

RUN, CYCLE OR SWIM? GET FIT QUICK

Stuff

SWITCH



PLAY ME ANYWHERE

Nintendo's new console is a bona fide game-changer



WIN

**A PS4 SLIM
+ HORIZON
ZERO DAWN**

TESTED

Porsche Design
Huawei Mate 9
DJI Mavic Pro
Asus Zenbook 3



March 2017
Middle East Edition
A Motivate Publication

BD150 ID3 KD120 R0150
QR15.00 SR15 DHS15



Dubai Technology and Media Free Zone

Massive Sound from a Stylish Body

This one-unit soundbar features full-scale speaker units, providing massive sound output as well as a tidy installation that maximises the excitement of movies and music.

Big enjoyment home theatre

Experience the overwhelming sense of presence and realism through wall-reflected surround sound beams.



Add one more and have more fun!

If you've got one MusicCast component, add another to the network and enjoy more music anywhere in your home.



MusicCast App



Living Room

Bedroom

YAS-706

Front Surround System

- Real 7.1ch surround sound
- Output Power: 285 W
- MusicCast compatible
- HT controller app
- Five cinema DSP programs.
- Compatible with DTS and Dolby digital.
- Supports Bluetooth and Airplay.
- HDMI: (2 in/ 1 out) with 4K60p Pass through and HDCP 2.2
- Wireless Subwoofer



NS-WSW121



Black

DOLBY AUDIO™

dts
Digital Surround

**STEREO IMAGE
ENHANCER**



musicCast



Bluetooth®

**WiFi
CERTIFIED**



Made for

iPod iPhone iPad

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WELCOME



At Stuff, we love weird gadgets. Sure, we're also fans of the smartphones and 4K TVs of this world, too, but nothing gets us more excited than messing about with things like WiFi-enabled toasters, 3D printing pens or self-monitoring plant pots. These are the inventions that make bold stabs at the future, giving us a glimpse at what could be, even if some of them end up falling flat on their faces in the process.

When it comes to bonkers tech, there's one company that springs to mind above all others for its sheer wealth of weird and wonderful ideas: Nintendo. Having brought us such game-changing triumphs as the Wii, and such better left forgotten embarrassments as the Virtual Boy, the Japanese gaming giant is back with one of its most extraordinary creations yet. The Switch is a console that can supposedly do it all, allowing you to play the latest *Zelda* or *Mario* wherever you find yourself, be it on the big-screen TV in your living room, or sandwiched between fellow commuters on your daily ride to work. It's a gamble so typical of Nintendo that only time will tell whether it will be rejected outright by gamers the world over, or if it will reshape the video game industry as we know it. What is clear is that we were as pleased as a rescued Toad to get our hands on the Switch for this month's cover feature (p30). As you'll see from our exclusive shots, it's looking rather tidy indeed. At last count, half of *Stuff* HQ has the thing on pre-order.

Of course, if that's nowhere near enough weirdness to satisfy your gadget lust, don't worry. You can also read all about a pair of trainers that'll dissolve in water (p50) and a drone that folds up small enough to carry around in your tote bag (p40). Oh yes, we will always bring you the weird. Enjoy the mag. **S**

Mike Priest, Editor / mike@motivate.ae / @MikePriest



Nintendo Switch

Five things you should know

- Nintendo has sold 135 million Wii U consoles to date.
- *Metroid*, *F-Zero*, *Kid Icarus* and *Luigi's Mansion* are all Nintendo franchises that went missing on Wii and Wii U. Comeback time?
- To avoid NES Classic Mini-style shortages, Nintendo is making over two million Switches for the console's launch.
- The Wii U launched with 24 games; the Switch is launching with just 10.
- That said, over 60 games have been confirmed for it so far.



WHAT'S HAPPENING ONLINE?

- Up to the minute news and views on everything from Apple to Adidas
- Exclusive video reviews, previews, trailers and gadget challenges
- More games! The latest titles reviewed in full, with in-game galleries and more



LET'S PARTY
ANYWHERE

Grab & Go



LG **XBOOM** FH2



Mic In



Karaoke
Star



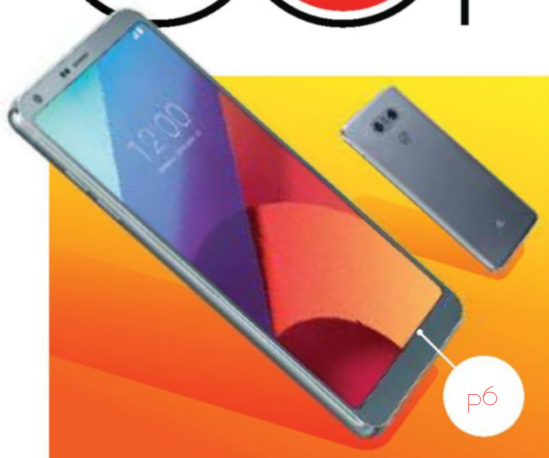
Bluetooth
Stand-by



Multi
Bluetooth

03.17

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Make a Microsoft HoloLens for \$30

H

S

T



Glass slipper

A choice and a proviso. The G6 is jacketed front and back with Gorilla Glass, so you can either get a case for it or spray your hands with glue. Decision: case. Proviso: take it out and admire it now and then.



WHY THE LONG FACE?

The G6, on the left with its 5.7in 2880x1440 screen, fits into almost the same shape as the G5 (right) with its boring old QHD 2560x1440 screen. Apps on the G6 will scale, but native apps, like Camera, will have extra features to make use of the space.

Are you there, Google?

The G6 will be one of the first non-Google phones to get access to Assistant, giving you smarter and more personalised answers to your rambling half-questions.

U

F

F

17 PAGES
OF THE BIGGEST
STORIES FROM
PLANET TECH



Two-cam play at that game

The dual-camera system is present, but tweaked. Now both the standard 71° and wide-angle 125° lens are 13MP. (The wide one on the G5 was slightly wider, but only 8MP.)

HOT
FOUR
#1

NOT THE SAME, BUT SUITABLY DIFFERENT

LG G6

We loved the G5's modular weirdness, with its ability to slot in a spare battery, an audio DAC or a handy camera grip. We didn't ever use it, and neither did anyone else, but it was a refreshing idea. The G6, LG says, is back to straight-up high-spec superphone and no unusualness... and then does a big Disney-style wink to camera. The screen of the G6, it transpires, is extraordinary in that it's an 18:9 aspect ratio – taller, or wider, than most phone screens, depending on which way you're aligned. To what end? Bragging rights, mainly, citing a better-than-QHD resolution of 2880x1440 and a 5.7in display that fits in roughly the same shell as the 5.2in G5 screen. It looks good, we think, if not as futuristic as the almost bezel-less Xiaomi Mi Mix. Elsewhere in the G6, there's a Snapdragon 821 processor, 4GB of RAM, a 3300mAh battery and IP68 waterproofing. Storage is 32GB, with a microSD card slot, and there is a headphone jack. If you're not going to wait and see what Samsung does with the S8, then your last decision is which G6 to buy: ice platinum, astro black or mystic white.

As hot as... being a little bit taller
US\$750 / lg.com

H O T S T U F F

A crown by any other name

A rotating power button lets you whisk through menus without touching the screen. Neat, huh? Sure we've seen it somewhere... The Sport gets extra buttons to launch Fit and Pay.



**HOT
FOUR
#2**

ANDROID WEAR 2.0 HAS ARRIVED, IN SOME STYLE

**LG Watch Style
& Watch Sport**

Few people can pull off style *and* sport. You might leave the house in shiny runners and slicked-back hair, but after just three minutes of running you're a heaving bedraggle. No, best to separate the two, which is just what LG has done. Designed with the full collaboration of Google, for whom these are a showcase delivery mechanism for its Android Wear 2.0 OS, there's a sporty one and a stylish one. The latter comes in silver, titanium and rose gold finishes, with easy-change straps. It has a 1.2in 360x360-pixel screen and a 240mAh battery, and in case you do want to treat it rough, it's IP67-rated for dust and water. At which the titanium or blue Sport (on the right) clears its throat, and points to its marginally wetter IP68 rating. It's also about 3.5mm thicker and 5mm wider, with a 1.38in 480x480 screen and a larger 430mAh battery. Both have Qualcomm's Snapdragon Wear 2100 chipset, but the Sport adds 4G to the standard Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. Plus, the Sport gets GPS, a heart-rate sensor and NFC for Android Pay. It's stacked. But it won't look so good with a little black dress.

A shot as... one for day, one for night
US\$249, US\$349 / lg.com

WHAT'S NEW IN WEAR 2.0?

1 IT WORKS WITH AN IPHONE

Which is to say it's no longer dependent on a connected Android phone. You can download apps such as Strava, Uber and WhatsApp direct from a mini Play Store.

2 IT'S GOT MORE GOING ON

Customisable sub-dials and redesigned menu 'drawers' make Wear much richer. A quick button-press launches Google Assistant, who knows a thing or two.

3 IT'S LIKE A TINY COMPUTER

You can tap out messages on its tiny keyboard, or swipe-type, or choose a contextual Smart Reply. Like: "People on the train are watching me poking at my watch."



PUMA[®]
FOREVERFASTER

RUN THE STREETS

WITH THE
IGNITE LIMITLESS



The Weeknd
Grammy-Winning Artist
and Style Icon.
Toronto.

H O T S T U F F

The eyes, to the rear, have it

The 0.39in, 2360K-dot OLED electronic viewfinder loses out slightly to the X-T2's 0.5in EVF, but the X-T20 gets a touchscreen. Call it a draw?



**HOT
FOUR
#3**

**HAS FUJI
GAZUMPED
ITSELF?**

FUJIFILM X-T20

It's no secret that we love the Fujifilm X-T2. But now this X-T20 has turned up with a lot of X-T2 skills for a fraction of the money. You get the same 24.3MP APS-C sensor – up from 16MP on the X-T10 and X-T1 – plus a vastly improved autofocus system. The latter puts pretty much every other CSC to shame, with up to 325 autofocus points, blink-and-you'll-miss-it focusing and a customisable tracking system. There's also 4K video recording at up to 30fps. In fact, the X-T20 actually beats the X-T2 on one front, because it's the first Fuji X to get all touchy-feely on its 3in LCD screen. Since all you really lose from the X-T2 are the weatherproofing, dual SD cards and a slightly bigger viewfinder, the Fujifilm X-T20 might be the bargain of the year.

A shot as... a one-carat diamond priced up as one carrot

US\$899 (body only) / fujifilm.com

THREE WAYS TO SMASH UP YOUR PIGGY IN THE NAME OF ART



FUJIFILM GFX 50S

"Can I play with madness?" asked Iron Maiden. They meant this – a new genre of camera. Medium format cameras have gigantic sensors but are normally big and heavy and confined to a studio. Fujifilm has made a mirrorless medium format, small enough to carry around but capable of stunning photography.

US\$6500 (body only)



LEICA M10

The brand's fans have been spooked by recent Leica cameras featuring such witchcraft as video. So the M10 is a bit of a sanity check: no video. But we're OK with that – it still has a 24.2MP CMOS sensor, with Wi-Fi and a bigger screen, and it's slimmer than the previous M. Probably as a result of shedding that nasty video.

US\$6495 (body only)



PENTAX KP

Pentax is too often overlooked these days. This appears to be a standard mid-spec DSLR – 24.3MP APS-C sensor, 4K video, weatherproof, etc. But delve a little deeper into the spec sheet and one number leaps out: the max sensitivity of ISO 819,200. This might be the 2017 camera of choice for astrophotographers.

US\$1099 (body only)

Spin cycle

When it's at rest you can tap the top of the Yves Behar-designed casing to tell it what track to play. Once it's spinning, you're better off using the app to change tracks.

**HOT
FOUR
#4**
**PAPA WAS A
ROTATING STONE**
Love Turntable

Generally speaking, hi-fi turntables do not like to be moved. They tend to be imbued with the mass of a neutron star and given spiky feet that sink an inch into your sideboard. But the latest release in a welcome series of crowdfunded turntable novelties – vertical, magnetically levitating etc – is this battery-powered portable marvel. You put the record base wherever you like and put the vinyl on the base. The Love device sits on top, grips the spindle and rotates itself around the record. Track controls, volume and RPM can all be controlled via the accompanying smartphone app and the music itself is sent out via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. It is, quite literally, revolutionary.

As hot as... lining up your records like a physical playlist
from US\$319 / kickstarter.com







U
T
T

Ultra

It's all about you.

htc.com

SUPERSTAR SMARTPHONE

Vertu Constellation

US\$1ba / vertu.com



This is your Vertu Concierge key. It's your speed dial access to a bunch of people who have to deal with people like you all day long. Be nice to them, eh?

Boutique phone maker Vertu sticks to its jewel-encrusted guns with this latest model... but the tech's better than expected

● **Underneath the leather...**
...it's actually a well-specced phone. Its screen has the highest resolution of any Vertu device: WQHD, or 2560x1440, spread across a 5.5in display with crystal sapphire glass on top. That gives it an enviable pixel density of 534ppi – right up there with the

best phones in the world. It runs on a Snapdragon 820 processor, which while not the absolute latest is still impressive, and has 4GB of RAM. There's also a 12MP camera, 128GB of storage, dual SIM slots, a 3200mAh battery and fast charging.

● **But that's not where the money lies...**
The OS is skinned Android, but the outside is skin of cow and lightweight anodised aluminium, while even the 'ear pillow' is hand-polished "for optimum

acoustic performance". But the real exclusivity here comes from Vertu's famed Concierge, Life and Certainty services. Concierge gives you 24-hour access to a team of what are essentially servants ready to do your bidding. Want to buy some opera tickets? Or a Bentley? They'll sort it for you. Life, meanwhile, gives you access to invitation-only events and private clubs, while Certainty covers security: each Vertu phone, including the Constellation, is fitted with all manner of encryption options for secure calls, texts

and emails. Perfect for when you're contacting the 'specialist' accountant who helps you out with all your tax evasion needs.

● **Thought its true cost remains a mystery...**

They're still keeping the actual price under wraps. But given that its previous mobiles have ranged from US\$5000 to upwards of US\$15,000, and double – given that this one is pretty fully loaded, you'll want to be pretty confident before you go and register with Vertu as an interested party.

SKINNED
ANDROID ON
THE INSIDE,
SKIN OF
COW ON
THE OUTSIDE



FOR A FEW
DOLLARS
FEWER...

BLU LIFE MAX

If Bess has one Android phone costing many thousands and Barry has a coat made from loads of \$120 Android phones, which of them is happier?

Well, it just might be Barry. The Blu Life Max has a tough faux-leather cover and fingerprint sensor, while inside is the proof that many 5.5in, 720p screens warming your torso are better than just one: there's a meaty 3700mAh battery in each one, adding weight to the idea that this Blu might be a bargain worth covering yourself in.

[US\\$120 / bluproducts.com](http://US$120/bluproducts.com)



Our bestie budget buds go Bluetooth

SOUNDMAGIC E10BT

A flower viewed from space may not bring forth an astronaut's tears, which is why you're as yet unmoved by these SoundMagic headphones. But let's add detail. They're \$87, whereas most wireless headphones are well over \$100. The actual earbuds are just as light and (we hope)

tuneful as the five-star E10C earphones because the battery is elsewhere down on the cable. And that brings us to the added bonus that the E10BTs are good for a claimed 10-12 hours of playback time, double that of Apple's AirPods. Yeah, there we go. Here, have a tissue.

[US\\$87 / soundmagicheadphones.com](http://US$87/soundmagicheadphones.com)



That tricky second tracker

TOMTOM TOUCH CARDIO

People often talk about the tricky second album. This is TomTom's second fitness band, but it has the immediate advantage of being nearly 30% cheaper than the TomTom Touch. You never get that with albums.

But then, albums tend to be roughly the same composition as each other, whereas the Touch Cardio doesn't have the unique body-fat analysis sensor that the original Touch has. But it does have a heart-rate monitor, activity and sleep tracking, notifications and calorie computation. None of which, in our experience, an album has ever had.

[US\\$115 / tomtom.com](http://US$115/tomtom.com)

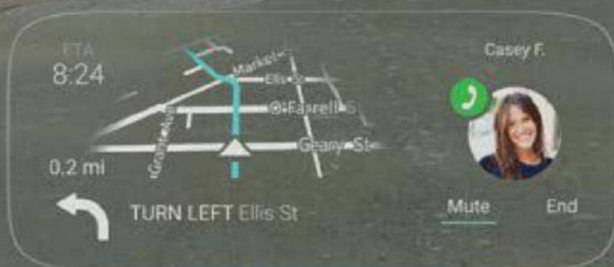
GIGAPIXEL

The bigger picture in tech



YOU SAY HELLO, I SAY...

It's all the fault of your parents, encouraging you to be popular. Get a decent tribe of family and friends, they said – you'll never want for anything. Except for some bloody peace! The constant calls about trivialities like "coming home" or "when you're coming to pick us up from school because it's hot". Sheesh. You've had to get yourself this \$799 Navdy head-up display, which connects to your phone via Bluetooth and shows calls, texts, notifications, navigation and trip data. Gesture control lets you dismiss it all while barely diverting your eyes from what's important in life: the road. Shut up, Casey F.





NEWS FEED



VR NOT ALONE

Having dunked our minds into VR gamescapes and been tickled by the notion, we now want to take things in there with us – which means attaching one of Vive's new Trackers to them. Gloves, guitars, guns... expect to see these prongy wonders all over the VR universe this year.



Hi, how can I help?

WHAT'S ON, TV?

Amazon's Alexa earnt her money at this year's CES show, popping up on all sorts of gadgets. Google's Assistant, only so far found on the Allo app, Home speaker and Pixel phones, has noticed: it has a new 'OK, Google' home in Android TVs and Nvidia's Shield box.



CAMPER-WHEN?

Volkswagen, you can't keep doing this. It hurts when you promise us a new bus but then don't deliver. And yes, the twin-motor 4WD system sounds clever and useful, but it also sounds like a good reason why we won't see it in real life any time soon. Stop this, VW.

START MENU

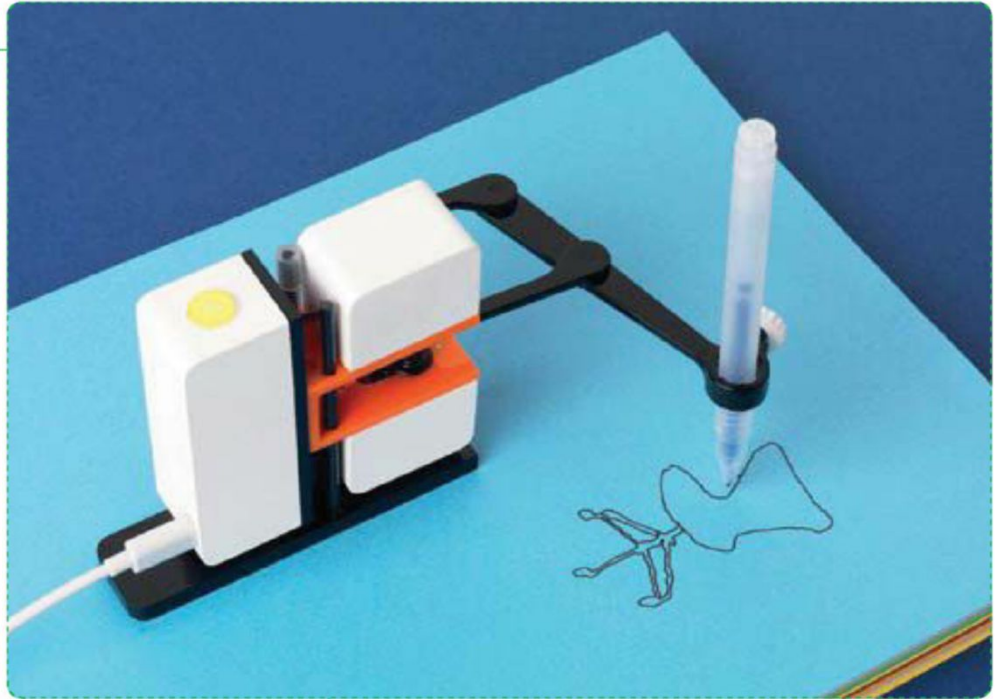
The latest startups, crowdfunded projects and plain crazy ideas

KICK-STARTER

Quick on the draw that you did before
LINE-US

If you like to live your life the topsy-turvy way, then this curious doodle repeater will appeal to you. It certainly does to us. Rather than digitising your paper-drawn pictures – an act we've grown tired of – the Line-us robot re-scribbles what you've just drawn on a tablet screen. You can give it a pen, a pencil, or even a paintbrush; it claims no great accuracy with any of them. Nor does it even begin to answer the question about why you wouldn't just draw on the paper yourself. Needless to say we love it, and it will now be the only way we communicate with our families.

£99 / line-us.com



BACK IT

STACK IT

SACK IT

KICK-STARTER

INDIE-GOGO

KICK-STARTER

KICK-STARTER



Teeny little super cable guy
JACK

Life is loss. Your beloved in-ears are now useless because Apple decided to ditch the headphone jack. Well, it's time to rewind the clock with Jack, a Bluetooth adaptor for your 3.5mm plug, which is now fully funded and on sale. It claims better audio quality and battery life than rival adaptors, and you can sync two Jacks to one music source.

US\$25 / podolabs.com



Write to reply
LOFREE

Life is boring. But imagine how much more likely you would be to sit down and do some invoicing, or write those birthday thank-you emails, if you had this lovely tactile keyboard? It can handle three different wireless connections and has backlit keys. But, you know, you should really write those thank-yous by hand.

from US\$59 / lofree.co



Beyond measure
PLOTT CUBIT

Life isn't quantifiable. But the physical world is, so long as you have a long enough measuring tape. Or a giant beaker. For room-sized stuff, the Cubit's mix of laser rangefinder, roller wheel for irregular objects and data-capturing apps should help you in your probably fruitless quest to generate order in your home space.

£tba / letsplott.com



Bust her rhymes
POLYTIK SYNTH

"Life, ooh life, ooh life, ooh life." Des'ree sure put her all into the lyrics of her 1998 smash hit *Life*. But aside from her cutting rhymes about not liking ghosts, but liking toast, your tribute remix's going to need some sick sounds to stand out. These arty binkety-boink synths might give it the, um, most.

from £120 / artistsandengineers.co.uk



Super pointy animal LOGITECH SPOTLIGHT

Giving a presentation used to mean smacking a chalk board with a long cane. Nowadays it's all sharp suits, hot offices and something shiny in your hand – which is where Logitech's Spotlight comes in. Hit the button and, rather than a little red laser dot, you'll get a highlighted or magnified focal point on the screen. Better still, a 30m range means you can stroll through the audience with the reckless abandon of a presenting rock star... and should you get too carried away with your masterplan for world salvation, the Spotlight will vibrate to signal you're over your limit, in terms of both time and scope.

US\$130 / logitech.com



All the colours BENQ X12000

Not since that incident with the police torch and the stained glass window has there been such a glorious melding of brightness and colour: meet BenQ's X12000, the first home cinema projector to deliver 4K with DLP. Enlisting the help of Philips LEDs, it kicks out movies with 2200 lumens of shiny brightness while serving up a Technicolor treat in the form of the cinema-standard DCI-P3 spectrum. To cut things down to teaser trailer size, it's basically the dream combo of sensational saturation and the sort of light output that sunglasses were made for – and it'll fit in your living room, just.

US\$7800 (approx) / benq.co.uk

DECIPHER

ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN...



#20 MEDIUM FORMAT

Tom Morgan

Fuji surprised the camera crew last year when it teased a mirrorless medium format camera. As you saw on p10, the GFX 50S is now real. But camera fans might be puzzled as to why Fuji skipped full-frame, the oversized sensor of choice for the likes of Canon and Nikon.

Apparently, the jump from the X-T2's APS-C sensor to a full-frame one just wouldn't have been enough. The difference in sensor size is quite significant: a medium format sensor is 43.8x32.9mm, compared to 36x24mm for full-frame or the common APS-C sensor size of 23.6x15.6mm. The GFX 50S's medium format sensor is rated at a whopping 51.4MP.

For studio photographers, the added detail and enhanced flexibility with lighting are essential – and they don't need to worry about the camera being physically large, because they have tripods and/or youthful assistants. But Fuji has managed to keep the GFX small, and more suited to life on the road,

FUJI HAS PUT THE ADDED DETAIL AND FLEXIBILITY OF MEDIUM FORMAT INTO A MIRRORLESS CAMERA

by making it mirrorless. The protruding LCD screen is really the only clue to the huge sensor behind the lens.

Ah, lenses. There's the rub. Specific lenses are required for the big sensor, and they'll cost you upwards of \$1600. Coupled with the body price of \$6500 (still cheap for a medium format), this remarkable new camera isn't going to be a DSLR-killer just yet.

But, with the right lighting and camera settings, you'll get billboard-quality shots right off your memory card. We'll be keeping an eye on how this develops.

This month's mobile must-downloads



1 Troublemaker

US\$9.99 / iOS

With its minimal UI, the Troublemaker synth might not smack of a TB-303, but it kicks out similar sounds. You also get a 64-step sequencer, AU compatibility, and a slim chance it'll lead to you joining The Prodigy.



2 Printed

US\$2.99 / iOS

Bored of Prisma? Sick of turning snaps into sort-of Van Goghs and Picassos? Then try Printed instead, and transform your photos so they resemble anything from vintage posters to ancient comic books.



3 Hater

US\$free / iOS, Android

A dating app for curmudgeons, Hater wants to match people on the basis of what they hate. Which sounds a bit too much like Tinder crossed with the comments from a YouTube video.



4 Peek Launcher

US\$free / Android

This launcher fills half the screen with a number pad, helping you filter your phone's apps by typing like it's 1998. It has predictive smarts too, and a drag-up drawer to house all your apps.



5 Pixabay

US\$free / iOS, Android

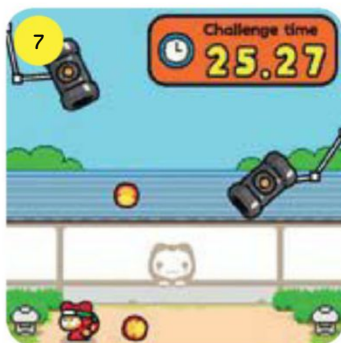
If you're one of those people who get a nagging feeling of guilt when pilfering images from the internet, try Pixabay. It houses a million photos, all of them free from pesky restrictions on use.



6 Bit Soccer

US\$0.99 / WatchOS

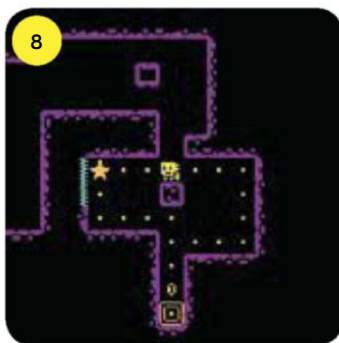
Run along the world's longest pitch, avoiding game-ending two-footed tackles and grabbing trophies. It's not exactly FIFA, but what do you expect from a crown-twiddling Apple Watch game?



7 Ninja Spinki Challenges!!

US\$free / iOS, Android

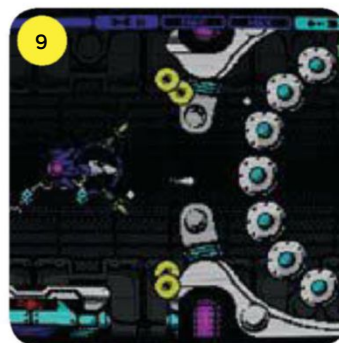
The latest game by the Flappy Bird guy – but this one's fun. You get six mini-games involving unrealistic ninja training – and in this world, you stay fit by avoiding fruit.



8 Tomb of the Mask

US\$free / iOS, Android

We mentioned this fast-paced mash-up of *Crossy Road*, *Pac-Man* and retro-style graphics a few months back, but now it's on Android you've got the perfect excuse for another go. Or 50.



9 Z-Exemplar

from US\$3.99 / iOS, Android

You like your shooters retro. How about an *R-Type*-like horizontal scroller? Not retro enough. With chiptunes? Still not enough. Fine: slather the thing in eye-searing ZX Spectrum visuals too. Lovely.

3 OF THE BEST

iPAD MUSIC MAKERS

Apple's free audio workstation has some new tricks, and it's not the only great app for crafting your latest floor-filler...

GARAGEBAND

US\$free

GarageBand now also courts pros, thanks to AU support, theAlchemy synth, and two-way compatibility with Logic Pro X.

KORG GADGET

US\$39.99

Loads of tiny synths and drum machines with countless knobs to twiddle, smashed into a single app.

CUBASIS 2

US\$49.99

Fully optimised for the touchscreen, and bundled with superb sounds, loads of effects, and pro-level features.



Stuff
/ MIDDLE EAST

READER'S SURVEY

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think about Stuff
— we're listening!**

Take part in the Stuff
Reader Survey and you
could win 1 of 2 Samsung
Gear Fit2 wearables



Visit **stuff.tv/me** to take the survey



FIRST PLAY DIRT 4 PS4, Xbox One, PC

Where last year's addictive *Dirt Rally* seemed to delight in forcing you off the side of its unflinchingly steep learning curve, *Dirt 4* wants to appeal to everyone from wannabe rally drivers to *Mario Kart* upstarts.

Between driver difficulty and car setup, this is a game that could steal months of your life. Rather than just adjusting the speed of your AI opponents, the difficulty modes alter various driving aids — plus there's a tangible difference when you set the handling to 'simulation' rather than 'normal'. You can also

adjust everything from brake bias to the speed your pace notes are delivered at.

Select a country, tweak the course settings and hit generate: the game will deliver a unique road for you to hurtle down, giving you infinite track variations. So you can't just spend hours repeating the same stage over and over again until you've nailed it. Listening to your co-driver is the only way to succeed here, bringing it much closer to a real rally experience.

Little surprises are there to add a dose of reality. Hare around

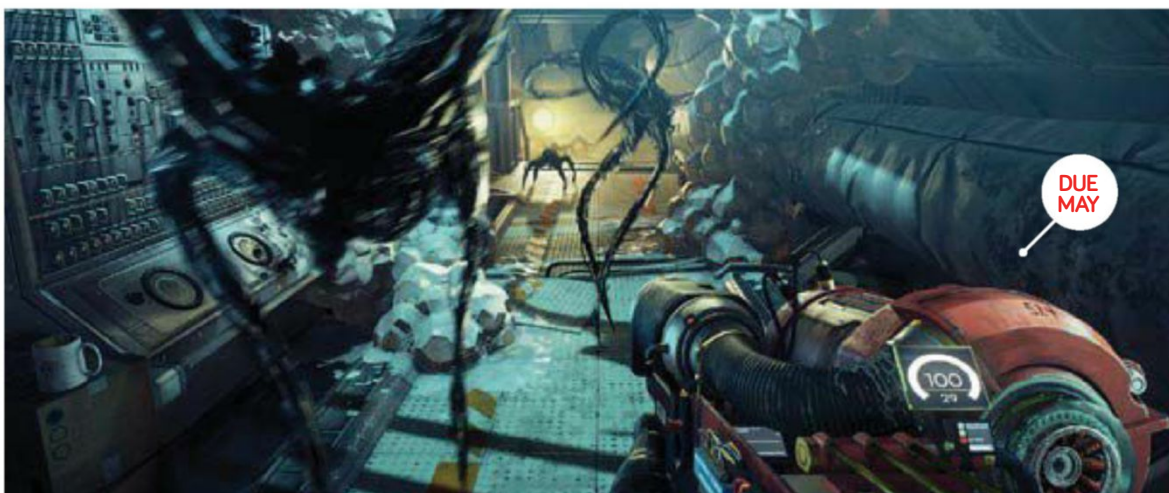
a blind corner and you could meet a marshal with a warning triangle, before passing a stricken competitor whose car has come together with a tree. Crest a jump and you'll just miss a drone filming your progress.

Dirt 4 will have more vehicles, tracks and race modes than ever before. There'll be multiplayer too, while new feeder series will make an appearance, with the likes of *Cross Karts* on offer.

Even at this early stage, all of the ingredients are there for *Dirt 4* to set a new standard for fast-and-sideways fun.



FIRST PLAY ANOTHER SPACE JAM



PREY PS4, Xbox One

The galaxy might look pretty roomy, but you can't move for alien-infested space stations up there these days. The latest is Talos 1, scene of some experiments on a breed of shape-shifters called Typhons. Alas, the ship now resembles a Typhon safari park – and these alien beasts don't just want your windscreen wipers.

You play as Morgan Yu, a scientist who has been developing a way to harness

their special skills. These will give you a whole range of ways to play the game, enabling you to hack doors, move heavy objects and sneak through ventilation shafts. You'll unlock these skills as you progress, but at the start you're just a plain old walking sack of meat.

Fortunately, you also have guns. Our favourite weapon so far is the GLOO Canon, a cross between a flamethrower

and a fire extinguisher that can be used to trap enemies, create ramps and cover up holes in fire-spewing pipes.

But it's the shape-shifting skills that make *Prey* such a tense experience. With the aliens able to take the form of any object, even the safest-looking room could be crawling with them. It's just as well you can beat them at their own game.

ON YOUR MARKS... UPCOMING RACERS



MICRO MACHINES: WORLD SERIES

PS4, Xbox One, PC

More than 25 years since its debut on the NES, Codemasters' top-down tiny racer returns with 12-player online sprints. There's also a new battle mode, probably inspired by *Rocket League*, with King of the Hill and Capture the Flag modes.



GTR 3

PS4, Xbox One, PC

Serious petrolheads aren't exactly lacking for options when it comes to racing sims, but *GTR* is the one that started it all, with physics you just couldn't find on consoles. *GTR 3* will be the first in the series to grace the PS4 and Xbox One, although it won't be arriving until next year.



MARIO KART 8 DELUXE

Switch

It might only be an enhanced version of the Wii U game that came out in 2014 but we can't help but get excited about any new *Mario Kart* game, especially when it comes with all the DLC, extra characters and added options in Battle Mode. For more on the Switch, turn to p38.



INCOMING

APRIL

- YOOKA-LAYLEE
- BULLETSTORM: FULL CLIP EDITION
- SNIPER: GHOST WARRIOR 3

MAY

● RIME

JUNE

● TEKKEN 7

● THE ELDER SCROLLS ONLINE: MORROWIND

RAYBABY

from US\$99 / rayiot.org

Pretty sure I've seen that thing in an episode of *Black Mirror*.

Not every gadget with a camera lens is an Orwellian menace, you know. In fact, Raybaby is quite the opposite: a proper do-gooder with its silicon heart in the right place. It's a baby sleep monitor that tracks your little one's breathing from afar in a very clever way – not with an impractical wearable or a SmartCot 3000, but with radar technology.

Radar? Nothing says sweet dreams like military surveillance technology.

Well, the Raybaby isn't exactly a big, scary antenna. It's a cute little cyclops that sits anywhere in your baby's room, quietly measuring their breathing to a claimed accuracy of 98% thanks to ultrasound-like tech. And that's just the start of its parental prowess. It'll also send you notifications when your baby shows signs of illness, alert you when they wake up or roll over, and serve up real-time video and audio monitoring. It'll even tell you how long the baby has slept for, while suggesting how much more rest is needed to prevent them from having a tiny tantrum. So stop standing around and fetch that organic baby milk...

Did you just see the way that thing turned its head? I'm not leaving the room just yet, thanks.

It's like you've never seen a webcam before. Anyway, yes, you can set the angle of the Raybaby's head to keep track of your little one. But this is not the complete parent replacement yet – you can't just install the app and swan off to play ten-pin bowling. It's more of a 'peace of mind' thing, serving up helpful alerts and sleeping tips. As if babies don't get enough sleep already...

Yeah, don't suppose it's got any tips for sleep-deprived parents too?

Afraid not, my zombie friend. Raybaby is attuned to the peculiarities of baby breathing, so will ignore any adults and pets around it. But hey, you'll sleep much better knowing there's a robo-nanny watching over your energetic bundle of perfectly rested joy, right? The only downside is that you'll need to wait until September if you back it on Kickstarter for the early bird price of US\$99. Maybe sleep on it...

NOTHING SAYS
SWEET DREAMS
LIKE MILITARY
SURVEILLANCE
TECHNOLOGY





If your Nokia 5140 ever breaks...
CROSSCALL TREKKER-X3

Need a phone for your Mont Blanc climb? You could stick a cheap Android slab in a tough case – or, you could shell out \$580 on the Trekker-X3, a tougher-than-tough 5in phone that's built for the outdoors. Throw it anywhere cold, hard or wet and it'll happily bounce back, thanks to a TPU-wrapped body built around a metal plate. In fact, it'll keep out chlorinated water, dust, dirt, oil and more – and you can use the screen with gloves on. Sure, it's as chunky as two iPhones, but you wouldn't want your life-proof phone to feel flimsy, would you?

US\$580 / crosscall.com



The GoPro for extreme scrimpers
MINOX ACX 300

Time was, buying a good action camera meant shelling out on a GoPro or going home. Not any more, though. Take the ACX 300 from Minox: waterproof to 30m, it'll shoot in 3K at 24fps or 1080p at 60fps, as well as offering a 120fps mode for fans of slow-mo shooting. What's more, it's packed with all sorts of tech – from optical image stabilisation to Wi-Fi smartphone pairing – and a battery that's good for 90 minutes without Wi-Fi. Oh, and there's a wrist remote thrown in – all for \$30 less than a Hero Session. Talk about tough competition.

US\$199 / minox.com



DROP EVERYTHING & DOWNLOAD

Opera Neon
 US\$free / Mac, PC

Like their smartphones, their pets and the curious array of inexplicable knick-knacks found in their kitchen drawers, people are pretty attached to their browser of choice. What we have here, though, is something that could change it all: meet Opera. Or, rather, a rebooted Opera known as Neon. It makes the web fun again: your favourite sites appear as bubbles on the homescreen and browsing tabs line up as circles down the left side of the screen. It's built on a 'physics engine', so things wobble and shake when you move them, and there's a Player panel that gives you one set of controls for all your media-playing sites. We like it. But will we keep it? Or will it end up, figuratively, in the kitchen drawer?



31st**GHOST IN THE SHELL**

It's a double-dip day down at the multiplex. *Free Fire*, a wisecracking warehouse shooter from *High Rise* director Ben Wheatley, looks scrungy and funny. But geeks will swarm towards the live action version of *Ghost in the Shell*, with Scarlett Johansson.

23rd**MASS EFFECT ANDROMEDA**

PS4, XBOX ONE, PC

Jetpacks and romance seem to be the two main talking points about this new adventure, set far away (in both space and time) in a galaxy called Andromeda. Actually, Jetpacks & Romance would be a good name for a bar. Or possibly a prog rock album.

EARLY CHECK-IN

EA Access subscribers will be able to get in on the action early: a 10-hour demo is out on 16 March.

YOUR MONTH

MAR

Spring is coiled, full of potential

Author
Kim Stanley Robinson

is born

1952

NOW

Read **New York 2140**

Rising sea levels have done a Venice to NYC

3rd

130
YEARS AGO

Earmuffs
first sold

NOW

11th**RUN THE SOLAR SYSTEM**

...is a new running app that shrinks the solar system down into a narrated 10k run, with online leaderboards. Super nerdy but also super-awesome.

17th**HOT THOUGHTS SPOON**

The Austin, TX band's ninth studio album finds its home back on Matador Records. You can expect expertly crafted three-minute pop-rock songs that will worm their way into your brain and sit there for days.

NINTENDO SWITCH

Most of the *Stuff* office were so busy hoo'ing and hah'ing about the Switch that we missed the pre-order window altogether. Hopefully they'll release a *Pokémon Go*-style AR app that lets us roam around and find people who have one.

Ditch your tiny buds and go big:
Jays u-Jays Wireless
\$190



WIN A PS4 SLIM AND A COPY OF HORIZON ZERO DAWN

There are some fun things you can do in life that don't require a PlayStation – snowboarding, eating chips, watching two greyhounds argue over a tennis ball – but we'd trade most of them for an evening of *Horizon Zero Dawn*, one of the most hotly anticipated games of 2017. An action-RPG that puts you in the shoes of Aloy, a hunter and archer who lives in a world overrun by robots. Some of which are massive dinosaur-looking things. Oh, and if you threw in the console for free we might just have a bit of a swoon.

Well, as you've probably worked out by now, that's the prize in this month's competition: one lucky winner gets to walk away with not only a copy of *Horizon Zero Dawn* to immerse themselves in, but also a brand spanking new PlayStation 4 Slim to play it on. The game wouldn't be much use without it to be fair.

Sounds like a whole lot of fun to us – and you can always go back to the greyhounds afterwards.

HOW TO ENTER

For the chance to really up your game, simply go to **stuff.tv/me/win** and answer this challenging question:

WHAT'S THE NAME OF THE CENTRAL CHARACTER IN HORIZON ZERO DAWN:

- A ... Aloy
- B ... Aloe Vera
- C ... Albert Einstein

Visit playstation.com for more info.

Terms & conditions

All entries to be submitted by April 1, 2017. The prizes are as stated and no cash alternative is available. Prizes are non-transferable. The decision of Motivate Publishing is final and no correspondence will be entered into. For full terms and conditions see: www.stuff.tv/me/terms-and-conditions-me

HURRY!
COMPETITION
CLOSES
APRIL 1



Every month we bring you the must-buy tech products available now in the region. Level up your gadget arsenal with one of these, you know you want to.



BenQ Zowie XL2540

Fancy yourself something of an e-sports fanatic? BenQ's latest Zowie XL monitor comes with a lightning fast native 240Hz refresh rate, so you won't miss any of the action as you school your opponents in *Overwatch*. It runs in Full HD across a respectable 24.5in LED panel with a 1ms response time, perfect for hardcore gamers. **US\$460 / benq.com**

Tesla Model X

Tesla's Model X is a true wolf in sheep's clothing: it's got gull wing doors, can go up to 565km on a single charge, and blast from 0-100kph in 3.1 seconds. Not bad for something that'll also own the school run and seat 7 adults. Available now in the UAE along with its sleeker Model S brother, it's time to get electric. **from US\$94,000 / tesla.com**



Mesuit

Android on your iPhone? Who thought the day would ever come. This nifty phone case is essentially a screen-less Android device (with an 8-core processor, second SIM slot and 16GB of storage) that lets you hot-swap your OS via a dedicated app. It comes in both 6 and 6s (including Plus size) flavours. **from US\$190 / gizmaze.com**

For the best deals on the hottest gadgets visit **GITEX Shopper**.
29 March - 1 April at the Dubai World Trade Centre. gitexshopperdubai.com



Yamaha YAS-706

Yamaha has been knocking it out of the park recently with their ever-growing collection of MusicCast-enabled products. It's a system that allows various components to function in tandem for a true multiroom experience. This stylish soundbar employs eight speaker drivers and two bass reflex ports, making it the perfect MusicCast option for those looking to add 4K passthrough to their home cinema setup.

US\$815 / yamaha.com

Pryma 01

Headphones don't have to just be boring black head huggers. Combining the highest quality Italian leather and premium aluminium, this pair from Sonus faber marries state-of-the-art audio tech with a luxury aesthetic that will make your richest mates well jealous. They're available in seven styles including 'Coffee & Cream' and 'Carbon Marsala'.

from US\$612 / pryma.com



Huawei Mate 9 Pro

If you can't spring for the cash needed to secure a Porsche Design edition of the excellent Mate 9 (see p55) then this brand-less Pro edition will do the trick nicely. It has the same 5.5in QuadHD AMOLED dimensions as the PD edition but only 128GB of storage - which is still more than enough. You also get the regular Mate 9's awesome twin-snapper.

US\$775 / huawei.com

***Prices are based on official RRP converted from AED and are correct at time of publishing.**



OSN Entertainment GetStarted Pack

If you're a fan of *House of Cards*, *Game of Thrones* and the WWE then look no further than OSN's revamped cable and satellite packages. Designed to suit customer's specific needs after half a year's worth of extensive research, you'll find what you're looking for out of their Sport, Movie and Entertainment offerings.

from US\$21 / osn.com



ONE
CONSOLE,
THREE WAYS
TO PLAY



HOME
CONSOLE



PORTABLE
HANDHELD



LOCAL
MULTIPLAYER





ANY SWITCH WAY YOU CAN

[Photography Matt Beedle]

US\$300 / nintendo.com

The Nintendo Switch wants to change the way you play.
But is there room in the world for a different kind of console?

The stakes could not be higher for Nintendo's Switch. After the Wii U tanked harder than Schwarzenegger in an '80s blockbuster, there is the very real prospect that this could be the last console it makes. So could it be 'game over' for the maker of the SNES, Wii and Game Boy? For all the millions of marketing

dollars that are spent on saying otherwise, the PS4 and Xbox One are basically the same thing: a big, powerful box that sits under your television for eternity. Compared to these static beasts, Nintendo's Switch is very different.

You can play it at home while slouched on a couch, but pick it up out of its dock and that's where the magic really happens: you simply carry on playing. This means a full-blown Mario

adventure on your journey into work, a sojourn with *Zelda* on your lunch break, and an evening with *Mario Kart* at home when you need to show who's king of your castle.

Sounds like the old Nintendo you know and love, right? New, inventive and – most of all – fun. Well, we've taken a long, exclusive look at the Switch to find out if it really is all that. Read on for everything you need to know.

1 IT'S PORTABLE PERFECTION

Nokia tried its luck with the N-Gage, Nvidia's Shield Tablet was a noble swing and miss, and some prat invented a PC backpack for portable VR. Alas, none of these efforts managed to crack the dream of an all-in-one console: one that's as good on the road as it is hooked up to a TV.

Nintendo's Switch is meant to change all of

that. Pop this sleek machine out of its dock and you'll begin to believe. In a matter of seconds you can flit from playing *Zelda* on your telly to continuing the game in your hands. It's a pretty much instantaneous transition and one that's free from obvious side-effects, like a jarring graphical downgrade or stuttering connection.

Job done, then? Not quite. Nintendo's recent

approach to console design has been all about garish, shiny plastics, awkward button configurations and too-dim touchscreens. Or in other words, awful.

Happily, the Switch bucks that trend like a rodeo bronco. Sleek and impressively sturdy, it feels like a premium bit of kit. Which is just as well since, at \$300, it costs significantly more than a PS4 Slim or Xbox One S.

And even though its touchscreen only has 720p resolution – that's less than Full HD – it's crisp and sharp, and dealt well with all the Nintendo creations we've played so far. Whip this thing out on a train and you'll have a whole carriage of commuters peering over your shoulder in jealousy... or howling with derision should a last-minute blue shell derail your *Mario Kart* hopes.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF TABLET

The Switch is basically an iPad with controllers slapped on either side. Only it doesn't play apps and has a smaller 6.2in screen than Apple's Mini 4.

2 THE JOY-CONS ARE GENIUS



■ **WII-MINISCENT** Remember the Wiimote? These Joy-Cons are their next evolution. Packed with all the buttons you could need, while being small and light enough to tuck into your hands, they're impressively well built.

■ **WHAT A CON** Each Joy-Con can act as a separate, dedicated controller – so you don't need to shell out on an extra pair for *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* multiplayer. That's just as well, since doing so will set you back \$80. Seriously.

■ **CHOCK-A-BLOCK** Each Joy-Con includes an array of accelerometers, gyro sensors and vibration tech to allow for something called 'HD Rumble'. This can emulate sensations such as shaking a glass full of ice, because... Nintendo.

■ **GOTTA COLLECT 'EM ALL** Amassed a collection of amiibo for your Wii U or 3DS? Don't panic. That Mega Yarn Yoshi 'collectable' will interact with your Switch too, via the magic of NFC. Don't know what we're on about? It's for the best.

TECH SPECS

Display 6.2in 1280x720 multi-touch screen, 1920x1080 resolution when docked

Hard drive 32GB (expandable via microSD)

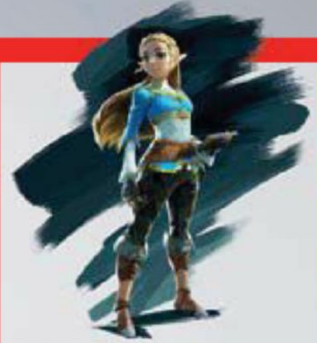
Processor Nvidia Tegra **Battery life** 6hrs

max Connectivity USB-C, HDMI, Wi-Fi



SHORT ON STORAGE

The Switch only comes with 32GB of storage. Downloading the 13.4GB-sized *Breath of the Wild* will eat up almost half of that total, so you'll want to pick up a microSD card.

**3 BREATH OF THE WILD IS ESSENTIAL**

Forget everything you knew about Zelda. *Breath of the Wild* takes a formula that was established 30 years ago and lobs it out of the window. The first open-world adventure in this saga allows you to take on its final boss only minutes after starting.

Or you could spend hours roaming around a Hyrule that's far bigger than Skyrim.

LINK'S AWAKENING

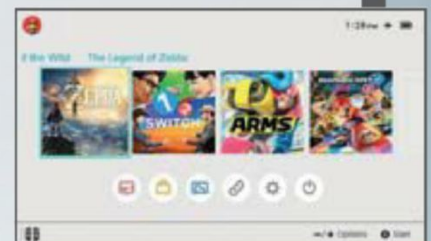
What we've played so far of *BotW* suggests it's all set to live up to its monumental promise. More importantly, there's enough story to make sure you're not just aimlessly wandering about in search of bokoblins to slay. *BotW* feels like it's going to be as significant to Nintendo as *Ocarina of Time* or *Wii Sports*: a game that will shift units, even though it's available on the Wii U as well. With a superior graphical gloss and that pick-up-'n'-play ability, there's only one console you're going to want to play the latest *Zelda* on.

THE CONSOLE**BORN TO RUN**

The Switch will live or die on its battery life, and so far it looks... OK. Nintendo claims it'll last for a minimum of three hours when playing intensive games like *Zelda*.

4 THERE'S NO NETFLIX

Nintendo has been focused on making the Switch an "amazing dedicated video game platform", which is a fancy way of saying it won't do Netflix or Amazon Prime Video at launch.



5 IT'S A HOME CONSOLE FIRST...

The Switch isn't simply a Game Boy or 3DS that you can plug into your TV; it's the most powerful console Nintendo has made. And you can play it wherever you want.

Most of the time, that'll be at home. It's where your games will look best, and you won't be constrained by any worries about battery life or whether one more go at Rainbow Road will cause you to miss metro train stop.

In this setup the Switch basically operates as a fancier version of the Wii U — only you don't have the second screen during

play. You pick up either the Joy-Con Grip or the Pro Controller and play in comfort for as long as you like. It's Nintendo's most gimmick-free console since the GameCube, and ideal for long sessions with *Zelda: Breath of the Wild*... although you're likely to miss out on oddball Wii U gems like *Captain Toad's Treasure Tracker* and *Kirby and the Rainbow Paintbrush*.

As anyone who actually owned a Wii U knows, games for it were often in short supply. By pretty much combining its home and portable development teams to work on a single machine, Nintendo is aiming to ensure Switch

owners have a constant supply of exclusives.

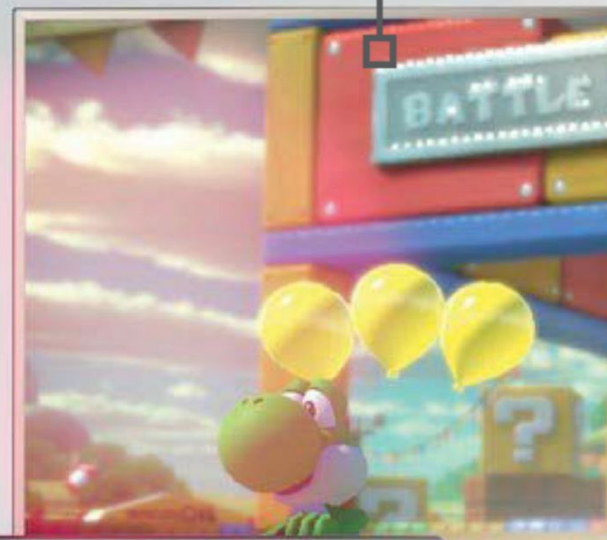
Can it compete with the PS4 Pro and Xbox One S? The Switch isn't capable of ultra-detailed 4K resolutions, and can't claim the same scale of third-party support. *FIFA* and *Skyrim* are confirmed, but the likes of *Battlefield* and *Overwatch* remain MIA.

DOCK & RUN

The dock hooks the Switch to your TV. And when you need to dash? Just pull out the tablet and you'll be playing again in seconds.

4K? NO WAY

Graphical grunt has never been an important feature for Nintendo, so it's no surprise the Switch sticks to Full HD resolution at 60fps.



6 ...BUT IT WORKS FINE WITHOUT A TV

Last we heard, *Zelda: Breath of the Wild* will clock in at around 100 hours of gameplay. That's a lot of time to be hogging the TV if your better half doesn't care a jot for the Triforce. Fear not: a handy variation on the Switch's tablet mode means you can pop up the kickstand to use its screen and a controller in conjunction while *Broadchurch* plays out in the background. This'll also work as a 'party mode' of sorts, allowing you to share out your Joy-Cons for multiplayer shenanigans like *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* and, erm, milking a virtual cow.



7 ITS CONTROLLERS ARE EXPENSIVE

■ JOY-CON CHARGING GRIP

The standard Joy-Con Grip you get with the Switch won't charge those controllers while you play. To do that you'll need to pay a whopping \$30 for a Joy-Con Charging Grip. At least the Joy-Cons last for 20 hours per charge.

■ PRO CONTROLLER

Don't fancy slapping two Joy-Cons together every time you sit down at home? You'll want the Pro Controller, despite the \$70 price tag. Essentially an Xbox One pad with added motion smarts, it's pleasingly chunky to wrap your hands around.



THE GAMES



BORN GRIPPY

The Joy-Con Grip's handles are more shallow than the Pro Controller, but it's still a decent pad. And slotting a Joy-Con into it is slick.



8 MARIO KART 8 IS BETTER THAN EVER

If you missed out on the Technicolor glory of *Mario Kart 8* on Wii U, it's been reincarnated for Nintendo's new console.

Mario Kart 8 Deluxe bundles together all its previous DLC, alongside a handful of new playable characters and a completely revamped Battle Mode.

BATTLE KARTS

That Battle Mode is a big deal as well, since it's the only banana skin the original slipped up on.

Rather than offering bespoke tracks in which you could unleash a reign of balloon-popping destruction, the Wii U's edition simply recycled ill-suited racing circuits from the main game.

That's all been scrapped now – with a selection of fresh and returning tracks, including Luigi's Mansion (from the GameCube) and Battle Course 1 (SNES).

9 MARIO'S BACK FOR CHRISTMAS

In case there was any doubt that Nintendo is going all-in with the Switch, think on this: the last time new 3D Zelda and Mario games were released on a console in the same year was on the GameCube.

Three consoles later, it's happening again in a big way. A sequel of sorts to the *Super Mario Galaxy* series, *Odyssey* will once again see your favourite

chubby-cheeked plumber mount an effervescent rescue mission to retrieve Princess Peach from Bowser's scaly clutches. According to Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto, this new instalment will ditch the pick-up-'n'-play approach of *Super Mario 3D World* and "go back to the roots" of more demanding adventures such as *Super Mario 64*. You know, the greatest platformer ever. Details

about *Odyssey* are thin on the ground so far, though. Nintendo has only released a teaser trailer, with more details to follow at the E3 gaming show in June.

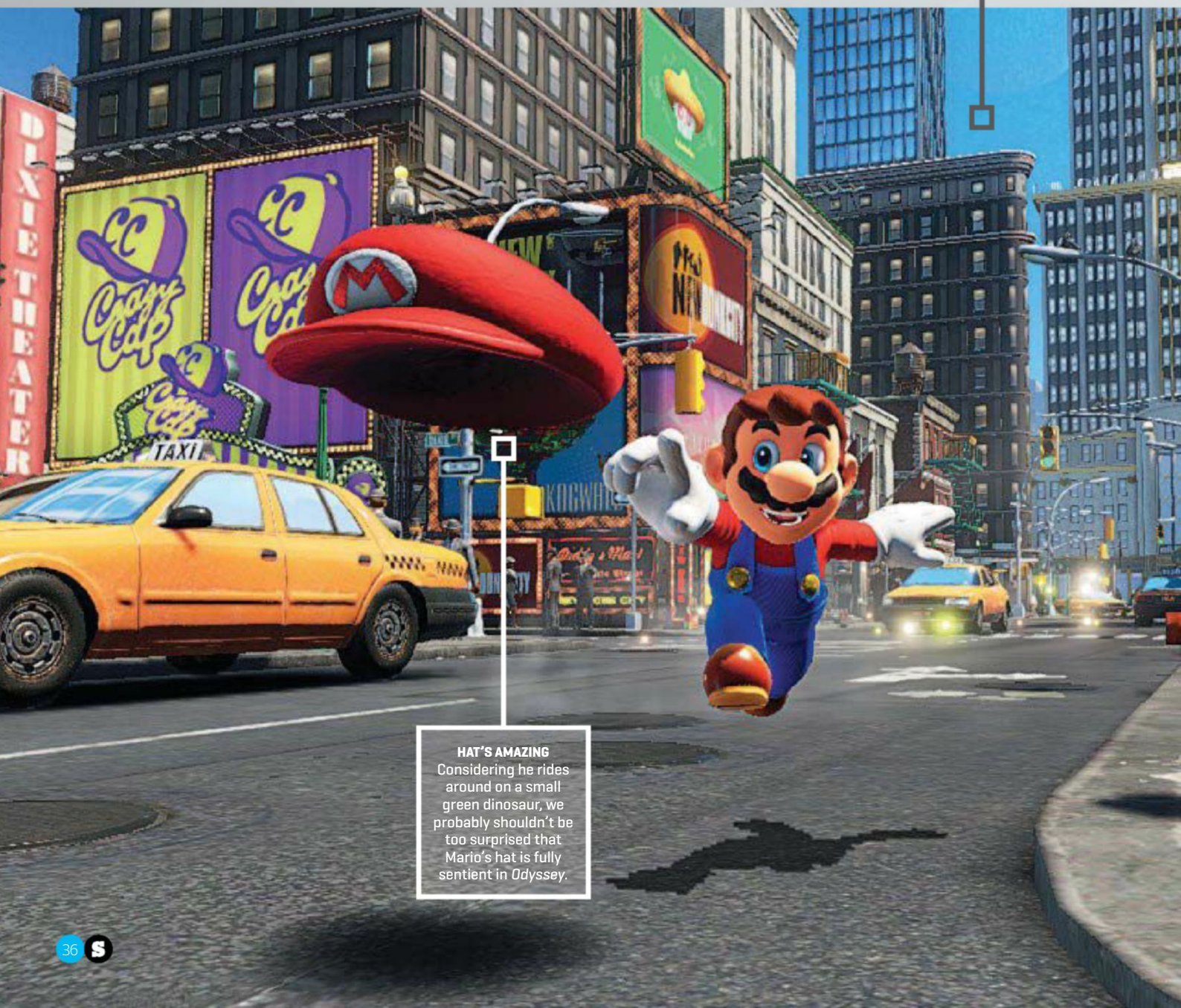
After a bit of sleuthing from that three-minute clip, we're expecting this new outing to feature a day-night mechanic, a whole new array of jumps and special moves for our moustachioed hero, a mystery involving rabbits

and a special appearance from Donkey Kong himself. Oh, and Mario will appear alongside 'real' humans in a thoroughly strange turn of events.

But while there's still a lot we don't know about *Odyssey*, it won't be long until all is revealed. The game is set for release before Santa embarks on his annual globe-trotting sleigh ride and will be the Switch's big release for the festive season.

RETURN OF KONG

Mario Odyssey will include several huge hub worlds. One of these is New Donk City, which is littered with references to the DK crew.



HAT'S AMAZING

Considering he rides around on a small green dinosaur, we probably shouldn't be too surprised that Mario's hat is fully sentient in *Odyssey*.

10 THE OTHER GAMES ARE GREAT TOO...



SNIPPERCLIPS

An adorable co-op puzzler, *Snipperclips* sees you and a friend playing as two shapes who cut each other into different shapes. What sounds a bit naff is a total joy in reality – and yet another example of why you can trust Nintendo to deliver unique games.



1, 2, SWITCH

Also known as 'the other Switch launch title', this is a collection of bonkers mini games in the same tradition as *Wii Sports* and *Nintendo Land*. Ever fancied milking a virtual cow while you stare your best mate directly in the eyes? No? Well, now you can anyway.



THE ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM

Sure, it first came out six years ago, but *Skyrim* is so massive you probably haven't finished it. Why not start questing all over again? You'll be able to slay a dragon on the bus to work, which is better than anything in *Candy Crush*.



FIFA

No console is complete without an annual dose of EA's football sim, and so Nintendo has made a big point of bringing *FIFA* to Switch. This edition is supposed to be different to what you'll play on PS4 or Xbox. Either way, you'll still be able to lead Southampton to glory.



ARMS

Another brand new Nintendo title, *Arms* is basically *Punch-Out!!* with motion controls and an even more wacky cast of characters. If you feel like swinging one at your bezzie mate, this is the best way to do it without bagging yourself a court date afterwards.



SUPER BOMBERMAN R

A retro icon comes exclusively to Switch. No, not Lara Croft, we're talking about Bomberman. Konami's most enduring character arrives on day one of the console's existence to serve up explosive multiplayer chaos.



SPLATOON 2

Before *Splatoon*, Nintendo didn't really make new games – just reimagined old ones. So when its first original franchise for well over a decade turned out to be a multiplayer shooter, we were sceptical. Then we were hooked. *Splatoon*'s concept couldn't be simpler: your team of four squid-things has to spray about as much paint possible until time runs out; whoever covers the greatest area with luminous gunk wins. And now there's a sequel...

PAINT THE TOWN RED

Lurking beneath each three-minute *Splatoon* scramble is a surprising amount of strategy. From a stealthy sniper to a gung-ho paint-roller, there are many ways to splat your team-mates to victory. So far, *Splatoon 2* doesn't seem to do much to change that magic formula; it's really a refreshed version of the first game. To ensure we get that 'one more go' obsession again, we're hoping to see voice chat, a greater array of new maps and an improved campaign mode.



STUFF SAYS NEVER UNDERESTIMATE NINTENDO

Mario's maker has been written off more times than a demolition derby banger, yet it's still here in 2017. Why? It takes big risks. The Switch is a gamble of monumental portions and – because of that – we reckon it just might work.



11

NINTY'S A SERIAL GAME-CHANGER

This new console isn't the Japanese maker's first to switch up the video game landscape: it's invented most of gaming's greatest ideas

IT TRIED VR FIRST



■ NINTENDO VIRTUAL BOY 1995

Sure, the Virtual Boy didn't exactly set the world alight, and it was more of a face-mounted monitor than a proper VR headset, but without it the whole concept could easily have been consigned to history. And it was at least halfway there, with individual screens for each eye that claimed to deliver proper 3D graphics. In reality it was a big red mess that was a strain on the eyes and an ergonomic nightmare to use. It got canned before Nintendo had time to develop a harness to make it wearable.

■ OCULUS RIFT

HTC's Vive might be our favourite VR headset, but it's the Oculus Rift that was responsible for virtual reality's resurrection. Unveiled on Kickstarter in 2012 but not released until last year, its potential was made clear when Facebook bought Oculus for US\$2bn in 2014. The future of VR is bright, even if the first-gen is far too expensive.



IT GAVE US MOTION CONTROLS



■ NINTENDO WII 2006

TV screens, chandeliers and other breakables might have suffered at the height of the Wii's popularity, but its motion-sensitive remotes changed gaming forever. The Wii could track up to four controllers and translate their basic movements into the game, meaning all you had to do to play a forehand tennis shot was swing the Wiimote in your hand. Accessories to turn it into a steering wheel, airgun-style zapper or golf club were not essential, but might have made you feel like less of an idiot.

■ HTC VIVE

The Vive makes the Wii's controller tracking look positively prehistoric. While the concept is essentially the same, its extra power means the experience is light years ahead. The Vive's two Lighthouse sensors mean you can see your hands move within VR, allowing you to physically interact with the CGI world that you've stuck your head inside.



THEN N64 ANALOGUE STICK 1996

Widely regarded as one of the best in gaming history, the three-pronged design of Nintendo's N64 controller hasn't endured but its analogue stick most definitely has. Sony added a second with its Dual Analog upgrade to the original PlayStation controller in 1997, and twin sticks are now the norm on any pad – including the Switch's Pro Controller.

NOW The two sticks on the Xbox Elite Wireless controller can be changed to add grips of different shapes and textures, with three different lengths.



THEN WAVEBIRD GAMECUBE CONTROLLER 2002

Hardcore gamers will insist there's too much latency in wireless tech, but for everyone else the convenience of snipping those cables outweighs any competitive disadvantage. Nintendo's WaveBird for the GameCube used an RF receiver that plugged into the console's controller port, but it had to make do without rumble because of the drain on battery life.

NOW Modern wireless controllers use Bluetooth.

THEN

NOW

THEN

NOW

IT INVENTED THE MODERN CONTROLLER

THEN
SNES SHOULDER BUTTONS 1990

These days shoulder buttons feel like they've always been there, but before the SNES turned up your index fingers would just hang out round the back of the controller looking for something to do.

NOW There are at least two shoulder buttons on most modern controllers, with extra customisable triggers and flippers around the back on pro pads.

**THEN**
GAME & WATCH D-PAD 1982

The plus-shaped pad that's been on pretty much every controller made in the past 35 years first appeared on Nintendo's Game & Watch range of handhelds, specifically 1982's Donkey Kong.

NOW The standard D-pad on Microsoft's Elite controller can be switched out for a flatter disc, better for pulling off rolling movements in beat-'em-up combos.

**THEN**
RUMBLE PAK 1997

Nintendo introduced vibration with an N64 add-on called Rumble Pak, which shook in response to in-game crashes, explosions and gunshots. Nowadays a pad without rumble feels a bit lifeless.

NOW The Xbox One's rumble skills are so precise it can make the individual triggers vibrate to simulate gunfire or a car losing traction underneath you.

Flyer tuck

DJI's teeny new drone folds away into a weasel's trouser pocket but is still capable of taking stupendous photos and video

US\$1099 / dji.com

Drones are getting smaller and smarter all the time, but the Mavic Pro feels like DJI's development team has jumped to warp speed nine.

Firstly, it's extremely small. Seriously, what is this – a drone for ants? This tiny quadcopter is jam-packed with tech, squeezing everything we love about the Phantom 4 into a smaller shell... and then leaving it in the dust with some truly fantastic new features. And that's before you fold the rotors away.

It's so small you can hold it in one hand – but it's faster, more intelligent and less likely to crash than anything before it.

Throw in a gimbal-stabilised 4K camera, a compact controller, a number of smart tracking modes and a load of other clever features, and you've got everything you need for pin-sharp aerial photos and video. Based on our test flights, it's clear other drone companies are going to have to step up their efforts – DJI has just left everyone else on the launchpad.



1 Packed launch

Folded up, the Mavic Pro will barely take up more room in your bag than a water bottle. When it's time to fly, flipping out the wings takes seconds. You don't even need to fix the articulated propellers in place – they'll sort themselves out through G-force.

2 All-seeing eyes

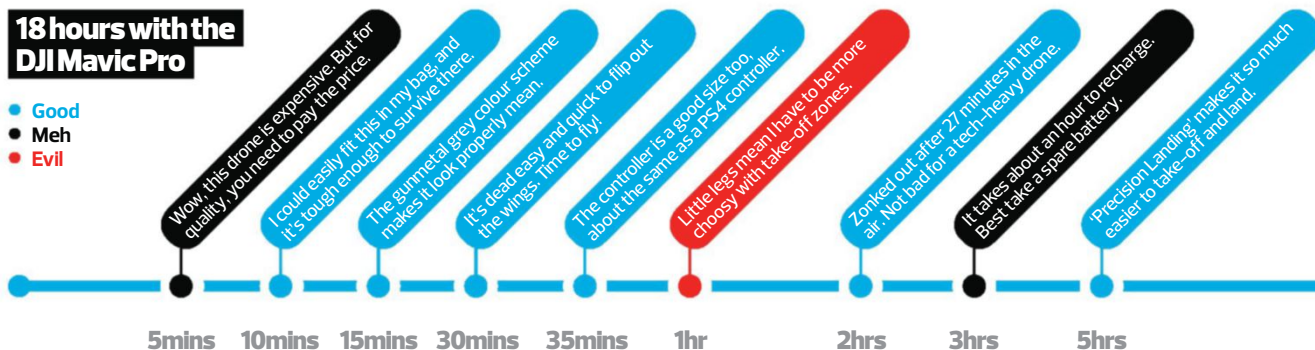
The Mavic has five cameras, including the main 12MP and 4K-recording one up front. Two front-facing cameras handle obstacle avoidance, so it doesn't end up smashed to bits. The last two cameras point downwards for the visual positioning system.

3 RAW talent

That camera is a beauty. The 1/2.3in, 12MP sensor can shoot stills in RAW as well as jpg, so you can edit them later, and it'll do 4K video at 30fps. A 3-axis gimbal keeps things stabilised, so your shots are shake-free and your videos stay smooth.

18 hours with the DJI Mavic Pro

- Good
- Meh
- Evil





4 Aerial power

The pocket-sized remote unfolds to the size of a PS4 controller, and a small LCD screen shows simple flight data. The flip-out antennas let you stay wirelessly connected to the drone from up to 7km away – and with a 1080p live video feed to your phone to boot.

5 Appy landings

You don't even need the controller for short-distance flying – just your phone. A switch on the drone toggles between remote and Wi-Fi control. Because you're using Wi-Fi instead of OcuSync, range takes a major hit, but that's hardly surprising.

Techspecs

Flight time 27 minutes
Battery 3830mAh
Maximum flying height 5000m
Max speed 40mph
Stills 12MP **Video** 4K @ 30fps
Dimensions 83x83x198mm, 734g

Watcher of the skies

We left the Mavic to do a lot of the flying itself, putting DJI's excellent tracking modes to the test



Follow you follow me

Active Track mode keeps your subject in the main camera's frame, following them automatically. The tech it uses to recognise objects has improved a lot since it first showed up.



I can dance

Terrain Follow mode lets the drone go up and down hills as it follows you. It should be great for hiking, downhill mountain biking and snow sports. And you can still pull off circle and spotlight tracking.



Carpet crawler

Another new addition, Tripod mode drops the speed dramatically but ramps up the sensitivity on the controller. DJI reckons it's ace for flying in small spaces, or for more cinematic shots.



Turn it on again

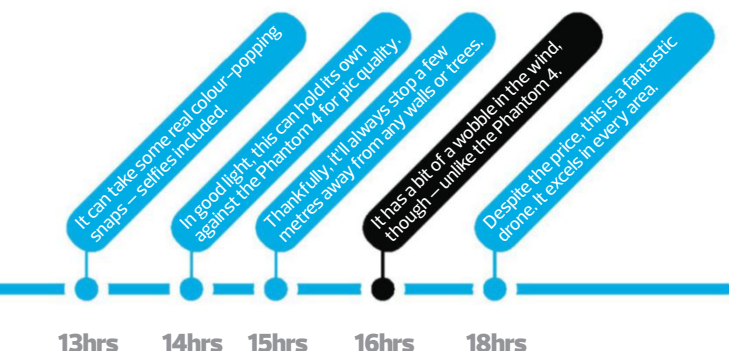
In Sport mode, it'll hit a pants-wetting 40mph at full tilt. The redesigned Intelligent Flight battery is usually good for 27 minutes of flight time, but you'll drain it a lot faster in this mode.

The Mavic is expensive, but bearing in mind it's just about manoeuvrable enough for racing, takes fantastic photos and videos, and is simple enough to fly for a novice, it really does cover everything. Unless you're a professional who needs an aerial camera platform for a hardcore video rig, this is all the drone you need.

@TomMorgan3

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

A real marvel of miniaturisation, the Mavic takes fantastic footage and is the ultimate hobbyist drone





REPUBLIC OF
GAMERS



ROG G752 BUILT TO WIN

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VRREADY

NVIDIA GeForce®
GTX 10 Series

ROG G752VS showcases the evolution of the ROG brand, with a revolutionary design finished in an Armor Titanium with Plasma Copper color scheme. With the latest 7th Generation Intel® Core™ i7 processor, discrete 10 series graphics, Windows 10 and up to 64GB of DDR4 memory, the ROG G752VS delivers gaming-dominating performance.

ROG G752VS is cooled by dual copper heat pipes and the ROG 3D Vapor Chamber for superior cooling and improved reliability. It also features a backlit anti-ghosting gaming keyboard with 30-key rollover for precise command and control in battle.

G752VS

AED 13,999

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- 17.3" 4K UHD (3840x2160) LED Screen
- NVIDIA® GeForce® GTX 1070 with 8GB • HD Camera
- Gaming bag + Headset + Gaming Mouse

G752VS

AED 11,499

- Intel® Core™ i7-7820HK Processor (8M Cache, up to 3.90 GHz)
- Windows 10 Home (64 bit) • 32GB DDR4 RAM
- 1TB HDD (5400 rpm) + 512GB SSD SATA3 M.2
- 17.3" 4K UHD (3840x2160) LED Screen
- NVIDIA® GeForce® GTX 1070 with 8GB • HD Camera
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NO.1 GAMING LAPTOP
BRAND WORLDWIDE
ASUS ranks as the No. 1 market share leader in GTX graphics card laptop



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ASUS
IN SEARCH OF INCREDIBLE

THE CHOICE OF
CHAMPIONS

BEST FOR
CYCLING
P47



BEST FOR
RUNNING
P46

WRIST ASSESSMENTS

Whether you're on two feet, on two wheels, or just had too many mince pies over Christmas, there's a fitness tracker out there for everyone

[Words Tom Wiggins Photography Matt Beedle]



BEST FOR
SWIMMING
P48

RUNNING



HITTING THE WALL

If you're using GPS and the heart-rate monitor while playing music, TomTom reckons you'll get up to five hours on a full charge. In our experience it's closer to four. This is certainly no stamina champ.

THE PRO CHOICE

TOMTOM SPARK 3 CARDIO + MUSIC

US\$230 / tomtom.com

Sometimes the only way to get yourself out of bed for your morning run is to turn it into a Rocky montage. Enter TomTom's Spark 3, which is particularly suited to music-loving pavement pounders.

Getting Eye of the Tiger onto its 3GB memory is hardly the slickest procedure (although it's definitely worth it), but once the tunes are there and you've got a pair of Bluetooth headphones hooked up — it comes with some for an extra \$30 — you can start tracking your runs with the built-in GPS and heart-rate monitor.

You can set specific objectives for each part of your run, such as fat burning, how many calories you want to crush, or what distance you want to cover.

It's certainly no Apple Watch in terms of design (the greyscale screen could be brighter and has just 144x168 pixels) or functionality (it doesn't do phone notifications), but that simplicity equals better battery life. There's no touchscreen, so a 4-way button underneath the screen controls all the functions, with vibration feedback to confirm selections — handy when you need to skip an accidentally loaded ballad in mid-run.

Once back home you can sync up your activities to the TomTom MySports app, which keeps track of all your workout data including duration, calories burned, heart rate and a map of where you actually ran.



JBL REFLECT MINI BT

Bluetooth earphones used to be unwieldy lumps of plastic that would weigh down anyone trying to run while wearing them. JBL's Reflect Mini BTs have all the wireless smarts in a lightweight pair of buds with a reflective cable, so even if you can't hear the passing cars or incoming joggers, they should be able to see you.

US\$100 / jbl.com



2XU HYOPTIK COMPRESSION TIGHTS

Some people might be put off wearing tights to go running, but consider one thing: Superman wears them all the time. And quite aside from any comic book associations, compression tights help your circulation, which helps fight fatigue and can prevent injury.

US\$80 / 2xu.com

STUFF SAYS Tough but tuneful, perfect for routine jogs ★★★★★

▼ THE PRO CHOICE

SUUNTO SPARTAN SPORT**US\$550 / suunto.com**

The Spartan shares its name with an ancient group of Greek warriors for a reason. It's a no-nonsense sports watch built for serious athletes – even if it does come with a funky blue strap.

With real-time lap tables plus power and speed, as well as heart rate (as long as you wear the bundled chest strap – there's no on-board HRM), it's packing more information here than any weekend cyclist could need. It'll play nicely with Suunto bike sensors and BLE power meters as well, in case you need even more precise tracking. Basically, if you're not doing time trials, this is probably overkill.

It's built to last too, with a super-tough steel bezel and mineral crystal glass

protecting the touchscreen. Don't expect Apple Watch–rivaling clarity and colour, though: it's a decidedly low-res affair with only a few muted colours.

You won't need to find a pocket to stash your smartphone, as it has GPS on board. Even for long-distance rides, it should survive the duration without running out of juice – in training mode, it'll keep ticking for 16 hours with GPS enabled.

And it will drop digital breadcrumbs as you cycle – so you can see where you've come and make it home without getting lost. Having to wear a chest strap to track your heart rate can be a pain, but for sheer flexibility and accuracy, the Spartan Sport is certainly tough enough.

STUFF SAYS Serious tracking that'll outlast your longest cycle route ★★★★★

**OAKLEY RADAR PACE**

Oakley's attempts to cater for your ears as well as your eyes haven't always gone well, but unlike 2004's Thump MP3 specs, these offer real-time voice-activated coaching feedback, not just tunes. As well as having sensors built in, they'll connect to power meters, heart-rate monitors and such like for more accurate monitoring. **US\$450 / oakley.com**

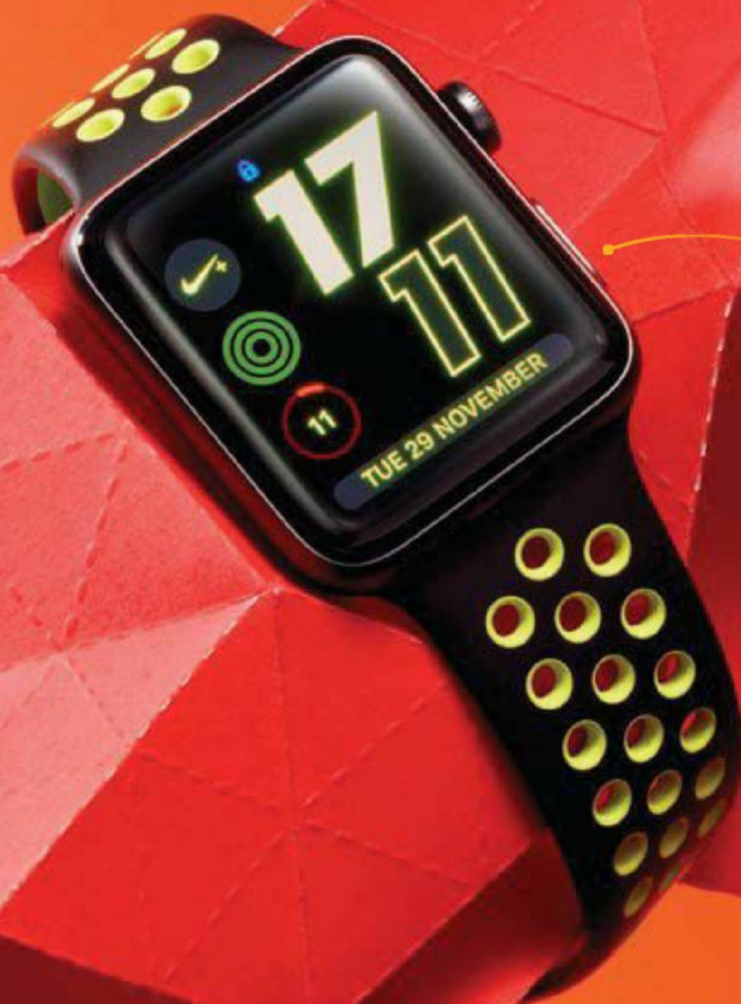
**GARMIN EDGE 820**

Garmin's latest cycling computer doesn't just record your ride on its 2.3in screen; its new GroupTrack feature means you can use it to check up on other riders using Garmin Connect – up to 50 at once. It'll hook up to speed, cadence and heart-rate sensors, so you can tell if you're more Chief Wiggum than Bradley Wiggins. **US\$400 / garmin.com**

CYCLING**ALL FAIR GAME**

Bored of cycling? The Spartan Sport has presets for 80 different sports. They're more variations on a fitness theme than parkour to kabadi, but with hiking and ski touring among them, it's got you covered.

SWIMMING



GP-YES

There are few things more enthusiasm-sapping than hanging outside your house in your running gear waiting for your watch to talk to a satellite... the Series 2 locks on in a matter of seconds.

▼ THE PRO CHOICE

APPLE WATCH SERIES 2 NIKE+

US\$410 / apple.com

Not making the original Watch waterproof was a bizarre move but the Series 2 suffers from no such aquaphobia, with both pool and open-water swims available to select from the Workout app.

The accelerometer does a brilliant job of counting strokes and lengths when pool swimming, and the speedy built-in GPS sensor produces almost exactly the expected distances outdoors. Water will interfere with the signal, though, so you'll need to let it have regular air – you might want to stick to front crawl.

The only part of the Watch Series 2 that isn't sealed off from the H₂O is the speaker – because physics – so the port will fill up when submerged. But, thanks to

a neat trick we'll call 'spurt mode', you can digitally wring out your Apple Watch by twisting the digital crown. Your Watch will spit out any liquid that's inside the speaker, leaving the sound unmuffled.

Open the Activity app and you'll find calories burned, distance travelled, average speed, average heart rate and even a map, colour-coded to immediately show you the parts of your session where you were over or under your average by 10%. You don't need this snazzy Nike+ edition of the Watch to do any of this, but it will get you some exclusive faces and a special strap with air holes that make it more flexible and more comfortable to wear when you're giving it 110%.



BRAGI THE DASH

These earphones are both waterproof and totally wireless, so you won't risk getting tangled up in cables while you're focusing on your strokes. They'll track your lengths and breaths but, more importantly, there's a music player built in, so you don't need to take your phone in for a dunking.

US\$299 / bragi.com



SPEEDO FASTSKIN LZR RACER X RACING SUITS

The drag caused by swimming in those baggy boardies might make you feel like you're working harder but it only slows you down. To achieve quicker times you'll want Speedo's compression cossies, which help you slip through the water like a greased-up penguin.

from US\$280 / speedo.com

STUFF SAYS The best smartwatch is now amphibious ★★★★★



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STANTON

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MALONE

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CANDY
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BETA YOURSELF NETFLIX

You may be only skimming over the surface of Netflix's televisual talents... **Stuff** reveals the tactics and hidden treats that will help turn you into a stream machine

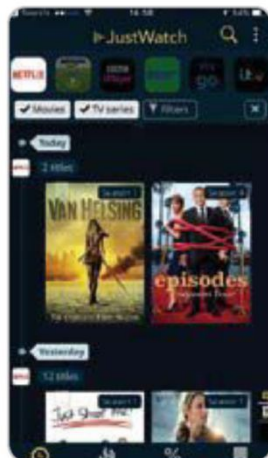
THE BASICS

■ Rate everything.

Netflix's algorithms use both your viewing history and your star ratings to serve up suitable suggestions, so remember to hand out verdicts when the end credits roll. Or do it later in one go by going to your profile's 'viewing history' in a web browser.

■ **Play with profiles.** Your kids might love *Peppa Pig's* intriguing plots, but you don't want that skewing your own recommendations away from Spike Jonze and John Woo films. It's easy to set profiles for everyone in your family, or make separate ones for movies and TV shows.

■ **Go manual.** Think you know better than Netflix's algorithms? To gain control



of the 'My List' section and start editing its running order, go to netflix.com/mylistorder and click 'manual ordering'. You can now drag and drop titles and make your own schedule.

■ **Mix and match.** Wouldn't it be great to have one big watchlist that combines your

favourite Netflix shows with the best of Amazon, iPlayer and Now TV? JustWatch (US\$free, iOS and Android) comes closest to this organisational dream, and alerts you when new Netflix shows have been added.

■ **Don't miss out.** Though you can see expiry dates in a show or film's details page, it's still easy to get caught out when titles are deleted. Follow @NewOnNetflix on Twitter for #lastchance alerts on things that are about to get the axe.

■ **Down it in one.** Netflix's downloading feature for iOS and Android devices is a godsend for flights and long commutes. Press the down-facing arrow next to shows you want and you'll find them in the 'my downloads' section.



FIND YOUR MATCH

■ **Extend yourself.** Build your Netflix watchlist in Chrome, where you can use browser extensions to pull in extra info. FindFlix and Flix Plus (both \$free, chrome.google.com) will give you access to Netflix's hidden sub-genres and Rotten Tomatoes scores.

■ **Ask a bot.** The Facebook Messenger bot AndChill (andchill.io) gives surprisingly good recommendations.

■ **Have a shuffle.** Feeling daring? Netflix Roulette (netflixroulette.com) will randomly pick your evening watch for you.





LEVEL UP WITH...



NETFLIX VR

Put on your VR headset of choice (Gear VR or Daydream), fire up this app and sit back in your cosy log cabin, complete with a snowy view, comfy sofa and massive TV. It won't be as sharp as your real 4K telly, but it's handy for avoiding scheduling arguments.

\$free / Gear VR, Daydream



YAMAHA YSP-2700

If your planning application for a full surround sound system has been rejected by your other half's interior design committee, this soundbar with wireless sub is a fine way to keep your immersive Netflix dreams alive.

US\$1199 / yamaha.com



ROKU 3

Worried about disturbing your family and/or goldfish with late-night Michael Bay explosion fests? This streamer's remote has a headphone jack, so you can plug in your cans and keep watching without getting glares at breakfast.

US\$99 / roku.com



WATCH AND LEARN

■ **Beat the buffer.** If a flaky connection is giving you the buffer wheel of death, you can tweak your streaming quality. In Chrome, press Control-Shift-Option-S and choose a lower bit-rate. On a console, pressing 'up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, up, up, up, up' will let you check connection speeds.

■ **Party on.** The Chrome extension Netflix Party (\$free, netflixparty.com) syncs playback to let people in different locations follow the action together, while a side-screen chat box lets you gossip about the actors' hair.

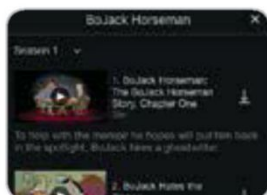
■ **Stop squinting.** Want to go all Euro arthouse but struggling to read the subtitles? Change their size, style and colour in Netflix's browser interface by going to 'your account' then 'subtitle appearance'.



NEXT LEVEL

■ **Make a Netflix button.** If you're a soldering wizard and know your way around a circuit board, you can build a one-touch button to fire up your fave show, order a takeaway and dim the lights. You'll find instructions here: makeit.netflix.com/projects/the-switch

■ **Mix it up.** Helping your parents to get started on Netflix, or just want to share your immaculate televisual taste? Log into Flixtape (flixtape.netflix.com) with your account and make a themed playlist of shows to email your lucky recipient.



GO OFFLINE

■ **Size it up.** Go to 'app settings' in Netflix's main menu to see a graph of how much storage your downloads are eating up. Download quality can be set to 'higher' (HD), but SD quality is good enough for most tablet or smartphone screens.

■ **Move to SD.** Netflix only lets you download shows to your phone's internal storage. But if you're rocking an Android phone with a microSD slot, there are some workarounds to let you get them onto a big SD card. To find out how, head to bit.ly/netflixsdcard

ROAD



The rain repellers Nike LunarEpic Flyknit Shield

There's nothing as demoralising on long runs as soggy feet, but you'll be dancing down the rainy streets in these. Though not quite puddle-proof, the Shield's high-rise upper does have a water-repellent coating to keep your feet dry. They even come with a set of 4mm sockliners.

US\$240 / store.nike.com



The road warriors Adidas Ultra Boost

We've long been fans of Adidas's bouncy Boost foam, and these new kicks marry them with a sock-like Primeknit upper. The soles pack all the usual energy-returning smarts – and if they get you running faster than usual, the Continental outsole will help keep you glued to the road.

US\$180 / adidas.com



The smart trackers UA SpeedForm Gemini 3 City RE

Not everyone wants to carry a 6in smartphone in their running shorts, which is why these Under Armours have a built-in Bluetooth pod to do all the tracking for you. They also have a new 'Jump test' feature to gauge when you should run next based on muscle fatigue.

US\$160 / underarmour.com

TRAIL



The rugged types Roclite 290

At just 290g the Roclites remain light, but still offer the water-resistant protection of a trail shoe with god-like grip in the sole. The claw-shaped cleats are made from a rubber compound that serves up constant traction even on varying terrain like rocks, wet grass and mud.

US\$120 / inov-8.com

UPVOTED RUNNING TRAINERS

Whether you're after some training kicks or race-ready speedsters, **Stuff** has the shoes for you



The mountain hoppers S-Lab XA Alpine

Is it a welly? Is it a running shoe? The Alpines are actually a hybrid of the two, combining the best waterproof and heat-retaining parts of a watersports bootie with the grip of a trail shoe. Whether you're climbing mountains or crossing a river, they'll keep your feet warm and cosy.

US\$250 / salomon.com

RACING



The bargain blasters Brooks T7 Racer

Lightweight on build and price, the unisex T7 Racers are ideal for shorter races. You get a streamlined upper for a snug fit and a 12mm heel-to-toe drop, which makes them a good fit for those with high arches. They're also vivid yellow to emphasise your bright prospects at the start line.

US\$85 / brooksrunning.com



The PB enablers Asics Metarun

Like the trainer equivalent of a concept car, the Metaruns pack all of Asics' latest tech into one pair of stunning and inevitably pricey racing shoes. The long list of features includes a super-light midsole foam and an exoskeleton that promises to 'remember' your fit.

US\$250 / asics.com



The all-rounders New Balance Vazee Pace V2

Striking a good balance between support and spaciousness, these racers come in colour schemes that lean towards the bold.

Still, your feet won't mind when the breathable airmesh forefoot is keeping them cool on a hot race day, while your toes will appreciate the roomy interior.

US\$120 / newbalance.com

HOW TO DECIDE

1. Light or cushioned?

The first stop for road runners is getting a gait analysis, which is available in most running shops. This will reveal whether you need a neutral, supportive or motion-controlling shoe.



2. Trail or road?

While trail shoes will work on roads, the soles will quickly wear down. Similarly, road shoes will soon feel like ballet slippers in muddy fields. Pick your style based on local terrain and race targets.



▼ The planet savers

Adidas Futurecraft BioFabric

What makes these golden kicks worthy of their futuristic name? They're made from a synthetic version of spider silk called Biosteel, which is completely biodegradable. Once you've finally ground down their Boost soles, you can grab a sachet of enzyme solution and dissolve them in your sink. Magic.

[US\\$180 \(due late 2017\)](#) / [adidas.com](#)



3 How high?

While minimalist trainers are temptingly light, their low 'drop' (the height difference between heel and toe) means it's best to transition into them gradually.

4 Back-up plan

It's best to avoid walking around all day in your new running trainers, as the two motions are biomechanically different. A separate pair of trainers is a great option for day-to-day comfort.

The MacBook heir?

Stuff spends 14 long, geeky days finding out if Asus's latest lightweight stunner is ready to be crowned the new king of the Ultrabooks

US\$1900 as reviewed / asus.com



DAY 01

Picking a lightweight laptop used to be easy. Short on cash? Grab a Chromebook. Got a bit more spending money? Tough to get better than a MacBook Air. But that's not true any more. Apple seems to have abandoned the Air to starve in the cupboard under the stairs, lavishing all its love on the ultra-thin (and ultra-expensive) MacBook. It opens the door for another brilliant ultraportable to go up

against that 12in looker... and Asus is hoping that will be the ZenBook UX390UA.

Taking it out of the box, it's clear that this little Asus is a stunner. The one we're testing looks fantastic in shiny blue aluminium and gold accents. Some distinctive design choices set it apart from the likes of the MacBook, with a brushed concentric circle design on the lid. It looks ace and glints

in the light – it instantly looks like a more expensive machine.

The all-aluminium shell weighs in at no more than 980g and is 11.9mm thick – skinnier than the Macbook, but 60g heavier. That's not much, but every gramme counts when you're trying to shed as much weight as possible for on-the-go working.

DAY 05

After a whole day of typing, I'm relieved to say that the keyboard hasn't given me any finger cramps. That's not to say it's perfect – it's on the wrong side

of spongy – but you still get enough travel in each key to type comfortably without filling your files with typos. There's also a full keyboard backlight, so I can still see which keys I'm hitting once the sun's gone down.

The touchpad has two built-in buttons and a huge glass surface that lets your fingers glide across with the smallest hint of friction. The fingerprint sensor lives in the top-right corner of the trackpad, and while it works well enough (it usually unlocks to the desktop in less than a second) the placement renders that portion of the trackpad useless.

Distinctive design choices set this Asus apart – the concentric circle design on the lid makes it look instantly expensive



Tech specs

Display 12.5in
1920x1080 FHD
OS Windows 10
Processor Intel
Core i7 **RAM** 16GB
Storage 512GB
SSD
Connectivity
USB 3.1 type-C x1,
headphone jack,
Wi-Fi, Bluetooth
Battery life 9hrs
Dimensions
296x191x11.9mm,
0.98kg



DAY 07

If you like to listen to music as you work, it's good to discover that this Asus has a decent pair of speakers. Crank the volume and you'll expose the lack of bass, but c'mon – anything more would be breaking the laws of physics: this is a slim laptop, not a hi-fi. There's also a headphone jack (yay!) but in classic Macbook-aping style, that's basically it. You do get a solitary USB-C port for charging, with a dongle in the box for HDMI and traditional USB connectivity.

DAY 10

Where the Zenbook 3 falls down in comparison to the Macbook is in screen resolution. Apple's laptop boasts a 2304x1440 display, while the Asus can only manage 1080p, and for that price it stings a little. Luckily, the display is still pretty good-looking; bright enough for outdoor use, and Netflix and YouTube videos pop.

Battery life is also solid, typically lasting a full workday – even sometimes having enough juice left back at home before needing to be plugged in. Our tests using a looping HD video gave a not unimpressive nine hours and 30 minutes on a single charge which is nothing to turn your nose up at.

DAY 12

With a dual-core Intel i7 CPU and 16GB of RAM on board, the UX390UA handles just about every basic job you can lob at it. The i7-7500U is an energy-efficient chip, though, so don't expect masses of power. You'd need a crazy number of browser tabs open to slow it down, but do anything fancy with 4K video and it'll feel the heat.

If you're looking for a gaming machine, this laptop isn't for you. There's no fancy Intel Iris graphics card here. It's enough for older, less demanding games, but only if you drop the resolution down to 720p. That Full HD panel would be hard work for a top-end laptop GPU, but here it makes new games unplayable. No trouble if you just want a *Minecraft* fix, though.

DAY 14

OK, it might be a basic clamshell laptop – a decidedly retro concept in 2017 – but Asus has added enough tricks and talents to help the UX390UA stand out. It's by all accounts and purposes more powerful than a fully tricked-out Macbook, but then you're ponying up extra for the privilege. If you want a lightweight Win 10 machine, then this is a good shout.

STUFF SAYS

Apple style and prices: Asus offers a sleek ultraportable Windows 10 alternative

★★★★☆

Pixel packed: A 4K TV with all the fixin's

This flagship Panny may not be a plasma, but it's got all the right UHD grunt to play ball



Panasonic TX-65DX900

US\$3500 / panasonic.com

Panasonic ought to be very proud, the TX-65DX900 is a cracker of a telly. It can handle 4K Ultra HD resolution and HDR, but the DX900 also meets the stringent criteria for UHD Premium and THX certification. Plugging in a 4K source into this 65in monster reveals fine detail in the picture quality. HDR? Piece of cake. This is a

bright panel with excellent local dimming, and contrast is extreme when necessary. We're not big fans of the Firefox OS (or the fact that you'll need a wide cabinet to place it on) but are willing to forgive for how great our games and movies look.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★
A great big TV that does 4K and HDR justice.

JARGON BUSTER

HDR

While 4K is your TV's resolution, High Dynamic Range is the contrast it's capable of. Think deep blacks and dazzling whites.

INPUT LAG

The time a TV takes to respond to your console's instructions. The more powerful a set is, the quicker it can update its pixels.

NITS

A measurement of light output, not those pesky hair-crawlers. Most UHD Premium TVs are at least 1000 nits bright.

PANEL BIT DEPTH

You want a 10-bit depth, which means your TV can reproduce 1024 shades for every primary colour.

Quick, call 911

Porsche Design screeches into the high-end smartphone race with a luxury version of the Huawei Mate 9 – and it's not just a pretty logo



US\$1430 / huawei.com

■ The regular Huawei Mate 9 is a great phone with a massive 5.9in screen and a \$600-ish price tag. This is not a regular Huawei Mate 9. You might think you're paying your life savings for the name across the top, but you'd be wrong – it's a very different handset.

■ The skinny 7.5mm body wears a stylish near-black hue and is carved from a single sheet of brushed aluminium. Gorilla Glass 4 with a factory-applied screen protector covers the more compact 5.5in screen, which has curved edges. There's no water-resistance, mind.

■ The fingerprint scanner sits on the front of the phone, sneaking round from its usual place on the rear of other Huaweis. There's no button, just a recessed pad that offers lightning-fast responses.

■ Despite having a smaller screen than the original Mate 9, this model packs in more pixels – 2560x1440. It's an impressive display to rival any other high-end phone. The display barely bends at the edges at all, which you'll like if you find Samsung's Edge curves distracting.

■ Like the HTC 10 Evo, this is an Android phone with the maker's own software layered over the top. Critics have long griped that Huawei tarts up the OS too much, but now there's an option to make EmotionUI feel more like normal Android.

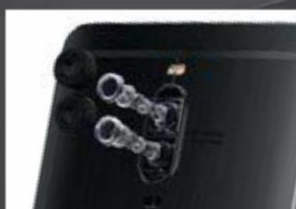
Techspecs

Screen 5.5in 2560x1440 OLED
Processor Octa-core Kirin 960 @ 2.4GHz **OS** Android 7.0 with EmotionUI **Cameras** 12MP colour & 20MP B&W rear, 8MP front
RAM 6GB **Storage** 256GB, non-expandable **Battery** 4000mAh
Dimensions 152x75x7.5mm, 169g



■ High horsepower

Powered by a Kirin 960 processor with four super-fast Cortex-A73 cores and four A53s, the Porsche Mate 9 is a beast when it comes to performance. Gaming is pretty great with the Mali-G71 GPU.



■ Speed camera

The Porsche phone retains the standard Mate 9's 12MP colour sensor paired with a 20MP B&W one, but Huawei has improved the processing of images to keep down visual 'noise' levels.



STUFF SAYS One of the best phones ever made... at a completely insane price ★★★★★☆

The best phone
you almost
certainly
shouldn't buy

You'd have to be a bit mad to buy this phone ahead of the Samsung Galaxy S7 Edge. In fact, you can get it without the Porsche name for less than half the price in the shape of the Huawei Mate 9 Pro. Having said that, if money is no object (or your phone carrier offers some decent financing options) then this is a premium luxury handset worthy of any gadgeteer.

App:roved

FOR
NEWSY
NERDS

● Hyper News

Do you spend commutes playing sardines in a train-shaped tin, cursing your mobile provider for peppering your route with dead zones? If so, Hyper News might be just the ticket (not literally – you still have to buy one of those). This app downloads news videos when on Wi-Fi for offline perusal later. The snag: the content is a bit US-biased. But the videos are smartly designed for phone use: short, sharp, and well captioned so you don't even need blaring audio to enjoy them.

Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$free / iOS

FOR
WARPY
WARRIORS

● Time Locker

So you thought vertical shooters would be a mite easier if you could freeze the action? Time Locker suggests otherwise. In this dazzling low-poly world of heavily armed critters, everything moves only when you do... except for a relentlessly encroaching darkness. Initially disorientating, the action nonetheless feels fresh. And it grabs hold as you learn to play with time, slowing to weave through enemies, and risking blazing ahead when bosses are in hot pursuit.

Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$free / Android, iOS

FOR
AMBIENT
AUTEURS

● Korg iWavestation

Continuing Korg's apparent desire to get every one of its classic synths on to iOS, here's a slice of 1990s weirdness. The original Wavestation was lauded by everyone from Depeche Mode to *X-Files* theme composer Mark Snow. This was down to the lush, evolving, soundscapes you could trigger by prodding a single key, before morphing sounds by twiddling a joystick. The iOS take is authentic, nailing that distinctive sound – but it's a bit brain-smashy to fully master.

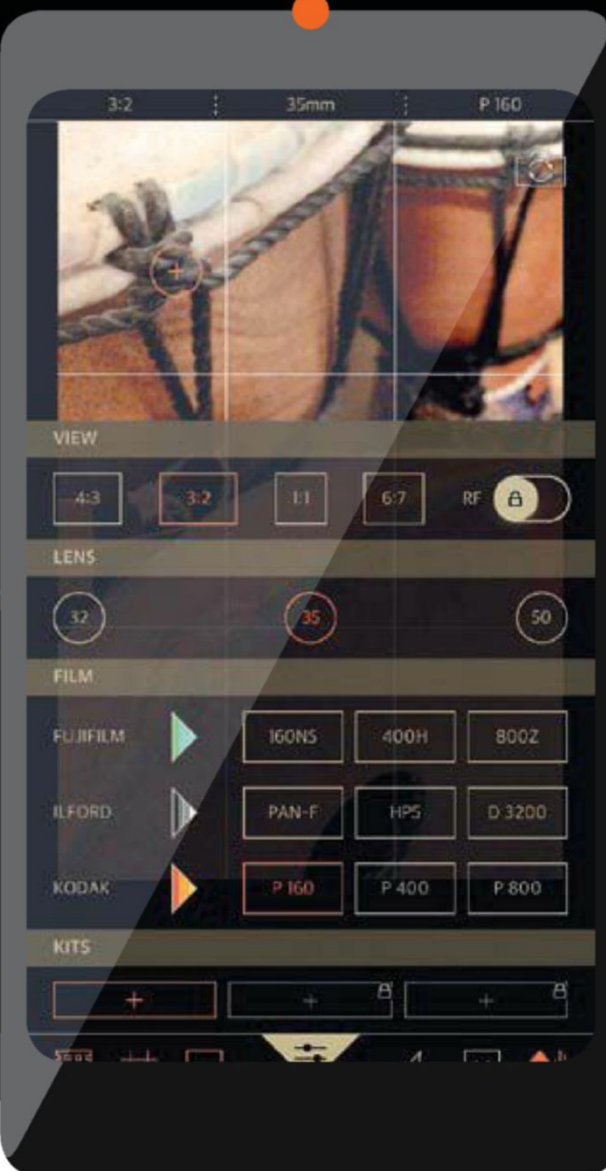
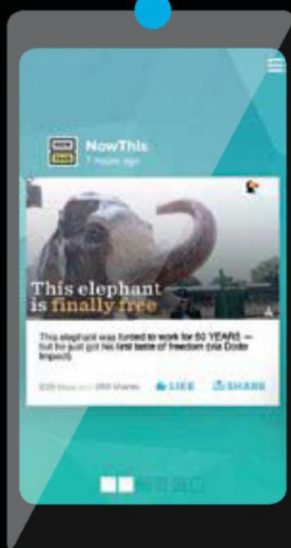
Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$15.99 / iOS

FOR
STYLISH
SNAPPERS

● Filmborn

This latest stab at bringing analogue photography's charms to digital is full of great ideas. The icon-heavy interface flows nicely, and each of the digital film types is distinct, providing potential for unique results. Neatly, the app offers tips for best use and handy tools to improve digital snaps, such as clipping warnings, a rangefinder and editing of curves. Some of these require IAPs, but even in its free incarnation, Filmborn's a must-download for iPhone photographers.

Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$free (IAPs) / iOS



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PS4, Xbox One, PC /
stuff.tv/ResEvil7

Resident Evil VII

How do you make gaming's most notorious horror series even more terrifying? Just add bloodthirsty rednecks and whimpering first-person claustrophobia...

Hordes of undead shamblers have been chasing our brains across games, movies and TV shows so regularly in recent years that they barely register so much as a shiver any more. A murderous family of rednecks with a twisted idea of hospitality, though? That's enough to give you nightmares for weeks, especially when you're meeting them face to face.

And Capcom has nailed it with the first-person perspective here. Every room feels constrictive, with

overflowing detritus and ruined furniture blocking your path. It doesn't help that everything is so dark, with your tiddly torch barely illuminating a few feet in front of you. Sometimes you'll open a door, take a peek inside, and "Nopel!" all the way back to your last save point.

The Baker family are a looming presence, each member stalking you through his or her own part of the house. It's these moments of tension, listening out for footsteps as head of the house Jack hunts for

you, taunting and calling out your name as you hide, where *Resident Evil VII* really shines.

Eventually you'll stop playing hide and seek and have to take a stand against each member of the Baker clan – and it's here that *Resident Evil VII* feels weakest. The clunky controls tend to conspire against you at the best of times, but when you're in a confined arena they just feel unfair.

In the final act, things take a turn for the action-packed, with large

battles you've got no choice but to fight your way through. It all feels rather rushed towards the end, losing a lot of the tension in favour of wrapping up the story.

That doesn't take away from the rest of the game, though – it's a fright-fest that feels familiar and fresh at the same time. That first trip through the Spencer mansion still resonates with us today, and something tells us we're going to be feeling that way about the Baker compound in ten years' time.

Tom Morgan

STUFF SAYS Back-to-basics shocks and scares bring a return to form for the series ★★★★★



Ammunition is a precious commodity, so missing a shot can be fatal.

VCR tapes provide exposition on the terrifying Baker family.



VR coming for you

Resident Evil VII is one of the first full-length games that gives you the choice of playing with or without VR. And if you've got the PlayStation VR hardware, you'll want to be wearing that headset. It makes an already scary game truly pant-wetting.

This is partly because of that old horror game favourite, the jump scare. There are more than a few – and when they're happening mere inches from your face, they're sure to have the desired effect.

Aiming weapons is done through head tracking, so you can be a little more accurate with your shots, but movement is slowed down slightly – which can make boss battles that much trickier. We ended up switching back to the TV to finish one particularly awkward section, but the headset went straight back on afterwards.

The gorgeous visuals do take a bit of a hit when playing on PlayStation VR, but you'll be so concerned with ducking from Marguerite's lantern that you just won't notice.





Media hoard

Since the events that defined 2016, putting politics and horror next to each other suddenly seems quite natural

WATCH

Miss Sloane_cinema

Hollywood has developed a habit of taking subjects as dry as a bowl of muesli in a drought and turning them into gripping films – think journalism in *Spotlight* or the financial crash in *The Big Short*.

Its latest is lobbying; the dark art of attempting to influence the decisions of people in power. Elizabeth Sloane (an intense Jessica Chastain) is the pill-popping, no-nonsense superstar of this murky world, who puts up so many emotional walls she'll probably have Donald Trump's architects on the phone.

After being approached by the NRA to help them block a tightening of American gun laws, Sloane jumps ship to the company trying to see through the bill's safe

passage, taking half of her team with her. You can probably guess the rest.

Like Keyser Söze in *The Usual Suspects*, only Sloane knows the secret of how this will all unfold – and just as the film starts to lag a little, it ramps up the jeopardy and espionage. In fact, on a couple of occasions it stretches things a little too far.

Miss Sloane reaches for a few dramatic zingers but at times the script is so clunky it takes everything the actors have not to lose their footing. Even in Sloane's heels Chastain has the chops to handle this; the supporting cast aren't so lucky.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Prevenge_cinema

The excellent Alice Lowe wrote, stars in and directs this gruesome, laugh-out-loud tale of an expectant mother who hears the murderous voice of her unborn child. The bloodthirsty baby sends her on a deadly rampage, although not without continuing to attend her regular antenatal check-ups. She's not totally mad.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Train to Busan_Blu-ray, DVD, VOD

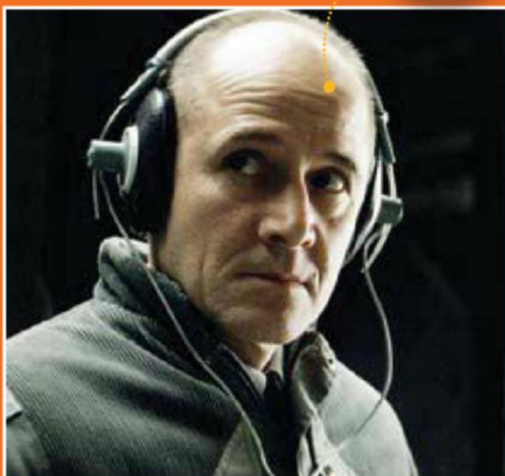
Travelling on Southern trains might be a nightmare right now, but at least they aren't full of zombies. Divorcee Seok Woo and his daughter Soo-an aren't so lucky when they catch a train and find it overrun by the undead. There's plenty of social commentary here, but it's just as easy to sit back and enjoy the ride.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

STREAM

LISTEN



The Lives of Others

When Stasi officer Gerd Wiesler starts listening in on the day-to-day business of an East German playwright, he hears more than what his subject is planning to have for tea. But instead of discovering a plot to overthrow the government, the state snooper soon realises he's merely being used as a puppet in a personal grudge held by one of his superiors. Wiesler's

influence on the lives of the writer and his girlfriend starts to shift. *The Lives of Others* weaves a gripping story, but it wouldn't be half as good without the brilliant performances of its central characters.



Bridge of Spies

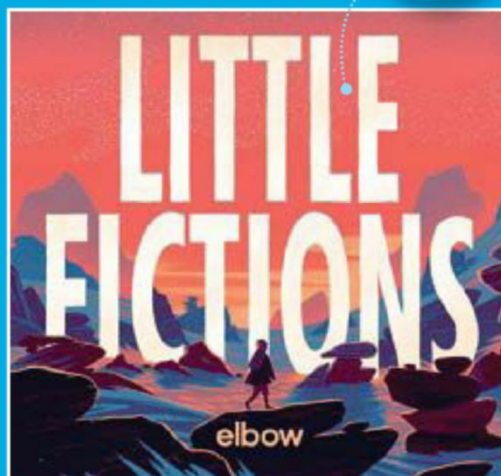
The dream team of Hanks and Spielberg is reunited, with Hanks playing the conduit in a spy-swapping deal between the US and the Russians in the late '50s.

The Conversation

Sandwiched between the first two *Godfather* films on Francis Ford Coppola's rather impressive CV, surveillance thriller *The Conversation* is riddled with paranoia.

Argo

The true story of a hostage rescue disguised as a sci-fi film shoot takes a few liberties with the facts, but it's almost worth watching for Batfleck's luxurious beard alone.



Little Fictions _Elbow

Elbow are often maligned for the overplaying of *One Day Like This*, but beyond that slice of montage-friendly schmaltz they're a band with an uncanny knack of tapping into a British way of thinking – there's even a track here called K2 that's far better than a song that could be called a Brexit anthem has any right to be.

Little Fictions is a record of subtle melodies and multi-layered percussion,

and the low-key instrumentation on songs like *Head for Supplies* and *Montparnasse* puts Guy Garvey's incredible voice front and centre – the latter track filled with the kind of knock-you-sideways lines that the frontman has made his trademark. But it's the title track that will live longest in Elbow's setlists.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Impressions

_Tall Ships

Coming more than four years after *Tall Ships'* last album, *Impressions* is their most energetic and mainstream record to date. This writer misses some of the weirdness of old, but the charming combination of the earthy, spiritual and cosmic remains in the lyrics and raises *Tall Ships* above the Britrock pack.

Tom Parsons

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Sick Scenes

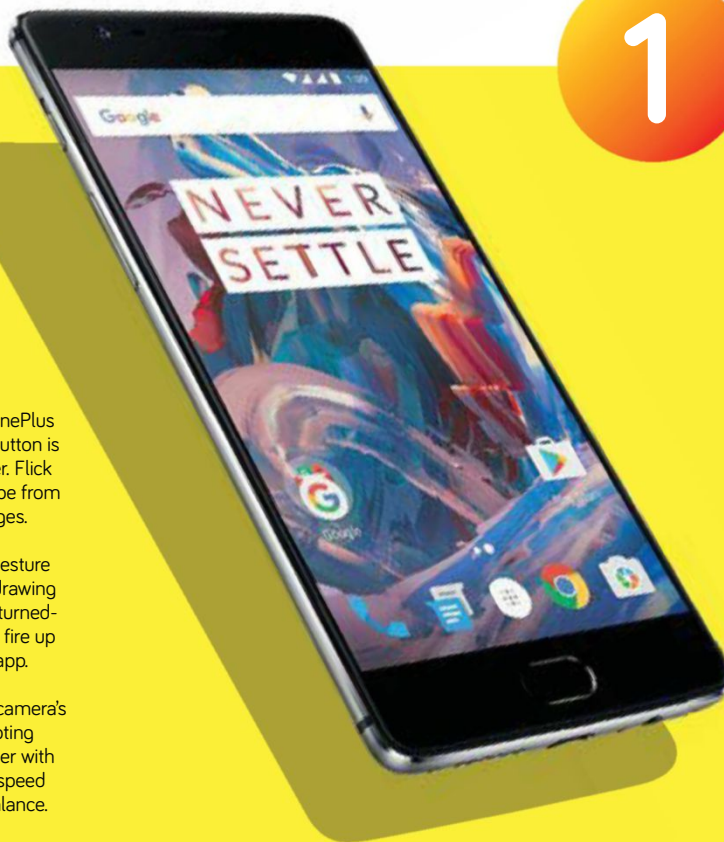
_Los Campesinos!

There's an art to matching an upbeat sound with downbeat lyrics, and on their sixth album *Los Campesinos!* come close to nailing it. Singer Gareth Paisey is still fighting his demons in *I Broke Up in Amarante*, while *A Slow, Slow Death* finds him "face-down in a puddle" – yet musically they're more dynamic than ever.

Marc McLaren

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

POLITICAL THRILLERS



1

HOT BUY

OnePlus 3

US\$435 / oneplus.net

Once again, OnePlus has swanned in with a \$400-ish phone that offers a true alternative to some costing more like \$700. The tech is as aggressively packed in as ever, but this is also the best-looking, most expensive-feeling OnePlus phone to date. If an extra \$300 is nothing to you, there are slightly better screens and cameras available. But last time we checked, most of our readers like a good deal. This is an unbeatable one.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A big, brilliant bargain of a phone that's going for half the price of its rivals



● **NOW ADD THIS** Rosewood case

The OnePlus 3 may be perfect for skinflints, but keep your frugal sensibilities to yourself with this luxe-looking wood and Kevlar case. US\$30 / oneplus.net

TIPS & TRICKS

- Above the OnePlus 3's volume button is an alert slider. Flick it up to escape from work messages.
- Try out the gesture controls by drawing an 'O' on its turned-off screen to fire up the camera app.
- Turn on the camera's manual shooting mode to tinker with ISO, shutter speed and white balance.

2



Samsung Galaxy S7

US\$680 / samsung.com

The Galaxy S7 looks a lot like the old S6 but has been improved all round, not least with an excellent camera. The Edge edition offers enhanced battery life, but pound for pound this model is actually the better buy. It sets a high bar for Samsung's competitors.

Stuff says ★★★★★

An imperious update of our favourite phone from 2015

3



Apple iPhone 7 Plus

from US\$770 / apple.com

The new 7 and 7 Plus look almost identical to last year's models, except for the glossy jet black option and Lightning headphone output. But they're waterproof, processing power and battery life have been improved, and the Plus gets a tasty dual-lens camera.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The best iPhone camera, screen and battery: there's no better iOS choice

4



Huawei Mate 9

★★★★★ US\$625 / huawei.com

A 5.9in display in a body no bigger than an iPhone 7 Plus? Yes please! The dual-snapper is ace, too.

5



Samsung Galaxy S7 Edge

★★★★★ US\$800 / samsung.com

Basically the same phone as the standard S7, but with a nifty curved screen and superior battery life.

6



HTC 10

★★★★★ US\$650 / htc.com

This handset barely puts a foot wrong and has the battery life to survive the most impromptu pub trips.

7



Apple iPhone 7

★★★★★ from US\$650 / apple.com

Forget the headphone furore; the iPhone 7 is a slick update packed with worthwhile new features.

8



LG G5

★★★★★ US\$680 / lg.com

The first smartphone to do modular design in a big way – the scale of the G5's ambition is breathtaking.

9



Sony Xperia XZ

★★★★★ US\$625 / sonymobile.com

Sony's back with a flagship to rival the best of 'em. A 5.2in slab of good looks, with a 23MP camera to boot.

10



Apple iPhone SE

★★★★★ from US\$450 / apple.com

The cheapest iPhone packs all the power of the iPhone 6s into the 4in shell of the iPhone 5s.

● Prices quoted are for handset only unless otherwise stated

1

HOT
BUY

Apple iPad Pro 9.7

from US\$599 / apple.com

The iPad Pro 9.7 takes everything we loved about Apple's original 12.9in Pro tablet, makes it a lot more portable, and then even adds in a few cool extras of its own. The True Tone display, for example – which changes intensity and colour balance automatically based on ambient conditions – is an absolute marvel, while the 12MP shooter is frankly overkill for those brave enough to use it out and about. It's expensive, yes, but quality comes at a price.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Incredible power, superb features and flawless design: the iPad Pro 9.7 is pure tablet perfection

2



Apple iPad Mini 4

from US\$399 / apple.com

Just the right size for a great portable entertainment hub, while subtle display tweaks do great justice to games and graphic novels alike. Plus it will easily last three days on a charge.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The best small tablet you can buy right now

3



Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 8.0

from US\$300 / samsung.com

A top 8in Android tablet that packs loads of fab features into a small, lightweight design. It's ace for reading magazines, playing games and watching films, while still being easy to hold in one hand.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Small but mighty, this is a seriously good tab

4



Google Pixel C

★★★★★ from US\$500 / store.google.com

Turns out the future of laptops looks a lot like Google's Android hybrid tablet.

5



Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 9.7

★★★★★ US\$500 / samsung.com

With a brilliant screen and serious stamina, this is our favourite full-size Android tablet.

1

HOT
BUY

SoundMagic E10C

US\$50 / soundmagicheadphones.com

With the SoundMagic E10Cs you get fantastic sound for the money, a quality cable and plenty of ear tips – and unlike the E10Ss, you don't need to tell these buds whether you're plugging into an (old) iPhone or an Android phone. In truth, there's still nothing out there that can topple SoundMagic as the king of cheap headphones, but the E10Cs prove that it is still possible to improve on something good without hammering up the price at the same time.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A phenomenally good pair of headphones for the price, plus the remote now works with every phone

2



B&O Beoplay H9

US\$570 / beoplay.com

Memory foam ear cushions and a uber-stylish design make these cans from the Danish masters easy on the eyes. But it's their wireless, noise-cancelling chops and stellar sound quality that make them worth it.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Premium cans for the audio connoisseur

3



AKG Y50BT

US\$150 / akg.com

Proof that good wireless sound doesn't have to cost the Earth, these serve up truckloads of detail, with a full charge promising 20 hours... and with none of the hiss or popping that's often a glitch of Bluetooth headphones.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Just the ticket for your iPhone 7

4



Bowers & Wilkins P5 Wireless

★★★★★ US\$300 / bowers-wilkins.com

The brand's first foray into wireless brings luxury for your ears inside and out.

HOT
BUY

5



Bose QuietComfort 35

★★★★★ US\$350 / bose.com

These wireless QCs are high on clarity and spaciousness: perfect for a long-haul journey.

BUY ONE GIVE ONE

Donate products to refugees around
the world with Emirates Red Crescent



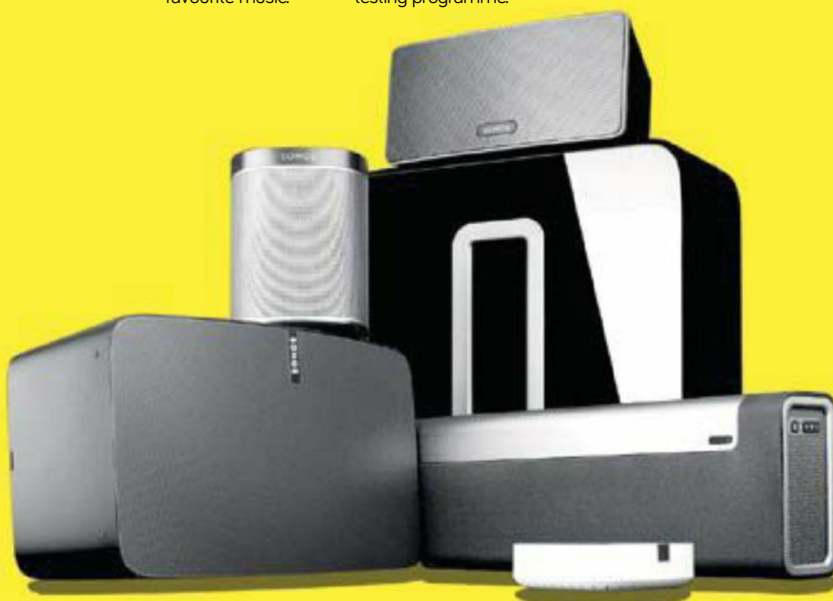
Available at Virgin Megastore
Mall of the Emirates | The Dubai Mall
virginmegastore.ae

1

HOT
BUY**TIPS & TRICKS**

Head into the Sonos app's settings menu and you can set an alarm using your favourite music.

Don't mind a few bugs? Get Sonos updates early by signing up to its beta testing programme.



Sonos multiroom system

from US\$199 / sonos.com

If you want to pretend your favourite band are playing in your living room, there's no better option than a Sonos wireless speaker. They look great, work with your smartphone and, most importantly, boom out your tunes with dazzling finesse – from the compact Play:1 (\$199) to the flagship Play:5 (\$499), a speaker redesigned from the ground up last year.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Infinite music in every room without the need for custom installers? Sign us up!



● **NOW ADD THIS Spotify Premium**
Sick of playing your iTunes library on repeat? Sign up to Spotify for more new music than you could ever possibly listen to.
\$9.99/month / spotify.com

2



Naim Mu-so
US\$1400 / naimaudio.com

How much for a wireless speaker?! Well, yes, but what a wireless speaker it is. Naim has ploughed all of its high-end hi-fi experience into delivering a beautifully made, great-sounding device with AirPlay, Spotify Connect and aptX Bluetooth all on board.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A wireless speaker that can make a valid claim to be genuine hi-fi

3



KEF Muo
US\$299 / uk.kef.com

The KEF Muo sounds as good as it looks, which is very nice indeed. It may be the size of a beer can but it creates a room-filling sound, brilliantly balanced and packed with vim and vigour. The Muo has the audio solidity of the B&W T7, but with even greater detail.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Portable Bluetooth at its best, with premium sound and design

4



Naim Mu-so Qb

★★★★★ US\$1000 / naimaudio.com
Complements its big brother's more refined character with a confident presentation.

5

HOT
BUY

Google Chromecast Audio

★★★★★ US\$35 / google.com/chromecast
Stream Spotify to your old hi-fi with this smart and highly affordable dongle.

6



Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin Wireless

★★★★★ US\$6999 / bowers-wilkins.com
This is the ultimate wireless speaker for the streaming-savvy audiophile.

7



Bowers & Wilkins T7

★★★★★ US\$349 / bowers-wilkins.com
There are a million portable Bluetooth speakers in the world, but few better than the B&W T7.

8



Monitor Audio Airstream S200

★★★★★ US\$299 / monitoraudio.co.uk
It may look like a floppy skyscraper, but this takes up little space and makes lovely noise.

9



Cambridge Audio Go

★★★★★ US\$180 / cambridgeaudio.com
It sounds awesome, it's really well built and its battery lasts a massive 18 hours.

10



Yamaha MusicCast

★★★★★ from US\$199 / aeyamaha.com
Yamaha's multiroom system offers a range of options from soundbars to clock speakers.

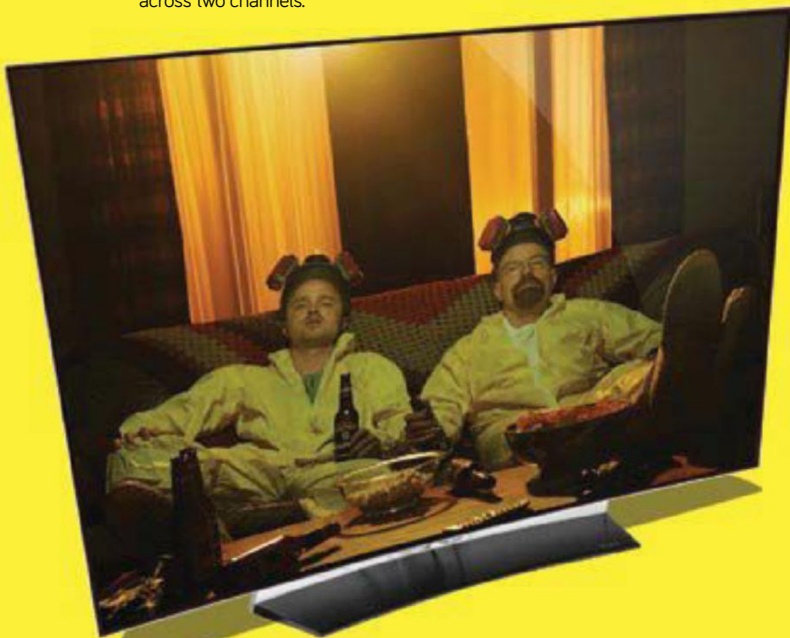
1

HOT
BUY

TIPS & TRICKS

Torn between *MOTD* and *Mr Robot*? LG's WebOS 3.0 lets you split your screen across two channels.

Want to watch Netflix in 4K? You'll need to opt for its Ultra HD package.



LG OLED55C6V

US\$3000 / lg.com

A truly stunning television. LG's OLED panel can go blacker than most TVs and will dazzle your senses with its brightness; it offers sharply etched detail, excellent viewing angles and solid HD upscaling. It also boasts support for both HDR standards – HDR10 and Dolby Vision – so you'll be able to watch compatible content from Amazon, Netflix and UHD Blu-rays regardless of which format wins out in the future. If you've got the money, this is the 4K TV to own.

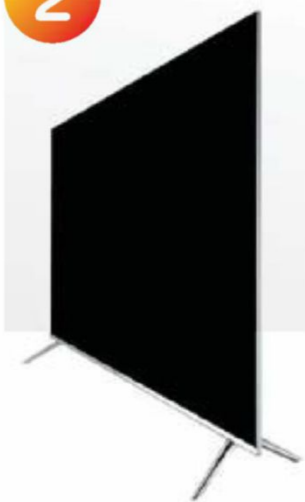
Stuff says ★★★★★

Packed full of tech, with jaw-dropping performance to send you into TV reverie

● NOW ADD THIS PlayStation 4 Pro

A fine games console and the first to offer 4K gaming. Grab yourself a copy of *Uncharted 4* and you'll see how much difference 4K makes to gaming, from US\$400 / playstation.com

2



Samsung UE60KS8000
US\$1600 / samsung.com

This set sprinkles extra stardust on top of its 4K and HDR brilliance in the form of 'Quantum Dot' tech, which claims to offer over a billion colours. The result? An impressively refined performance, and most of the benefits of a top-of-the-range TV at a fraction of the price.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A real winner, and significantly cheaper than some of its rivals

3

HOT
BUY

Sony 55XD93D
US\$2000 / sony.com

This Sony ticks every box for a thoroughly modern TV. You get the full 4K and HDR package in a set that's large but not ridiculous for the average living room. Indeed, for a 55in TV, it's as svelte as we can imagine. It looks great and performs, if anything, even better.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A whole lot of superbly performing 4K HDR TV for your money

4

LG OLED65E6V

★★★★★ US\$5600 / lg.com

A regal TV that excels across the board. There are few better you can buy at any price.

5

Samsung UE55KS9500

★★★★★ US\$2100 / samsung.com

Stunning performance for the money, proving there's plenty of life in LCD yet.

6

LG OLED65G6V

★★★★★ US\$7500 / lg.com

A superb specimen of technology and design, with one of the best pictures we've ever seen.

7

Panasonic TX-58DX802

★★★★☆ US\$1600 / panasonic.com

One of most stylish tellies we've seen in ages, with a great 4K HDR picture and punchy sound.

8

Panasonic TX-65DX750B

★★★★☆ US\$2100 / panasonic.com

This 65in Panasonic is tempting, but falls slightly short on brightness and colour bit depth.

9

Hisense 55K321

★★★★☆ US\$750 / hisense.com

Even if its Full HD picture quality leaves a little to be desired, this Hisense is still a bargain.

10

LG 55LA850W

★★★★☆ US\$3000 / lg.com

Excellent picture and clever, app-stuffed smart TV hub. Shame about that crazy pricetag.

HOW TO BUY A TV

You're ready to invest in the greatest glowing rectangle of them all: a new telly. Here's how to navigate the minefield of acronyms and jargon...

JARGON BUSTER

HDR

Stands for High Dynamic Range. Compatible tellies will deliver great subtlety and detail.

OLED

These screens have self-illuminating pixels, creating stunning contrast... at a price.

Input lag

This measures (in milliseconds) how long the TV takes to respond to signals.

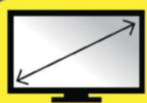


TV GUIDE

1 Size it up

Big can look brilliant, but you will need to put some distance between yourself and your new TV, otherwise you'll start to pick apart the picture. With 4K TVs you can sit a little closer.

● Get this: **Sony KD-65ZD9**
sony.com



Optimum viewing distance is 1.6x your screen size (HDTV)

2 Judging panel

Now plasma has been consigned to that big recycling bin in the sky, there are only two TV technologies battling for supremacy: LCD and OLED. The latter is limited to 55in or 65in sizes, and you can expect to pay a premium compared to the LCD equivalent. However, OLED's wafer-thin designs, deep blacks and wide viewing angles could swing your decision.

● Get this: **LG OLED55C6V**
lg.com

3 Time to 4K out?

There's still life in Full HD tellies – they're a good shout if you're after an affordable second screen for a bedroom or kitchen. But if your budget is north of \$1000 and your sights are firmly set on 4K services, it's a no-brainer. Although the leap in quality from HD to Ultra HD isn't as huge as the jump from SD to HD was, you can still see a real difference.

Get this: **Samsung UE49KS8000**
samsung.com

4 Curved or flat?

If you need to squeeze your set into the corner of a room, the curve can help slot it into place. Picture quality is affected by seating position, though. If you're going to be sat straight in front, right in the curve's sweetspot, video can look amazing. But if your seats are flung out to the four corners of your living room, images can appear distorted.

● Get this: **Samsung UE55KS9000**
samsung.com

5 Be smart

As with smartphones and tablets, different TV manufacturers use different operating systems for their sets. The Firefox OS system used by the majority of Panasonic's 4K TVs is clear and concise, not to mention quick and responsive. You'll also need to check the basics, such as which on-demand and catch-up services are supported.

● Get this: **Panasonic TX-65DX750**
panasonic.com

EXTRA FEATURES

NOW ADD THESE

● A SOUNDBAR

A full surround system isn't always viable, but a good soundbar like the Yamaha YSP-2700 can get close. It has all the 4K-compatible HDMI inputs you could ever need.

● A 4K BLU-RAY PLAYER

If you want the ultimate picture, you should consider investing in an Ultra HD Blu-ray player. The Panasonic DMP-UB900 serves up a brilliant display.



1

HOT
BUY

TIPS & TRICKS

Siri on MacOS Sierra allows you to search for photos on the web and your laptop, then drag them into apps.

Save on space by getting your Mac to optimise its storage. This will reduce the clutter from big files.



Apple MacBook Pro

from US\$1300 / apple.com

Apple didn't change too many parts of the MacBook Pro for its 2015 update, but given how good the Pro already was, that's enough to keep it right at the top of our honours list. There's a new trackpad and the latest generation of Intel CPUs, which deliver better stamina as well as lots more power. If you need speedy processing as well as long battery life and portability, this is one of the best laptops money can buy.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Performance and trackpad are top of its class, though it's due an upgrade now...



● **NOW ADD THIS** Western Digital My Passport Wireless Pro
This 3TB wireless hard drive is easy to set up and packed with features.
US\$399 / store.wdc.com

2

HOT
BUY

Dell XPS 13

from US\$800 / dell.com

The original XPS 13 was already a great lightweight laptop, but now Dell has given it a Windows 10 refresh. If the last one was the thinking person's Ultrabook, this is that and a whole lot more. With improved battery life and performance, it's hard to beat.

Stuff says ★★★★★

An excellent Windows 10 Ultrabook, small in size and great in stature

3



Dell Chromebook 13

from US\$430 / dell.com

This Dell brings quality construction together with horsepower that outclasses almost every other Chromebook on the market. The price is roughly double that of similar devices, but the Dell 13 offers a true 'laptop experience' for the extra cash.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Not the flashiest laptop, but the top-notch screen is a stunner

4



Asus ZenBook UX305

★★★★★ from US\$1100 / asus.com

This is a better portable job than the MacBook Air, with a fetching design and premium display.

5



Apple MacBook

★★★★★ from US\$1300 / apple.com

Aside from an extra hour's battery life, the 2016 MacBook isn't that different to the previous one.

6



HP Spectre 13

★★★★☆ from US\$1250 / hp.com

Until recently the world's thinnest laptop – but this machine still has serious power to spare.

7



Asus X555LA

★★★★☆ from US\$400 / asus.com

This bargain crams in a Core i5 processor, 8GB of RAM and a responsive trackpad. Impressive.

BARGAIN
BUY

8



Apple MacBook Air 13in

★★★★☆ from US\$1000 / apple.com

If a portable road warrior is what you're after, this slinky MacBook remains a great choice.

9



Microsoft Surface Book

★★★★☆ from US\$1600 / microsoft.com

Shorn of its initial bugs, the Surface Book is a lustrous Windows hybrid with luxe appeal.

10



Acer Chromebook R 11

★★★★☆ US\$280 / acer.com

This Chrome-tab hybrid is tiny enough to carry everywhere, and super-flexible.

1

HOT
BUY

Apple Watch Series 2

from US\$369 / apple.com

Last year's Apple Watch was already the best smartwatch to date; now it's found its focus. The Series 2 devices come with an array of upgrades – more power, a brighter screen – along with a greater emphasis on fitness functions without a phone in tow. Both GPS and waterproofing make this a far more compelling gadget for exercise obsessives. No alternative is as fast or as well made, or has the same quality and quantity of bespoke apps.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Apple's small tweaks and renewed sports focus add up to make the Series 2 a watershed wearable

1

HOT
BUY

Garmin Vivoactive HR

US\$250 / garmin.com

Garmin has a frankly bewildering array of fitness trackers and outdoorsy GPS watches, but the Vivoactive HR is the one you really want. It's packed to the gills with long-lasting, easy-to-use and rewarding fitness cleverness. That means it contains the daily step and sleep tracking that you can get in other bands costing under a ton, but also the optical heart-rate monitor, touchscreen display and smartphone notifications that you'd normally pay more for.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Not super-stylish, perhaps, but crammed with sensors, sports and stamina: a fab all-round fitness tracker

2



Pebble Time Steel

US\$160 / pebble.com

It's very similar to the Pebble Time, but the extra Gorilla Glass 3 on the front makes the Steel a bit less damage-prone; and the bonus battery life means it'll last for a solid week of proper use.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The Time Steel is the best Pebble you can buy

2



Fitbit Flex

US\$80 / fitbit.com

Fitbit's cheapest wrist strap packs a lot of tech into a comfy rubberised band. The only real complaint we have is that Android support is so far patchy, but it's a cracking iPhone companion.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A fun way to squeeze more exercise into your life

3



Fitbit Blaze

US\$200 / fitbit.com

Almost as much a fitness tracker as it is a smartwatch, the Blaze delivers accurate heart-rate tracking, multi-sport modes and a lovely interface – even if its design won't appeal to everyone.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The Blaze is built to be an ace workout buddy

3



Apple Watch Series 2

from US\$369 / apple.com

More than a smartwatch now, Apple's addition of GPS and waterproofing to the new Watch means it's well worth considering as a fitness tracker. Plus you get plenty of stats to pore over.

Stuff says ★★★★★

This will motivate you to get more active

4



Garmin Vivomove

★★★★☆ US\$150 / garmin.com

Free up a space on your wrist – this is everything you need from a fitness watch.

4

BARGAIN
BUY

Moov Now

★★★★☆ US\$60 / moov.cc

Not just a tracker but a trainer, offering guided workouts with voice coaching.

5

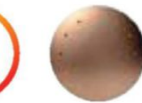


Samsung Gear S2

★★★★☆ US\$300 / samsung.com

The rotating bezel is a genius bit of design. Needs more apps, though.

5



Misfit Shine

★★★★☆ US\$99 / misfit.com

The Shine is a \$99 tracker that feels anything but cheap. Its app isn't great, however.



PHOTO



VIDEO



**EQUIPMENT
RENTAL**



**STUDIO
RENTAL**



WORKSHOPS



**DRONE
RENTAL**

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Light House Studio is a Photography, a Film Production and a Rental House based in Dubai. We offer a wide range of products and services to cater to your needs. We are equipped with state-of-the-art facilities that cater to both Photography and Film Productions with dedicated editing suites.

Facilities include an en suite dressing room, make up area, meeting and creative space reception area and bathrooms. Light House Studio can help your online presence grow with our wealth of experience in Photo, Video, Production and Content Creation.

1

HOT
BUY

NEW



PlayStation 4 Pro

US\$400 / playstation.com

As a gaming platform, PlayStation 4 is the best around — which makes the PS4 Pro the best of the best. Games optimised for the new console look stunning on a 4K HDR TV, and are substantially improved by the extra grunt inside this slightly bigger machine. If you've already splashed out for a 4K HDR screen and you enjoy video games at all, it's well worth the upgrade. The missing 4K Blu-ray drive means it isn't a perfect entertainment system, but streaming converts won't care.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The system for console gamers who have a 4K TV and want the best gaming experience possible



Xbox One S

from US\$400 / xbox.com
Microsoft dumps Kinect, the \$400+ asking price and the fugly power brick to create a supremely enticing console that also has a 4K Blu-ray player. It remains a serious alternative to the PS4 Pro.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A fine console with some big exclusive titles



PlayStation 4 Slim

US\$300 / playstation.com
This is the old PS4 squeezed into a 20% smaller package, and it still delivers an awesome console gaming experience. But if you see a 4K TV in your future, you're better off saving for the PS4 Pro.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Better than the old PS4 in almost every way



HTC Vive

★★★★☆ US\$800 / vive.com
Our VR headset of choice offers a completely new way to experience gaming.



Oculus Rift

★★★★☆ US\$600 / oculus.com
Oculus got there first, but the Rift can't beat the Vive for VR immersion.

MAKE A MICROSOFT HOLOLENS FOR \$30

Microsoft's 'mixed reality' headset is a bit spendy at \$3000, but you can get a flavour of its power for a pittance with this Google Cardboard-like tribute:

- **Get a ZapBox.** First, you need a cardboard headset for your phone that lets you play virtual mini golf on your lounge floor. That's the ZapBox (\$30, kickstarter.com), which is due to ship in April and includes everything you need for stripped-down AR, including cardboard controllers.

- **Place your point codes.**

These are the markers that the ZapBox app will use to map your room and place objects. Once these are in position, your similarly coded handheld controllers will be ready to interact with them.

- **Move the sofa.** All done?

Put your smartphone in the ZapBox headset and you'll be ready to play its free games, including ZapBrush and mini-golf. Congrats, you've made the first step towards building a holodeck.



CUSTOMISE YOUR AIRPODS

Apple's white AirPods aren't to everyone's tastes. Here's how to tweak their colour and theft-proofing:

- **Give them a paintjob.**

Whether you fancy giving your AirPods a matt black look or a full turquoise makeover, the Grafexpressions store has a generous range of skin overlays. Each pack comes with two spare stickers plus a matching one for your charging case (from \$6, bit.ly/airpodoverlays).

- **Make a cunning disguise.**

Apple has kindly made the AirPods' charging case look like a pack of dental floss, so all



you need to add to throw thieves off the scent is one sticker (\$4, bit.ly/airpoddisguise). Your dentist will be impressed too.

1

HOT
BUY

Fujifilm X-T2

US\$1599 / fujifilm.com

The X-T2 is an excellent lesson in how to upgrade an already great gadget. The X-T1 was itself a brilliant camera, so Fuji gave it superb video and autofocus skills to go with the already top weatherproof build. Sure, it's pricey, but it's also worth every penny. What you're getting here is a camera that approaches high-end DSLRs for speed and rivals pretty much any camera for image quality, so it's a truly superb all-rounder.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A dream of a camera that barely strays from perfection from start to finish – and has brilliant 4K video skills

1

HOT
BUY

Sony DSC-RX100 IV

US\$949 / sony.com

Yes, admittedly it's rather expensive for a compact, but then the high frame rate, fast burst mode and 4K video recording aren't to be sniffed at. You probably won't be using them every day, but they're great options to have at your fingertips. The RX100 IV is also a premium point-and-shoot that offers all the flexibility and all-round performance you could ever need. If it's a compact camera you're after, and your budget's big enough, then this is the one to go for.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A pocket rocket compact with almost no compromises: the perfect companion for your system camera

2

Sony A7R II

US\$3199 / sony.com

The A7R II combines impeccable build quality with a class-leading full-frame sensor, 5-axis image stabilisation, a huge ISO range, super-fast autofocus, an excellent viewfinder and 4K video recording.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The finest camera Sony has ever made



2

Panasonic Lumix LX100

US\$799 / panasonic.com

This is one of the most capable premium compacts on the market. It can capture 4K footage, but its superb stills and HD video performance are what make the Panasonic stand out.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A star performer when it comes to the basics



3

Canon EOS 80D

US\$1199 / canon.com

Even a child would get great results with the 80D – it's the photographic equivalent of playing FIFA 17 at Barcelona, on full auto mode, against Burnley. This takes the hard work out of getting fantastic photos.

Stuff says ★★★★★

If you want simplicity, you won't get much better



3

Sony RX10 III

★★★★★ US\$1499 / sony.com

One of the best all-rounders we've ever seen, capable of handling everything you could ask of it with aplomb. If you're looking for a high-performance camera without the hassle of interchangeable lenses, this is it.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The best bridge camera you can get



4

BARGAIN
BUY

Fujifilm X-T10

★★★★★ US\$799 / fujifilm.com

The X-T10 beats most other choices at any price. It also handles beautifully.



4

Panasonic Lumix FZ1000

★★★★★ US\$899 / panasonic.com

Incredibly versatile – a fixed-lens camera capable of shooting fantastic stills and video.



5

Canon EOS 5DS

★★★★★ US\$3699 / canon.com

A fantastic piece of kit that any pixel-peeping SLR fan will get heaps of enjoyment out of.



5

Fujifilm X70

★★★★★ US\$699 / fujifilm.com

A very nice little camera with a big sensor delivering excellent image quality.



4DX™

Absolute Cinema Experience

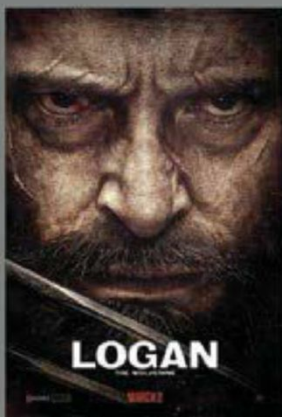
VOX
CINEMAS سينما

Get into the action.

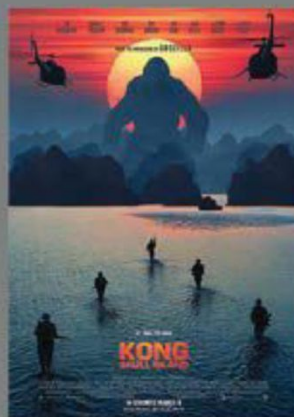
LOCATIONS:

Cineplex Grand Hyatt, City Centre Ajman, City Centre Deira, City Centre Fujairah, City Centre Mirdif, Mall of the Emirates, Marina Mall (Abu Dhabi) and Yas Mall (Abu Dhabi)

WATCH THESE BLOCKBUSTERS IN 4DX!



LOGAN: THE WOLVERINE
MARCH 2



KONG SKULL ISLAND
MARCH 9



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
MARCH 16

For more information or to book tickets, visit voxcinemas.com, VOX apps or box office.



NEXT BIG THING?



EMOTIONAL GAMING

O

h no. Are you going to bring up the time I cried when my Companion Cube died in *Portal*?

Er, no. Wait, you cried? That's so pathetic... actually, we did too. But we digress. The 'emotional' thing isn't about games that cause you to laugh or cry. Instead, the idea behind it is to create games that adapt and react to your emotions. Imagine a dialogue-driven game like *Mass Effect*, but instead of picking from preset on-screen responses, the game could select the narrative based on your emotional reaction to the action.

That sounds creepy. I'm not one for probing.

Thankfully there's no need for any *Matrix*-style needles prodding your grey matter. All you need is a wrist-worn wearable designed to measure your emotions, which are then fed back to compatible games. The Ankkoro is one such device. It's got a built-in heart-rate sensor and a galvanic skin sensor that detects your sweat levels based on the conductivity of your skin. Of course, sweating buckets and an increased heart rate are symptoms of both love and terror, so there's a clever algorithm involved to detect which emotional state a player is in.

Clever, yes. But real? I doubt it.

The Ankkoro isn't ready for mainstream release, so we understand your caution. But the sensors are all there, and we're told that several years of research with a cognitive neuroscience lab took place to help develop it. Obviously, clever tech is nothing without the software to support it, so we'll have to wait and see if game developers jump on board too. As for us? We're keeping our fingers crossed for a survival horror game in which the monsters can hear the sound of your frantic heart beating away, and then slowly crawl towards you...

[Words: Esat Dedezade]

CAN'T WAIT FOR THE NEXT ISSUE! LOG ON TO STUFF.TV/ME

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BEST MEETS BEST REACH NEW HEIGHTS

VR EXPERIENCE
ENHANCED

*7820HK vs 6700HQ, Test result may vary on different config

25%▲▲▲



GT83VR Titan SLI



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| GEFORCE[®] GTX 1080 SLI / 1070 SLI | MECHANICAL RGB BACKLIT KEYBOARD |
| SWITCH BY CHERRY MX SPEED SILVER | VR READY | NAHIMIC VR | ESS SABRE HiFi |
| Hi-RES AUDIO | AL ALLOY CHASSIS DESIGN | SUPER RAID 4 | COOLER BOOST TITAN |
| DDR4-2400 | NVMe M.2 PCIe SSD | THUNDERBOLT[™] | KILLER DOUBLESIGHT PRO |
INTEL INSIDE[®]. EXTRAORDINARY PERFORMANCE OUTSIDE.



WHERE TO BUY

MSI.COM



Lucky star
www.luckystardubai.com
9714-3514445



Computer Care
www.computercaredubai.ae
9714-3595910



Royal Focus
argdistribution.com/argphp/
contactus.php
9714-3593469



Virgin
www.virginmegastore.ae
9714-3414353



Apple Plus
www.redapple-me.com
9712-5592677

*Product features and specifications may vary by model.

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InfinityEdge display. Only from Dell.

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Use your laptop like a tablet.

XPS 13 2-IN-1

