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TODAY

GADGETS & GIZMOS

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COMPUTERS / CAMERAS / GAMING GEAR

ANDROID
PHONES
THAT COST
UNDER
₹10K



DCP No. F2(U/I) Press/2009



ANNUAL AWARDS ISSUE BEST GADGETS OF THE YEAR

{ RACE TO THE FINISH }



**GALAXY NEXUS: THE BEST
ANDROID PHONE EVER?**

**TABLET S: A DESIGN
COUP BY SONY!**



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20 THE BEST GADGETS OF THE YEAR



At the end of an eventful year, we look
 at the top stuff that 2011 gave us.
 Helped by a panel of experts, we
 announce our list of the best there
 were in mobile phones, computers,
 television, photography, home
 entertainment, audio systems, portable
 media players and gaming. In a year
 of excellence, there were products that
 ran each other close in. But *GG*'s top
 listers impressed by their innovation,
 performance and value for money.

Illustration by SANTOSH KHUSHWAHA

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Androids to fit the purse



Phones on the Android operating system are
 no longer the expensive devices they used to
 be. There are a number of them in the
 market that don't cost a bomb.

52

Sony's quiet coup

It took Sony more than two years to
 enter the tablet market.
 But with its Tablet
 S, it has turned
 the tables on the
 staid designing of other members
 in its tribe.



64 A handle on Twitter

Tips and tricks on how
 to get the best out of
 your presence on
 the popular net-
 working site.



58 Chill pill for the season

The weather gods may not be a genial lot
 during winter. But there is technology that
 can take the edge off the season's bite.

REGULARS

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66 Contrast rationale

In the second of our series on how to use Adobe
 Photoshop to make photographs better, we tell you
 how to balance the contrast and sharpen or blur
 parts of the image and to watermark your photo.



WHAT ABOUT THE SMALLER TABLETS?

There are so many tablets in the market now. Could you do a cover story on the best 7-inch Tablets that are currently available in India, namely the Samsung Galaxy Plus, Lenovo Ideapad A1, Acer Iconia A100, Reliance 3G Tab, HCL Me X1, iBall Slide and the XTab. It would be really illuminating to learn about the CPU, GPU, RAM, ROM, Android version, price, and hardware differences among these.

SANDIP ROY, VIA EMAIL

We did a comprehensive cover story on tablets in the December issue. Some 7-inch tablets were included in the story. But thanks for your suggestion—and wait for a story on the comparative merits of 7-inch tablets.

THE WAIT FOR NOVELTY

From the days when watching a 3D movie was a rare treat, we are now at a stage where this amazing technology is now in the living rooms of our homes ("2D to 3D", December 2011). But the problem is the lack of content. We bought our LCD television sets and waited all these years for high-resolution content. Only now are we getting channels in hi-definition and we know different TV watching has become. Hopefully, content providers, especially TV serial and movie makers, will start churning out 3D stuff for our homes. Then surely, 3D will become a true TV phenomenon.

RUPIN BHANDARI, DEHRADUN



IMAGINE, A MOBILE LIFE SAVER!

When I read the story on mobile operating systems ("What the new mobile OS is all about", December 2011), I realised that perhaps the mobile phone can become a weapon against terrorism. Someone can invent a phone that, perhaps with electronic waves, can smell out tRDX and other explosive materials, and determine its exact location. These can be used by investigative agencies and they can be placed at various spots—crowded places, trains, airports, on buses, etc. A beep or a red light can signal the presence of explosives. Such a mobile, if manufactured, can help the authorities locate and defuse bombs and help save innocent human lives.

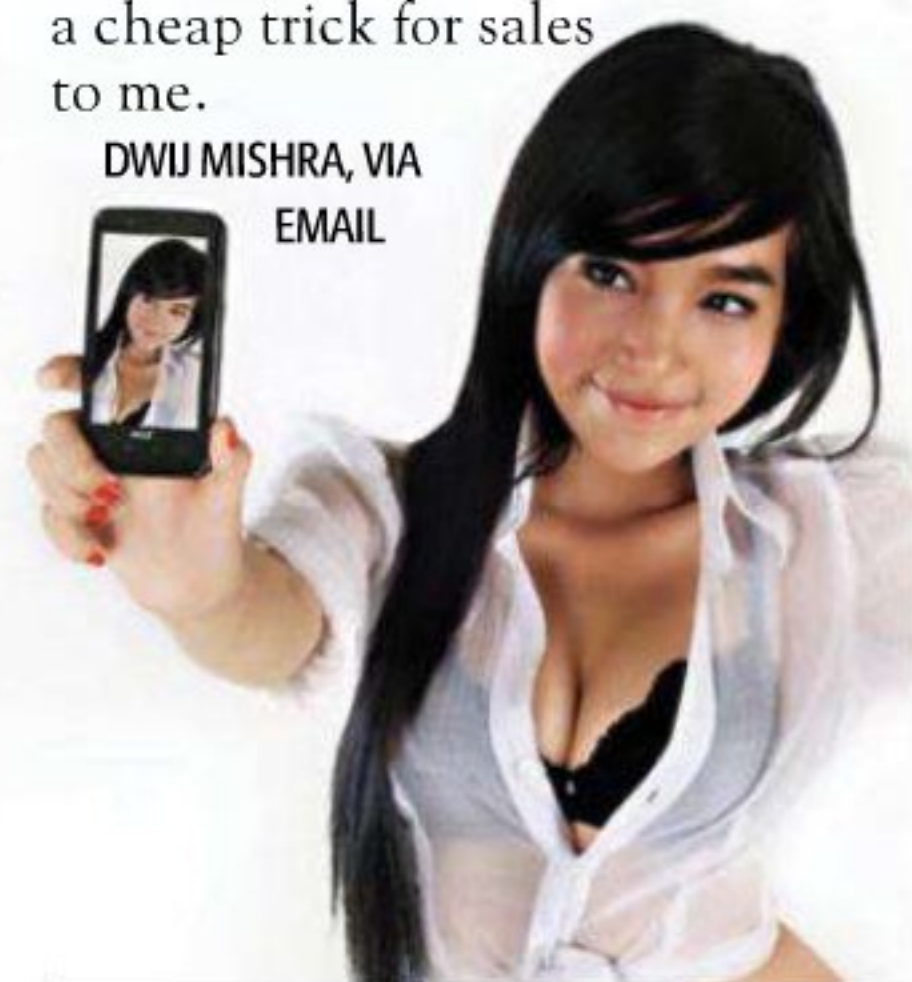
MAHESH KAPASI, NEW DELHI



COVER UP

Is it really necessary to have naked girls on the cover of a tech magazine? Looks like a cheap trick for sales to me.

DWIJ MISHRA, VIA EMAIL



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All comments and suggestions printed on this page may be edited for length and clarity.

ON THE INDIAN SHOP SHELF

I've been reading G&G for the past few months. The reviews are all good but I have a small suggestion. Please mention where we can get the products in India. I tried to buy the Nopopo battery and the Ubislate but their official websites are overseas. Please mention the launch dates for India.

SATTISH L, COIMBATORE

Nopopo battery is available at www.Basecamp.in, while the Ubislate will be released soon.

PRICELESS!

I look forward to getting every issue of G&G. When will you add the conversion to dollars of all rupee pricing? That would be useful.

NELSON
(SUREOWL@GMAIL.COM)

Since we write about products that are available in India, we do not usually give dollar prices.



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LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITOR



Dear Men's Health reader:
There is never a substitute for plain old-fashioned politeness. That's the measure of the man in you. And then there is grooming. This month, I am Guest Editor of the MH Grooming Guide. I invite all of you to come and add the finishing touches to your personality.

Saif Ali Khan
SAIF ALIKHAN

Men's Health

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Q I am writing this letter for advice. I am planning to buy the Samsung Galaxy S II. Please give me a detailed review about the device. You could even suggest a phone for me that will cost a maximum of ₹ 25,000. It should be an Android smartphone, have a bright screen, fast processing speed, a good camera and GPS/A-GPS. It must also be 3G-enabled.

Saurav Kumar, on email

GG The Samsung Galaxy S II is an awesome device. Powered by a 1.2 GHz dual-core processor, it is quick in handling everything, including email, apps, browsing, camera, etc. The 4.3-inch capacitive display is super bright and rich and you would enjoy using the phone. The only issue you might face is with the battery. The Galaxy S II is fuelled by a 1720 mAh battery that manages to run through a day if you have the normal stuff running on the phone. It sells at ₹ 29,990. Under ₹ 25,000 options include the LG Optimus 2X, HTC Sensation and the Sony Ericsson Xperia Arc.



Q My contact details (around 4,000 of them) are stored in my Nokia E5 purchased around two months ago. I am having problems now. When I get some calls, the caller's name is not displayed. Also, when I go to the search options for contacts, I find that the phone number of contacts with names from A to K (e.g., Abu, Kumaresan) are not displayed. I feel that this is due to a memory problem.

M Mahaveer Chand, on email

GG Before you try out anything, we would recommend that you back up all your data, including your contacts, with the PC suite so that you are not left high and dry. After this, go for a hardware reset using *#7370# followed by the default 12345. This will wipe your phone completely. You can then transfer your contacts to the phone again and hopefully your phone should stop malfunctioning.

Q I recently bought a Dell XPS 173 D laptop and after playing games for a few hours, it got very hot. I want your suggestions on a good cooling pad which is durable and efficient.

Viren Parmar, on email

GG There are a plenty of cooling pads available in the market. A cooling pad is recommended to help you avoid any burns or discomfort. You can choose among the Philips cooling pad that bundles up as a carrying case, the Logitech N120, N100 and the Antec cooling pads. All these are good, but the Logitech and Antec ones are USB-connected and would, therefore, block a USB port on your laptop.

Q I want to digitise my large collection of cuttings from newspapers and magazines, most of them printed on high quality paper. They are taking up too much space and are hard to organise. Please suggest an all-in-one solution, namely a printer + scanner + copier.

BV Shrinivasprasad, on email

GG Obviously you will be doing a large number of scans and copies. We would recommend the Canon Pixma MX366 for your needs, which include scanning all your paper cuttings and then organising them as digital files. The MX366 can print in both colour and black and is easy to use. This efficient all-in-one costs ₹ 5,990.

Q I recently downloaded a game torrent but I don't know how to open that file. Please help me. How can I open torrent file and install the game? If it requires a software please give a link from which I can download it.

Devansh Chawda, on email

GG You need a torrent application to download a torrent file. The application is a software that connects to various users and enables you to get the file. A popular one is mu-torrent, or uTorrent. Download and install an application, say uTorrent from www.utorrent.com. Then you can double click on the torrent file that you want to download. It will be opened by the application. Select where you want to save the file. The download will start in a few minutes depending on the number of hosts/users available with the same file. Make sure you choose a file option that shows a large number of users.

Q I want to buy a 42-inch LED TV with 3D and Internet capabilities for around ₹70,000. Pls also suggest a good 1TB external HDD for around ₹ 7,000.

Rishab Kansal, on email

GG The product closest to your price point is the LG LW 4500 3D smart TV, but its price is ₹ 79,990. This 42-inch TV has all the specifications that you said you needed. As for the HDD, you can get the sleek Seagate Freeagent GoFlex 1TB for around ₹ 6,500.



HELP AT HAND

Having trouble with your laptop? Would like to boost your cell phone's capabilities? Want advice on what camera is best for your needs? Write to us with all your queries and we will have experts answering them.

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COOKING UP ENTERTAINMENT

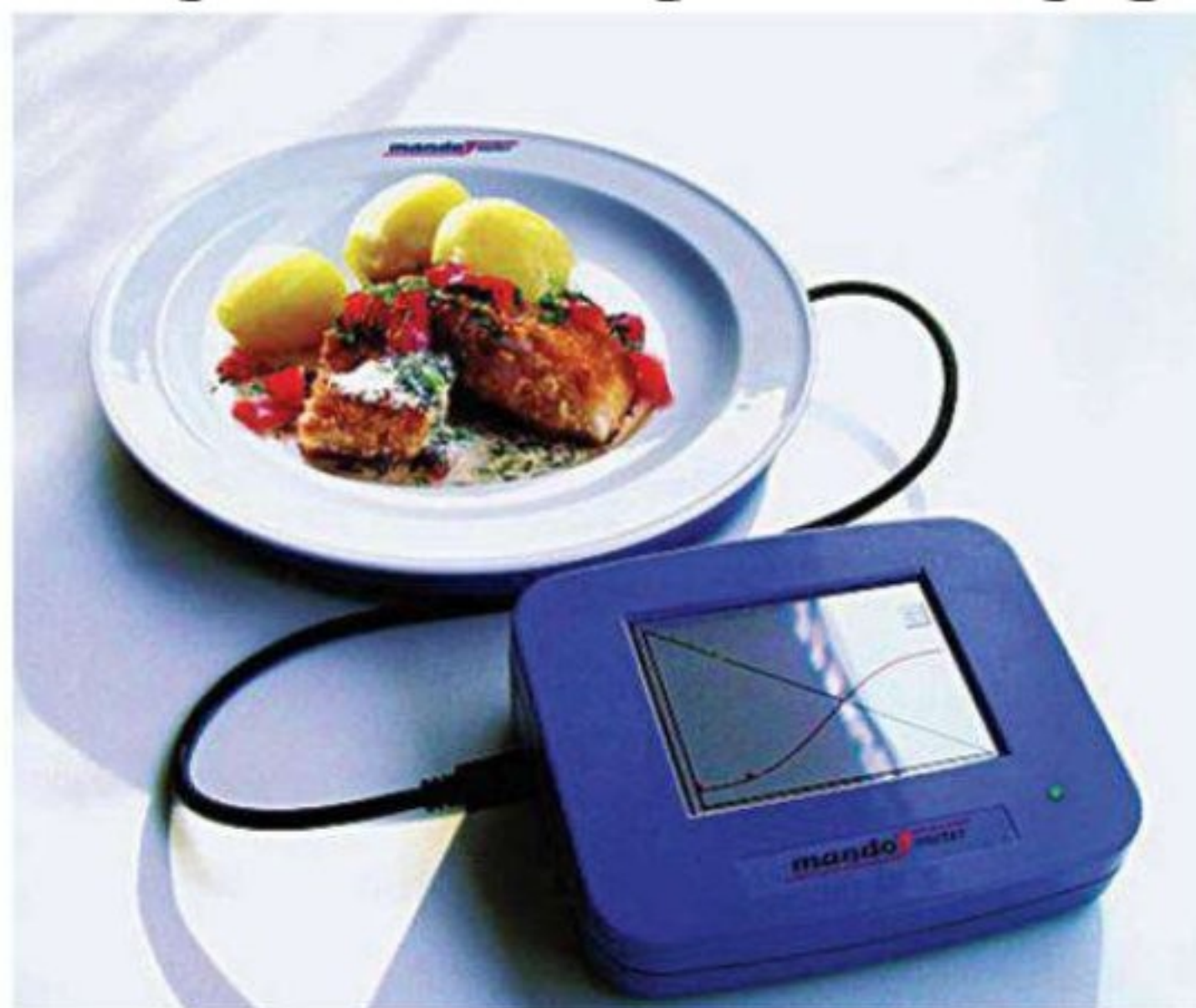
For all those who twiddle their thumbs waiting for the microwave oven to ping when its done, here is what four young tyros built in just 40 hours at the University of Pennsylvania. The *mWave* (the Greek letter Mu is a symbol for 'micro') is a modified Westinghouse oven that plays YouTube videos of the same duration as your food's cooking time. When the cooking is through, it sends an SMS to your smartphone. It also has its own Twitter account to tweet about its use. But don't rush to the market just yet. It is not commercially available. It was only created by the students for the university's PennApps hackathon.



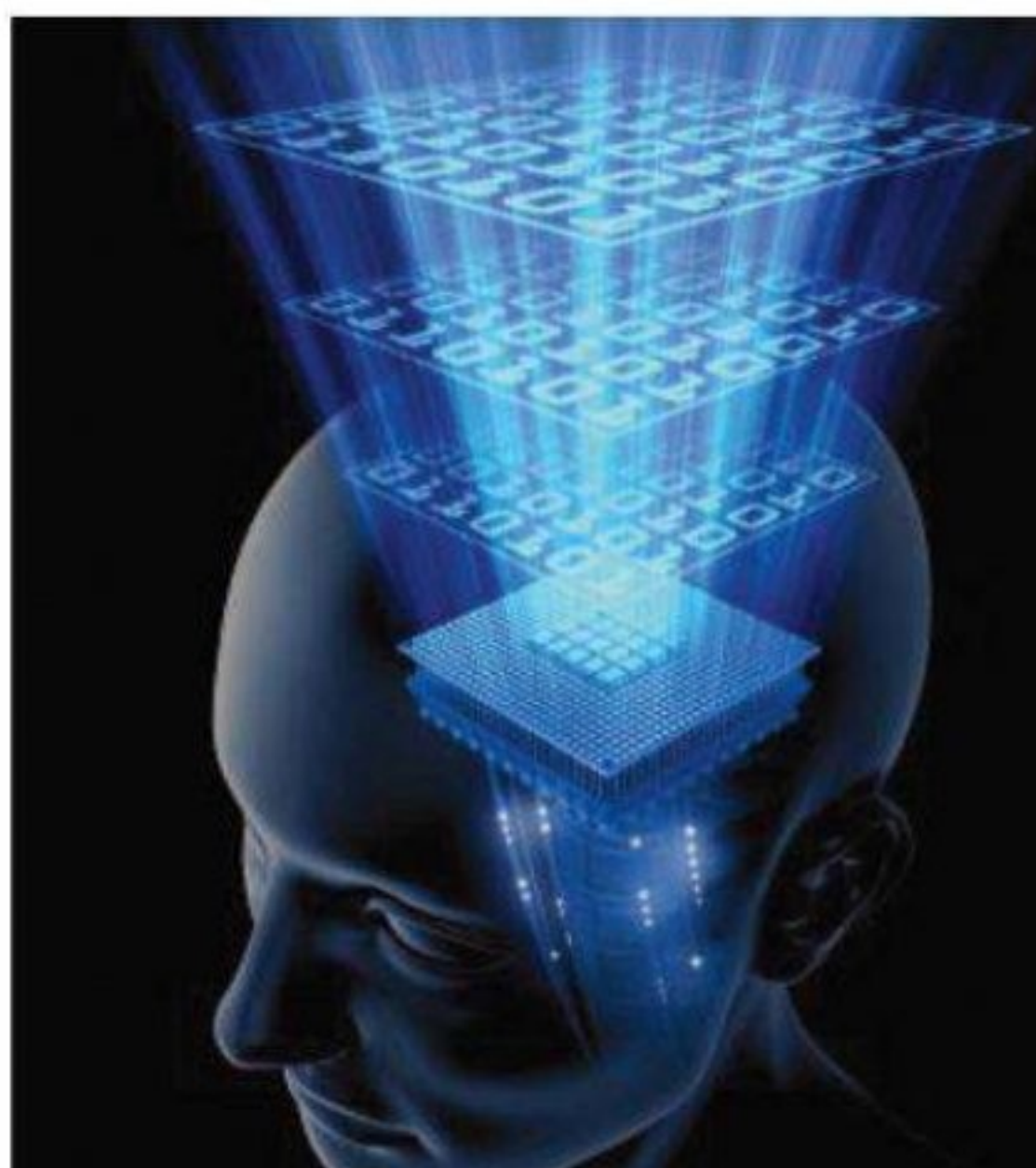
WISE CABBIE, SMART DRIVE

Radio cabs are a convenience, but most of the times you have to wait a while for it to appear. In London, a city with one of the highest penetrations of smartphones, firms have come up with apps like Hailo, LDNTaxi, Get Taxi and Kabee. Since all smartphones incorporate a GPS system, the caller's location is determined by the company, which then informs the smartphone-wielding driver closest to the passenger. The apps have reportedly led to better all-round experience for everyone.

COMPUTER DIET FOR WEIGHT LOSS



The trouble with eating is the body does not tell you exactly when your needs are satisfied, and by the time you feel full, you might well have packed away extra calories that show up on your waistline. That is where the Mandometer, they claim, helps. The device consists of a scale that is connected to a computer. The software allows the patient to see on the computer display a comparison between a normal rate of eating and level of satiety and an overweight user's own rate and satiety perception. In around four months, the user is apparently trained to eat like a normal person does. Eat normal, weigh normal, voila!



NTH DEGREE SPEED READING

Imagine the amount of scientific information that lies in computers in the form of research data, academic articles, theories, etc. Now imagine someone intelligently trawling through all that information and linking all common data. Wouldn't that take decades? Not if it is CRAB. Researchers from Cambridge University and the Karolinska Institute of Sweden have come up with a system called CRAB that can read the scientific papers like a human would, but infinitely faster. The first task that CRAB will undertake is to mine the data for cancer research. The system is the latest implementation of a rapidly emerging form of artificial intelligence called natural language processing, which is also used in the Siri personal assistant software in the iPhone 4S. It allows computers to read texts and derive meaning from them, despite their complexity and ambiguities, as humans do.

472%

The increase in percentage since July 2011 of malware aimed at Google's Android operating system, according to Juniper Global Threat Center, US. With Android selling 2,50,000 units every day, and its free-for-all app development, the OS-specific malware has surged phenomenally.



BATHROOM SONGS ON WATER RADIO

If you thought all that water in the bathroom was going down the drain, then Vivian Black not only thought about it but went one step forward. Vivian Black is mainly remembered before this for his success in commercialising British inventor Trevor Baylis' hand-cranked radio for use in remote areas of Africa. Black employed the power created by the motion of water to run a radio. The radio, which he has named the H2O, uses a micro-turbine technology to generate power from the flow of water when the shower is turned on. The waterproof instrument clips on to the water pipe that runs up to the showerhead. The radio is manufactured by the Tango Group. Thanks to them, bath time can well mean *Kolaveri* time.

FROM FACEBOOK TO THE "FACEPHONE"?

What's better than a phone with a Facebook App? A Facebook Phone. There are rumours that Taiwanese phone maker HTC has been tasked by the social networking site to build a phone, codenamed Buffy, that is geared to integrate the communication device with Facebook. Apparently, Buffy will run on a tweaked version of Android and will support HTML5 as application platform. Obviously it is too early for any discussion on its features, designing or its release date. For the millions who can't do without their daily dose of FB, this phone will be a godsend. But there's a period of waiting involved, rather like the time between a friend request being sent and the arrival of the confirmation.



SERVED, WITH WARM REGARDS

Eager to grasp at all ideas that could help avoid fossil fuel use, two researchers at the University of Virginia and four at Microsoft Research explored the possibility of using computer network servers to heat homes in chilly weather. In a paper presented at the Usenix Workshop on Hot Topics in Cloud Computing, they said the server—still operated by their companies—could be placed inside homes and used as a source of heat. The authors call the concept "data furnace." They calculated that in the coldest climate, about 110 motherboards could keep a home as toasty as a conventional furnace does. In warmer seasons, the heat generated would be vented out.



TAKE ON TECH

"We are seeing the rise of new economic powers throughout Asia, as well as Brazil, Russia and West Asia. The Internet will clearly be the best way to engage this new world. We know three billion more people will come online by the end of the decade, mostly in emerging economies. In 2011, any kind of business can tap that kind of opportunity."

ERIC SCHMIDT,
Executive Chairman, Google Inc

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Price: ₹ 1,50,000



TRANSCEND JETFLASH 760

Transcend's latest product launched in the country is the JetFlash 760. These colourful flash drives are easy to carry around and are sliding USB connectors without caps. These flash drives are based on USB 3.0 technology, which is capable of providing double the performance speed compared to the popular USB 2.0 generation. With a starting price of ₹ 860 for 4 GB, these flash drives are available in capacities of 8 GB, 16 GB and 32 GB.

Price: ₹ 860 onwards



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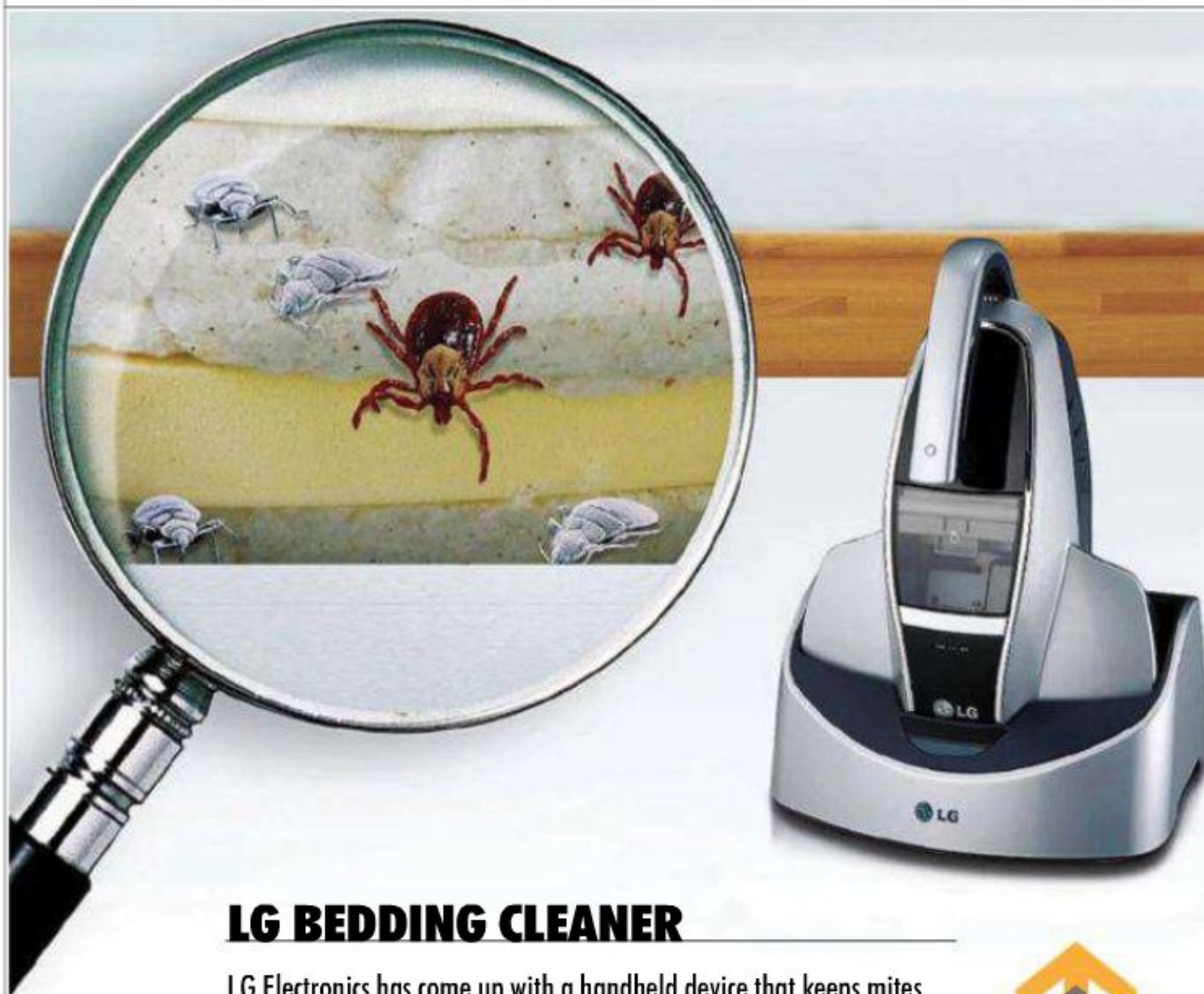
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IDEA ANDROID SMARTPHONES

After MTS launched affordable Android phones for CDMA users, Idea is following in its footsteps. The company has recently announced two new 3G-enabled smartphones on the Android platform. Running Android v2.2 aka Froyo, the two phones will have a 3.2 MP camera, a 2.8 and 3.5 inch touch display and regulars such as GPS, FM radio, MP3 player, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth.

Price: ₹ 2,609 and ₹ 4,751



LG BEDDING CLEANER

LG Electronics has come up with a handheld device that keeps mites and allergens at bay. Called the Bedding Cleaner, this vacuum cleaner sucks mites from nooks and corners of the bed or mattress, providing a germ-free environment for kids. It has a three-step, deep-cleaning process, including 4,000 vibrations per minute for effectively cleaning hidden dust, smooth pick up brush and a powerful suction. There is a hygiene UV sterilisation station that comes into action after the cleaning. A UV lamp inside the station kills the harmful bacteria at the bottom of the cleaner to prevent secondary infection.

Price: ₹ 12,990



CONTEST



SP SILICON POWER IS A TAIWANESE COMPANY THAT PROVIDES A WIDE-RANGE OF UNIQUELY DESIGNED, HIGH QUALITY STORAGE PRODUCTS AND GADGETS. HERE IS A CHANCE TO WIN 8 GB LIMITED EDITION SILICON POWER USB DRIVES. JUST ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

- 1 What is the USB 3.0 transfer rate of Silicon Power's Marvel M60 USB 3.0 flash drive?
 - a) Read Speed 100MB/s; Write Speed 70MB/s
 - b) Read Speed 100MB/s; Write Speed 60MB/s
 - c) Read Speed 100MB/s; Write Speed 50MB/s
- 2 Which one of the following is NOT one of Silicon Power (SP)'s Touch Series USB flash drive models?
 - a) Touch Series
 - b) Ultima Series
 - c) Stream Series
- 3 What is the name of Silicon Power (SP)'s SATA III solid state disk?
 - a) Velox V20
 - b) Vetto V30
 - c) Velox V30

ANSWERS OF DECEMBER SILICON POWER CONTEST

THE LUCKY WINNERS ARE:

Touch 850 USB 2011 Limited Edition:
ANUPAM DAS from GUWAHATI

Luxmini 322 USB 2011 Limited Edition:
SALVADESSWARAN PS from KOLKATA

1) c, 2) b, 3) b, 4) c

Send your entries to contestgg@gmail.com or mail them to G&G, F-26 Connaught Place, New Delhi 110001.

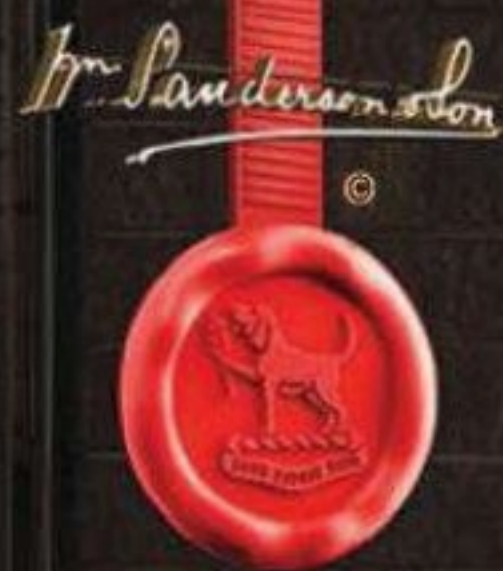
All entries must include the full name, full address, email address and phone number of the sender.

The last date for receiving entries is January 9, 2012. The names of the winners will be announced in the February 2012 issue of G&G.

In case of more than two winning entries, winners will be decided through lots.

Requests for cash in lieu of prizes will not be entertained.

The contest is not open to employees of the India Today Group, their relatives or friends or affiliates.



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PORTRONICS SCANNY 4

After launching its products, Portronics probably tries to do better with the subsequent gadget in the series. So, since its portable scanner, the Scanny 3, supported Bluetooth functionality for transferring scanned data to a Bluetooth-enabled device, the Scanny 4 goes one better with a small LCD display where the user can view the scanned image. This will come across as a handy feature as it will eliminate the need to view the scanned image by connecting the portable scanner to the PC. The Scanny 4 is expected to come to the market sometime soon



Price: ₹ 6,500 approx.



HTC RHYME

With the introduction of the Rhyme in the Indian market, HTC claims to have come up with a new kind of phone created for people who require advanced features blended in a sleek form factor. HTC Rhyme is a complete touch phone. With a stylish unibody design, it has a 3.7-inch WVGA display, and the latest version of HTC Sense UI. There is also a 5 MP camera with instant shutter. Available in Clearwater colour, the box includes a tangle-free headset and a small light-emitting cube that can be attached to the phone by a cord.

Price: ₹ 27,499

Specs: 3.7-inch capacitive display; Android v2.3; 5 MP camera; 4 GB memory, 768 MB RAM, microSD slot, 3G, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth; 130 gm; 1600 mAh battery.





LG CF3D

LG has launched the world's first single lens Full HD 3D projector targeted at hardcore movie and gaming enthusiasts. It displays 3D content in Full HD resolution and has a 120Hz True Motion technology for clear and smooth movement. It uses two projectors combined with one lens for perfect brightness and contrast ratio. It also has a 3D auto picture calibration that eliminates the need of manual alignment. Utilising the same polarized technology of its 3D TVs and 3D laptops, it gives flicker-free 3D experience. With 2500 lumens, it has a contrast ratio of 30000:1.

Price: ₹ 8 lakh



ASUS VS247H

After Samsung and Philips, Asus has now introduced LED monitors in the Indian market. The Asus VS247H is a 24-inch Full HD monitor with a high contrast ratio of 50,000,000:1 for the finest image and colour quality. Featuring the Asus Smart Contrast Ratio, it dynamically enhances the display's contrast by adjusting luminance of the backlight to achieve the darkest and brightest white. This mercury-free backlit panel has convenient key controls for functional set-up and has HDMI interface.

Price: ₹ 11,900

TIMEX HEART RATE MONITORWATCH

The latest innovation from Timex watch company is the heart rate monitor watch that has been developed specially to help marathon runners achieve their best timings. With no chest strap required, the watch can be tied on the wrist and it reads and displays the heartbeats with a touch of a finger. Here, the watch provides an accurate heart rate in two formats—BPM and percentage of max and workout information. Water resistant up to 50 metres, it has an Indiglo night light with 12/24 hour time/month/date display

Price: ₹ 3,995



FUJIFILM FINEPIX S2950

The latest in the FinePix stable of Fujifilm cameras is the FinePix S2950. It is a feature-rich, compact camera, it is designed keeping today's young generation in mind. With the 14MP sensor on board, it has a six-scene recognition function and face detection features like detect face, blink and smile. While it has a maximum ISO level of 6400, it boasts an 18x optical zoom and comes with 28mm wide angle lens.

Price: ₹ 10,999



LENOVO THINKCENTRE EDGE 91Z

The Lenovo ThinkCentre Edge 91z is the new all in one desktop in town that has a sleek design with small details that can makes it stand-out. This 21.5-inch all-in-one has a Full HD LED screen and it runs on Intel i5 processor. With up to 1TB HDD for storage, it runs on Genuine Windows 7 Home Premium 64 and has 4GB RAM.

Price: ₹51,900



iBall Speakers

Considering the need of having a powerful set of speakers for the laptop on the move, iBall has launched a range of speakers. The iBall Medody is a slim bar that can be mounted on the top of the laptop horizontally as well as vertically or even placed on the table using the table top accessory. It offers full stereo sound through two high-performance drivers, a built-in amplifier. The iBall USB drum is another speaker with a *tabla* design. Both of them can be connected via USB ports.

Price: ₹ 890 for Melody Bar; ₹ 990 for USB drum





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THE BEST OF THE MONTH



SAMSUNG GALAXY NEXUS

Price: ₹ YTA

Specs:

4.65-inch sAMOLED display; 1.2 GHz dual core processor; 1 GB RAM; 16 GB internal Memory; Android v4.0 (Ice Cream Sandwich); Wi-Fi, 3G, Bluetooth, NFC; 5 MP camera, 1080p video capture; 1750 mAh battery.





NEW STAR IN THE GALAXY

THE NEW NEXUS PHONE COMES WITH THE SAMSUNG MARQUE. IT SPORTS THE SPIFFY ICE CREAM SANDWICH ANDROID v4.0 OPERATING SYSTEM. THIS COMBINATION OF GOOGLE AND SAMSUNG IS A WINNER.

TEXT BY NIDHI SINGAL & PHOTOGRAPHS BY RAIWANT RAWAT

The Samsung Galaxy Nexus is a sleek device at 8.4 mm thickness that slims down to 4.29 mm at the top. The front, sporting a high-definition sAMOLED 4.65-inch display, does away with the regular hardware keys. To live up to the new Ice Cream Sandwich Android OS v4.0, Samsung hasn't compromised on the hardware and has used a dual-core processor clocking at 1.2 GHz along with 1GB RAM and 16GB storage.

But what left us awestruck was the OS running on the Galaxy Nexus. Ice Cream Sandwich is a class apart from Gingerbread or Honeycomb. A fresh interface redefines the experience and here it is noticeable across lock screen, notifications, widgets, multitasking, etc.

The screen can be unlocked by sliding towards the right. Left slide launches the camera. For added security, a face unlock feature scans your face to unlock the phone. Unlike earlier, the notification bar can be accessed even when the screen is locked. A new feature includes the notification bar opening any new email directly. Also, the bar shows new settings icon that gives access to the regular settings, including a few new ones like data usage tracking, near-field communication (NFC) and Android beam for transmitting app content via NFC, etc. The

Google Search bar, the four shortcut icons, app launcher and the Back, Home and Menu icons remains static across all windows of the homescreen. Instead of adding single apps to the homescreen, you can now create folders. The main application tray has been divided into two: apps and widgets. Anything can be dragged to the homescreen and added as a shortcut. While adding a third-party app to the homescreen, an uninstall icon appears at the top. A number of widgets come preinstalled, and the one we liked the most was the Gmail widget—it facilitates scrolling through the inbox from the homescreen itself. As for the apps running in the background, you no longer need the task manager—Google has embedded it into the OS. The multitasking key shows all the running apps and you can kill them by swiping the finger horizontally.

Although, typing is fairly comfortable, a Mic icon appears on the onscreen keypad in messages indicating that you can dictate the message instead of writing it out. The 5 MP camera with touch focus is super fast and is accompanied by an LED flash. It also takes pictures in the sweep panorama mode. The 1080P video capture is about average, as are the still pictures. The Galaxy Nexus's 1750 mAh battery lasts a day with a busier than normal usage.

WHY WE FELL FOR IT

The Samsung Nexus beats the Apple iPhone 4S and Nokia Lumia 800 but its pricing will eventually decide its fate.

20 IT Gadgets & Gizmos
January, 2012



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GADGETS
AND GIZMOS

Illustration by: SANTOSH KHUSHWAHA



DESKTOP OF THE YEAR

LENOVO IDEACENTRE B520

Price: ₹ 71,990

The Lenovo Ideacentre B520 not only looks good sitting on your desk with its frameless 23-inch screen, but the speakers at the bottom of the monitor give an ubercool appearance that one immediately falls in love with. Having the USB port on the side means that one does not have to turn the machine to access it. Since you can get it with a Blu-ray drive, and also because it has HDMI and Component ports, you can actually replace your TV with this desktop. However, a wireless keyboard and mouse are accessories that you have to add. You can also opt to have it upgraded to a touchscreen.

SPECS:

23-INCH FULL HD SCREEN; INTEL CORE i7 PROCESSOR 3.4 GHZ; 6 GB DDR3 RAM; 1TB HDD; NVIDIA GEFORCE GT 555M 2GB GRAPHIC; BLU-RAY DRIVE; HDMI, COMPONENT, BLUETOOTH, WI-FI; MULTI-TOUCH, 3D SUPPORTED; 5.0 SYSTEM SPEAKERS; TV TUNER.

EXPERTSPEAK

"I love the fact that the machine can be upgraded to 3D Vision by getting an NVIDIA kit. You can actually have it in your bedroom instead of a television set."

GAGANDEEP SAPRA



LAPTOP OF THE YEAR

MACBOOK AIR 13

Price: ₹ 98,900

The MacBook Air 13 is both a hot looker and a great worker. It provides extreme performance in a tiny form factor. On the test bench, the Air 13 returned results that would put to shade even the performance of bigger machines from Apple's own stable. It has a fairly large keyboard and super bright LED screen. The speakers are nicely hidden, though you will realise they are not so shy once you put the audio on. The battery works for a commendable six and half hours. As part of the package, you get useful software like movie editor, photo organiser and Garage Band with real-time tutorials.

SPECS:

13-INCH LED DISPLAY; INTEL CORE2DUO PROCESSOR 1.86 GHZ; 2GB DDR3 RAM; 256 GB SSD DRIVE; NVIDIA FEFORCE 320M GRAPHICS; 2 USB, CARD READER; WI-FI, BLUETOOTH; WEBCAM; 1.32 KG WEIGHT.

EXPERTSPEAK

"For me two things matter about a laptop: the time to boot and the weight to lug around. In both these issues, the MacBook Air 13 comes out shining."

GAGANDEEP SAPRA

TABLET OF THE YEAR

APPLE iPad 2**Price: ₹ 36,900**

When Apple changed the rules of the game with its iPad tablet, it set off a frenzy in the tech world. And despite a burgeoning tribe of tablets, the world looked forward to the second iteration of the iPad. When it did come, the iPad2 sported everything new. It is lighter, slimmer, better looking and has a boosted processing power in the 1 GHz dual-core A5 chip. The tablet remains unsurpassed in both user experience as well as the sheer magnitude of its magical content and native, tablet-optimised applications. The iOS 5 update has made the best only better and its battery has almost no rivals.

SPECS:

9.7-INCH LED DISPLAY; 1GHZ DUAL-CORE APPLE A5 PROCESSOR; iOS 5;
16 GB STORAGE; 720P REAR CAMERA, VGA FRONT CAMERA; 3G, WI-FI,
BLUETOOTH; A-GPS; 613 GM.

**EXPERTSPEAK**

"We were taken by its superslim aesthetics and its superfast performance. Also, there's an app on iStore for whatever you may want to do on your iPad2."

G & G



SMARTPHONE OF THE YEAR
SAMSUNG GALAXY S II

Price: ₹ 29,990

When you know that the Samsung Galaxy S II sold 10 million units within five months of its launch, you know there is something special about this phone. But it's not just about figures. The Samsung Galaxy S2 is unarguably the best smartphone in town. Encased in a sleek body are a dual-core 1.2 GHz processor and 1 GB RAM on the latest version of Android, the v2.3 Gingerbread. A great blend of smart functionality with the best of multimedia features, the Galaxy S II was up against the Apple iPhone 4 (the iPhone 4S was not considered as it hadn't been launched in India at the time of the rankings) and won on sheer performance.

SPECS

4.3-INCH SUPER AMOLED DISPLAY; 1.2GHZ DUAL-CORE PROCESSOR; 8 MP CAMERA, FULL HD VIDEO CAPTURE; 16 GB MEMORY, EXPANDABLE TO 32 GB; BLUETOOTH, WI-FI, 3G, A-GPS; 1720 mAh BATTERY.

EXPERTSPEAK

"The best part of the device is how Samsung has managed to pack so many goodies into such a compact form factor. The phone is just 8.5 mm thick and weighs just over 100 gm."

VARUN KRISHNAN



COVER STORY



CAMERA PHONE OF THE YEAR

iPhone 4

Price: ₹ 37,900 for 8GB

This will be a shocker of sorts for you—from a 12 MP camera phone that we picked as our winner in this category last year, we have plumped for a 5 MP device this year. But this is an Apple phone and the images captured using the 5 MP sensor and the LED flash on the iPhone 4 are better than those captured by Samsung Galaxy S II and Sony Ericsson Arc. The phone also provides the option of capturing images in High Dynamic Range. Don't ignore the 720p video capture at 30 frames per seconds either. And after all your creative capturing, you get plenty of applications to edit and to share your images.

SPECS:

3.5-INCH RETINA DISPLAY; 5 MP CAMERA SENSOR; 720P VIDEO CAPTURE; 8 GB MEMORY, NOT EXPANDABLE; 3G, WI-FI, BLUETOOTH, A-GPS; 137 GM.



MUSIC PHONE OF THE YEAR

NOKIA X5

Price: ₹ 9,500

There were a number of very good music phones launched during the year, including the Apple iPhone 4, Nokia X5 and the Sony Ericsson W8. But what impressed us about the Nokia X5 was its simplicity and the outstanding sound. The X5 has a dedicated music key placed below the display. It has a Playlist DJ for profiling songs as per the user's mood and a 'Spin' feature for changing tracks randomly. The 950 mAh battery was good enough to take you through a day of great music playback, whether over the speakers or headphones.

SPECS:

2.36-INCH NON-TOUCH DISPLAY; 5 MP CAMERA; 200 MB INTERNAL MEMORY, 2 GB MEMORY CARD; MEMORY EXPANDABLE TO 32 GB; FM RADIO, MUSIC PLAYER, 3G, WI-FI; 129 GM.

EXPERTSPEAK

"The speaker in the Nokia X5 is one of the loudest in the business. Plus the audio output from the 3.5mm jack is distortion free too."

VARUN KRISHNAN

AFFORDABLE PHONE OF THE YEAR

SAMSUNG GURU DUAL 35

Price: ₹ 3,150

Usually the cheapest phones come from Indian handset producers. But this dual SIM device from Samsung pips all of them in terms of value for money. It has the best quality, utility and design. Even though it isn't the true dual SIM phone as the network of the second connection goes off air when accessing a call on the first, Samsung has still managed to put up a great show. The company got rid of the two calling keys by adding a dedicated SIM switching key. There is also the freedom of having a personalised sound setting for both connections individually.

SPECS:

2-INCH DISPLAY; VGA CAMERA; WIRELESS FM RADIO; MUSIC PLAYER; EXPANDABLE MEMORY UP TO 2 GB; BLUETOOTH; 1000 mAh BATTERY.

EXPERTSPEAK

"At an affordable price tag, it not only offers basic phone functionalities, but also a lot of multimedia features."

VARUN KRISHNAN





3D TV OF THE YEAR

LG 42 LW 6500

Price: ₹ 99,900

Yes, we know that 3D TVs are the future. But LG did the best job of the year but yoking its 3D screen with what are called "Passive 3D" glasses. These weigh around 16 gm, compared to the 80-200 gm of normal active-shutter glasses. The LG LW 6500 can convert 2D feed, whether from a console, media player or a set-top box, to 3D. The images are vivid and frame rates stable during high-pace action scenes. The onboard audio isn't bad either. Apart from these, this TV comes with smart applications that let you browse the Internet or to stream media from an external source. Its magic motion remote aids the user in managing and browsing content.

SPECS:

42-INCH LED DISPLAY; FULL HD, PASSIVE 3D; HDMI, COMPONENT, COMPOSITE PORTS, SMART FUNCTIONS; 20 W RMS SOUND; MOTION-SENSING REMOTE; 140 W POWER CONSUMPTION.



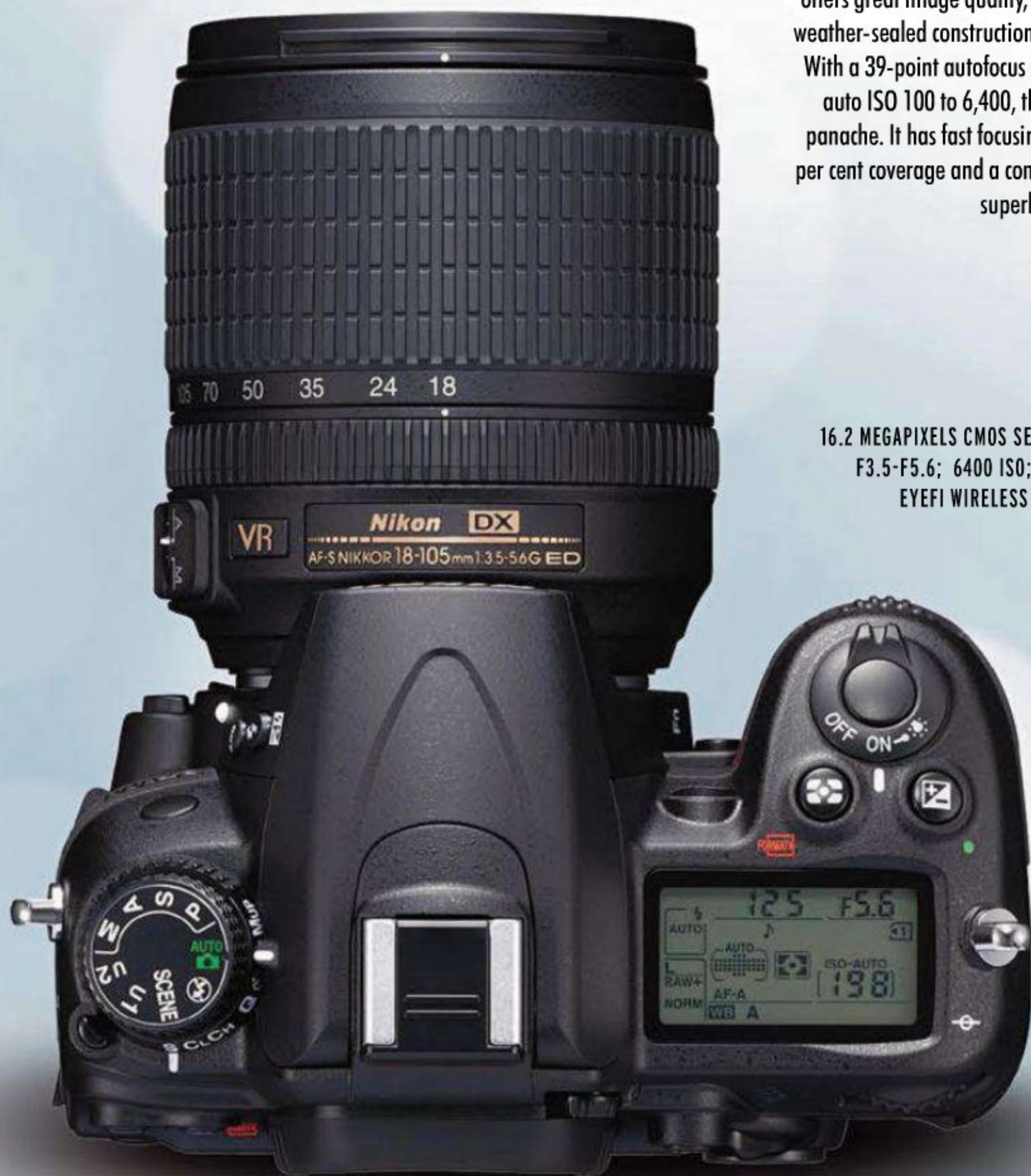
LED TV OF THE YEAR

SAMSUNG UA 40D5900UR**Price: ₹ 70,900**

The latest trend in flat panel television sets is "Smart TVs". While boasting Full HD support, these are capable of connecting to the Internet. Besides, with the application space expanding, there are apps available for download on Smart TVs now. And this machine takes advantage of these. This Samsung beauty has 100 Hz clear motion rate, ultra clear panel for crystal clear images, digital noise filter and wide colour enhancement for improving image quality are what makes it really special. It comes with 2 USB ports and 4 HDMI's with a maximum power consumption of 34 Watts on energy saving mode and 100 Watts during regular use.

SPECS:

40-INCH LED TV; FULL HD; HDMI PORT, USB PORT, COMPOSITE PORT;
10 WATT X 2 RMS, INTERNET CONNECTIVITY, 12.1 KG



DSLR OF THE YEAR

NIKON D7000

Price: ₹ 70,900

Pipping the Canon EOS 60D to the winning post, the Nikon D7000 offers great image quality, image depth and wide dynamic range. Its weather-sealed construction allows for shooting in extreme conditions. With a 39-point autofocus system, shutter speed of 30 to 1/4000 sec, auto ISO 100 to 6,400, this sturdy shooter packs in a punch with panache. It has fast focusing and a large bright viewfinder with 100 per cent coverage and a comprehensive feature set that all make a for superb shooting capability.

SPECS:

16.2 MEGAPIXELS CMOS SENSOR; 3-INCH MONITOR; 18-105 KIT LENS; F3.5-F5.6; 6400 ISO; FULL HD VIDEO RECORDING; USB 2.0; EYEFI WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY; 690 GM WEIGHT.

EXPERTSPEAK

"This mid-range DSLR camera is a sheer delight not just for people who are ready to move up to their second DSLR, but also the serious amateur."

ASHISH BHATIA

ADVANCED COMPACT CAMERA OF THE YEAR

CANON POWERSHOT SX40 HS

Price: ₹ 28,995

The first impressive feature you notice about this great advanced compact camera from Canon is its long 35X zoom (that's the equivalent of a 24mm-840mm lens). Along with the nicely stabilised distance shots, the sharpshooter can handle tight macro photos with great adroitness. It shoots Full HD video at 1920x1080 with 24 frames per second and 1280x720 at 30 fps. You can use creative effects not only in the stills, but also in the video. A 240 fps setting allows you to play back video in slow motion.

SPECS:

12.1 MP CMOS SENSOR; 2.7-INCH LCD PANEL; 35X OPTICAL ZOOM; F2.7-F5.8; ISO 3200; FULL HD VIDEO; FOUR ASPECT RATIO OPTIONS FOR IMAGES; SD/SDHC/SDXC STORAGE; 600 GM WEIGHT.

EXPERTSPEAK

"This little dude has everything going for it. The colours are vibrant, the image quality, tack sharp and the creative effects and features to play around with, ample. To top it, it has an external flash that offers exposure of as long as 15 secs."

ASHISH BHATIA





COMPACT CAMERA OF THE YEAR
CANON IXUS 310HS

Price: ₹ 70,900

Aside from turning heads as a fashion statement of sorts, this handsome snapper boasts a large high-resolution LCD screen, 12.1 megapixels grab, an 8X zoom and Full HD movie capture. The camera's high quality optics ensure that the image output is top notch for a shooter of its class. It has the ability to capture a good amount of detail in natural colour without a whit of oversaturation. Its low-light photography is surprisingly good, using the inbuilt flash. Bottom line: A pretty piece that makes pretty pictures and costs a pretty packet!

SPECS:

12.1 MP BSI-CMOS SENSOR; 3.2-INCH DISPLAY; 24-105 MM LENS;
 F2.0-F5.8; 1/1600; ISO 3200; FOUR ASPECT RATIO
 OPTION FOR IMAGES; 185 GM.



CAMCORDER OF THE YEAR
CANON HFM41

Price: ₹ 56,995

The Canon HF M41 packs in a lot, pushing it to the winning edge. To start with, the CMOS Pro sensor captures high resolution quality videos. This is combined with 10x optical zoom for capturing details from a distance along with optical image stabiliser that eminently does what it is supposed to do. Along with these features, the ease of use has been enhanced by adding a 3-inch touch LCD display and a very convenient remote that can be used for operating the video camera from a distance

SPECS:

3-INCH TOUCH DISPLAY; 1920x1080 HD RECORDING; 10X OPTICAL ZOOM; 32 GB ONBOARD MEMORY; TWO CARD SLOTS; OPTICAL IMAGE STABILISER; REMOTE.

EXPERTSPEAK

“With the Videowave, Bose provides real theatre-like surround sound, exceptionally good viewing and an innovative interface in a nice form factor.”

G & G

HOME ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM OF THE YEAR

BOSE VIDEOWAVE

Price: ₹ 4,78,000

This home entertainment system is a big show-off in a likable way. Not only does it pleasure our eyes with high-grade video, but is also indulges our aural sense with its true surround sound capabilities. Its thick frame accommodates 16 speakers. It has just one wire attached to its back that goes down to its very Bose-like main console, where all connectivity ports are pooled. The 16 speakers deliver an audio experience that makes a mockery of the "sweet spot" for surround sound. Wherever you are in the room, you can hear the audio envelope you. The system also has a first-of-its-kind click pad remote. Touch the button and a menu pops up on screen for you to navigate.

SPECS:

42-INCH SCREEN; FULL HD; 16 SPEAKERS SURROUND SOUND;
CLICK PAD REMOTE; HDMI, USB, COMPONENT PORTS; IPOD DOCK;
44 KG WITHOUT STAND.



AUDIO SYSTEM OF THE YEAR

HARMON KARDON BDS 700

Price: ₹ 59,900

Competing against music systems from Samsung, Philips, LG and Sony, it was Harmon Kardon's BDS 700 that managed to breast the tape. What did we like about it? Packed with the latest features, the system consists of four small side speakers, one front middle speaker and a sub-woofer. The impressive sound quality was yet another reason why the BDS 700 left the others behind. It plays Blu-ray, MP3, DVD and has USB support along with Full HD resolution for HD TVs. It also has a 3.5 mm jack if you desire individual attention from the harmonics emanating from its excellent innards.

SPECS:

5.1 CHANNEL; HDMI, COMPOSITE, COMPONENTPORTS; USB; BLU-RAY PLAYER; ALL POPULAR MEDIA FORMAT PLAYBACK.

EXPERTSPEAK

"The audio impresses with its loudness and the thump of the bass. The picture quality is great, no ghosting, no cakey images typical of HTSes."

G & G





MEDIA HUB OF THE YEAR

AMKETTE FLASH TV HD

Price: ₹ 3,995

This instant plug-and-play media player with an HDMI cable enables watching 1080P HD content on a big screen without so much as a hiccup. Capable of playing just about any and every format, the Amkette Flash TV HD uses advanced video decoding technology, resulting in impressive movie clarity and DTS/Dolby format sound. Its video preview mode, automatic scanning through attached hard disk drive and automatic selection of the best display type supported by TV and upscaling media are some of its capabilities. Compact, circular shaped, this media hub goes well with most of TV setups.

SPECS:

XVID, MPEG4, FLV VIDEO PLAYBACK; WAV, MP3, AAC AUDIO PLAYBACK; USB; SD CARD READER; HDMI, COMPONENT PORTS; INFRA-RED REMOTE CONTROL.

EXPERTSPEAK

"Among the many good products that Amkette has launched is this disc-shaped wonder, which plays music and videos of all sorts."

G & G



PORTABLE MEDIA PLAYER OF THE YEAR

APPLE IPOD TOUCH

Price: ₹ 13,500

The iPod, which changed the way people listened to music, is available in three different forms. But for us, once again it is the iPod Touch 4th generation that gives out that aura of extraordinary excellence. Its music output has always been the best-in-breed and the addition of a bright Retina display has enhanced the video watching experience on it. Other welcome additions include 720P video capture, FaceTime for video calling over Wi-Fi and thousands of app, making the iPod touch both fun and utilitarian. Because the Touch is upgradable to the latest iOS, it also means that it doesn't get senile too soon.

SPECS:

3.5-INCH CAPACITIVE TOUCH DISPLAY; 8 GB ONBOARD MEMORY; TWIN CAMERA; HD RECORDING; 40 HOURS OF AUDIO PLAYBACK, 101 GM.



GAME OF THE YEAR

THE ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM

In a year that ended with perhaps the greatest blockbuster quarter in the history of videogames, it is hard to pick up one game as the best of the best. How do you choose between *Uncharted 3*, *Skyward Sword*, *Super Mario 3D*, *Skyrim*, *Arkham City*, *Modern Warfare 3* or *Portal 2*? The answer lies in looking at games that took the art form the furthest ahead, a game that would end up having the most impact on the widest range of genres. One game emerges then. Bethesda's classic *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*. It is more than a game—a lovingly crafted world to explore and live in, staggering both in terms of sheer scale and scope and in terms of minute details and intricacies. It is a title that the industry has always wanted to make.

EXPERTSPEAK

"All through gaming's history, game creators have always wanted to craft worlds that are so immersive that you want to live in them. Skyrim takes this giant leap towards this holy grail."

ANAND RAMACHANDRAN

BUZZ OF THE YEAR OVERSEAS

KINDLE FIRE

When the whole world was running after the tablet and a myriad companies proffered their products to an eager consuming mass, Amazon came up with a very affordable tablet of its own. Priced at \$199, it gives users attractive features at a price that is half of the iPad tag. The other great thing going for the Fire is the content—Amazon's collection of music, videos, books and magazines that could be accessed over the tablet. It also comes with a convenient 7-inch display and has been lauded for its "down-to-earth sensibility".



SONY HMZ T1

Having made listening to music a very personal activity with its Walkman a generation ago, Sony has now come up with a personal video viewer. It is a head mounted device that allows the user to view 3D and other videos in an immersive theatre-like experience. Its dual OLED displays and the 5.1 channel audio transports you to a theatre even as you sit in a train or a bus. It provides the illusion of a 150-inch screen right in front of your eyes. So while you breathe in one world, you could be on an adventure in another.



SAMSUNG GALAXY PLAYER

Samsung's Galaxy world, which consists of smartphone and tablets, now has another star from another genre. The Galaxy Player, a media player, is already being touted as the iPod killer. It has a 5-inch LCD display, plays all music formats and can access the Internet for more content. Running on Google Android v2.3, or Gingerbread, it can also compete with Apple in the apps that can be downloaded on to the device.

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MOBILES



There are a number of Android phones with price tags as mouth-watering as the names of the various versions of the OS

AFFORDABLE ANDROIDS

DROIDS ON A BUDGET

ANDROID PHONES DON'T COME AT EXORBITANT PRICES ANY LONGER. WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE OPTIONS YOU CAN CONSIDER WITHOUT CHANGING YOUR BUDGET MUCH.

TEXT BY NIDHI SINGAL &
ILLUSTRATIONS BY SANTOSH KUSHWAHA



Back in 2008, owning an Android smartphone was a far-fetched dream, the reason being the operating system was relatively new and only the leading handset makers were releasing phones on the platform. The handful of smartphones, therefore, had hefty price tags. Things have changed down the years. Along with the big names, Indian handset companies are now looking beyond the dual-SIM devices and eyeing the Android market. As a result, we now have many Android smartphones priced under ₹ 10,000. While the prices are enticing, you shouldn't, however, expect the best of hardware when you acquire these phones. Do consider the display size, processor speed and the RAM—specs that will boost the overall performance of the handsets. Here are a few that we think are worth their price.



MICROMAX A70

Specs:

Android v2.2; 3.2 inch capacitive display; 160 MB memory, 256 MB RAM; 5 MP camera; 85 gm.

The company is not just coming up with dual SIM phones but is aggressively trying its luck in the Android space as well. One of its three offerings on this platform, the A70 comes with a 3.2-inch capacitive touch display. The decent metallic look is accompanied by the traditional Android design comprising four keys—back, home, search, options—and the Micromax branding at the top. On the internal hardware front, it packs in a 600 MHz processor, 256MB RAM and runs on Froyo, Android v2.2. In performance,

this phone is neither super fast nor can it be called sluggish. Accept the fact that this handset cannot stand comparison with the likes of Samsung's Galaxy S series. Also, the onscreen keypad isn't the best and one might take some time getting used to it. Basic connectivity options such as Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, 3G are onboard along with a 5 MP camera, music player, video player and FM radio. The 1450 mAh battery manages to do the required tasks for around a day and a half.





MOTOROLA FIRE

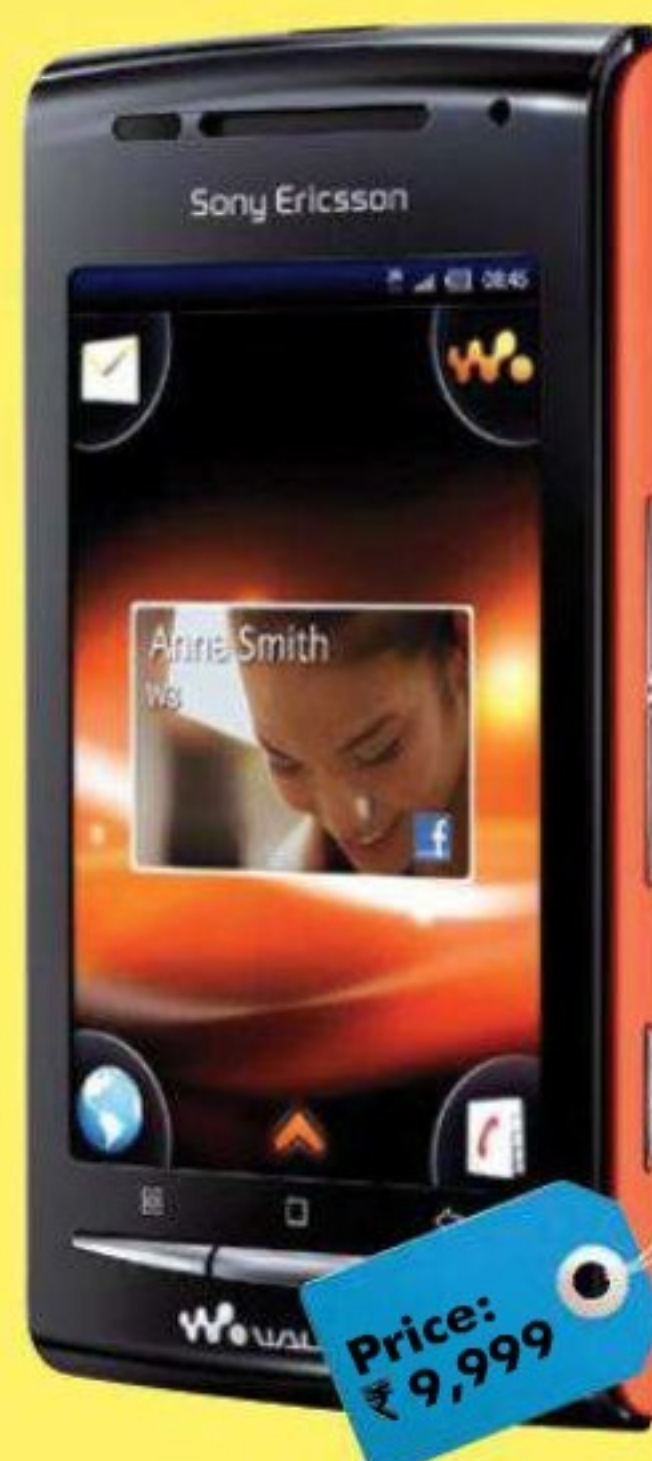


The Motorola Fire has a 2.8-inch capacitive display on which you can navigate with your fingers, as well as a physical QWERTY keypad on which you can type. It may have a regular 600 MHz processor and 256 MB RAM, but it scores over some of the other Androids since it sports the latest version of the operating system, Android v2.3. Capable of handling emails, web browsing, applications and multimedia with ease, it comes with a 3.15 MP camera and ability to record 480P videos at 24 frames per second. Predictive text input, document viewer, digital compass, etc, are other usual options. This phone packs in a 1420 mAh battery.

Specs:

Android v2.3; 2.8 inch capacitive display, QWERTY keypad; 256 MB RAM, memory expandable to 32 GB; 3.15 MP camera; 110 gm.

SONY ERICSSON W8



Although Sony Ericsson is pushing it as a music phone by labelling it a Walkman device, the W8 is still an Android smartphone. Compact and good looking, it has a scratch-resistant display. Sadly, it runs on outdated Android v2.1 and is powered by a 600 MHz processor and has a 168 MB RAM. Although on the spec sheet it scores less than the Micromax and Lava phones, the W8 is better in term of hardware and user interface. The 3.15 MP camera captures decent images and the music player is loud and clear. The phone handles emails, browsing, application download with ease.

Specs:

Android v2.1; 3-inch capacitive display; 128 MB storage, expandable to 16 GB; 3.15 MP camera; 104 gm.



KARBONN A1

Specs:

Android v2.2; 2.8-inch resistive display; 210 MB memory, expandable to 32 GB; 3.2 MP camera; 105 gm; 1100 mAh battery.

Being a budget phone, Karbonn's Android smartphone, the A1, has a plasticky look and feel; its 2.8-inch resistive display doesn't respond fluidly to the touch of the finger. Unlike other Android phones, this one has a physical D-pad with navigation keys and a call answer and call reject key. Hiding under the hood is a 600 MHz processor, 162 MB RAM and the Android Froyo operating system. An Advance Task Manager for killing the apps running in the background, Aldiko (an eBook Reader), AccuWeather, Documents to Go Viewer, Swype keyboard input and a call block list app are preloaded on the phone.

Price:
₹ 6,999

MTS LIVEWIRE

Specs:

Android v2.2, 2.8 inch resistive display; 3MP camera; 600MHz processor; 256 MB RAM; 1000 mAh battery

There were talks about sub-\$100 Android smartphone but none was priced below ₹ 5,000. The MTS Live Wire is the most affordable Android smartphone but only for CDMA users. With a 2.8 inch resistive display, a stylus has been placed at the back for operating the device. With the ability to provide easy access to Google Services and Android Market for downloading apps, it runs on Android v2.2. For prepaid users, the phone is price at ₹ 4,999, however, postpaid users can get it for ₹ 2,999 by paying the balance in form of the monthly rental and accessing limited calls, data and messages for free.



Price:
₹ 4,999



MTS MTAG 3.1

Specs:

Android v2.2, 8.0 inch capacitive display; 256 MB ; 3.0 MP camera; 1000 mAh battery .

Of all the smartphones mentioned on these pages, only the ones offered by MTS are meant for CDMA users. Priced relatively higher than its LiveWire, the MTAG3.1 one has a 2.8-inch capacitive display and the matt finish makes it look elegant. This phone runs on Android v2.2 with a 600 MHz processor, but in addition, it comes with apps such as Task Manager and call recording. The 3 MP camera along with VGA quality video recording are the other highlights of this affordable Android.

Price:
₹ 5,499



LG OPTIMUS NET

Specs:

Android v2.3; 3.2 inch capacitive display; 150 MB storage, 512 MB RAM, expandable to 32GB; 3.15 MP camera; 1500 mAh battery.

After the success of the Optimus One, LG has come up with two new Androids phones, of which the Optimus Net is the better one. Even though the high-end Optimus devices ran on the old Android v2.2, the Net proudly runs on Gingerbread. Moving ahead from a 600 MHz processor, this one has a 800 MHz processor and 512 MB RAM. These make this phone significantly better than the ones available in the market in this price bracket. Also, the device looks stylish with its curved edges, this designing extending to below the display near the physical keys as well. Multimedia features include a 3.15 MP camera, FM radio, YouTube, and GoogleTalk.



LAVA S12

The Lava S12 is a good-looking Android smart-phone with a curved, textured design at the back. Despite the plastic, it has a sturdy build quality and weighs 120 gm. It has a 3.2-inch capacitive touch display. On the specs sheet, it boasts similar dimensions as the Micromax A 70—600 MHz processor, 120 MB onboard storage, 3G, Wi-Fi, and Android v2.2. Even with the custom 3D menu on board, the phone isn't slow and manages to perform everything smoothly. The 5 MP camera fared better than average and the music output is impressive. This device comes with one year free subscription to Zenga Mobile TV and a 2GB memory card in the sales box and has a 1300 mAh battery.

Specs:

Android v2.2; 3.2-inch capacitive display; 120 MB memory expandable to 32 GB; 5 MP camera; 120 gm.



Reviews

REVIEWS AND RATINGS OF PHONE PRODUCTS



**BLACKBERRY
CURVE 9380**



**SONY ERICSSON
ARC S**



**APPLE
iPhone 4S**

BEAUTY WITH BRAINS?

The wait for the first Windows Phone from Nokia ended with the release of two devices. We reviewed the Lumia 800, a gorgeous smartphone. Available in black, cyan and magenta, it has a curved 3.7-inch glass AMOLED display that gels smoothly with the unibody design. The Power, volume control and camera keys are in silver metal placed on the right edge with the charging jack. The microSIM slot is neatly covered with a lid.

Complementing the outer design is the Windows Phone platform with its Metro UI. The customisable tiles on the homescreen with the app menu is similar to any other Windows Phone device. But thanks to the tie-up between Nokia and Microsoft, users get the best from both worlds. Onboard apps include Nokia Drive for navigation, App Highlights for recommended apps by Nokia, Nokia Maps, Bing Maps, TuneIn Radio and timesPoynt, to mention a few. Starting the phone prompts you for a Windows Live ID for downloading applications and SkyDrive for data storage and the Nokia account. Typing using the onscreen keyboard is a pleas-

ing experience and all communication appears under a single hood. Users can update their status on various sites from the 'Me' tile that appears on the homescreen and check friends update and post comment from the people hub. The Office app addresses the issue of downloading a third-party documentation app and lets one read and edit documents on the move. The sound output is impressive, as is the video playback. However, the 8MP camera isn't the best and captures average images only. The phone's smooth functioning is due to the 1.4 GHz processor and 512 MB RAM.

However, there are a few drawbacks. The onboard memory of the smartphone is a measly 16 GB and it doesn't support a memory card for expanding memory. The applications available for Windows Phone Mango are very few in comparison to those for iOS and Android. Another drawback of the Windows Phone platform is one its inability to transfer content over Bluetooth. The battery backup too is just about average.



NOKIA LUMIA 800

Price: TBA

Specs: 3.7-inch AMOLED display; 8 MP camera; 16GB onboard memory, no extra card slot; 512 MB RAM; 3G, Bluetooth, A-GPS, Wi-Fi; 142 gm; 1450 mAh battery.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

By far the best Windows Phone in town.

STANDING TALL AND BOLD

It was commendable for the BlackBerry Bold 9900 to integrate capacitive touch with a QWERTY keypad in a bar design. Walking in its footsteps is the Bold 9790, which is priced lower than that phone.

The 2.45-inch capacitive touch display comes handy while launching the app tray, applications and scrolling through emails and messages. The rest of the phone is easily operated using the keypad and the regulars—call receive/end, back, menu and mouse pad. What we found attractive about the design was the curved shape of the corner keys, almost melting into the metal bezel. At first you might miss the volume controls and the cam-

era key on the right edge as the keys are really very sleek. The only colour in this black beauty comes from the liquid graphics of the BB OS7. The app launcher tray had various categories—all apps, favourites, media, download and frequent. Emails, web browsing and BlackBerry Messenger worked smoothly over the smartphone. The call clarity was good, the sound output of the media player too was okay. The 5 MP camera sensor at the back is superfast but good only in daylight. What disappointed us was the VGA resolution video recording, which is good enough only for the phone's display. It also has a good battery backup of 1.5 days.



BLACKBERRY BOLD 9790

Price: ₹ 27,490

Specs: 2.45-inch display; 5 MP camera; 8GB, microSD card; 3G, Wi-Fi, NFC, 107 gm; 1230mAh battery.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

Good, but is up against the Samsung Galaxy S2.



ON FITNESS MODE

Just when we were getting tired of the typical Android device, Sony Ericsson combined the concept of fitness with a smartphone and came up with the Active. Sporty looking, the Active has been engineered to withstand water and dust. For this, the company has given it a scratch resistant, 3-inch capacitive display along with two layers of cover at the back. The charging port and 3.5 mm jack are neatly covered with air-tight lids. The phone has accessories such as changeable rear covers, a rubber wrist strap and an arm case and ear-hooks.

The Active successfully survived a water test and sweat test during a workout. It also has fitness applications on board. The

Walkmate application, when launched, keeps a count of the daily footsteps while showing the weekly average. It also comes with the iMapMyFitness+ application using which you can create a profile and record workout and calorie budgets, etc. Along with the fitness apps, it behaves like a typical Android smartphones by handling Google mails, Search, MarketPlace for download applications, etc. There is a 5MP camera onboard that manages to capture decent images.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

An interesting combo of features and fitness, but is priced on the higher side.



SONY ERICSSON ACTIVE

Price: ₹ 18,990

Specs: 3-inch display; 5 MP camera; 1GB memory, expandable to 32 GB; Bluetooth, 3G, Wi-Fi, 110.8 gm; 1200 mAh battery.

A BUMPY CURVE

In the effort to strengthen its market share in India, Research-In-Motion has recently launched a new set of devices. Of the three, the Curve 9380 is yet again an all-touch device that has ditched the QWERTY keypad. The 3.2-inch capacitive display is bright and easy to navigate around. Although typing using the on-screen keypad has improved drastically, we still ended up typing wrong alphabets. Powered by an 800 MHz processor, it comes with 512 MB RAM and runs on the BB OS7. It smartly handles personal and official email accounts and the social networking feed brings all Twitter and Facebook updates under one hood. However, for data connectivity—be it for

email or browsing—the user has to subscribe to a special data plan. Wikitude, a mobile augmented reality application, comes pre-loaded on this device. And for backing up data, the BlackBerry Protect is onboard. It can come handy while switching between two BlackBerry smartphones. At 98 gm, the new Curve is really very easy to carry around. It quietly slips into the pocket and is equally comfortable to hold in the hand. A number of BlackBerry smartphones have the Near-Field Communication (NFC) chip and a 5MP camera at the back, and this one isn't an exception. As for the battery backup, it is decent and goes through a whole day.



BLACKBERRY CURVE 9380

Price: ₹ 20,990

Specs: 3.2-inch display; 5 MP camera; 512 MB memory expandable to 32 GB; 3G, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth; 98 gm.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

The attraction is the price tag, not the device itself.



THE S FACTOR?

Sony Ericsson's Xperia Arc was one stylish feature-packed phone. The Xperia Arc S is its beautiful successor. But will it manage to hold its own against the excellent devices in town? The design of the original Arc was well appreciated by the market and Sony Ericsson was prudent enough to retain the same curves and lines. The metal bezel running around the corners has controls and jack, making it stand out against a body colour like black. The 4.2-inch capacitive display in a sleek casing was comfortable to use and to slide into the pocket.

So, what's the difference between the Arc and the Arc S? The company has pumped up the processor power from 1 GHz to 1.4

GHz. As a result, there is a notable difference in the speed of operations. The camera shutter lag has decreased and photography gains. Even switching between the apps or browsing through the images is relatively quick. Once again, the 8 MP camera manages to do a great job and videos can be captured at 720p resolution at 30fps. But, the Arc S feels slow in comparison with phones powered by dual-core processors. Battery backup, at 1500 mAh, manages to last a day on above average use.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

At this price, the LG Optimus 2x is a better bet.



SONY ERICSSON ARC S

Price: ₹ 27,000

Specs: 4.2-inch display; 8 MP camera; Android v2.3; 1.4GHz processor; 1GB RAM, expandable to 32GB; Bluetooth, 3G, Wi-Fi, A-GPS; 117 gm; 1500 mAh battery.





Tempting but exorbitant

The much awaited smartphone of the year, the Apple iPhone 4S, was launched in October. Within two months, it reached India—but at a hefty price tag of ₹ 44,500 for the base 16 GB model. We know what you are thinking: is the iPhone 4S really better than the excellent iPhone 4?

The Apple iPhone 4S looks exactly like the iPhone 4 and there is no way you can differentiate them from their appearance. But under the hood, the iPhone 4S is a completely new phone.

The first big inclusion is Siri, the intelligent voice assistant. This is an integrated app that understands the voice commands and responds accordingly. It worked well for me when adjusted to English (UK). From dictating text messages to browsing the web to checking weather, it responded well. But at times, it did respond saying, 'I cannot understand what you are saying'. When asked to look for restaurants nearby, it replied saying 'I can only look for business in the United States'. We don't blame Siri as it is still in the beta stage for many countries, including India.

Unlike the iPhone 4 that had antenna is-

ues, there were no call drops on the 4S. The call clarity was superb. Even with a single-core processor, the iPhone 4 never felt slow, but Apple is joining the bandwagon, having put an A5 dual-core chip in the 4S. This made it quick and responsive. Apple has also replaced the 5 MP camera with an 8MP one. The quality of the images captured is superb; it even comes with an HDR mode for special images. The 4S is undoubtedly the best camera phone around. Also, the 1080p video capture is stunning.

Although, the iOS5 is available for upgrade to the iPhone 4 and iPhone 3GS, it comes pre-installed on the 4S and provides access to iCloud for storing data on the cloud, Twitter integration, notification bar and alerts, camera key on the home-screen, etc. Overall, the iPhone 4S is among the best phone but it is the price that will deter many enthusiasts from buying it, at least in India.

Tip: Buying a 4S in India isn't a great idea. Consider getting one from the US, UK, Hong Kong or Singapore. But unlike other Apple products, iPhone doesn't come with an international warranty.



**APPLE iPhone 4S
16GB**

Price: ₹ 44,500

Specs: 3.5-inch retina display; 8 MP camera; 16 GB internal memory, 3G, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth; A-GPS; 140 gm.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

Beautiful, feature-rich hardware but over priced in India.

—NIDHI SINGAL

APPSOLUTELY

YOUR MONTHLY UPDATE ON MOBILE PHONE APPS



Launcher Pro

Android OS

Not liking the customised user interface loaded on your Android smartphone by your manufacturer? Install the Launcher Pro for free from the Android Marketplace. When you press the homescreen next, it will show the Launcher Pro and other user interfaces. Select the Launcher Pro and tick it as the default UI. Within a second or two, it will be set up as the default homescreen. There is also a paid app available but according to us, the free app works smoothly on most of the makes, including HTC, Sony Ericsson, Samsung and LG.



Nokia Panorama

Symbian OS

The results from Nokia phone cameras is usually nice. And to take the full advantage of the handset, there is a nice way to capture great panoramic views using the Nokia Panorama application available on Ovi Store. Launching this app guides the user to start the process by clicking the camera key. Once done, it suggests holding the phone still and captures the first image automatically. After this, it suggests moving the camera towards the right, while adjusting the frame by moving up, down, right or left. At every instance, it captures the shot and after three images, it prompts you to stop the process by hitting the camera key again. The initial results obtained don't look impressive but the app automatically stitches the image together, making it look neat.

(Tested on Nokia N8)

Scan Pages

iOS

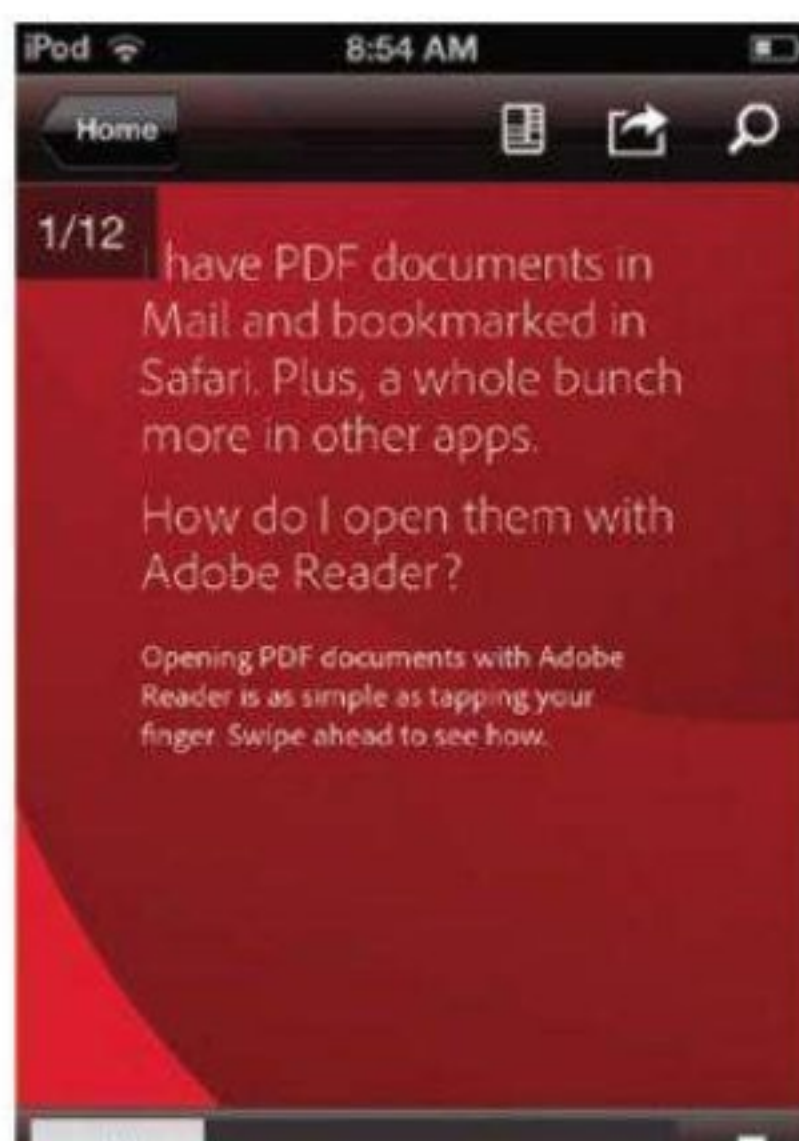
How many of us have a stand-alone scanner or a multi-function device at home that can scan important documents when in need. If you don't have one and are a proud owner of the iPhone or an iPod, install this utility application developed by Ricoh Innovations for free. Using the device's camera, it allows you to capture the document or image that you wish to scan and adjust the frame. Once done, it starts cleaning the image automatically and stores it on the device. The Scan Pages app is intuitive to use and delivers impressive results. Both the original image captured and the cleaned image is stored for future reference. From here, the scanned document/image can be shared directly via email or can be sent to Evernote. (Tested on iPhone 3GS)



Adobe Reader

iOS, Android

Adobe Systems Incorporated has come up with an Adobe Reader application for iPhone and Android devices where it allows user to read PDFs in a hassle free manner. With the the free app, you can download PDF attachments from emails or web browser and open them using the Adobe Reader App. This can also be used to open password protected PDFs. Searching text to find specific information, bookmarking for directly jumping to a different sections and selecting and copying text to the clipboard are the other few highlights of this application. If the phone supports multi-touch, you can also zoom into the text or view images closely. (Tested on iPhone 3GS)



Battery Watch

BlackBerry OS

An easy way to keep an eye on your smartphone's battery is to install the Battery Watch application for free. This app creates an icon on the notification bar on the homescreen that displays the remaining juice in the battery. Also, when you plug the phone to charge or the phone is fully charged, there is a loud announcement. (Tested on BlackBerry Bold 9900)



—NIDHI SINGAL

TOP 10 SMARTPHONES

1. SAMSUNG GALAXY S II (₹ 29,999)



Specs: Android v2.3; 4.3-inch display; 1.2GHz dual core processor; 1GB MB RAM; 16GB expandable. **Plus:** Fast, features **Minus:** Almost none.

2. LG OPTIMUS 2X (₹ 20,900)



Specs: Android v2.2, 4-inch display; 1GHz dual core processor; 8GB, 32 GB expandable. **Pros:** Dual-core processor **Cons:** Average battery

3. APPLE i PHONE 4S (₹ 44,500)



Specs: iOS 5; 16GB; 8MP camera; App Store **Plus:** Touch Interface; applications for download **Minus:** Price

4. SAMSUNG OMNIA W (₹ 19,990)



Specs: Windows Phone 7.5; 3.7-inch display; 1.4GHz processor; 8GB onboard memory **Plus:** OS **Minus:** Looks

5. SONY ERICSSON XPERIA ARC S (₹ 27,000)



Specs: Android v2.3; 4.2-inch display; 8 MP camera; 8.7 mm thickness **Plus:** Slim built; Camera **Minus:** NA

6. BLACKBERRY 9360 (₹ 19,990)



Specs: BlackBerry OS 7; 2.4-inch display; 800MHz processor; 512 MB internal storage **Plus:** Bright display **Minus:** 1000 mAh battery

7. BLACKBERRY 9900 (₹ 32,490)



Specs: BlackBerry OS 7; 1.2GHz; 8GB; 2.8-inch display **Plus:** Capacitive display, QWERTY keypad; **Minus:** NA

8. HTC RADAR (₹ 23,990)



Specs: Windows Phone 7.5; 1 GHz processor; 3.8 inch display; 8GB onboard storage **Plus:** Touch with QWERTY **Minus:** Touch

9. HTC WILDFIRE S (₹ 13,500)



Specs: Android v2.3, 600 MHz; 3.2 inch display; 5 MP camera **Plus:** Compact Size **Minus:** Onscreen Keyboard

10. APPLE iPHONE 3G S (₹ 20,990)



Specs: iOS; 3.5 inch display; 3 MP camera; 8GB storage **Plus:** Touch interface; **Minus:** Is Old

Top Affordable Phones



1. NOKIA X2-01 Price: ₹ 3,500

Specs: 2.4-inch display; QWERTY keypad; VGA camera; 1020 mAh battery **Pros:** Good performance **Cons:** Poor VGA camera



2. SAMSUNG CHAT 355 Price: ₹ 5,080

Specs: 2.4-inch display; QWERTY keypad; 2 MP camera; 1000 mAh battery **Pros:** Great looks, Wi-Fi **Cons:** Price on the higher side



3. ZEN M111 Price: ₹ 3,999

Specs: 2.4-inch display; triple SIM GSM; 1.3 MP camera; 1500 mAh battery **Pros:** Triple SIM GSM, good display **Cons:** Average camera

Top CDMA Phones



1. MOTOROLA XT 800 Price: ₹ 15,000

Specs: GSM/CDMA; 5 MP camera; Android v2.1; 1GB memory, expandable up to 32GB. **Pros:** Dual SIM – CDMA/GSM **Cons:** NA



2. SAMSUNG CORBY SPEED Price: ₹ 7,500

Specs: 2.8-inch touch display; CDMA; 80MB memory, expandable up to 8GB; 960 mAh battery **Pros:** Mobile TV **Cons:** Plastic body



3. LG 6160 Price: ₹ 2,649

Specs: FM player; Torch light; 5 MB memory, expandable to 4 GB; No camera **Pros:** Basic CDMA **Cons:** No camera

Top Feature Phones



1. NOKIA N8 Price: ₹ 22,500

Specs: Symbian 3; 3.5-inch display, 16 GB, 32GB expandable; 12 MP camera. **Pros:** Good images, music **Cons:** Symbian 3 OS



2. SAMSUNG WAVE 3 Price: ₹ 19,900

Specs: Bada OS; 4GB, 32 GB expandable; 5 MP camera. **Pros:** Bright display, nice build **Cons:** Bada OS



3. SONY ERICSSON W8 Price: ₹ 9,999

Specs: 3.0 inch display, Android v2.1, Speakers; 4GB memory card included **Pros:** Music phone on Android **Cons:** Small Display

Top New Entries



1. MOTOROLA RAZR Price: ₹ 33,990

Specs: 4.3inch display; 8 MP camera; 1.2GHz dual core processor; 32GB expandable **Pros:** Sleek body **Cons:** NA



2. SAMSUNG GALAXY NEXUS Price: TBA

Specs: 4.65-inch display; 5 MP camera; 16GB onboard, 1.2GHz dual core processor **Pros:** IceCream Sandwich OS **Cons:** NA



3. NOKIA ASHA 200 Price: ₹ TBA

Specs: 2.4 inch display; 2 MP camera; 10 MB + 32 GB expandable; 105 grams **Pros:** Dual SIM **Cons:** NA

TestBench

REVIEWS AND RATINGS OF PRODUCTS



BOSE BLUE-TOOTH SERIES 2



BENQ W710ST



LG LSM 100



LG A530



SONY TABLET S

Price: ₹ 29,990

Specs: Android v3.2; 9.4-inch display; 5 MP camera; 16 GB storage; 32 GB memory expandable; WiFi, Bluetooth; mini USB port; 3.5 mm jack.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

A stylish lightweight tablet, but no SIM slot.



FRAME CHANGER

LATE AS IT HAS BEEN IN ENTERING THE TABLET MARKET, SONY STILL STUNS WITH A UNIQUE LOOK FOR ITS DEVICE.

BY NIDHI SINGAL

It has taken Sony close to two years to enter the tablet market. In an excellent bid to stand out in the crowd, Sony has given its tablet a refreshing and aesthetic design. Described as an "ergonomic innovation", the design consists of an unusual curve-wedge shape, rather like a single sheet of black plastic bent to make the ends meet. The gorgeous looks give the impression that the Tablet S is a heavy device. But at 598 gm, it is more than comfortable to lug around. The controls, including on/off, volume, 3.5mm jack, memory-card slot and a mini USB port, are on the side while the charging jack lies at the bottom.

This 9.4 incher runs on the version of Android modified for tablets, Honeycomb v3.2. The interface is similar to what the other Honeycomb tablets offer: five windows on the homescreen, the application launcher tab on the top right along with

the back, home and multitasking icons on the left bottom. Other than Google services, it comes with some interesting applications on board. These include Remote Control that turns the tablet into a universal remote, Wi-Fi checker and a Social Feed Reader. Video Chaska, Star Player, Big Flix, Bollywood Hungama and Meragana.com have been specially designed for the Sony Tab. You can download them by hitting the 'Select App' icon from the app launcher. Watching multimedia content on the tablet was a pleasure and using the 'Throw Function and DLNA' we could actually watch the video playing on the tablet on the Bravia TV using Wi-Fi. To enable this stellar performance, the Tablet S has a dual-core ARM Cortex processor clocking at 1 GHz along with 1 GB RAM. Like the iPad, this tablet is only Wi-Fi enabled (no SIM) and offers 16 GB of onboard storage. The battery lasted close to seven hours.

SMALL WONDER

You have probably seen images of this camera on television and in magazines. Yes, it's the one where you see the LCD panel fanning out in various angles. The first thing you will notice, therefore, is the LCD that opens up rather like a page in a book. It allows you new viewing angles, though it achieves half the 360 degrees movement of the display in more advanced cameras. The second thing you will notice is how thin the camera is. It is less than an average finger width with the LCD closed down and, therefore, could deceive you into thinking it is a smartphone. These features make the MV800 a device of

which you could proudly claim, "Mine is smaller than yours."

Unlike most other cameras, the various options are accessed on a smartphone-like "homepages". Placed like widgets on the monitor, you can touch these icons to get to the modes (smart auto, smart movie, 3D photo, scene mode, beauty shot, etc) as you would on a phone. It's amazing how such a tiny device is capable of so much, including 3D photographs and "live" panorama shots (essentially video panoramas that also double up as stills). The results are good, though some functions seem a little fussy.



SAMSUNG MV800

Price: ₹ 15,990

Specs: 16.1 MP CCD sensor; 3-inch touch display; F3.3-F5.9; 5X optical zoom; 16- 1/2000 sec; ISO 3200; 130 gm

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

For its price and innovations, it's not a bad camera



THE BIG PICTURE

It's useful to have a camera that can project your images and videos. "Useful" is the adjective here, not "necessary". Nikon's Coolpix S1200pj, the latest in the series that started with the S1000pj in 2009, comes with a 40-lumen projector that did a pretty good job of throwing the images on a wall from as far as 10 ft away. Plus, in a joint venture with our computer, it similarly projected images or videos located in our Mac or PC (or for that matter in the Apple trio of the iPhone, iPad and the iPod). The projection is pretty nifty in a darkened room. Only, don't think of the S1200pj as a cineplex machine and you

will be more than happy.

Besides being a projector, the S1200pj, is actually a good camera that comes with the regular scene modes, shooting options, etc. The controls are handily located and accessing features is not a matter of curses. However, keep in mind that it is essentially a point-and-shoot, so the results will satisfy the amateur, not the professional. Plus, the pictures are good enough for a device that you would think was dependent solely on its projector to sell. And those of you who love luminescent hues will adore its fuchsia coat—others may balk at the attention it attracts.



NIKON COOLPIX S1200pj

Price: ₹ 14,950

Specs: 14.1 MP CCD sensor; 3-inch display; F3.9-F5.8; 5X optical zoom; 1-1/1500 sec; ISO 6400; 720P video; 20 lumens projector; RGB LED light; 5-60 inch image; 11 inch-10 ft

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

A projector and camera combo for a good price.

—BY JOEL RAI AND
PICTURE BY RAJWANT RAWAT



COMFORT CALL

Do you often feel like living in a wire-free world and plan to invest in a nice Bluetooth headset? Picking one today isn't difficult but think about what you want to buy—a regular headset or a feature-rich lifestyle one? If your heart calls for the latter, then Bose's latest Bluetooth Series 2 headset is worth a look.

Priced competitively (it's not overpriced, believe us) this headset is a perfect blend of beauty with functionality. Light in weight, it has a neat design with "Bose" embossed on the front. But unlike other headsets, this can't be worn in any ear. When you buy them, choose those meant for the right and left ears as they have a side-specific design that ensures that the call controls stays on the top. Pairing the headset hardly takes a few seconds and once done, it manages to stream calls and music over the headset. Bose has cleverly added a noise rejecting microphone that cuts through the surrounding noise while ensuring clear sound on the other end. It even has automatic volume adjustment feature during changing noise levels. The sound clarity was loud and clear and was distortion free on both the ends. It is comfortable to wear for long durations. The battery lasted for close to five hours of working.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

A Bluetooth headset worth investing in.



BOSE BLUETOOTH SERIES 2 HEADSET

Price: ₹ 8,888

Specs: 12 gm, worn in single ear;
4 hour talktime, 100 hour standby.

WORD FINDER

Some time ago students in school pored at words in a paper dictionary. Then the generation moved on to online dictionaries. Now Casio is trying to replace the two with a digital pocket dictionary. But will it succeed?

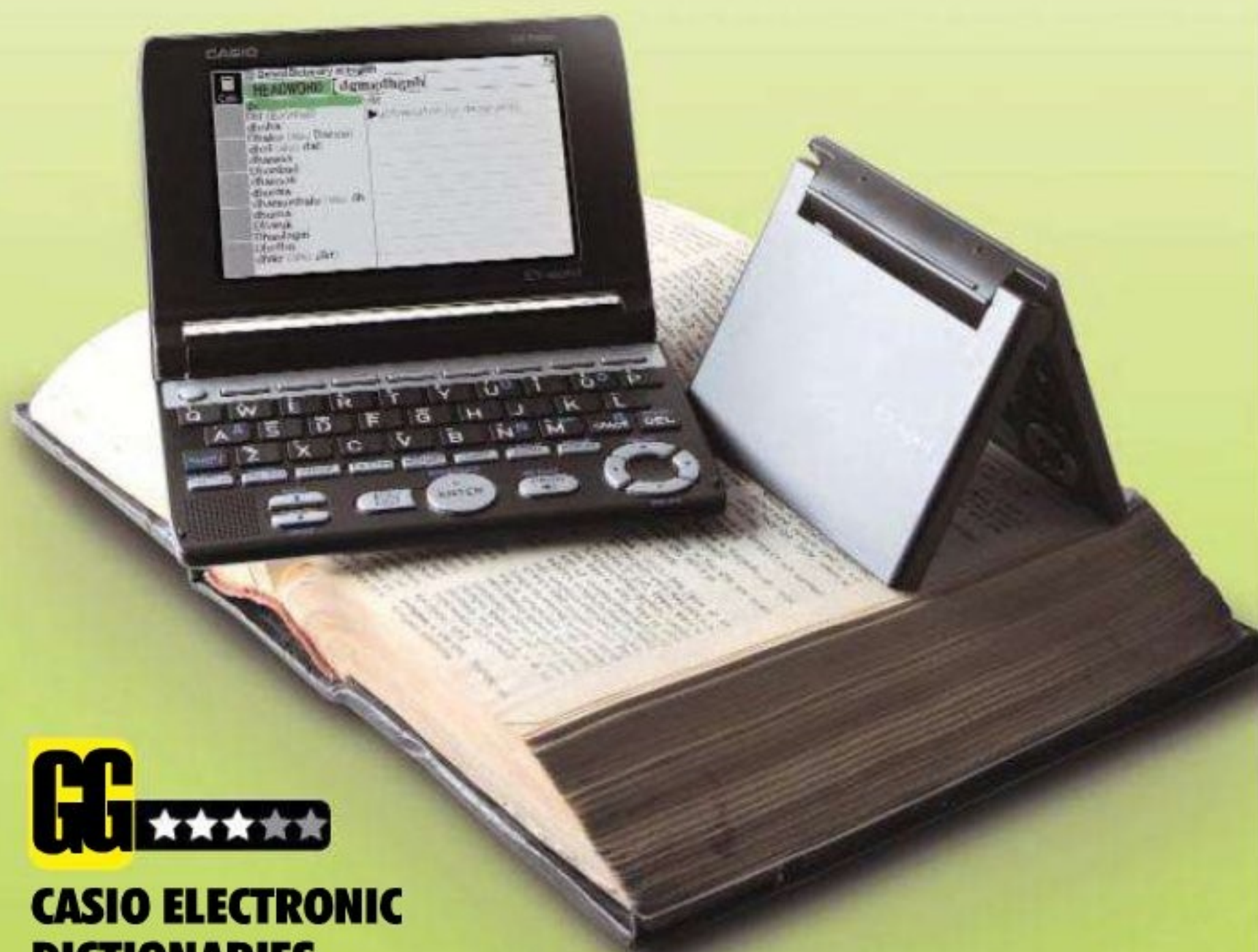
These eDictionaries are compact and look like mini laptops with a display and a QWERTY keyboard. Although, these devices look basic, they pack in a complete Oxford dictionary, which you can use to find word meanings, check spellings, search for a word using keywords, etc. Easy to use, the dictionary responds in real time, as we type. The keypad is smooth, just like the ones on the Casio calculators. For easy navigation, there are arrow keys, delete, enter and escape keys too. Starting the Ex-Word gives options to search headword, example and phrase from multi dictionary search. Other options include Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary, Oxford Learner's Thesaurus, Oxford Collocation

Dictionary for Students of English, Oxford Idioms Dictionary for Learners of English, Oxford Learner's Wordfinder Dictionary, and calculator. Using the marker key, we could highlight the keywords, definition, etc, and save it to the vocabulary list for future reference. Of the two models, the EW B100C is priced at ₹ 7,995. The EW B2000C is priced at ₹ 14,995 and is relatively bigger in size and includes some additional features. This has an inbuilt speaker that can be used to learn correct pronunciation of different words. It did work for many words but there were a few that were not in the data base. Along with the above mentioned titles, Britannica Concise Encyclopedia and Oxford Hachette French Dictionary have also been loaded on this eDictionary.

Both the dictionaries are powered using AA batteries and are sturdy enough to withstand a fall from a height, making it safe for students to use.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

This is a helpful but expensive gadget for students.



CASIO ELECTRONIC DICTIONARIES

Price: ₹ 8,995 and ₹ 14,995



KEEPING IT SIMPLE

Laser printers are the best for fast printing but their broad waist-line consume a lot of space. Of late players in this domain have been introducing compact laser printers. The Laser Jet Pro P1108 is a perfect example coming from the leader, HP. Ideal for small and medium offices, this Laser Jet is good looking yet compact and can fit in any workstation with ease. Unlike other printers, it doesn't even have a display except two blinkers for printing and error. Hassle free and quick to set up, the Laser Jet is equally quick in printing. In an effort to make it the world's most energy efficient printer, HP has added an auto on/ off feature that kills the machines when there is no printing command for a period of time. We thought that the printer might take some extra time to turn back on and print a page. Surprisingly, as soon as we hit the print command in the on/off mode, we had the print in our hand in less than 9 seconds. The prints obtained on a regular A4 sheet were bright and clear. However, on a tone save mode, the small font size of 10 looked completely washed out. Also, a single cartridge is capable of printing 1500 monochrome pages.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

A quick and hassle free B/W printing solution.



HP LASERJET PRO P1108

Price: ₹ 6,599

Specs: 18 B/W prints per minute; 8.5 secs for first print; 266 Mhz processor; 150 sheet input tray, 5.2 kg

SPACE-CONSCIOUS MACHINE

BenQ's W710ST projector projects visuals of up to 63 inches size from a short distance of just one metre. This feature makes it a must-have for those who wish to set up a personal theatre at home but lack the space that a normal projector requires. What is more, its white and gray colours blend with most home interiors. The regular projection area varies between 33 inch and 300 inch diagonally. Whatever the size, the image was bright and clear. Zoom level and focus can be adjusted using the two rings at the front. Physical keys on the top make for convenient navigation. The lamplife of 4,000-6,000 hours are adequate, but our concern was the average sound output from the 10W speaker. The connectivity ports at the back of the machine include Composite Video

in, S-Video in, Component Video in, Audio in, Audio L/R in, Audio out, HDMI (x2), Mini USB and RS232. Considering the price, the company could have included a USB port as well. At 720P native resolution, it isn't a Full HD projector. However, the company claims it is 3D ready. We could not test this feature as the 3D glasses are sold separately.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

A 5-ft image from just a metre away—good for the home.



BENQ W710 ST

Price: ₹ 55,000



—TEXT BY NIDHI SINGAL AND PICTURE BY RAJWANT RAWAT

THE HYBRID MOUSE

From multi-touch to foldable design, there have been a few innovations in the computer mouse segment. But no one had gone so far as to think of a scanner built into the mouse. LG has—with its LSM 100. While it looks like a regular desktop mouse, the LSM 100 is bigger in size, making it a little uncomfortable to hold and use. Although it has the regular controls, including a scroll wheel, a close examination reveals two buttons on the left panel and the sensitive glass casing at the bottom for scanning. To get on

with the task, you have to install the Smart Scan software that comes with the mouse. Pressing the scan key launches the software and starts the scanning. By moving the mouse slowly over the document, all text and images can be scanned. While scanning, a real-time scanned image appears on the computer monitor and you can rotate it or adjust colour and brightness using the software. Surprisingly, for its small scanning area, the LSM 100 can be used for scanning A4 and A3 documents.



LG LSM 100
Price: ₹ 3,500

Specs: Regular mouse with scroll wheel; Scan key; Smart Scan software; Scans text and images.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

A hybrid mouse for day-to-day scanning needs.



SKULLCANDY FIX
Price: ₹ 3,899

Specs: Fixed in-ear fit; remote and Mic support for Apple products; 3 ear buds; Black Chrome, Red White and White Chrome colours.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

Comfortable to wear, justifies the price tag.

PERFECT FIT

Not everyone feels comfortable using big over-the-head earphones. And in-ear ones often don't fit well. Keeping this in mind, Skullcandy has come up with the Fix, an in-ear headphone that is designed to fit the ear well. Once worn, even when pulled with a bit of force, the earphones don't fall off. Besides this novelty, there aren't anything innovative in terms of the design. On the left lead are the volume controls and the microphone. However, the mic doesn't work with just any device, coming into action only when

plugged into an iPod, iPad and iPhone.

Priced at ₹ 3,899, it is not meant for the budget-conscious. But for those who are willing to spend, the Fix will not disappoint as it offers great sound and deep bass. It was soft on the ears at controlled volumes, though there was distortion at high volumes.

Usually headphones are difficult to store. But this Skullcandy Fix has a small black pouch with a skull embossed on it for storage. There are additional ear buds that can be changed according to need.

-NIDHI SINGAL

AN ADDED DIMENSION

TEXT BY NIDHI SINGAL &
PHOTOGRAPH BY RAJWANT RAWAT

3D technology isn't new to LG. The Korean company's latest 3D Cinema TVs with FPR (Film Patterned Retarder) 3D technology and flicker-free glasses are among the best in the industry. Now it has re-entered the notebook market with the same polarised, strain-free glasses for its 3D laptop, the A530.

This laptop has a fine outer casing in black matte finish and silver casing inside. Opening the lid reveals a 15.6-inch full HD 3D LCD along with a full desktop like keypad comprising the QWERTY keyboard as well as the numeric keypad. The touch pad has been shifted towards the left, an inconvenient positioning. Adding enough power to handle heavy 3D graphics and gaming, LG gives it an i7 processor and 8 GB RAM along with an NVIDIA GeForce GT555m graphics card with 1 GB dedicated RAM.

Capable of performing all tasks required of a notebook, what makes the A530 stand out is the 3D functionality. LG has cleverly added a dedicated 3D Zone in the programs for all the

3D features and content. The notebook had a few 3D videos pre-installed and watching 3D content using the light weight glasses was fun. It boasts an option to upscale regular 2D DVDs and Blu-Ray movies into 3D. We could also switch to 2D mode while watching 3D videos at the click of a button. Also onboard were two 1.3 MP web-cameras that can capture content in 3D. However, while the 3D depth captured by the cameras was amazing, the quality was just about average. For enjoying 3D content, this laptop comes with a lightweight 3D glass along with a 3D clip-on specs that can be worn over regular spectacles. Connectivity options include Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, 3 USB ports, HDMI, card reader, VGA, microphone and Ethernet jack, all placed on either side. The battery backup was about average with around three hours of videos, browsing and music playback.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

A great 3D experience but you can get a 3D TV at this same price.



LG A530

Price: ₹ 79,990

Specs: 15.6-inch Full HD 3D display; Windows 7 Home Premium; Intel Core i7 processor; 8GB RAM; 750GB HDD; 3 USB ports, 1 HDMI; Card reader.



CHILLY? IT'S COOL!

GADGETS THAT TAKE THE EDGE OFF WINTER'S BITE

BY NIDHI SINGAL

The brrrrr days are here. Everything has turned cold to the touch, making summer seem like a delightful tropical island. Out have come the blankets, the woollens and the jackets in preparation for the couple of months of chilly weather. You can make winter a more salubrious season with the help of some smart gadgets. No, not just your air blowers or your halogen heaters. Don't forget stuff that help you avoid chores that are painful in the cold.



Kohler Numi Integrated Toilet Seat

Price: ₹ 6.5 lakh

Commodes with seat warmers and auto flush have been available for quite some time now. But Kohler has come up with an advanced toilet seat that opens and closes when someone approaches it or moves away. Other than the heated seat, this facility also blows warm air up from the floor-level vent that heats the floor surface to keep your feet warm. Adjustable front and rear sprays, integrated dryers with controllable air temperature, deodoriser, bidet wand with self-cleaning UV light and an intuitive touch interface plus music are the highlights of the fascinating Numi Integrated Toilet Seat.

SPECS: Automated functions; Touch interface, 1.28 and .6 gallons per flush.



Eureka Forbes Euroclean Robocleanz

Price: ₹ 6,990

Imagine having to clean the house when you'd rather curl up in bed with a book and a tureen of hot soup. You can actually. Get yourself the Euroclean Robocleanz, an automatic vacuum cleaner with intelligent path judgment. It is equipped with a smart side brush for easy cleaning of nooks and corners and the sleek design ensures it does not neglect to clean beneath the sofas, tables and the beds. So, just set the Robocleanz going on its dust-down mission while you turn the pages of your chosen tome. Or perhaps catch your favourite show on television.

LG F1480RDS29

Price: ₹ 70,990

Pulling out the damp clothes from your washing machine and hanging them out to dry can leave you irritable on a cold day. The LG F1480RDS29 offers a solution. This washer-dryer combo has a direct drive technology that claims to clean clothes better than hand washing, while the Steam Refresh blasts clothes with a powerful burst of steam, removing wrinkles and odours.

SPECS: 9 kg washer, 6 kg dryer;
Washing options; Steam



Braun ThermoScan 3

Price: ₹ 2,500

A change in weather is often accompanied by ailments, especially cold and fever. Having a thermometer at hand is advisable. Although this Braun ThermoScan 3 is designed especially for children with its one-second temperature reading time, it can also be used on adults. Quick and accurate, the ThermoScan also remembers the last temperature reading.

SPECS: 3V lithium battery; 11 disposable lens filter; 1-second reading time.

Philips Mini Kettle

Price: ₹ 1,895

It is prudent to avoid chilly liquids and to drink warm water or beverages in the winter. Having an electric kettle by the bed side or on the office desk can, therefore, be a good idea. This one from Philips comes with indicators for liquid levels such as one cup or two cups. It also has a blue light indicator that shows whether the kettle is on. Tip: For those who enjoy drinking green tea, this will heat your water whenever you want, without a hassle.



Westinghouse Convector Heater

Price: ₹ 3,490

Move over traditional electric heater, here comes a modern replacement. The Convector Heater from WestingHouse comes with two heat settings and adjustable thermostat anti-frost projection. With a 24-hour timer for on/off, the heat output is 2000 watts. It is designed to prevent overheating. Good looking, it can be used in a free-standing position or can be mounted on a wall.

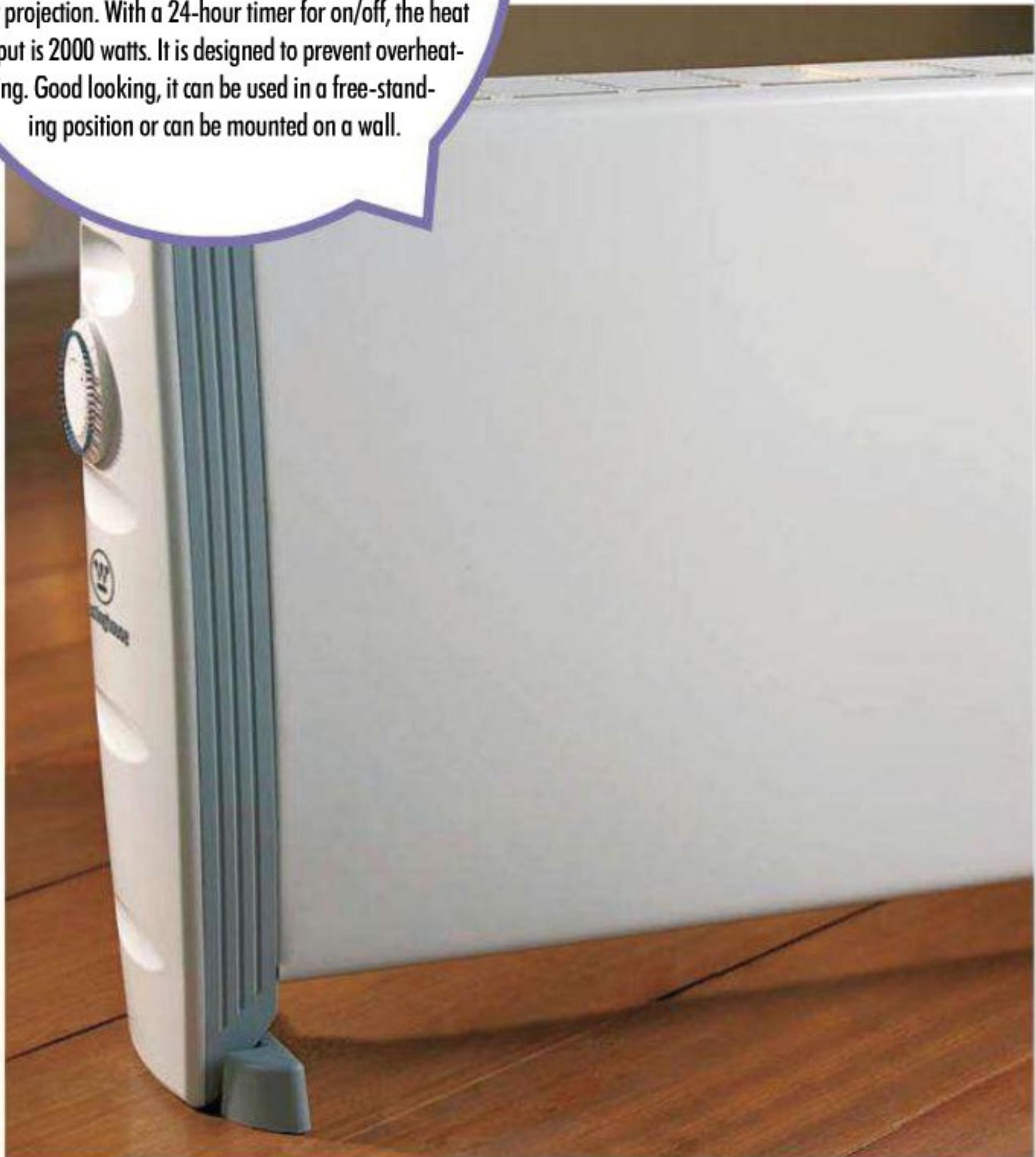


Havells Gero

Price: ₹ 8,000

With the onset of winters, the long-neglected geyser comes back to life. Of course, while it heats your bath-water, it is also gobbling up a lot of electricity. In the spirit of saving energy, you could consider installing the Havells Gero at home. This ensures quick water heating while consuming lesser power. With a 5-star rating from the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, it has CFC-free PUF insulation that prevents over 45 per cent of normal heat loss. The high precision thermostat and multi functional safety valve keep water hot for close to 24 hours while consuming just half a unit of electricity.

SPECS: 15-litre capacity; Heating indicator lamp; 5-star BEE rating; White, ivory, brown colours



WARM WISHES FROM ABROAD



Pajama Warming Pouch

Price: \$31.95

www.hammacher.com

This one is an electric blanket for your clothes. The Pajama Warming Pouch warms your clothes so you don't pull on cold nightwear. Using heating elements, it heats the clothes to a nice 48 degrees Celsius within 10 minutes, consuming 50 watts. Of course, it need not be used just for pajamas—you could well warm up your shirt, towel, hats, gloves, whatever.



Etre FivePoint Gloves

Price: £40

www.etrashop.com

Capacitive displays are cool, but not during winters when your gloves interfere with the slide of fingers across the screen. If you feel that you have to have gloves on, you wouldn't do better than to get the Etre FivePoint gloves that are designed for touchscreen devices like smartphones and tablets. So there, no frozen digits, no stoppage in work.



Bajaj Majesty RH 9 Oil Filled Heater

Price: ₹ 5,804

Where conventional heaters reduce the oxygen level in the room while heating it up, the oil-filled heaters warm up the room without reducing the oxygen level. Bajaj's oil-filled heater, the Majesty RH 9, comes with oil that when heated evenly increases the temperature in the room. With a wheeled stand, it is easy to move around the room, and it has temperature selection for just the correct degree of toastiness.



Panasonic Hair Dryer EH2271

Price: ₹ 6,490

Step out of the house with wet hair and invite winter maladies like cough and cold. And if you are against hair dryers for leaving your tresses dry and brittle, you can try this special one from Panasonic. The EH2271 is designed to make sure that your hair doesn't lose the moisture or the shine. Also, along with hot air, it comes with a selection of cool air options, an advanced feature that most other dryers don't have.

SPECS: 200W power; External ion outlet; 3-speed selection; 4-temperature selection.



USB Heating Gloves

Price: \$19.99
usb.brand.com

From a touch display to a keyboard is another story. For this you would probably need a different type of gloves. So why not stylish USB-heated mittens. These come with open fingers, allowing work on a keypad. Made of wool, the mitts have heating pads whose temperature can be controlled. Each glove needs to be connected to a USB port individually.



Zippo Hand Warmer

Price: \$12.50
www.amazon.com

The Zippo hand warmer, as the name suggests, keep your paws from freezing in the cold. This device from the popular lighter maker fits easily into the pocket and uses the Zippo premium lighter fluid to keep the outer case of the warmer many degrees above freezing. With the appropriate heat selected, it can stay active for close to 12 hours on a single fill.



Outdoor LCD Thermometer

Price: \$12.90
www.thinkgeek.com

It is always advisable to check the weather forecast before heading out of the home. You want to be neither overdressed or undressed for the weather, do you? The Outdoor LCD window thermometer shows the current temperature along with the minimum and maximum temperature achieved during the day. The thermometer is weather resistant.

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GET A HANDLE ON TWITTER

YOU CAN BE ENTHUSED OR TURNED OFF BY TWITTER. WHILE YOU DEBATE YOUR RESPONSE, TAKE THESE TIPS TO FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THE NETWORKING CAN DO FOR YOU.

BY TUSHAR KANWAR



In its five years of existence, Twitter has polarised opinions like few other communication mediums—a useful tool, the true democratisation of web communication for some, and an addictive waste of time, a really noisy corner of the Internet for others. If you find yourself agreeing with the latter, maybe it's time you considered some handy tools, tips and tricks to get the most out of your Twitter experience while still maintaining some semblance of a real social life.

1 USE HASHTAGS: With millions sent out each hour, more so when important events are taking place or news is breaking, tweets can be difficult to follow. Hashtags help you overcome this—just place a hashtag (#) directly before relevant keywords or topics (many events even publicise their hashtags in advance). What this does is allow others to find your tweets easily—most twitter clients let you click a hashtag to see all the tweets associated with it—as well as allow you and others to 'mute' out hashtagged tweets if they're not interested in the event/news. Use them wisely though, too many hashtags in a tweet looks plain horrible!

2 USE A CAPABLE TWITTER CLIENT: While the Twitter website is getting better to use, it is still woefully inadequate in many departments. With features like custom URL shortening, Twitter style retweets and old-school comments based retweets—dedicated Twitter clients are still the way to go on a PC/Mac or your favourite mobile device. If you like a 'busy' interface with plenty of columns for your @mentions, specific hashtags, try out Tweetdeck, and for folks who like cleaner lines, try the Echofon apps.

3 FOLLOW THE RIGHT FOLKS: If you're only following folks you know in the real world on Twitter, it can get to be awfully quiet and boring (depending on who you know, of course!) Twitter has its own built-in search facility to help you find relevant people to follow. You can either see who Twitter suggests under the "Who to Follow",

clicking on View Suggestions, Browse Interests or Find Friends or you can use the search box to find something more specific. Search for folks in your line of work or interest, and soon you'll be following and interacting with folks that you may never even have met otherwise. And ever so often, if you end up following too many people, don't be afraid to spring clean and unfollow people.

4 BE CONSISTENT: Set yourself a daily schedule for Twitter, so you don't overdo it on just one day of the week and remain silent for the rest. Consistency brings with it rewards in the form of new followers and increased interaction. Tools like Buffer and Twilert help as well. Buffer is a really simple tool, in that whenever you read an interesting article on the web, you can send it via a browser extension to Buffer. The Buffer service will send out the tweets well spaced out over the day, so you never flood your followers with too many tweets at once. Twilert on the other hand keeps an eye out for important terms you may want to track on Twitter (say for your brand, competitors or some news you're waiting for), and sends you notifications if these are mentioned on twitter. Think of Twilert like a Google Alerts for Twitter.

5 ANALYSE THIS: If you're a numbers-driven sort of person, and want to track your Twitter performance, give TwentyFeet a shot. Sign up, and soon you will start receive very interesting graphs on details such as retweets, mentions and followers and how they are changing over time. Tweriod on the other hand tells you when your followers are online and most active on Twitter. Simply drop your username into Tweriod, and it gives you two helpful graphs showing you the time of day and the day of week when you should be tweeting.

Got any tips that work wonders for you? Let us know on twitter at @ngmagazine!

DARKER BLACK, LIGHTER WHITE

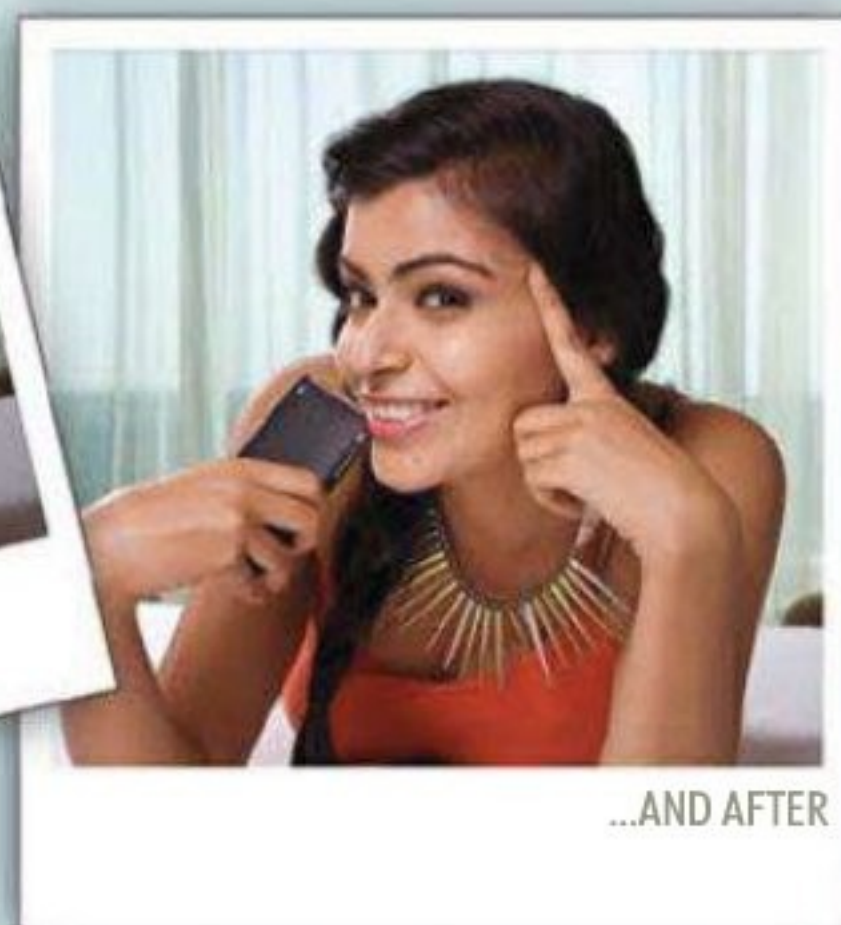
IN THE SECOND OF THE SERIES ON EDITING PHOTOGRAPHS ON ADOBE PHOTOSHOP, WE DEAL WITH THE DYNAMICS OF BRIGHTNESS AND CONTRAST.

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPH BY **RAJWANT RAWAT**



here are times when you feel a little disappointed when you download the images you have clicked and look at them on the computer screen. What looked like a passably good photo on the camera LCD now looks a bit washed out. Or you can now discern the harsh light and dark shadows more clearly. Sometimes you see to your dismay that your flash illumination wasn't bright enough to make every face in the photograph cheery enough. Don't worry, your photos can still be redeemed.

There are different software available to handle these photography problems. Essentially, since light is a mixture of all colours, the software enhances different hues to create something that could help the image. The most popular of such software is Adobe Photoshop. In the December issue of G&G, we looked at how to use Photoshop to correct colour distortions in photographs. This month, let us see how brightness and contrast can be manipulated to give you more pleasing images. There is also a plus at the end: how do you watermark your photograph?



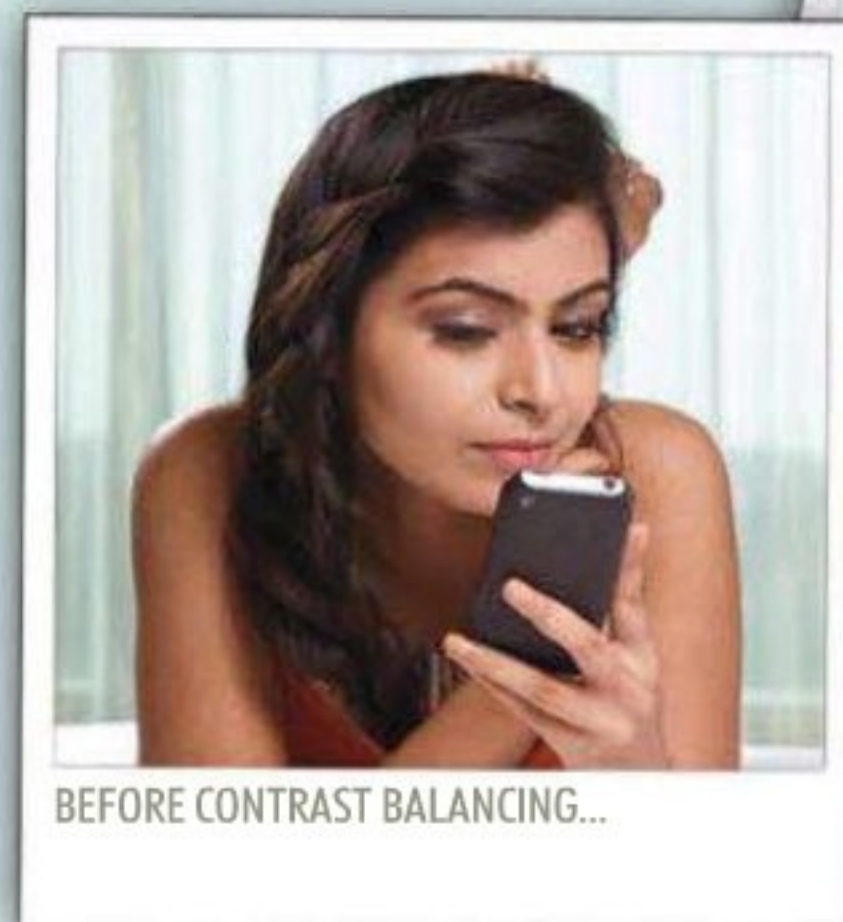
1

BRIGHTNESS & CONTRAST

Brightness is the amount of light that is available across the picture. Contrast is the difference, or the ratio, between the brightest and darkest parts of a photograph. To balance them, open the file in Photoshop and go to Images. Under Images, go to Adjustment and from there to Brightness/ Contrast. You can use the sliders to adjust the picture's brightness and contrast to your preference.

Another way in which you can carry out the same task is to use Curves. Open the image and under Adjustment, click on Curves. Use the graph line to get the desired brightness and contrast. Remember that increasing the brightness reduces colour saturation and increasing contrast leads to higher colour saturation.

Both these methods will require you to practise a bit before you can correctly judge the best brightness and contrast. After that you can experiment with these two aspects not only to correct your image, but also for special effects.



2 SHARPNESS AND BLUR

Sometime a picture suffers from a blur created by the camera shaking when taking a photograph. The lines are, therefore, not quite sharp. To minimise blurs, open picture in Photoshop. In Images, go to Filter and then to Sharpen. You can use the options of Unsharp Mask and Smart Sharpen to take care of the blur. If you want to sharpen some parts of the picture and not the whole, then go to Layers (F7), Duplicate Layers (Ctrl+J), then sharpen the upper layer as much you want. You can then use the erase tool (press E) to rub away the portions that you do not want to sharpen.

On the contrary, if you want to blur out certain portions of your picture, you can follow the same procedure as for sharpening parts of the image. Instead of the Sharpen option, just use Blur.

An easy way to use blur or sharpen is to go to the Blur tool (waterdrop-like icon) on the left menu. Clicking on its give you the options for blur, sharpen and smudge. Choose the area on the picture you want to work on and use the tool.



SOME TIPS

Take care to save your image you are working with under another name, else your original image gets saved with all the changes you made and you will not be able to remove the effects. So, use the **Save As** option instead of Save.

For undo option in Photoshop, use Ctrl+Z. To undo more than just the previous action, use ctrl+Alt+Z.

3 WATERMARK

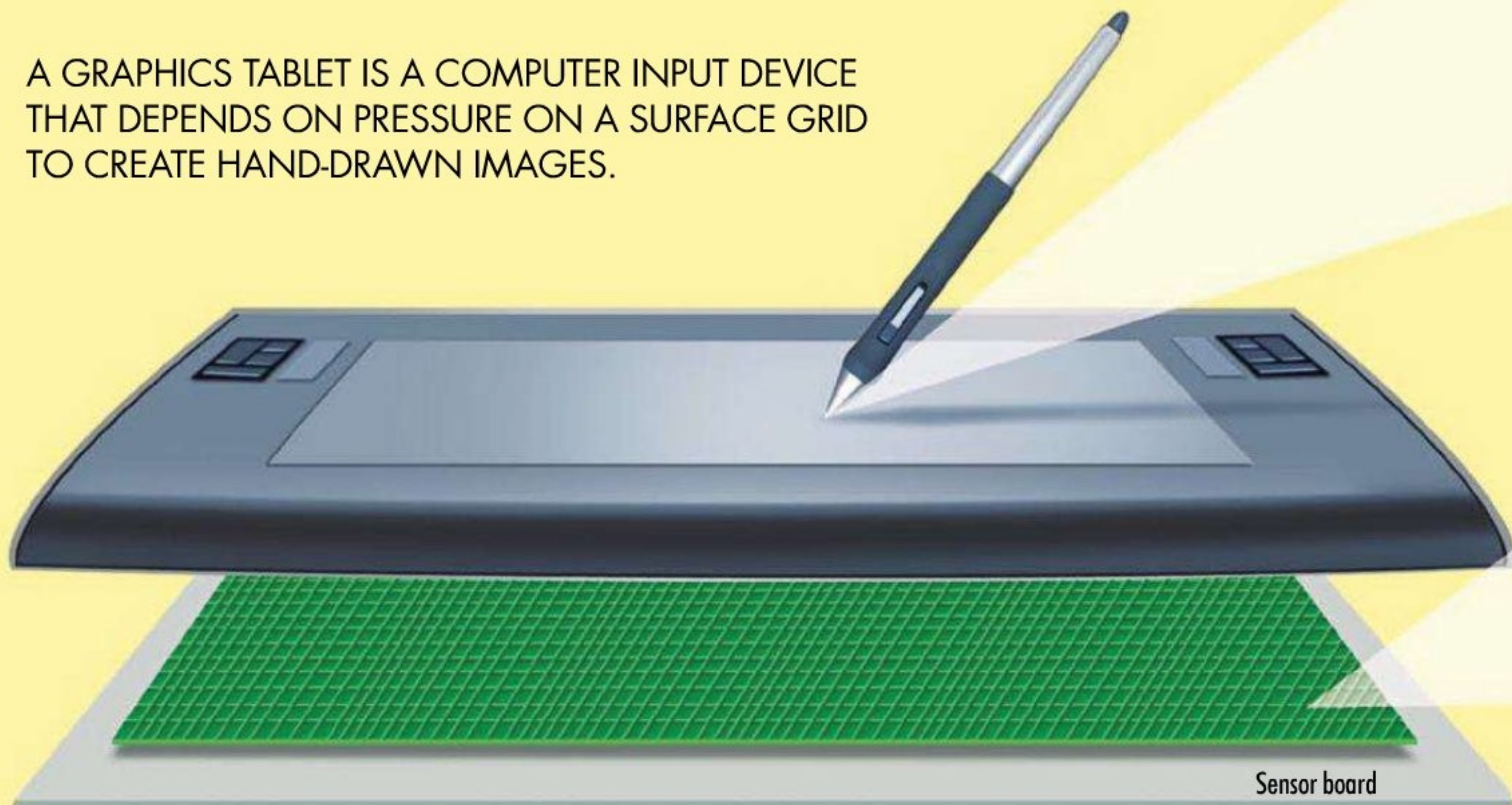
You can use watermarking to ensure that your images are not misused or claimed by others. Making a watermark is a very easy procedure in Photoshop.

Open your picture and then press F7. A layer window will open. Add a new blank layer using the Create a new layer option at the bottom of the window. Go to the main tool bar on the left side to Text tool (indicated by a T sign). Type out what you want your watermark to say. You can choose different colours by clicking on the Set Background Colour tool (two intersecting boxes). After typing out your text (you get options for small or big, bold or smooth fonts), go to Layers, click on opacity to choose the desired level of transparency of your text. Then go to Layer at the top of the page and choose Flatten Image. The text becomes a watermark on your image.



SURFACE AND PRESSURE

A GRAPHICS TABLET IS A COMPUTER INPUT DEVICE THAT DEPENDS ON PRESSURE ON A SURFACE GRID TO CREATE HAND-DRAWN IMAGES.



Sensor board

TEXT AND GRAPHICS BY SANTOSH KUSHWAHA

A graphics tablet is a flat surfaces on which you draw with a stylus or a pen-like device. The tablet is attached to the computer and the stylus to the tablet. The tablets capture the image as data which is then stored as a file or document. Graphics tablets can be used like a large marker board to take notes on or to create outlines at a conference or lecture during which images have to be viewed by the audience. They can also be used by individuals as drawing surfaces to create drawings/ paintings, and edit images. The output is almost close to handmade sketches and drawings.

1 The tablet works by plugging into a computer via a USB port. A stylus is similarly attached to the tablet. When a user draws a line with the stylus, the drawing does not show up on the tablet. Instead the action generates a signal that goes to a vertical grid of wires running across the tablet.

In touchscreen tablets, the whole monitor becomes the writing surface and the user interacts directly with the display instead of drawing on one surface and viewing on another.



FACTS FROM THE PAST

1888

The first electronic handwriting transmitting device was the Telautograph, patented by Elisha Gray.

1957

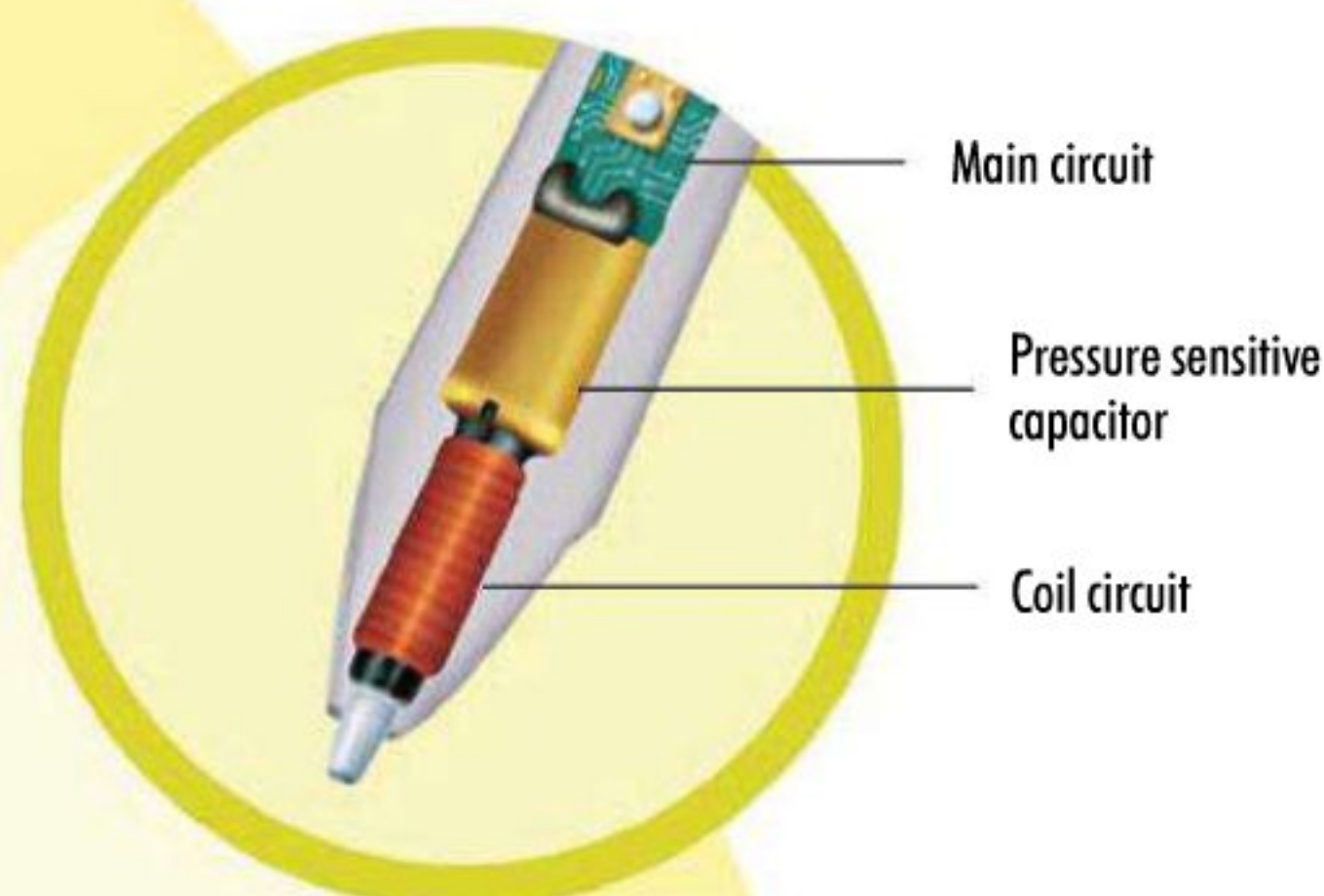
The first graphics tablet resembling contemporary tablets and used for handwriting recognition by a computer was the Stylator.

1980

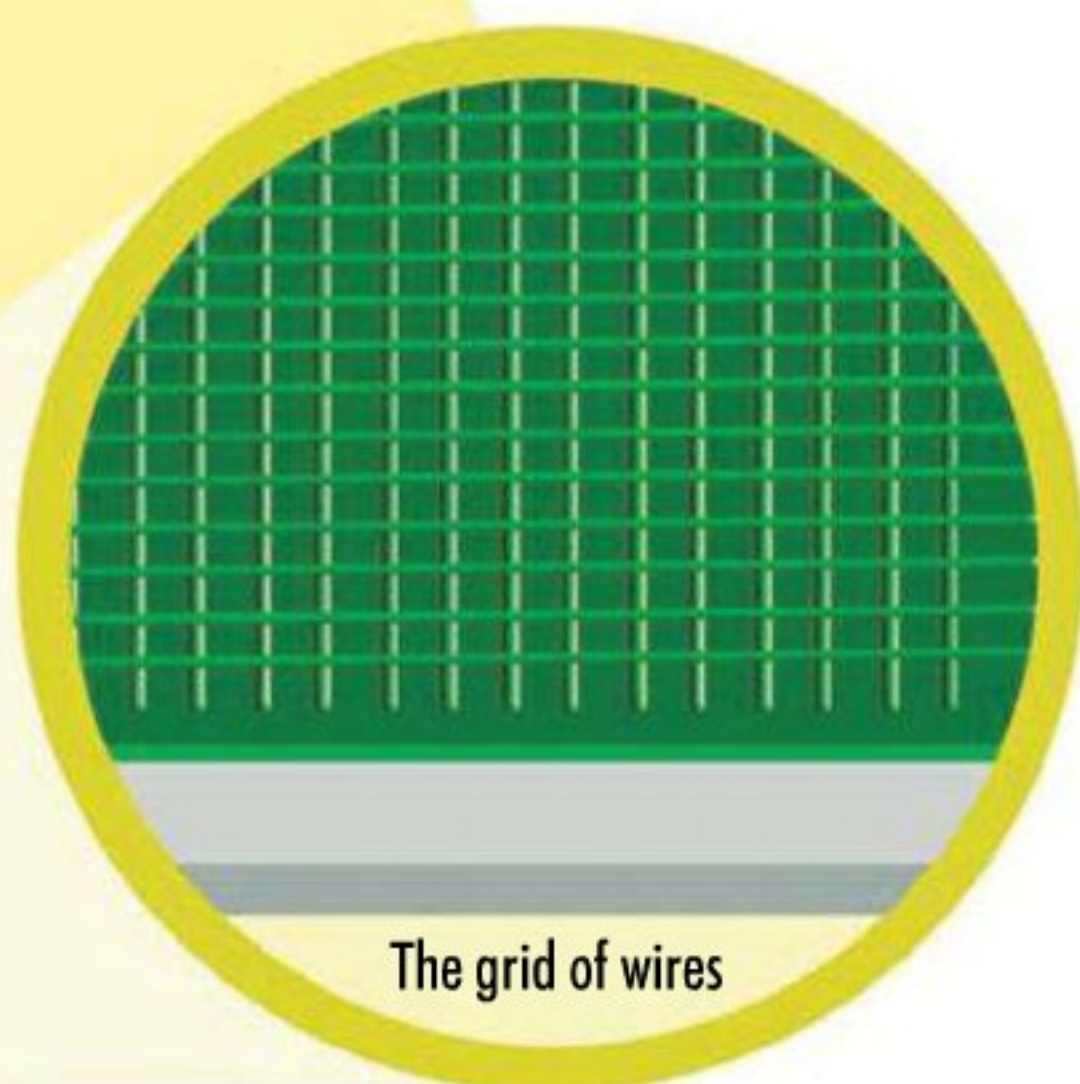
In the 1980s, several vendors of graphics tablets began to include additional functions, such as handwriting recognition and on-tablet menus.

1981

In 1981, musician Todd Rundgren created the first colour graphics tablet software for personal computers. It was licensed to Apple as the Utopia Graphics Tablet System.



2 The pen may be battery-powered or may have a cord. When a user draw a line using the stylus, the coil circuit transfers the signals to the main circuit inside the stylus. This calculates the number of lines-lengths, while the pressure sensitive capacitor measures the pressure of the lines. The data signal is generated by the stylus and detected by a grid of wires in the tablet called the sensor board.



3 The horizontal and vertical wires of the tablet operate as both transmitting and receiving coils. The tablet generates an electromagnetic signal, which is received by a circuit in the stylus. The stylus works as an antenna that receives the signal and generates another electromagnetic field that "talks" back to the tablet.

4 By using electromagnetic signals, the tablet is able to transfer the lines to the computer screen or display being used.

Stylus effect

These tablets come with different levels of sensitivity to pressure applied on the surface by the digitiser pen or stylus. Applied pressure on the drawing surface

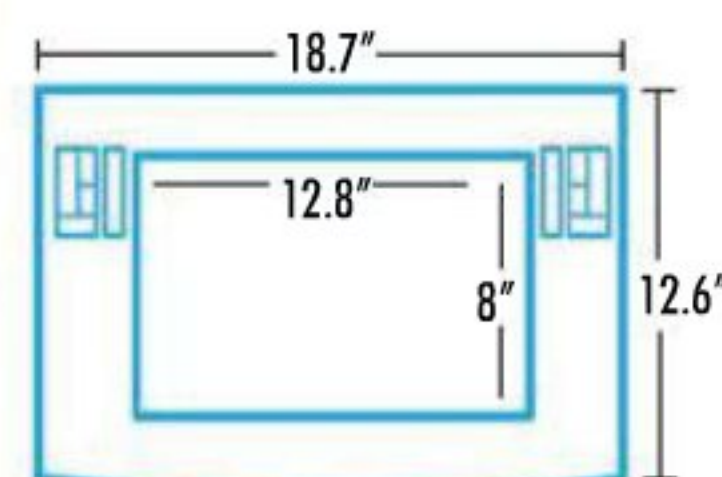


Examples of different kind of pressure-sensitive strokes

of the graphics tablet gives a mark or line its thickness. Pressing the digitiser pen hard against the drawing surface will result in the line or mark being very dark. Lightly touching the pen to the surface of the graphic tablet will result in a lighter mark or line. With pressure sensitivity, the user experiences a more natural approach to drawing on a computer.

Sizes

Wacom tablets come in various sizes, with the smallest being 7.6 cm by 12.8 inches and the larger tablets having more than these dimensions. The price of a Wacom pen and tablet varies with the size.



THE MINECRAFT PHENOMENON

HOW A SINGLE-DEVELOPER INDIE GAME BECAME
ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL GAMES OF THE YEAR.

BY ANAND RAMACHANDRAN



You begin all alone on a deserted island. You explore. You collect wood and stone and sand. You make simple tools. You build yourself a shelter. Later, you hunt pigs and gather fruit for food. And fight off monsters in the dark.

And it's all made up of cube-shaped blocks. Yes, even the pigs.

It's really hard to describe *Minecraft*. Lego with monsters. Lego Robinsin Crusoe. *Doom* with blocks and without guns and with farming. See what I mean? Hard.

But, impossibly, this indie game created by a single developer has been downloaded 14 million times, and has grossed over 30 million dollars within weeks of its release. That's more than many AAA titles make over their lifetimes. It has made its creator Markus Persson (a.k.a. Notch) very wealthy, and his studio Mojang one of gaming's

hottest properties.

What makes *Minecraft* so special?

While it may be hard to describe the game, it is easier to describe the *Minecraft* experience. Which is where I'll start.

You begin all alone on a deserted island. The entire island is made out of cubes—mud, grass, stone, coal, sand, water, even the clouds and the sun are made out of Lego-like cubes. It's beautiful in a surreal sort of way.

And here's the thing—you can dig, chop and cut through the entire landscape, one cube at a time, and gather the resources it offers. Dig up a mud cube and you get some mud. Chop a tree and you get wood. Cut through stone with a pickaxe and you get some stone.

You can then use these materials, block by block, to build stuff of your own. Homes, bridges, walls, towers, sheep cannons—almost anything you can imagine spring up as you

painstakingly create a world around you to survive the elements. And the monsters that come out at night. Yes, I'm telling the truth you about the sheep cannons.

It's a magical experience as you reshape the world around you—carving out valleys, trenches and caverns, levelling mountains and raising platforms, building structures, walls, staircases and other things of beauty. It's a fundamental human instinct to enjoy seeing order emerging from chaos—and *Minecraft* taps into this quite beautifully. When you finish putting the final touches on your first log cabin, beautifully lit with torches, decorated with a bed and bookcases and windows, and step back to take a look, it's a feeling of pride and ownership that is rivalled by few games indeed.

Now, it's time to kill the monsters. Yep, *Minecraft* has all sorts of nasties that pop out at nights trying to kill you. But you'll be ready



for them. You can mine iron ore from the depths of dark caverns and forge them into powerful armour and swords. You can kill spiders, take their webs and use them as bowstrings in wooden bows. And you can kill them skeletons, zombies and creepers good.

Minecraft is one of gaming's greatest sandboxes. It's an amazing and compelling experience just exploring, crafting and building things in this world. Players have taken it upon themselves to push the limits of the construction tools of *Minecraft*—people have build epic structures such as full-scale models of Hogwarts, The Reichstag and even the *USS Enterprise*. Players have created custom texture packs that make *Minecraft* look like *Animal Crossing*, *Halo* and *Fallout*. People are beginning to invent their own games using *Minecraft*'s physics engine. Yes, some of them involve sheep cannons that can launch our

woolly friends towards the moon.

Minecraft's blocky, retro-Lego-chic (aided by some imaginative sound design) also adds immeasurably to the experience. Somehow, the relatively abstract aesthetic lets our imaginations take over and fill in the blanks—resulting in a world that's as realistic, beautiful, idyllic, daunting or terrifying as we imagine it to be. *Minecraft* avoids the classic trap of falling into the uncanny valley by steering very wide of it. It's a great immersion win.

The success of *Minecraft* is being replicated by other games as well. *Minecraft* clones are spreading like wildfire, each one of them bringing something new to the core gameplay and enjoying great success. *Terraria*, a 2D interpretation of the *Minecraft* mechanics with some *Castlevania*-style platforming thrown in, was the top-selling game on steam during the week of its release, outselling titles like *The*

Witcher 2 and *Portal 2*. *FortressCraft*, another *Minecraft*-alike on Xbox Live Arcade, became the highest grossing Indie game of all time on Microsoft's platform.

The incredible success of the genre can perhaps be explained by the fact that people simply love putting things together and pulling them apart. That's why kids love Lego—it lets us play with it any way we choose. Look, I made a gun! Hey! I made a monster! Woot, I made a castle! It is as realistic or as abstract as we'd like it to be.

Minecraft is an important game—another in the list of illustrious games that are more about creation than destruction. It proves, yet again, that games that let people express themselves and exercise their imaginations work well and enjoy great success. It's another milestone in gaming's evolving history—creating a genre and entertaining millions of happy, happy players.

ARRIVEDERCI EZIO

Our favourite Italian assassin Ezio Auditore da Firenze is back—for the last time. *Assassins Creed* game developer Ubisoft has decided to let him retire in peace after this one last mission. This will also be the game's final installment of the Renaissance era, which is good news as you can hardly distinguish Rome from Constantinople.

Ezio is no longer a young assassin. With his grey hair and a visible paunch, it is obvious that a graceful exit was the order of the day. Yes, we are still stuck in protagonist Desmond Miles' mind. The part bartender, part assassin is strapped on to the Animus, the machine that accesses his ancestral memories—the master assassin Altair ibn-La'Ahad and Ezio.

The cinematic sequences in *Assassins Creed: Revelations* are breathtaking. With vibrant graphics, it successfully makes the characters and Constantinople as real as they can get. The sound track too gets you into the groove. But these are all too similar to the previous *AC* editions. So it's

not exactly something new. Nonetheless the game keeps you engrossed. The plot is to find the keys of Altair, hero of the first edition.

The most important addition in this version is undoubtedly the Hook Blade, which not only helps Ezio climb roof tops but also helps him slide down cables. The hook also helps reach out to and grab walls as you fall, reducing your chances of becoming street pizza. The hooded assassin also gets his hands on bombs. But despite having an explosive arsenal, you (or Ezio) invariably end up using the traditional weapons as they are a lot more fun to wield. Perhaps, the addition of bombs in this version was a bit of a waste.

There are also mini games, like Brotherhood, where you can train assassins and send them off on contract missions. Your aim is to extend the assassins' influence and defend your turf from Templar attacks. To keep things interesting, *Revelations* gets back the multi-player feature. Now from being the assassin, you can become the target. There are other play modes like Capture the Chest and hide-and-seek games that have new characters with new special abilities, maps and modes.

This game might not be a big revelation as its title suggests; it does fail to break away from its own mould. But what it does smoothly is finish the chapter on Ezio and Altair.

Revelations will keep you thoroughly engaged through its visuals and game play.



**ASSASSINS CREED:
REVELATIONS
FOR PS3**

Price: ₹ 2,699

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

While not exactly novel, it still keeps you engrossed.

ALL GAME REVIEWS BY
—ARUP DAS

FOR THE CHILD IN YOU

It is your day out in the Happiest Place on Earth—Disneyland—and Kinect gives you that touch of reality as you walk around. *Disneyland 2* is the first open-world game for Kinect where you are free to explore the theme park however you like. There are over 100 adventures you can take and over 40 characters you can interact with. You can also take photos of landmarks, hug, chat and dance with your favourite Disney characters, pose for pictures, visit shops and take a ride on famous Disney rides. Each character you meet will give you a quest or ask you to track down something or take a ride in the park. The Kinect comes in here as the rides take the form of mini games, where you get to interact with the attraction and its story.

Once you create your avatar and understand the game, it's time to interact with the main six Disney characters: Mickey, Minnie, Donald, Daisy, Pluto, and Goofy. Your trusty map displays the locations of the Disney characters and

the rides. There is no doubt the presentation and visuals are realistic and excellent, but it would have been better if we could customise the avatar rather than choose from ready options.

In many ways this Disney is full of pomp and glamour and no competition. Things are too unchallenging, even for the targeted age group. For example going to combat against pirates sounds fun and adventurous but with only three fighting options—low, high charge and dodge—the idea suddenly collapses. Don't get us wrong, this is easily the cheapest way to let your kids and yourself enjoy Disneyland as the experience touches phenomenal levels but your interest will wane. However, *Disneyland Adventures 2* will definitely let you get in touch with the child inside you and bring a smile to your face.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

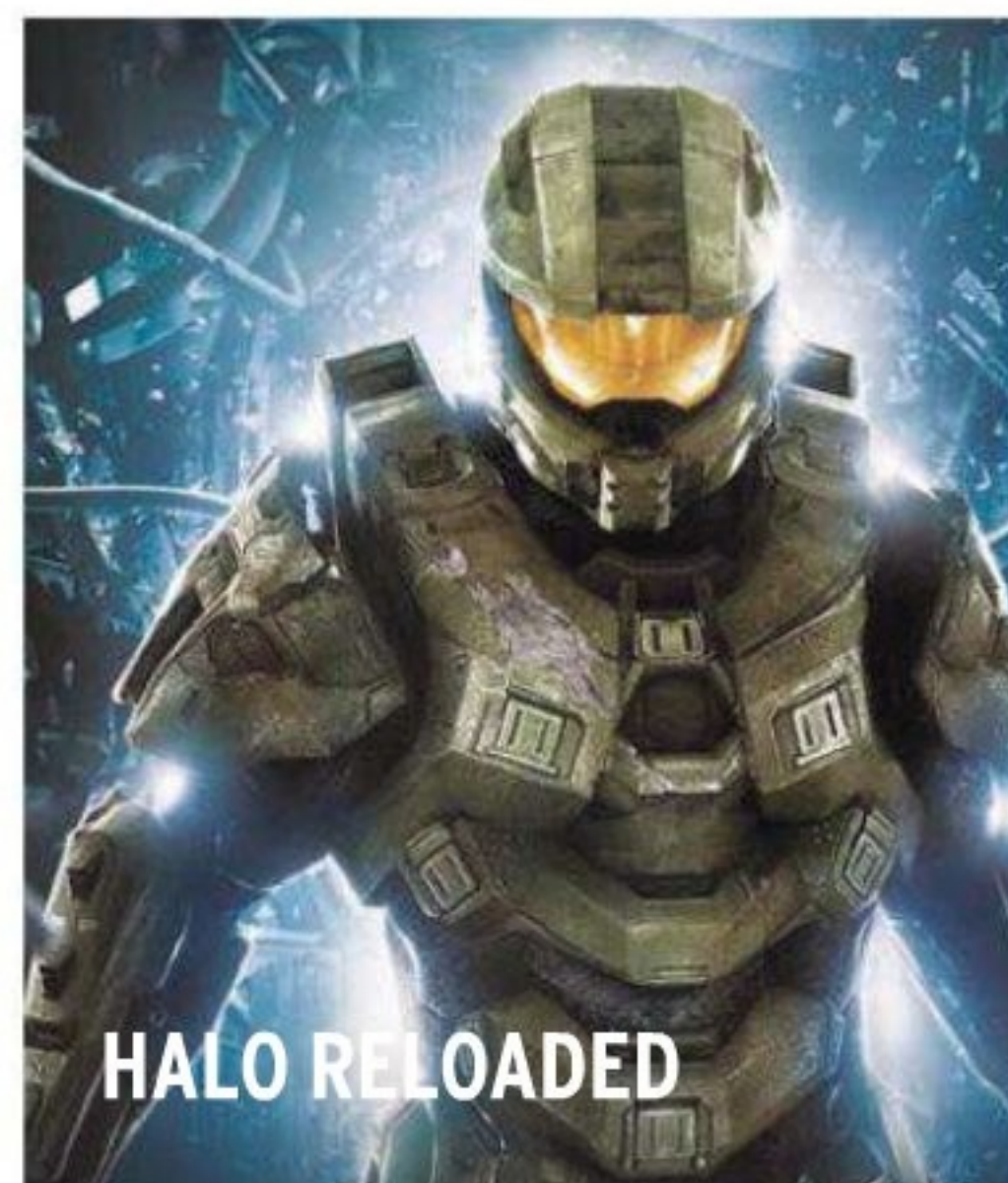
A realistic, though unchallenging tour of Disneyland.



GG ★★★★★

**DINSEYLAND
ADVENTURES 2
FOR XBOX 360 KINECT**

Price: ₹ 1,999



HALO RELOADED

The remastered graphics of *Halo*, one of the world's best first-person shooting games, allows you to revisit the antics of the master chief. No new levels have been added but then that's the beauty of this game as—the entire first edition has been reworked in such a way that a first time player will never guess this is a 10-year-old game. It was good to be reacquainted with the reliable Magnum pistol, which remains the best weapon to overpower the Covenant aliens. The Assault Rifle is another effective arm.

The multiplayer mode is where things get a bit tricky. Purists will probably be critical because the original *Halo* didn't have this option. The Halo Reach engine enables six reworked classic maps. The Ridgeline map is a surprise addition as it was exclusive to the PC and Mac versions of the original game. The captivating game modes, weapons, character customisation kept us enthralled.

You can tweak the settings to play either the original music or the remastered and enhanced soundtrack. The game developers want to show how far the graphics have progressed—press the Select button to switch between the latest and the original graphics.

GG ★★★★★

**HALO: COMBAT
EVOLVED ANNIVERSARY**

FOR XBOX 360

Price: ₹ 1,999

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

Reunion time for old *Halo* fans and must-play for new ones.

HO-HUM RACING

Can *Need For Speed: The Run* inch closer to *Gran Turismo* and *Forza* for supremacy in the car racing franchises? The first striking thing about *NFS* is the graphics—clearly the best yet in the series. The life-like surroundings, lacking in previous editions barring *Hot Pursuit*, has upped the level of excitement. Driving on avalanche-affected roads in the Rocky Mountains is not only a challenge but a scenic experience. What makes this game realistic is the fact that the fastest car is not always the winner. So though you might take a fancy to a Chevrolet Dodge or a Ford Mustang you need to brush up your skills, you will find them hard to control as they drift at the corners. The best bet, of course, would be to start with a slower BMW M3.

The protagonist, Jack Rourke, has a mob debt hovering over his head and the only option for him is to race across the United States and win the prize money which he can use to pay off his debt. Yes, the storyline is as thin as it sounds.

The good thing about *The Run* is that it lets you experience different real-world vehicles like muscle cars, street racers and super sports cars. Basically, a bit of everything to tackle different driving challenges for the player.

However, this idea sadly fails to impress even though you can use muscle cars for long highway stretches, street racers for owning the tracks and sports cars to conquer the urban jungle. The problem is that you can drive down from San Francisco to New York with your first car, the M3. This is where the 10-stage race with many multiple short races between cities becomes predictable, bordering on the boring. What was disappointing was the artificial intelligence that runs the rival cars. It attacks your car but holds the line when the rivals are side by side. This where all realism shatters. Excellent trailers and great graphics but *NFS: The Run* has to get more substance and inject a lot more interest for the speed freaks.



★★★★★

NEED FOR SPEED

FOR PS3

Price: ₹ 3,299

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

The graphics are great, but the action gets repetitive.



TURF FIGHT

They are brash, arrogant and abusive—but entertaining to the core. In *Saints Row: the Third*, our gang members have become celebrities and the big, bad Syndicate wants a piece of the profit. The concept of the game remains basic—crack some bad guys' skulls, turf out rivals and recruit more members for your gang.

The new edition gets a multi-player option: Co-op. It doubles the mayhem. It also has the Whored Mode, a survival game with three maps, each with 30 different challenges that require mowing down enemies. To keep things interesting each challenge comes with a different set of rules.

The graphics will not win awards with the retro-arcade visuals that give the game a seedy ambience. Because of the lack of realism, the violence in game is not gory. It is, however, definitely an over-the-top game with colourful language and game play, a veritable cross between *Pulp Fiction* and *Grand Theft Auto*.

BAG IT OR JUNK IT?

A must for action addicts.



★★★★★

SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD

FOR PS3

Price: ₹ 2,499

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iPad, iPhone, Android
and PC



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G&G Top Ten LISTINGS

THE BEST GADGETS IN THE MARKET AS RANKED BY G&G

SIZE	RESPONSE TIME	SOUND	DYNAMIC CONTRAST RATIO	PRICE	PROS	CONS
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LCD TELEVISIONS

2 LG 42LE7500	42-inch	2.4ms	10W + 10W	5,00,000:1	₹ 99,990	Design, brilliant resolution	Sound
3 Samsung UA40B6000VR	40-inch	4ms	20W	—	₹ 1,25,000	Style, sound	Price
4 VU LED-40T28GP	40-inch	6ms	185W	10,00,000:1	₹ 70,000	Internet-ready, price	Response time
5 Samsung LA46A650A1	46-inch	4 ms	20W	50,000:1	₹ 1,55,000	Picture quality	Weight, price
6 LG 42LH70YR Scarlet 2.0	42-inch	2.4 ms	20W	1,00,000:1	₹ 79,990	Design, contrasts	None
7 LG Jazz Theatre LH60	42-inch	2 ms	700W	1,50,000:1	₹ 76,990	Sound, contrasts	Price
8 BenQ S04321	42-inch	6.5ms	205W	5,000:1	₹ 49,999	Picture, sound	Design
9 Phillips 42PFL9703 / 98	42-inch	2 ms	30W	30,000:1	₹ 1,29,990	Good response time, sound	Price
10 Philips Cinema 21:9	56-inch	—	2 x 12W	—	₹ 4,50,000	Great images	Price

PLASMA TELEVISIONS

SIZE	RESOLUTION	CONTRAST RATIO	SOUND (WATTS)	PRICE	PROS	CONS
2 Samsung PS42A410C1	42-inch	1024x768 pixels	1,00,000:1	₹ 58,000	Contrast ratio	Price
3 LG 42PG61UR	42-inch	720 pixels	2.49	₹ 65,000	Sound	Resolution
4 Panasonic VIERA TH- 42PV8D	42-inch	1024x768 pixels	15,000:1	₹ 59,000	Contrast ratio	Price
5 Hitachi P42E101A	42-inch	1024x1080 pixels	10,000:1	₹ 82,000	Picture and contrast	Connectivity
6 Samsung PS50A550S1	50-inch	1920x1080 pixels	1,00,000:1	₹ 1,40,000	Size	Weight
7 LG 60PG70FR	60-inch	1920x1080 pixels	10,00,000:1	₹ 33,0000	Great contrast	Super-heavy
8 Panasonic TH 65PY850D	65-inch	1920x1080 pixels	30,000:1	₹ 4,99,900	Picture resolution	Weight, price
9 Hitachi P60X01A	60-inch	1920x1080 pixels	8,000:1	₹ 4,50,000	Clear and Crisp images	Weight, price
10 Samsung PS 50A450P1	50-inch	1365x768 pixels	1,00,000:1	₹ 1,27,000	Great pictures and colours	None

TABLETS

DISPLAY	PROCESSOR	CONNECTIVITY	PRICE	PROS	CONS
2 Samsung Galaxy tab 8.9	1 GHz	3G, Wi-Fi	₹ TBA	Good Screen, Navigation	-
3 Sony Tablet S	1GHz	Wi-Fi, Bluetooth	₹ 29,990	form factor	-
4 Acer Iconia Tab A501	1 GHz	USB, HDMI, BT, Wi-Fi	₹ 33,900	Good Built	Average Display
5 Reliance 3G Tablet	800MHz	3G, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth	₹ 12,999	Price	NA
6 Samsung Galaxy Note	1.4GHz Dual Core	3G, BT, Wi-Fi	₹ 34,990	Easy to carry around, Pen Stylus	Price
7 Asus EEE Transformer	1 GHz	Wi-Fi, USB, BT	₹ 43,000	Keyboard Dock	Price



1. SAMSUNG UA55D8000YR
Price: ₹ 2,49,990

Specs: 55-inch 3D LED panel; 1080p Full HD; 10 W x 2 speakers; Mega dynamic contrast ratio; 4 HDMI; 2 USB ports; 18.6 kg



1. PANASONIC P50VT20D
Price: ₹ 1,99,000

Specs: 50-inch display; Full HD resolution; 5,00,000:1 contrast ratio; 2.1 channel sound output; 30.5 kg



1. APPLE iPad 2 64 GB 3G
Price: ₹ 46,900

Specs: 9.7-inch display; 1GHz dual core processor; iOS 4.3; Wi-Fi, 3G, 64GB

LAPTOPS

LAPTOPS										
	PROCESSOR			GRAPHICS CARD	RAM	HDD	DISPLAY	PRICE	PROS	CONS
2	Sony Vaio CW16FG	Intel Centrino C2D 2.53 GHz	nVidia GT230M	4 GB	320GB	14-inch	₹ 57,000	High-end specs	None	
3	LG A530	Intel i7 processor	nVidia GT555M	8GB	750GB	15.6-inch	₹ 79,990	3D	Battery	
4	Lenovo Z570	Intel Core i3 2.1GHz	NVIDIA GT520m	3GB	640GB	15.6-inch	₹ 37,990	Multimedia	Avg battery	
5	MacBook Air	Intel Core i7 1.7GHz dual core	Intel HD 3000	4GB	256GB flash	13.3-inch	₹ 89,990	Ultra Slim	None	
6	SAleinware M11X	Intel Core i7 1..5 Ghz	NVIDIA GT540M	4 GB	720 GB	11.6 inch	₹ 74,900	Style, performance	price	
7	Apple Mac Book Pro	Intel C2D, 2.66 GHz	NVIDIA Ge Force 9600M	8GB	320GB	15-inch	₹ 1,48,800	Performance	Price	
8	Lenovo G560	Intel Pentium P6100	Onboard	2GB	500GB	15.6-inch	₹ 31,990	Performance	Battery life	
9	HP Pavilion DV6	Intel Core i3, 2.1GHz	AMD 6490M	4GB	500GB	15.6-inch	₹ 45,690	Storage, connectivity	Heavy	
10	Acer Aspire S3	Intel Core i5 1.6 Ghz	Intel HD graphics	4GB	320 GB	13.3-inch	₹ 50,900 +	Slim	USB port placement	

NETBOOKS

	PROCESSOR	GRAPHICS CARD	RAM	HDD	PRICE	PROS	CONS		
2	Samsung N210	Intel Atom, 1.6GHz	On board	1GB	160GB	10.1-inch	₹ 20,952	Design, style	None
3	Sony Vaio W	Intel Atom, 1.66 GHz	On board	1 GB	160 GB	10.1 -inch	₹ 29,990	Good screen	Price
4	Sony Vaio P	Intel Atom , 1.60 GHz	Intel GMA 500	2GB	64GB	8-inch	₹ 64,990	Compact	Price
5	Lenovo S10	Intel Atom, 1.60 GHz	Intel GMA 950	1GB	160GB	10.1-inch	₹ 21,990	Good design	None
6	Samsung N150	Intel Atom, 1.66GHz		1GB	160GB	10.1-inch	₹ 17,999	Battery life, price	Low RAM
7	Dell Inspiron Mini 10	Intel Atom, 1.60 GHz	Intel GMA 500	1GB	160GB	10.1-inch	₹ 21,550	Handy design	None
8	Sony Vaio X	Intel Atom, 2GHz		2GB	128GB	11.1-inch	₹ 84,990	Super slim, RAM	Expensive
9	Samsung N140	Intel Atom, 1.6GHz	Intel GMA 950	1GB	160GB	10.1-inch	₹ 24,999	Good multimedia support	Price
10	Asus S101H	Intel Atom	—	1GB	160GB	10.1-inch	₹ 27,990	Style	Price, low RAM
	PROCESSOR	GRAPHICS CARD	RAM	HDD	PRICE	PROS	CONS		

DESKTOPS

DESKTOPS								
	PROCESSOR	GRAPHICS CARD	RAM	HDD	PRICE	PROS	CONS	
2	Apple iMac 27 inch	Intel C2D 3.06GHz	ATI Radeon HD4670	4GB	1TB	₹ 89,900	Brilliant resolution, performance	Price
3	HP Elite M 9400	Intel C2D, 2.66 GHz	nVidia 9300GE	2048MB	320GB (7200rpm)	₹ 46,490	Good graphics	Low RAM
4	Apple I Mac Desktop	Intel C2D, 3.06 GHz	nVidia GT 130	4GB	1TB (7200rpm)	₹ 1,15,180	RAM, HDD	Price
5	Lenovo Idea Centre A600	Intel C2D, 2.00 GHz	ATI Radeon HD3650	2GB	640GB (7200rpm)	₹ 69,500	Gesture gaming capability	RAM
6	Dell Studio Hybrid	Intel C2D	Intel GMA X3100	4GB	320GB (5400rpm)	₹ 39,900	Super-compact	No monitor
7	HP Touch Smart IQ500	Intel C2D, 2.16 GHz	nVidia 9300M - GS	4096MB	500GB (7200rpm)	₹ 89,990	Performance, storage	Price
8	HP Pavilion Slimline	Intel C2D, 2.66 GHz	nVidia 7100	2048MB	320GB (7200rpm)	₹ 40,690	Design	Low RAM
9	Acer Revo R3600	Intel Atom, 1.6 GHz	nVidia 9400	2GB	160GB	₹ 25,325	Compact size	No monitor
10	BenQ nScreen i91	AMD Sempron 1.5GHz	ATI X1200	1GB	160 GB	₹ 26,999	Affordable	Low performance



1. DELL XPS 15 L501X
Price: ₹ 75,933

Specs: 15.6-inch LED display; Intel Core i7 Q740 1.73 GHz (8 cores); 4 GB RAM; 500 GB HDD; NVIDIA 2 GB GT



1. ACER ASPIRE ONE D250
Price: ₹ 18,651

Specs: 10.2 inch display; Intel Atom 1.66GHz processor; 1GB RAM; 160GB hard disk



1. ALIENWARE AURORA
Price: ₹ 1,40,000 onwards

Specs: Intel Core i7-975 processor; 12GB DDR3 SDRAM 1333MHz; 1TB SATA HDD; 2x GTX250 nVIDIA graphics cards; 19-in-1 card reader

CAMCORDERS

	STORAGE MEDIA	OPTICAL ZOOM	LCD	VIDEO RESOLUTION	WEIGHT	PRICE	PROS	CONS
2 Samsung HMX-H200	Flash memory	20x	2.7-inch	1920x 1080 pixels	271 g	₹ 20,990	Crisp video	None
3 Canon HF M41	Flash memory upto 32GB	10x	3-inch	1920x 1080 pixels	360g	₹ 56,995	Video, LCD	None
4 Panasonic SDR H101	80GB HDD	78x	2.7-inch	720 x 576 pixels	-	₹ 19,990	Zoom	No HD
5 Creative Vado HD	4GB	-	2 -inch	720p	93g	₹ 14,999	Affordable	Not Full HD
6 Sony HDR -TG 1E	Memory Stick Micro	10x	2.7-inch	1920x1080 pixels	240g	₹39,990	Compact, style	Low MP
7 Samsung VP - HMX20C	Flash Memory	10x	2.7-inch	1920x1080 pixels	456g	₹ 18,500	Full HD	Bit bulky
8 Sony XR100E	80GB HDD	10x	2.7-inch	1920x1080 pixels	330g	₹ 39,990	Storage, video	Price
9 Panasonic SDR - H60	60GB HDD	50x	2.7-inch	640x480 pixels	340g	₹ 34,990	Hybrid storage	Resolution
10 Canon HFR205	SD memory	18x	3-inch	1920x1080 pixels	270g	₹ 22,995	Video quality	-



1. SONY XR550E
Price: ₹ 59,990

Specs: 3.5-inch touch screen LCD; 10x optical zoom; 240GB hard drive; Full HD video recording; 500 gm



1. CANON 7D
Price: ₹ 1,31,995 with kit

Specs: 18 MP; 3-inch LCD; 6400 ISO Max; 1080p video; 820 gm



1. CANON SX 40 HS
Price: ₹ 29,990

Specs: 12.1 MP CMOS sensor; 2.7-inch LCD panel; 35X optical zoom; Aperture: F2.7-F5.8; ISO 3200; Video 1920 X 1080; Four aspect ratio for images; SD/SDHC/SDXC storage; 600 gm (with battery).

DIGITAL SLRs

	MEGA PIXELS	ISO SPEED	LCD SIZE	PICTURE RESOLUTION((MAX)	WEIGHT	PRICE	PROS	CONS
2 Nikon D300S	12.3 MP	6400	3-inch	4288 x 2848 pixels	840g	₹ 94,950	Pro quality	Less MP
3 Nikon D7000	16.2	25,600	3 inch	-	690g	₹ 89,950	Pictures, ISO	-
4 Canon 60D	18 MP	6400	3-inch	5184 x 3456 pixels	755g	₹ 77,195	Best MP	Price
5 Sony NEX 5	14.2MP	12800	3-inch	4592x3056 pixels	296g	₹ 34,990	Pro quality, compact	-
6 Nikon D90	12.3 MP	3200	3-inch	4288x2848 pixels	620g	₹ 83,950	Good images	Less MP
7 Canon 550D	18 MP	6400	3-inch	5184 x 3456 pixels	475g	₹ 51,995	Quality, video	None
8 Sony Alpha SLT - A33	14.2 MP	12,800	3-inch	4272x2848 pixels	433g	₹ 37,990	Images	Electronic VF
9 Canon EOS 1000D	10.1 MP	1600	2.5-inch	3888x2592 pixels	450g	₹ 27,995	Price	Less MP, ISO
10 Samsung NX10	14.6MP	6400	3-inch	—	353g	₹ 42,990	Compact, attachments	-

DIGITAL POINT & SHOOT AND PROSUMER

	MEGA PIXELS	OPTICAL ZOOM	LCD SIZE	PICTURE RESOLUTION((MAX)	WEIGHT	PRICE	PROS	CONS
2 Sony TX 9	12.2MP	4x	3.5-inch	4000 x 3000pixels	133g	₹ 21,999	Sleek body	-
3 Canon PowerShot SX30IS	14MP	35x	2.7-inch	4320x324 pixels	600g	₹ 28,990	Zoom, quality	Weight
4 Samsung WB600	12MP	15x	3-inch	4000x3000 pixels	-	₹ 19,900	Zoom, quality	None
5 Canon SX200IS	12.1 MP	12x	3-inch	4000x3000 pixels	220g	₹ 22,995	LCD and zoom	None
6 Fujifilm Finepix S3300	14MP	26x	3-inch	4000x3000 pixels	445g	₹ 14,999	Quality, price	-
7 Canon PowerShot S95	10 MP	3.8x	3-inch	3648 x 2736 pixels	193g	₹ 26,995	Compact DSLR	Expensive
8 Canon PowerShot G11	10 MP	5x	2.8-inch	3648 x 2746 pixels	355g	₹ 31,995	Rugged body	Low MP
9 FujiFilm AV200	14 MP	3X	2.7 inch	4288 x 3216 pixels	168g	₹ 5,499	Picture Quality, price	non
10 Panasonic S3	14.1 MP	3x	2/7-inch	-	117g	₹ 7,990	Affordable	keys

HOME THEATRE SYSTEMS

	TOTAL RMS	SPEAKER CHANNEL SYSTEM	HDMI / USB	FM TUNER	PRICE	PROS	CONS
2 Bose Lifestyle V35	—	5.1	Yes/Yes	Yes	₹ 2,24,888	Excellent surround	Price
3 Sony DZ810	1000W	5.1	Yes/Yes	Yes	₹ 29,990	Sound, design	Price
4 Phillips HTS 9520	800W	5.1	Yes / Yes	Yes	₹ 70,990	Looks, performance	None
5 LG HT903TA	1000 W	5.1	Yes / Yes	Yes	₹ 26,990	Good sound	Price
6 Bose Lifestyle 48 DVD Ent System	—	5.1	Yes / —	—	₹ 2,58,638	Very good looking	Heavy
7 Sony DAV - DZ790K	1000 W	5.1	Yes / Yes	Yes	₹ 29,990	Good surround	Price
8 Samsung HT-X725	800W	5.1	Yes / Yes	Yes	₹ 19,990	Good for all round use	None
9 Samsung HT D5550	1000W	5.1	Yes / Yes	-	₹ 49,900	Looks	NA
10 Sony DAV DZ390K	1000 W	5.1	Yes / Yes	Yes	₹ 19,990	Surround, USB support	Heavy

1. PHILIPS HTS 9140 SOUNDBAR

Price: ₹ 71,900

Specs: 3D Blu-ray player; built-in decoders include Ambisound, Dolby Digital, DTS; 600W amplifier; Net TV; Wi-Fi upgradable; HDMI, YUV, Composite, optical and RCA



PORTABLE MEDIA PLAYERS

	SIZE	TOTAL CAPACITY	BATTERY LIFE	WEIGHT	PRICE	PROS	CONS
2 Viewsonic VPD400	4.3-inch	8GB	12 hrs audio, 6 hrs video	140 g	₹ 9,000	Huge screen, battery	No touch
3 Philips Go Gear Raga	1-inch	4GB	22 hrs audio	24 g	₹ 2,999	Compact	Design
4 Cowon iAudio 9	2-inch	4GB	7 hrs audio	40g	₹ 6,500	Lightweight	Low space
5 Creative Zen X-Fi2	3-inch	8GB	8 hrs audio,	75g	₹ 8,000	Good screen	Battery life
6 Cowon O2	4.3-inch	32GB	18 hrs audio, 8 hrs video	205g	₹ 17,000	Excellent screen	Weight
7 Samsung YP P3	—	16GB	30 hrs audio, 5 hrs video	96g	₹ 14,900	Looks, capacity	Interface
8 Phillips SA 2825	—	2GB	20 hours	2 g	₹ 2,999	Value for money	None
9 Viewsonic VPD500	5-inch	8GB	15 hrs audio, 4 hrs video	200g	₹ 12,000	Big screen	No touch
10 Apple iPod Nano 8 GB	2-inch	8GB	24 hrs audio, 4 hrs video	36.80g	₹ 8,200	Battery life, interface	Relatively old

1. APPLE IPOD 32GB

Price: ₹ 19,900

Specs: 3.5-inch touchscreen; twin cameras; HD recording; 32 GB onboard memory; Wi-Fi; 40 hrs audio playback; 115 g m



MUSIC SYSTEMS

	TOTAL RMS	SPEAKERS	DISC PLAYER	TAPE DECK	WEIGHT	PRICE
2 Phillips FWD 876 / 98	600 W	4	1 disc tray	—	35.7 kg (with box)	₹ 25,999
3 Panasonic SC VK870	875 W	5	5 disc tray	Yes	16.45kg	₹ 26,990
4 Bose Acoustic Wave II	—	2	—	—	6.49 kg	₹ 65,138
5 Sony MHC GNZ888D	470 W	5	3 disc tray	Yes	13.3kg	₹ 15,990
6 Samsung MAX DA 75	135 W	2	1DVD	—	12.7kg	₹ 16,900
7 Panasonic SC VK670	500 W	3	5 disc tray	Yes	4.9kg	₹ 19,990
8 Mitashi PH60T	—	2	—	—	—	₹ 2,790
9 Samsung MAX DA55	90 W	2	3 DVD	Yes	10.5kg	₹ 11,900
10 Phillips FWD 397 / 98	240 W	2	3 DVD tray	Yes	13.9kg	₹ 33,638

1. MERIDIAN F80

Price: ₹ 2,00,000

Specs: 80 W total RMS; 2.1 channel sound; disc tray; FM tuner; 6.5 kg



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1. HALO: REACH

Price: ₹ 2,499

Specs: Platform: Xbox 360; Genre : First-person shooter; ESRB Rating : Mature; Publisher: Microsoft



1. SAMSUNG DVD - H1080

Price: ₹ 5,900

Specs: Media Type: DVD, DVD -R, DVD -RW, DVD +R, DVD +RW, CD, CD -R, CD -R CD -RW, MP3; DivX compatible; Dolby Digital sound; USB port; 1 kg

GAMES

2	FIFA 2012	PS3, Xbox 360	Association Football	Everyone	EA	₹ 2,499	Graphics, fun	none
3	Mortal Kombot	PS3, Xbox360	Arcade	Mature	Midway games	₹ 2,495	Graphics, Fun	Hard gameplay
4	Kinect Dance Central	Xbox360	Music	Teen	MTV Games	₹ 1,990	Fun to play	None
5	L.A. Noire	Xbox360	Third person sAction	Mature	Rockstar	₹ 2,499	Superb graphics	None
6	Mafia 2	PC, Xbox360, PS3	Third-person action	Mature	2K games	₹ 499	Graphics, gameplay	None
7	Kinect Adventures	Xbox360	Action	Everyone	Microsoft	₹ 2,499	Graphics	Game lags
8	Dirt 3	PC	Racing	Everyone	Codemasters	₹ 599	Graphics, Gameplay	None
9	WWE All Stars	Xbox 360	Arcade Fighting	Mature	THQ	₹ 2,495	Graphics, sound	Reversals
10	Little Big Planet2	PS3	Adventure	Everyone	Sony Computer Entertainment	₹ 2,499	Graphics, cutscenes	None

SPEAKER CHANNEL SYSTEM	VIDEO UPSCALING	DOLBY DIGITAL	USB PORT	PRICE	PROS	CONS
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DVD PLAYER

2	Sony DVP - NS628P / B	—	—	Yes	1	₹ 3,590	USB playback	None
3	Mitashi DVD-2711	5.1	—	Yes	1	₹ 3,290	Card reader, 5.1 channel surround	Bland looks
4	LG DV 388	5.1	—	—	1	₹ 4990	Good picture quality	Pricey
5	Haier HD - 103	5.1	—	Yes	—	₹ 3,990	Multi-channel support	Pricey
6	Philips DVP5996K	5.1	—	Yes	Yes	₹ 5,299	Multi-channel support	Pricey
7	Onida Candy	5.1	—	Yes	—	₹ 3,790	Great sound	None
8	Onkyo DV - SP406	—	Yes	Yes	—	₹ 16,350	Great surround	Pricey
9	Sony DVP - NS728HP / B	—	Yes	Yes	1	₹ 5,290	Video upscaling	None
10	Sony DVP - SR400P / B	—	—	—	—	₹ 3,290	DivX playback	No USB



WHAT SETS SRM APART?

That we are India's No.1 Multiple Stream Private University as ranked by India Today?

That our ECE program is accredited by EAC of ABET, USA?

That we placed a record 2336 student in 15 days?

That we have sent 300 students to MIT, Cornell, Madison etc. under Semester Abroad program?

Or the Nobel Quest organized by us that was inaugurated by six Nobel laureates?

YES!

THESE ARE OUR BIG ACHIEVEMENTS.

**BUT NOW WE ARE IN A DIFFERENT LEAGUE
AFTER OCTOBER 12, 2011:
THE DAY WHEN OUR STUDENTS DISPLAYED
THEIR INNOVATIVE SPIRIT TO LAUNCH SRMSAT
A NANO SATELLITE CROWNING SRM AS
INDIA'S FIRST PRIVATE UNIVERSITY TO ACHIEVE THIS FEAT.**

**OUR STUDENTS ALSO MADE THE NATION PROUD
BY CREATING AN AWARD WINNING
GREEN AIRPLANE DESIGN AT NASA, USA.**



It was truly a moment of pride at SRM University when students from twelve departments unleashed their innovative talent to design and launch a nano-satellite called SRMSAT. The satellite was launched into orbit by ISRO's PSLV-C18 along with Mega-Tropiques satellite, an Indo-French mission.

SRMSAT is now at 865 km earth-orbit monitoring greenhouse gases, carbon-dioxide and water vapour in the tropics.

The SRMSAT weighs 10.9 kg including three solar panels and was built at a cost of Rs 1.5 crore. The students are keeping track of the satellite monitoring its performance through the ground station, they erected at the university. SRM is the first private university in the country to have launched a nano-satellite.

Besides SRM has created award winning green airplane designs at NASA, USA. This places the SRM University in the same league as Purdue University, Indiana University and Georgia Institute of Technology and Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.

Kudos to our students and thanks to ISRO and NASA



SRM

UNIVERSITY

(Under section 3 of UGC Act 1956)

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- Multipoint Technology
- Digital Signal Processing for High Quality Sound



Nokia Bluetooth Headset BH-112

- Voice Guidance for Easy Pairing
- Soft and Ergonomic Ear Pads for Extra Comfort
- Advanced Multipoint for Dual Connectivity



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