful and enchanting voice.



Vivo Philippines CEO Jay Xiong and brand director Annie Lim with the brand marketing team and Vivo club ambassadors, after a successful Vivo V5 Plus launch at the SM Mall of Asia Atrium.

Kaspersky Lab Launches 2017 Flagship Security Solution in PH

Kaspersky Lab aims to spread awareness and protect you from the perils of the World Wide Web through its new flagship security solution.

The Kaspersky Internet Security 2017 provides protection for Windows, Mac, and Android users against malware, dangerous sites, online tracking, fraud, and theft.

The 2017 security solution from Kaspersky Lab provides the same tested protection as its previous products, but now comes with several new functions for Windows. In this version, users can protect their data from being intercepted even when on an unsafe internet connection with the help of Secure Connection. This feature encrypts all data sent and received through a network. This comes in handy when making financial transactions, authorization on sites, or transferring confidential information. The Kaspersky Lab protection component, Secure Connection, can be launched from the main window of Kaspersky Internet Security. It can also be activated automatically when the device is connected to public Wi-Fi or when the user is inputting confidential information online.

Within the security product's license, users are given 200 MB of encrypted traffic at their disposal, daily. Additionally, they can opt for unlimited volume of traffic for a fee. The new version also allows users to effortlessly patch "holes" in their device through Software Updater and Software Cleaner.



Software Updater automatically finds applications that need to be updated and, if the user agrees, install the latest versions from vendor sites on their computer. The user can also request the update of an application manually or add any of them to the list of applications that should not be updated.

Meanwhile, Software Cleaner scans all applications installed on the computer and marks those that pose potential risk. It will also inform users if a program has been installed without them knowing, slows down the user's device, provides incomplete or incorrect information about its functions, operates in the background,

shows banners and messages without permission (e.g. advertising), or if it is rarely used. The user can then either remove or leave the application in question.

In addition to the new functions, Kaspersky Internet Security has been enhanced with improved advanced technologies such as the multi-level protection of financial transactions (with Safe Money), the prevention of the installation of unwanted applications (with Application Manager, part of the former Change Control feature) and the blocking of advertising banners in the browser (with Anti-Banner).

Epson's B2B Marketing and CSR Efforts Recognized at Marketing Excellence Awards

Global digital imaging and printing solutions provider Epson won two awards at the prestigious Marketing Excellence Awards 2016—bronze awards for Excellence in B2B Marketing in Singapore for its ENGAGE2WIN Regional Dealers Program and for excellence in Corporate Social Responsibility for its initiative to sponsor youth footballers from the National Football Academy on holistic overseas training stints.

The Marketing Excellence Awards organized by Marketing Magazine, is Singapore's main event recognizing excellence across the marketing communications services industry.

The ENGAGE2WIN dealer program is a point-based reward program for Epson's dealers for its large format printers across five countries, enabling dealers to redeem rewards through an online catalog. Dealers from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines are awarded points based on the sales of large-format printers they make.

Additionally, Epson provided a series of training stints to Singapore's young footballers, with one of Japan's J2 League teams, Matsumoto Yamaga FC in June 2015. In December 2015, Epson Singapore offered Singapore national goalkeeper Izwan Mahbud the opportunity to train and be scouted by the region's best football managers at Yamaga FC.



"Both the awards are recognition of our strength and success of our regional marketing efforts and local CSR outreach. We would like to highlight that collaboration with the local football community and youth development is one of the ways we give back to the community

and is integrated with our marketing efforts. We look to continue building the Epson brand in Singapore and the region, and to seek to support and inspire our youths to pursue their passions," said Toshimitsu Tanaka, managing director (Southeast Asia), Epson Singapore.

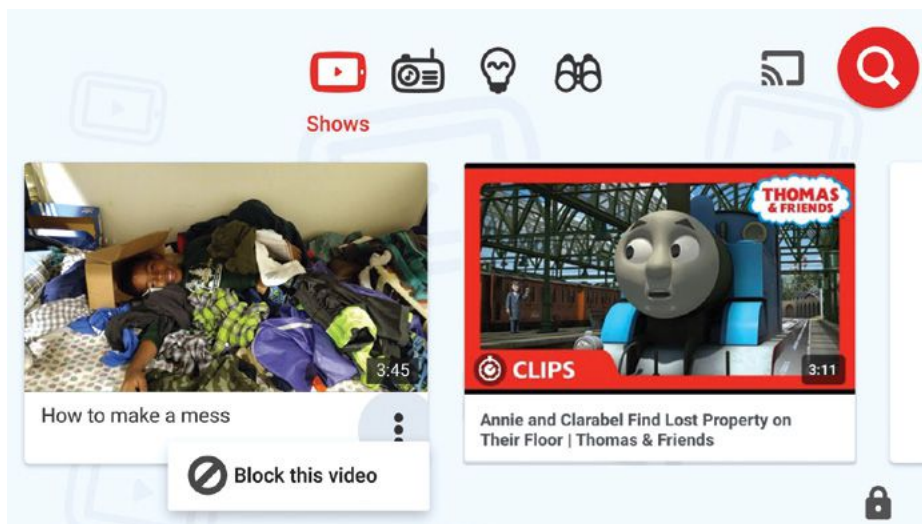
YouTube Kids Gives Parents Content Control

The almost-two-year-old YouTube Kids app has seen an immense following from families across the globe, currently with over 10 million downloads on Google Play, ranking consistently as one of the top five apps in the Apple App Store, and notching an overall 4+ rating on the Play Store.

It boasts features such as: an in-depth tutorial on how the system recommends content and how to flag videos; a timer that allows parents to specify how long the kids' screen time is; compatibility with smart TVs, Chromecast, Apple TV, and game consoles; and age-based home screen content customization.

The app rolled out a new feature which allows parents to block certain channels, videos, and content from their children. This includes potentially messy ones such as goo- and slime-making tutorials.

In order to do so, parents must go to the YouTube Kids app, tap the Three-Dot menu next to any video or channel, and choose the block option. They will then be prompted to verify the decision through a parental consent email.



All the blocked videos and channels on YouTube Kids will also sync across all devices so parents don't have to repetitively go through the same process of blocking and verifying. Should they change their mind, they can also easily unblock restricted videos or channels.

The new feature is available in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Malaysia, Philippines, India, and Singapore.



Asia's Accelerating Cloud "App-vancement"

Words by Oscar Visaya

Oscar Visaya

Country Manager
F5 Networks

In Asia, the application economy is an unstoppable juggernaut advancing at full speed. Wielding the power to make or break the customer-brand relationship, applications that fail to deliver a positive user experience risk losing about a third of their customer base. Recognizing the potential of this digital strategy, today, F5 has found that organizations across this region depend on about 200 applications each, to streamline and introduce efficiencies in functionalities ranging from enterprise productivity, IT deployment to supply chain management.

This number is however set to rise as digital workplaces become commonplace. More employees want to, and are given the autonomy of choosing the apps and processes to work with to maintain a high intensity of corporate functionality anytime, anywhere, across any device.

In spite of its diverse and uniquely fragmented economies where technological maturity is polarized across developed and developing nations from Singapore to Myanmar, one common technology denominator stands out in Asia: mobile. The strong growth of mobile use is ubiquitous across countries in the region, further driving the demand for applications and creating a level playing field for businesses in this increasingly app-centric landscape.

With the surging demand for applications, IT departments are facing increased pressure to deploy them more rapidly, leading to more complex infrastructure and an increase in new attack vectors for malicious actors. What businesses need today, therefore are solutions that enable them to deploy, scale and manage the growth of their application population—quickly and securely—while creating a seamless experience between the application and the end user.

Asia's Cloud-y Outlook

The industry has come a long way from the time when security and performance concerns hindered companies from migrating even basic applications to the cloud. Today, the cloud acceleration is

tangible as CIOs are already prioritizing the move of business critical applications, such as ERP and HR functions, to the cloud as their top agenda.

The cloud is transforming the way businesses deploy and manage applications by improving agility, automating processes and increasing speed to market in ways traditional IT infrastructure cannot achieve. Value points include:

Flexibility: The Cloud provides organizations the flexibility to scale up or down their Cloud capacity on demand. This level of elasticity enables businesses to be more agile and perform better.

Improved mobility: Applications are available to employees anytime and anywhere. Employees can access apps across smart phones and tablets catering to the demands of the increasingly mobile-savvy population.

Cost savings: As companies do not have to purchase equipment and operate a data center, they have reduced expenses on hardware, facilities, and other operational aspects. The Cloud enables organizations to reduce operational costs while increasing IT effectiveness.

To Cloud Or Not To Cloud?

However, Asian businesses still remain cautious. A survey by F5 Networks revealed that the Asia Pacific market lags behind the rest of the world in tapping the Cloud for application development and operations. The study also revealed that businesses

in Asia remain hesitant about deploying Cloud projects that are mission-critical and production-grade, and instead only deploy non-critical low-risk applications, such as email, collaboration tools and static websites.

The inherent challenges in cloud migration such as determining which workloads are suitable for the Cloud, the lack of control and visibility, the application delivery and security capabilities of the Cloud provider, and the real possibility of rewriting your entire application to take advantage of the capabilities provided by the Cloud provider, can give pause to even the most digitally mature businesses. In Asia Pacific in particular, integration between a provider's Cloud technology and on-premises systems stand out as key factors in weighing the adoption of the service.

In addressing these challenges, organizations need advanced and programmable application delivery services which span across data centers and cloud providers, and provide business flexibility to enable a smooth and successful Cloud migration. Organizations require a unified platform that enables them to deliver and manage application services consistently across different application environments for existing as well as new cCloud-native applications.

Companies cannot ignore the rise of the Cloud; however, what they can do is to ensure that their individual journeys to the Cloud are secure and successful, by ensuring that the application delivery service that they choose provides the following three key considerations for every app regardless of deployment model:

Availability – Especially for mission critical workloads, businesses need to ensure that application delivery services can provide persistent app availability across disparate environments.

Performance – With the increased urgency to deliver on-demand content to a variety of devices, app delivery needs to be optimized regardless of the deployment model in order to enhance end-user experience.

Security – The increasing frequency with which organizations experience attacks and vulnerabilities, drive security needs as one of the core app services necessary to ensure the survival of apps and business today.

Imagine application developers and IT coming together to rapidly develop and launch an application on the Cloud that helps scale a line of business from hundreds to millions of customers—all with the same reliability, security and control of a traditional data center deployment. Every company has a Cloud journey unique to its own needs. As a leading provider of application delivery services, F5 is enabling this future today, without compromises, empowering organizations to power their digital transitions without challenges.

ePDS Reports Paper Documentation Still Prevalent Despite Digitization



Even though the world is experiencing a drastic rise in digitization, ePDS, Inc., a document management services and customer communication management solutions provider, notes that consumers still prefer physical copies of documents such as account statements over electronic ones.

"The demand for data printing continues to be strong despite the growing presence of digital media," said Minetta Tangco, executive vice president and general manager of ePDS. "This is particularly true for financial institutions, banks, and credit companies, as well as utility companies handling telecommunications, power, and water where majority of their clients expect to receive statements of their accounts via physical

documents. Additionally, when it comes to bills, consumers value physical mail as a record-keeping tool, thereby serving as payment reminders."

Although digital workspaces are more efficient, traditional filing systems still have the security most businesses crave for. Tangco noted, "Though most Filipinos appreciate the benefits and advantages of shifting to digital storage of their documents, obviously to save on physical storage space and amount of time accessing these in its physical form, including the convenience of mobile accessibility anytime, anywhere, the thought of jeopardizing the security of sensitive and confidential information over digital access and making them vulnerable to hacking is still a factor."

Due to the merits of both document-keeping methods, businesses should strike a balance between convenience and control. And in order to make them blend seamlessly, a proper document management system—which identifies, preserves, and secures data for institutional accountability and timely access to information—is needed.

"With the consumer's preference of physical documents and many companies making the digital shift, we are now seeing a convergence of both traditional and digital document management systems," concluded Tangco. "Companies should consider this as an opportunity to develop both their physical and digital document management systems to boost efficiency and profitability."

Locally-Brewed Ai1 Enterprise Software Launches Awareness Campaign



Gatesoft Corporation advisory board of directors Gilbert Remulla and Paolo Bediones, vice president Mac Murray, and President and CEO George Ariel Llorente.

After over 20 years of quietly making a name for itself in the revenue, inventory, labor, and accounting scenes of enterprises, Gatesoft Corporation's All-In-One (Ai1) Software Solutions officially launched in December last year. The launch—which aims to connect the solutions provider with more medium-sized businesses—also served as the announcement platform of

its power-packed board of directors and its international expansion plans.

Gatesoft began as a payroll and timekeeping software systems provider. Due to client demand for inventory, accounting, point of sale, asset management, and property management software systems, Gatesoft CEO and software architect George Llorente realized that there is no commercially available single software solution that allows for the digital management of all business aspects. Thus, Ai1 was developed, removing the need for a mishmash of unintegrated and unoptimized solutions from different providers.

Conventional financial reports are generated within one to three months, depending on the size and complexity of the industry. Ai1 boasts an

over 10 times faster report generation thanks to its all-in-one platform. The quick turnaround time allows owners to immediately gain insight into the financial status of their business for timely and impactful decisions. And though Ai1 is a very comprehensive management platform, its license cost is only a fraction of its competitors'.

Climbing aboard for the company's local and international expansion plans are Apa Ongpin, former ABS-CBN news anchor and former president of Alphaland Development Corporation; Gilbert Remulla, former ABS-CBN journalist, former congressman, and Island Cove managing director; and Paolo Bediones, TV5 newscaster, GoNegosyo superstar, and owner of Punta Mandala restaurant. The three will be using their influence and personal experiences with Ai1 in their advisory board of directors role.

Emerson Network Power Rebrands as Vertiv



VERTIV

The business formerly known as Emerson Network Power will now be called Vertiv and will be under the leadership of new CEO Rob Johnson. The news follows the enterprise's sale to Platinum Equity in a transaction valued at over USD 4 billion. "It's a fresh start for a business that already has so much going for it. I look forward to working with my new colleagues at Vertiv as we begin this transformational chapter in the company's history," said Johnson. "As an independent company, Vertiv will operate with great freedom to make business strategy and investment decisions, move more quickly like a startup, and focus on innovative solutions for our customers,

including those in the growing Cloud computing, mobile, and IoT networks."

Johnson's most recent venture was being an operating partner at Kleiner Perkins Caufield and Byers. He also spent 10 years at American Power Conversion, rising to the rank of President and CEO during his tenure there. While at APC, he also served as general manager of the company's availability enhancement group.

Vertiv will build on the broad portfolio of products and services for power, thermal, and IT management capabilities it previously offered as Emerson Network Power, including its industry-

leading flagship brands ASCO, Chloride, Liebert, NetSure, and Trellis.

Platinum Equity partner Jacob Kotzubei said that the company's M&A and operational resources, and the firm's strong relationship with Emerson, will benefit Vertiv in the short and long term.

"We will support Vertiv's growth and product innovation every step of the way, both organically and through prospective add-on acquisitions," commented Kotzubei. "This is our second partnership with Emerson and we have had great success together. We look forward to a seamless transition and an exciting future for Vertiv and the customers it serves."

SAP SE Launches HANA 2 Platform



SAP SE has announced the release of the SAP HANA 2 in-memory computing platform, featuring better database and data management, analytical intelligence, and application development performance.

"SAP pioneered in-memory computing with the launch of SAP HANA in 2010 and throughout our journey we have driven breakthrough innovation on a highly stable core data platform for our

customers," said Bernd Leukert, member of the executive board, Products and Innovation, SAP SE. "The release of SAP HANA 2 marks a milestone in the industry, as it represents the next generation of SAP HANA that will propel customers toward a successful and prosperous digital future."

Improvements in analytical intelligence and application development has been implemented into SAP HANA 2 to allow developers to

easily examine rich insight into applications, including text, spatial, graph, and streaming data. In terms of database management, SAP HANA 2 will allow organizations to leverage secondary systems to off-load read-intensive workloads for improved operations. Data management will also be made more efficient with the new edition of the SAP Enterprise Architecture Designer Web application that works with and is powered by SAP HANA. Not only does it allow for the management of complex information architectures, it also allows enterprises to visualize the impact of new technologies before they are implemented.

"SAP HANA 2 represents a continuation of technology innovation by SAP, designed to enable organizations to address

the fast-changing aspects of digital business," said Carl Olofson, research vice president, IDC. "SAP HANA 2 features new and enhanced functions that can enhance data management and accelerate application development for digital transformation. In addition, new SAP HANA microservices in the cloud, accessible through SAP Hybris as a Service, are expected to increase innovation of insight-driven applications to deliver competitive advantage for SAP customers."

Railroad



Words by Jose Alvarez

The invention of the wheel is considered one of the biggest breakthroughs in history. It is not known when the wheel was invented or who invented it (some place it around the late Neolithic around 9000 to 6000 BC), but it revolutionized other breakthroughs such as agriculture and made labor significantly easier for ancient peoples. The railroad, on the other hand, revolutionized land transport like no other, and significantly cut travel times from one place to another.

The railroad is a lot older than one might think. The ancient Greeks invented the Diolkos wagonway, which served to transport boats across the isthmus of Corinth during the 6th century BC. Slaves pushed these trucks, which ran through limestone grooves. This was considered one of the earliest railways in existence, and this operated for 600 years. However, it would take almost 2,000 years for the railway to reappear in civilization. By the 16th century, a funicular railway called the Reisszug appeared. Cardinal Matthaus Lang, the future Archbishop of Salzburg, documented this railway, which runs to this day (but with more modern technology) and is supposedly the oldest railway still in operation in the world.

Mining was one of the first industries to benefit from the railroad. In 1550, narrow gauge railways were common in European mines, and were used to transport coal from mines to load onto boats. The world's oldest working narrow gauge railway was built in 1758, called the Middleton Railway located in Leeds, England.

Many other improvements were made to the railway in the 18th century, such as the iconic iron plate railway (which is a typical railroad feature to this day), which featured iron plates on top of wooden rails, as well as horse-drawn railways, where horses would pull a cart that traveled on rails.

The Industrial Revolution would see the railway explode in use and popularity. Although the steam engine was developed as early as 1712, it was not until 1804 when Richard Trevithick developed the high-pressure steam engine that could help pull

heavy loads. It would take until 1830 when the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened, which was the first intercity route for railways in the world. The standard gauge of 1,435 mm (four feet, 8.5 inches) became known as the standard gauge and is still used by about 60 percent of railways today. By 1850, Great Britain had over 11,000 kilometers (7,000 miles) of railway.

In the United States, railroads had a far greater purpose. The vast size of the country necessitated linking many of the country's cities by train. The completion of the first transcontinental railroad shifted emigration to the West significantly, replacing the wagon trains with a safer, more pleasant journey. Between 1850 and 1890, it was estimated that the United States alone constituted a third of the world's rail mileage. Another country that became famous for the railroad was India, then a colony of the British Empire, and by 1880, over 25,495 km (15,842 mi) of track was laid in the country, and by 1896, India had started building their own locomotives.

Electric railways were first experimented with as early as 1838, but the German Gross-Lichterfelde Tramway was the first route to feed electricity into the trains en route when it was opened in 1881. The first fully completely electrified railway mainline was the Valtellina line, which opened in Italy in 1902. Many large cities such as New York City, Paris and London began to use electrical railways to transport people around, a trend that also continues to the present day.

World War II once again revolutionized the development of the railroad. Advances in internal

combustion engine technology made diesel trains cheaper and more effective than steam, but at the same time, air transport and automobiles had stolen the power of the railroad. By 1964, Japan developed the Shinkansen high-speed rail, more popularly known as the "bullet train" outside of the country. These electrified trains significantly reduced the wear and tear on railways as well as allowed fast acceleration and deceleration, significantly cutting the travel time between cities. For densely populated regions in Japan, this became a model for the rest of the world's train systems, and high-speed rail is utilized extensively in Europe and Asia, where governments are encouraging the use of mass transit.

An innovation that is currently in development for the railroad is the magnetic levitation (maglev) train, already in use in China, Japan, and South Korea. These trains use magnetic levitation to reduce friction and allow for extremely high speeds. It has been reported that maglev trains are far more efficient than even air travel, which could be something to consider for the future. Another proposal to revolutionize the railroad is the Hyperloop, which has theoretical top speeds of 760 mph, and a study showed that it could cover the 560 km (350 mi) distance between the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles, California in only 35 minutes.

The railroad made travel more efficient across the world. Using its efficient method of transporting passengers and goods, it allowed civilization to thrive and prosper. Despite the presence of automobiles and air transport, the railroad is still considered one of the safest and most enjoyable ways to travel.

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