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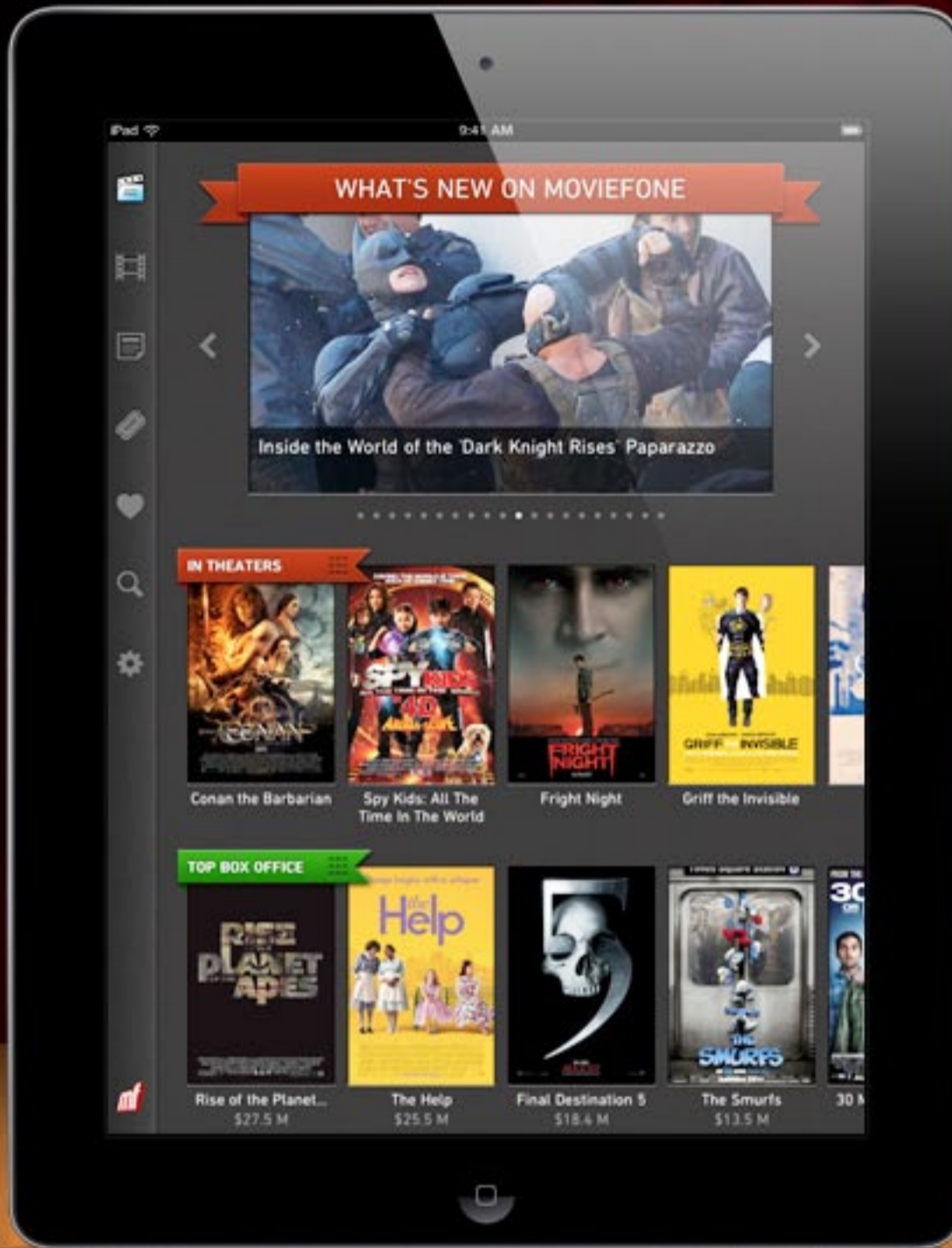


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A Compressed Look Back at the News that Shaped the Industry

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DISTRO Issue #20...

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By Sharif Sakr

SWITCHED ON The 2011 Switchies

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By Don Melanson

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CRAPGADGETS The Top 10 Crappiest Crapgadgets of 2011

By Engadget Staff

CE-OH NO HE DIDN'T The Year in Corporate Mudslinging

By Engadget Staff

2011 YEAR IN REVIEW » [Technology_In_2011.zip](#)

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PREDICTIONS Engadget's 2012 CES Preview

By Engadget Staff

» *ESC*

Q&A TechnoBuffalo's Jon Rettinger

LAST WORD Tech Stories You Didn't Hear About in 2011

By Box Brown

*Photo Illustration Cover/
this page: Stephen Webster*

A Look Back



Editor's Letter

This is the end, beautiful friend. This is the end of 2011, an odd year not only in number. Twelve months of highs, like the release of the Galaxy Nexus and Transformer Prime, and lows, like the effective termination of Palm and the tragic passing of Steve Jobs. The biggest head-turner of the year, though, was the sheer number of devices. ¶ Never before have we seen this number of gadgets thrown at us — we couldn't swing by any random Tuesday evening media event without taking home a couple of groundbreaking new smartphones and a new tablet or three to boot. Samsung in particular embarked

upon an all-out assault on the market, niche warfare of a scope we've never seen before. Pick any mark on any ruler and Samsung had a slate or smartphone for you. Between the Galaxy S II and Galaxy Nexus, it pretty well covered every carrier worldwide, too.

Apple, meanwhile, had a conservative year — but it must be said an incredibly successful one. It all started with the iPad 2, which, believe it or not, has only publicly existed since March. Other highlights this year include the only mildly refined yet vastly superior MacBook Air and the iPhone 4S, a device that is likewise similar to its predecessor though rather less progressive.

For me, the device that takes the cake is the ASUS Trans-



former Prime. It doesn't shatter the world in any one category, but manages something few other gadgets could: it, like the Air, offers considerably better performance and battery life. I hope these two set a trend that continues through the new year; mobile devices are fast enough, their screens big and

bright enough and their wireless data rates more than adequate. It's time for a major step forward in battery life.

That's my hope for 2012, but before 2011 goes you get one more issue of Distro, featuring a compendium of highs and lows from throughout the year, like some of the most quotable CEO statements and miserably bad devices. We're also looking back at the good things, with an overview of the top stories of the year from Engadget, some of the best reading from around the web and Ross Rubin's Annual Switchie Awards. We also have Q&A with TechnoBuffalo's Jon Rettinger and, for those who like to look ahead, a few predictions for what's to come at the International Consumer Electronics Show. So take a break from laying out those 2012 resolutions, pour yourself one last glass of eggnog and have a look at the year that was. d

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink.

TIM STEVENS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF,
ENGADGET



Shocker! Tablet Ad Requests Are Up

The Weekly Stat

Good news: All those new tablets you see reported on these pages aren't being stolen by elves; they're entering the human population at large and — most Christmassy of all — they're displaying ads. Google told *TechCrunch* that its AdMob platform saw eight billion ad requests from tablets during the month of November, compared to one lonely billion back in December 2010. Total AdMob requests amount to roughly three billion per day, however, so tablet advertising is still sugary froth compared to that on smartphones. — *Sharif Sakr*

THE 2011 SWITCHIES

Switched On



BY ROSS RUBIN

It's that special time of year between the post-holiday sales and the pre-CES hype that presents an opportunity to consider some of the most innovative devices of the year. Switched On is proud to present the *Saluting Wares Improving Technology's Contribution to Humanity* awards, also known as The Switchies. This year marks the sixth annual Switchies, which are decided based on a rigorous examination of the opinion of me, and do not reflect the opinion of Engadget or its editors. For that latter honor, nominees will need to win an Engadget Award. Let's roll out the red carpet, then. ¶ The *"Brand New Convertible"* and *Product of the Year* award goes to the ASUS Eee Pad Transformer Prime. The first quad-core Android tablet, the Prime represented a refinement of ASUS' original Transformer, which debuted earlier in the year. Its detachable keyboard dock accessory addresses one of the key issues consumers have with tablets, the occasional need for a physical keyboard, while also adding a battery boost, SD card reader, and an increasingly useful USB port.

The **"Easy Call to Make" Award for Best New Smartphone** goes to the Samsung Galaxy Nexus. Actually, this was not an easy call to make, with many strong introductions during the year. However, the Galaxy Nexus' large display and LTE support, and, of course, the introduction of the Android 4.0 operating system that will unite smartphones and tablets gave it the edge.

An honorable mention goes to the sheer engineering showcase of the Motorola Droid RAZR. Introduced just hours before the Galaxy Nexus, this 7.1mm LTE phone set a new benchmark for LTE devices, and Motorola's thoughtful

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Switched On is proud to present the Saluting Wares Improving Technology's Contribution to Humanity awards, also known as The Switchies.

use of materials such as Kevlar paired with a water-resistant nanocoating and some helpful services married to software help this Droid recapture at least some of the status that its namesake exuded. A second honorable mention goes to the Nokia N9. While launched with the stillborn MeeGo operating system, the N9 introduced the “fabula” industrial design language that has been part of the appeal of Nokia’s first Windows Phone flagship, the Lumia 800.

The **“Your Pad Or Mine?” Award for Best New Tablet** goes to the Apple iPad 2. Apple’s follow-up to the pioneering iPad had competitors scrambling with most still far behind the product’s thin profile and maturing operating system. Even its Smart Cover accessory displayed more forethought than many products on the market. Honorable mentions go to the Samsung Galaxy Tab 8.9, the stylus-flirting HTC Flyer, and the Amazon Kindle Fire.

The **“Light on Your Lap” Award for Best New Ultraportable PC** goes to the Lion-equipped 11” MacBook Air. Apple’s second-generation 11-incher remains a great compromise between the portability of a netbook and the thinness of an ultrabook, upping the

attractiveness of the company’s sub-\$1,000 laptop offering. Much as with the iPad 2, few competitors have yet to offer as complete and polished a direct competitor. Nonetheless, an honorable mention goes to the ASUS Zenbook, one of the first and most stylish of the Windows-based ultrabooks to compete with the MacBook Air.

The **“Quarterbacks Often Make Passes on Screens That Need Glasses”** award for best new 3D product goes to the LG Cinema 3D displays. While active shutter technologies certainly have their advantages, the 3D effects on these TVs really pop, and the glasses — while still an inconvenience — are more like the inexpensive lightweight variety used in movie theaters. For consumers who place a premium on 3D, passive glasses represent a step forward in convenience. Honorable mention goes to the Nintendo 3DS which, after a somewhat slow start, has been able to capitalize on Nintendo’s control of the platform to encourage more 3D game development then we’re likely to see on 3D cell phones for some time.

The **“Lens With Benefits” Award for Best New Imaging Product** goes to the Lytro. The first light field

camera, the Lytro is capable of creating images with dynamic focus. Honorable mentions go to the scarce 24 megapixel-packing Sony NEX-7 and the Looxcie 2, a slimmed down version of the original video camera-equipped headset that has been paired with the Looxcie Live real-time video clip sharing service.

The **“Gist on Your Wrist” award for Best New Mobile Glanceable Display** goes to the WIMM One. While a somewhat chunky developer product today, WIMM Labs has blended advanced display technology with its own Android variant to produce a new platform for development and licensing. An honorable mention goes to the rapidly maturing Allerta InPulse, which emerged from a long hibernation to expand both its scope and platform support.

The **“Display Matches Well With Dat Play” Award for Best New Mobile Monitor** goes to the Lenovo ThinkVision LT1421. There was a time when being on the road meant being confined to the display that your notebook came with. For those used to using multiple monitors at work, that could be confining. But this extra 14 inches of real estate doesn't take up much room in the bag, and provides a reasonably bright workspace at the expense of only about \$200 and a USB port.


The **“We Value Your Input” Award for Best New User Experience** goes to the Apple iPhone 4S for its introduction of an integrated version of Siri. Far from the first voice input or command technology, Siri scratches the surface of what may be possible moving

forward in terms of natural dialogue with a computer regarding the world around us. An honorable mention goes to Sifteo Cubes, which combine small screens and sensors to create novel edutainment experiences.

The **“Guess We Just Click” Award for Best New PC Input Peripheral** goes to last year's input device award winner Microsoft for its Touch Mouse with an honorable mention to the Logitech Wireless Trackpad.

The **“Set-Top Box That Rocks” Award for Best New TV Add-On** goes to the Roku 2 XS. While lacking the purple case cachet of its sub-\$50 sibling, Roku continues to add more channels to its lineup while now expanding into casual games via its Wii-like motion controller. An honorable mention goes to the diminutive Biscotti video chat camera, which can bring remote parties to the (coffee) table.

The **“Phones Need Friends, Too” Award for Best Smartphone Accessory** goes to the Motorola MOTOACTV. A standalone iPod nano competitor in its own right, the MOTOACTV can pair with a Motorola smartphone and Bluetooth headphones to create an integrated Bluetooth personal network designed around monitoring one's runs.

The **“Finders, Keepers” Award for New Best Location-Based Product** goes to Location Based Technologies' PocketFinder. Finally coming to market after debuting at CES years ago, the puck-like device can be planted in all kinds of bags and pockets to be tracked via a companion iOS app. 



William Gibson,
March 17, 2008

William Gibson, The Art of Fiction

William Gibson has given plenty of interviews over the years, but none more exhaustive than this sit-down with



Interviewed by
David Wallace-Wells
The Paris Review

David Wallace-Wells for the summer issue of *The Paris Review*. As explained by his colleague Bruce

Sterling, “if you ever wondered ‘why William Gibson is like that,’ this is the interview you oughta read.”

AROUND THE WEB

Steve Jobs: The Beginning, The Wilderness, and The Return
by Jim Aley, Peter Burrows,
and Brad Stone

Bloomberg Businessweek



A lot was written about Steve Jobs in 2011, but *Businessweek* had perhaps the most definitive account of his life and legacy until Walter Isaacson’s biography was released. This series was at the heart of an impressive special edition of the magazine, now also available as an ebook.

How Digital Detectives Deciphered Stuxnet, the Most Menacing Malware in History
by Kim Zetter

Wired Threat Level



Kim Zetter may have one of the must-reads of 2012 with her book on the STUXNET computer virus, but she’s already written the most definitive account of it to date in this gripping piece for *Wired*.

A Memory of Webs Past
by Ariel Bleicher

IEEE Spectrum



The web is advancing every day, but it’s also disappearing. In this piece, Ariel Bleicher provides a compelling profile of those trying to preserve it, and the challenges they face.

Inside the Russian Short Wave Radio Enigma

by Peter Savodnik

Wired



“From a lonely rusted tower in a forest north of Moscow, a mysterious shortwave radio station transmitted day and night.” With an opening like that, how can you not read the rest?

Recommended Reading

THE TOP 10 CRAPPIEST CRAP GADGETS OF 2011

This year saw the introduction of some truly spectacular standout gadgets, but they can't all be winners. Over the course of 2011, we've introduced you to a slew of the most ridiculous, offensive and downright absurd crapgadgets on the market today. You told us which ones were the worst of all and we tallied your votes from a collection of Engadget polls to come up with this list. So what is the crappiest crapgadget of them all? Herewith, your selections.



10

ZHU POCKETOWEL
For those who hate sacrificing daily sauna time for last-minute concalls.



9

DOKKIRI HAND CASE FOR iPhone 4S / 4
Who said 'creepy' wasn't fun? Your little iPhone pal will hold your hand to help you through those tough calls.



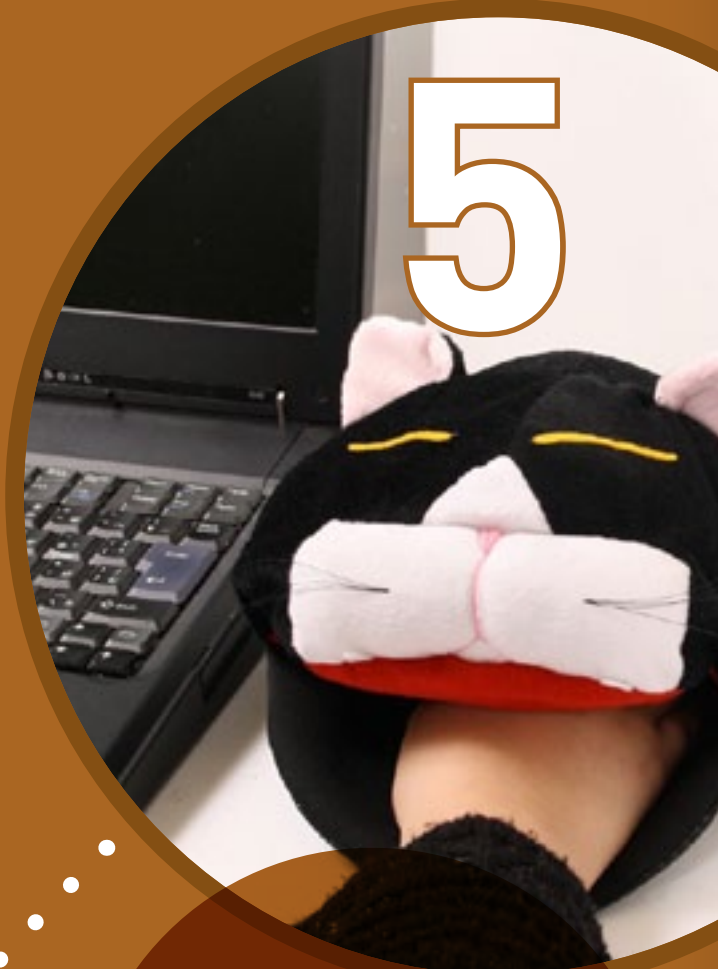
8

MOFONE IPHONE CASES
Apparently landline nostalgia is all the rage, and the unfortunately named Mofone can help you get on board, by removing all of that pesky portability from your smartphone.



7

OFF THE HOOK SHOWERHEAD
Not important enough to have your shower wiretapped? This giant red phone shower head is surely the next best thing.



5

THANKO'S CAT FACE / MOUSEPAD / WARMER
Shrödingers mouse? Reach past the hairball and find out...



6

RHYTHM SOUNDBAG
Looks like a load of labels fell off the Core i5 sticker delivery truck.



4

ISAFE BAGS: WAIST PACK WITH BUILT-IN PERSONAL SECURITY ALARM

It seems to us that wearing a fanny pack is its own built-in security system, but if you're still concerned about people nabbing something from your midsection, the Waist Pack with Built-in Personal Security Alarm can help.



3

TOUCHWOOD STICKERS

Knock On Wood iPhone stick-on for that little bit of luck just when you need it. Does it help with dropped calls? We can't say, but knock on wood just in case.



2

CEDES TOOTHPASTE SQUEEZER

At \$300, this toothpaste tube squeezer should pay for itself exactly one day before the sun burns out.



THUMBS UP EAR PHONE CASE

How is this iPhone case different than all other iPhone cases? Simple: it makes it look like you've contracted some sort of engorged ear disease. Never get bothered during important phone calls again!



1

CE-OH NO HE DIDN'T!

(THE YEAR IN CORPORATE MUDSLINGING)

BY ENGADGET STAFF

“ You don’t have to be a computer scientist to use a Windows Phone, but you do to use an Android phone.”

— Steve Ballmer on Android



“If you go to a nightclub in any city in the world, the pretty girl has an iPhone or a BlackBerry. She doesn’t have an Android phone. She has no emotional attachment to an Android phone. It’s too complicated. It’s a geek device, it’s all wrong.”

— INQ CEO [Frank Meehan](#) on Android and pretty girls

“**Microsoft is over — game over, from my point of view...**”

— [Patrick Lo](#) on Windows Phone 7’s chances of competing with Android and the iPhone



“... No self-respecting twenty-something is going to be sitting on an airplane with one of those.”

— **Jack Tretton** on Nintendo’s Game Boy as a “babysitting tool”

“Apple created Android, or at least created the conditions necessary for Android to come into being.”

— **Stephen Elop** on Android



“My prediction is that six months from now, you’ll say the opposite.”

— Eric Schmidt recounting a time when an Android user asked why apps were often written for iOS first, and then ported over to Google’s OS. Following an uncomfortable silence, he added that Android’s “open” model meant the company had volume on its side — and volume is what he feels will attract developers.



“Competitors are responding with lawsuits as they cannot respond through innovations.”

— Eric Schmidt on the competition

“Dead on arrival.”

— ngmoco:) CEO **Neil Young** on Sony’s PSP

“Today they’re vapor.”

— **Tim Cook** noting the lack of pricing and release schedules for Android tablets announced at CES.



“Galaxy Tab sales are quite small.”

— **Steve Jobs** repeating a common misquote of Samsung’s Lee Young-hee, who said Galaxy Tab sales were “quite smooth.” The quote was widely and officially corrected before Jobs uttered it at Apple’s iPad 2 launch event.



Technology_In_2011.zip

A Compressed Look Back at the News that Shaped the Industry

In an industry that changes minute by minute, a year's worth of news is a lot to digest. We combed our archives in an attempt to drown out the noise, and came up with a short list of the stories that made 2011. Consider this an abridged look back at the year that was.

FIRST UP: January ►

JANUARY

Click on any date to view the original story...



01
04

ASUS' pair of Tegra 2, 10.1-inch, keyboard sportin' tablets, the **EEE PAD SLIDER** and **TRANSFORMER** (left), were announced at CES causing quite the buzz. Not entirely abandoning the outfit's commitment to the keyboard, both shape-shifting slates put a creative spin on the tablet — but most importantly laid the groundwork for their quad-core successor.



01
04

AMD revealed its hybrid CPU / GPU Fusion processors, complete with DirectX11 support, at CES 2011. Dedicated 1080p HD video processing and 10 plus hours of battery life quickly jumped aboard laptops, including the first fusion-powered machine, the **HP PAVILION DM1** (announced the same day).



01
05

Putting rumors to rest and simultaneously increasing selection in the Windows market, **MICROSOFT** announced that the next major version of its OS would ship complete with ARM support. As if that weren't enough, the company said that the release would play nice with SoCs as well.



01
10

After lending us a hand in escaping a soggy and cold Washington DC last year, the **CHEVY VOLT** was named North American Car of the Year. Despite government loan issues and delayed shipping, the 93MPG-capable vehicle bested both the Nissan Leaf and Hyundai Sonata in its quest for top honors.

01
11

Apple and **VERIZON** made a million dreams come true when the two announced the iPhone 4 would make an appearance on Big Red in February. After beginning talks way back in 2008, the wait was over as the Verizon 3G (EV-DO) only (it lacked 4G and GSM) handset finally became a reality.



01
20

Among the details of Google's Q4 2010 financials was a bit of a bombshell: in April, **LARRY PAGE** would take over as CEO. Page would assume the helm of day-to-day operations in addition to product development and strategy. Eric Schmidt stayed on board as Executive Chairman, focusing on external projects.



Page

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

01
27

Sony came clean with its next-generation PlayStation Portable, codenamed NGP. What we would come to know as the **VITA** was announced in all its quad-core ARM Cortex-A9 glory. Of course, a 5-inch OLED touchscreen, dual analog sticks and a rear-mounted touchpad were nice specs as well.



01
19

Nintendo finally spilled the beans on the US and Europe launches of the **3DS** after what felt like an eternity. The \$249.99 glasses-free 3D gaming handheld was slated for a March 27th release in the US, while European gamers were able to snag one two days earlier. Sales of the device would prove somewhat less certain.



TIM STEVENS
Editor in Chief

“
It's odd to think of a mid-life refresh of a device really rocking my world, but this one did.
”



SAMSUNG GALAXY NEXUS This phone may not have rocked the world yet, but it certainly rocked mine. I was lucky to be there for the launch of the device in Hong Kong and we knew then it was something special, even though it was plagued with some software glitches. The released versions, either HSPA+ or LTE, both nixed those issues and are my choice for best phone — for the moment at least.

ASUS TRANSFORMER PRIME Finally, an Android device that offers both better performance *and* better battery life. I'm not a huge fan of the sharp metal edges here, but build quality is great overall and, while the keyboard isn't quite roomy enough, it's usable. And then there's the whole 16 hours on a charge thing, which is mighty hard to resist.

APPLE MACBOOK AIR 13-INCH It's odd to think of a mid-life refresh of a device really rocking my world, but this one did. Twice the speed, improved battery life *and* Thunderbolt connectivity? Yes, please. The Air is a legitimate laptop for professionals and now my go-to machine for when I'm on the road — which is pretty much all the time these days.

NEXT: February ►

FEBRUARY

Click on any date to view the original story...



02
09

While HP unveiled a host of devices in the phone and tablet space, including the TouchPad, Pre 3, Veer and

webOS for PCs, one thing was missing: Palm. As an apparent casualty of HP's acquisition and subsequent "scale," the source of handheld innovation for decades left behind its **WEBOS** to fight another day – for a few months, anyway.

02
13

Samsung announced two highly anticipated devices: the **GALAXY S II** and the **GALAXY TAB 10.1**. The dual-core GS II was released in Europe and Asia first, North America clamoring for its variants. Not to be outdone, the 10.1-inch slate featured Android 3.0 and a dual-core Tegra 2 processor, but would face an admittedly more complicated release.



02
04



We knew the **VERIZON IPHONE** launch would be huge, but after only two hours of having the handset available for pre-order, Big Red shattered its all-time record for first-day sales of a single device. The feat is even more impressive when you consider pre-orders were only open to subscribers and began at 3AM.

02
10

Sure, we knew the **White House** was on board with the FCC's desire to free up 500MHz of spectrum. Then, **OBAMA** announced a plan to make it happen, enticing spectrum squatters with a share of the auction revenues. The plan also included a \$5 billion investment for 4G networks in rural areas.

02
14

At Mobile World Congress, Intel's Senior VP, Anand Chandrasekher, took aim at ARM while hammering home the company's focus on battery life.

Intel announced that its

MEDFIELD PROCESSOR was being tested in mobile devices and that it would in fact ship in a phone, complete with the "longest usage time" we've seen.



It shouldn't have been a surprise that IBM's million-dollar **WATSON** would take a pair of regular humans to school on *Jeopardy*. As it turns out, all three contestants knew the answer most of the time, but the supercomputer was just quicker on the draw. As a victory lap, Watson would take on the healthcare industry.

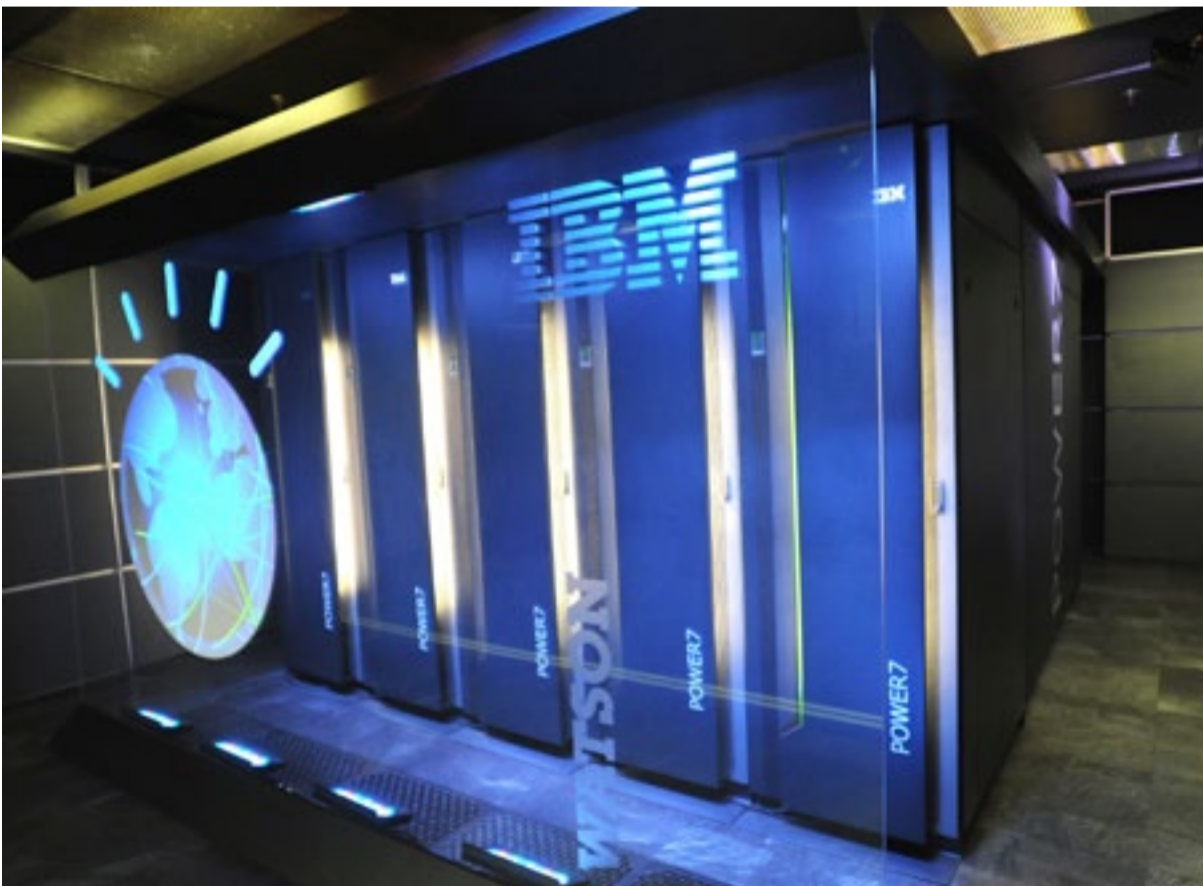
02
16

PHOTO: AFP / GETTY IMAGES

02
15

After getting our hands on an **NVIDIA** roadmap, the barely conceivable quad-core **TEGRA** chip was made official. What was known as Kal-EI internally, the Tegra 3 was promised to land in tablets in August. After a few months delay, the processor shipped in the *Transformer Prime*; it's expected to grace the *Padfone* in early 2012.

02
24

While it wasn't the most original name the couple could've mustered, Apple's implementation of **INTEL'S LIGHT PEAK** standard was unveiled in **THUNDERBOLT**. Making its debut on this year's MacBook Pro models and promising 10Gb/s transfers, we'd eventually see both storage and display implementations for the new tech.



DARREN MURPH

Managing Editor

“

It's been snappy and savvy, and best of all, the GPS works reliably.

”



CANON'S EOS-1D X I've dumped so much money into Nikkor lenses that it'll take a miracle (or a lottery win) for me to buy into Canon, but this is undoubtedly the DSLR of 2011 that left me drooling. With an ISO ceiling of 204,800, the low-light lovers in attendance should be applauding. Also, I'm praying this pushes Nikon to best it with the D3S' successor.

SAMSUNG GALAXY S II Until the Galaxy Nexus popped out, this was *the* phone to beat in 2011 — at least on the Android side. Serving as a replacement to the Nexus One in my own life, it's been snappy and savvy, and best of all, the GPS (and in turn, Google Maps Navigation) works reliably.

APPLE'S 27-INCH THUNDERBOLT DISPLAY It's the ultimate MacBook Pro docking station, and I honestly wish every LCD worked this nicely with laptops. Too bad I still need to buy a Thunderbolt-equipped MBP to use with it...

NEXT: March ►

MARCH

Click on any date to view the original story...



03
02

Apple made its **SEC-
OND-GENERATION
IPAD** official, featuring a 1GHz dual-core A5 chip and both front and rear-facing cameras. The new internals promised to be twice as fast and showcase graphics performance up to nine times faster than the O.G. model. While battery life remained nearly the same, so did the price as the slate started at \$499.

PHOTO: AFP / GETTY IMAGES



03
11

The **MASSIVE 8.9 EARTHQUAKE** that rocked Japan shut down factories around the country. Several familiar manufacturers were forced to cease production due to damage. Sony and Toyota stopped operations while injuries were reported among Honda and Panasonic workers. The tragedy ultimately led to widespread losses and delays.

03
04

Whether you love or loathe Apple, the upgrade of the iPad was quite impressive. Even Samsung had to take another look at the hardware and pricing model for its **Galaxy Tab 10.1**. Originally expected to cost more than the 7-inch Galaxy Tab, the company eventually shipped a slimmed-down 10.1-incher with a **\$499 base price**.



03
17

Verizon's first 4G LTE handset was unveiled in the **HTC THUNDER-BOLT**. While the 4.3-inch smartphone was impressive on paper, it packed a \$250 price tag on contract. As we would come to experience for ourselves, one major flaw with the device was its battery life, as the hardware couldn't keep pace with 4G download speeds.

03
20

The **AT&T / T-MOBILE SAGA** started back in March when Ma Bell agreed to the \$39 billion purchase from Deutsche Telekom. AT&T claimed a significantly expanded LTE footprint among the benefits of what would have been a de facto GSM monopoly. The companies estimated that the regulatory hurdles would last 12 months...

03
22

After popping up on Sprint's site before the official word, it was announced that the **HTC EVO 3D** was headed to Sprint. Trumpeted as a 3D ambassador, the 4.3-inch WiMAX handset came loaded with a 1.2GHz dual-core processor and dual 5 megapixel cameras. In the end, the 3D moniker wasn't much more than a gimmick.

Samsung went back to the drawing board after the iPad 2 launch, looking to slim down their **10.1-INCH GALAXY TAB**. At CTIA, the company revealed its thinner revamped model as well as the smaller **8.9**. Both slates were the first to alter a pure Android 3.0 experience by adding **TouchWiz 4.0**.

03
2203
29

amazon.com

Looking to throw its hat in the music-streaming ring, Amazon rolled out its own service dubbed the **Amazon CLOUD PLAYER**. While the announcement wasn't exactly groundbreaking, it did shake things up a bit. Sony Music took the company to task over streaming media rights, while Amazon remained unmoved.



DANA WOLLMAN
Reviews Editor

EDITOR'S CHOICE

“
It all comes down to this: I'm a sucker for painstaking craftsmanship.
”

APPLE MACBOOK AIR At first blush, the Air really shouldn't be on this list: as far as design, it's nearly the same pinch-thin slip of a thing that was first announced in 2008. The difference is, I'm finally ready to recommend it for more than just simple things like email and web surfing. Apple promised twice the performance of the last generation, and man, did it deliver. I want an Air, and if I ever get one, I won't just use it to read hate mail; I'll get stuff done. I'll run lots of apps at once — Photoshop, a chat program, Office, two browsers and iMovie. There's a growing pool of Ultrabooks, some even offer similar performance, but for now, I still prefer the Air.

NOKIA LUMIA 800 The Galaxy Nexus is every tech writer's favorite phone at the moment, and with that kind of warm reception, you might assume it's mine too. But after glimpsing the Nokia Lumia 800, I might hold onto my OG Droid for a few more months. No, it's not on Verizon (yet), but it's the first phone that's left me ready to draw a line in the sand. It all comes down to this: I'm a sucker for painstaking craftsmanship.

SONY NEX-C3 For a long time, I was wary of setting aside my Canon T3i. I toyed with the idea of using a Micro Four Thirds camera, but I worried they wouldn't be as fast, that the finished photos wouldn't look as compelling. Even after AOL outfitted the staff with C3s of their own, I only used it to shoot hands-on videos. I'm not sure what, exactly, persuaded me to put down my T3i, but suffice to say, I'm glad I came to my senses.



NEXT: April ►

APRIL

Click on any date to view the original story...

04
18

Bringing news of perhaps the **BIGGEST PATENT SUIT OF 2011**, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Apple was taking Samsung to task for allegedly copying the iPhone and iPad. Among the offending devices at the center of the year's most wide-sweeping case were the Galaxy S and Galaxy Tab.

04
20

Sparking one of 2011's biggest controversies, a pair of UK researchers exposed a feature in iOS 4 that constantly collected and recorded location data. Culminating in a **SENATE HEARING** on mobile privacy, the firestorm would leave no OS untouched, with Google and Microsoft being swept into the fray.

04
01

acer

Following the sudden resignation of the company's CEO, Gianfranco Lanci, plans for a **NEW STRATEGY** at Acer began to emerge. Lanci's replacement, JT Wang, announced that while the company would continue to focus on PCs, it would more aggressively attack the tablet and smartphone markets, à la Apple.

04
19

RIM's attempt at tackling the consumer tablet market came up short with the launch of the BlackBerry PlayBook. With basic software like native email and calendar apps absent right out the gate, it appeared the already **TROUBLED COMPANY** wasn't poised to capture the hearts and dollars of casual users.



04
21

Following the announcement of a **STRATEGIC ALLIANCE** between Nokia and Microsoft, the two tech industry heavy hitters penned a definitive agreement that would see Espoo concentrating its handset strategy on Windows Phone. The announcement brought with it the promise of a new portfolio of handsets as well as a new way of doing business.

04
21

Just weeks after Anonymous claimed responsibility for intermittent **PLAYSTATION NETWORK OUTAGES**, Sony's online service was down again. The company initially stated that the interruption could be the result of "targeted behavior" and could last "a full day or two," but it would last nearly a month.

04
21

Proving it had a few – ten to be exact – bones to pick of its own, **SAMSUNG STRUCK BACK** at Apple with a hefty stack of infringement claims in South Korea, Japan and Germany. Shedding light on the accusations, *Reuters* reported Samsung's claims centered mostly on data transmission-related technology.

IT TOOK ALMOST A FULL YEAR for the white iPhone 4 to follow its ebony predecessor to market. After various delays and endless speculation, the albino handset was finally set free, with the big Apple's marketing head, Phil Schiller placing the blame on the addition of extra UV protection.

04
28



MYRIAM JOIRE
Senior Mobile Editor

EDITOR'S CHOICE



“
Samsung's
Galaxy S II has
undeniably
made a huge
impact on
the mobile
industry in
2011.
”

SAMSUNG GALAXY S II Samsung's Galaxy S II has undeniably made a huge impact on the mobile industry in 2011. It's still fresh eight months after being launched and its variants — including the Galaxy Note and Galaxy Nexus — continue to impress.

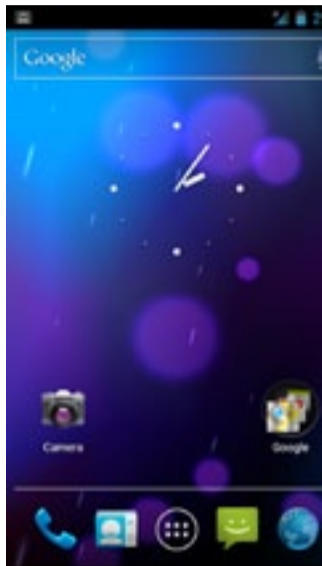
APPLE MACBOOK AIR I've owned every generation of Apple's MacBook Air since the first and this year's iteration — with the backlit keyboard and optional Core i7 processor — is the most polished one yet, inspiring legions of Ultrabooks.

NOKIA LUMIA Thanks to a combination of gorgeous hardware and brilliant software Nokia's N9 — along with the Lumia 800 — represent the blueprint for the company's rebirth.

NEXT: May ►

MAY

Click on any date to view the original story...



Marking a new direction for its sugary sweet operating system, Google laid bare its plans to meld its tablet-based and smartphone-oriented operating systems into “one OS that runs everywhere.” Following the **ICE CREAM SANDWICH** excitement, the company announced its very own cloud-based music service, aptly titled Google Music.

05
10

05
11

Google I/O served as the jumping off point for the company’s official foray into the commercial laptop game, with the introduction of not one, but two **CHROMEBOOKS**. The Samsung

Series 5 and creatively named Acer

Chrome-book would be the first laptops to make it to market, running Mountain View’s cloud-based Chrome OS.



05
01

Over a week after Sony’s PlayStation Network went down for the count, the outfit’s VP, Kaz Hirai, officially addressed the outage. Sony mentioned **TARGETED ATTACKS** by Anonymous, but stopped short of placing blame. The FBI was brought on to investigate, but it would take a full month for restoration to begin.

05
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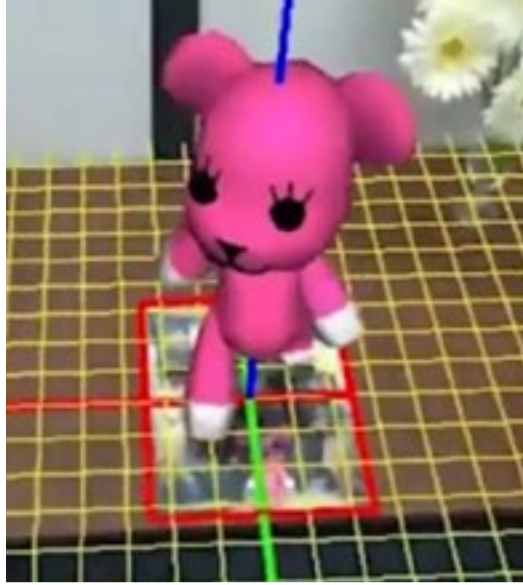


Sealing the deal for a cool \$8.5 billion, Microsoft announced plans to suck up internet calling giant, Skype. Under the agreement, **SKYPE CEO TONY BANKS** would become president of the newly minted Microsoft Skype Division, while Redmond made clear that it would encourage development of “Skype clients on non-Microsoft platforms.”

05
19

Proving that not all augmented reality is dumb, Sony introduced us to

SMARTAR. Billed as “integrated augmented reality technology,” the software touts increased responsiveness and markerless object recognition. While the outfit stopped short of offering release dates, we eventually caught it showing off its smarts on the PS Vita.

05
24

Microsoft officially announced its hotly anticipated **WINDOWS PHONE 7** refresh, codenamed Mango, bringing with it the promise of 500 new features. Those updates included everything from increased social networking integration, the introduction of IE 9 and more dynamic Live Tiles. Windows Phone users would finally taste Mango’s sweet nectar in September.



With the introduction of **GOOGLE WALLET**, mobile payment got the sort of stateside brand recognition it lacked. The NFC-based system made its debut with a limited number of retail partners on board and the support of Citibank and MasterCard. While questions of adoption remain, Google continues to add partners, like Visa.

05
26

Proving there’s room for more than one twiggy lappy on the market, Intel’s Sean Maloney coined a new term for skinny PCs. **ULTRABOOKS** would contain the chipmaker’s 22nm Ivy Bridge processors, measure less than 0.8-inches thick, carry sub-\$1,000 price tags and significantly decrease power consumption.

05
30



EDITOR'S CHOICE

DONALD MELANSON
Senior Associate
Editor

“
It’s been a
buzzword
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was the year
that “the
cloud” truly
came into its
own
”

THE CLOUD It’s been a buzzword for quite a while now, but 2011 was the year that “the cloud” truly came into its own. Amazon, Apple, Google, Netflix, Spotify and others all either launched major new services or expanded their offerings, each betting on a future where they do the heavy-lifting and you simply do the consuming. Some experiments haven’t entirely paid off and others still aren’t fully developed, but we’re increasingly becoming more dependent on content that we neither own nor store on our own devices — and, indeed, less dependent on the devices themselves.

PHOTO: ANGELIKA WARMUTH / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

CURIOSITY / MARS SCIENCE

LABORATORY It may not have been available to consumers in 2011, but it was “released” in 2011 — into space, that is. Curiosity is NASA’s latest Mars rover, and by far the largest and most advanced to date, packing an array of new and improved instruments that will allow it to search for evidence that Mars could have supported life. While much has been accomplished already, the mission will truly get underway in August 2012, when the rover will begin its work on the red planet.

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:
WATSON AND SIRI SAY ‘HELLO’**

We may not yet live in the world of HAL-9000 or Star Trek computers, but 2011 saw one of the biggest jumps yet towards that goal. The most HAL-like computer to date, IBM’s Waston, made its debut on *Jeopardy* early this year, and proved more than adept at holding its own with humans. Then, later in the year, Apple released Siri on the iPhone 4S. It wasn’t a new technology, but it was the most refined version to date, and it put it in the hands of a lot of people.

NEXT: June ►

JUNE

Click on any date to view the original story...



Talk about a bad case of *déjà vu*. Following the seemingly unending PlayStation outage that saw some **77 MILLION ACCOUNTS HACKED**, Sony's online properties were hit again. This time around it was Lulz Security taking the credit for breaking into SonyPictures.com and snatching up the personal information of some 1 million users.

06
02



06
06

Apple proved that not even the cloud was safe from its i-naming convention this summer. Then-CEO, Steve Jobs took the stage at this year's WWDC to outline **ICLOUD** and **ITUNES MATCH**, the latter service offering repeat rip-pers the opportunity to legitimize their libraries for \$25 a year.



06
01

Continuing its dedication to a touchier, feelier UI, Microsoft raised the curtains on an awfully familiar-looking OS during Steven Sinofsky's D9 keynote. Aping its mobile-minded cousin, **WINDOWS 8** adopted a tablet-friendly interface, complete with Live Tiles and **HTML5 / Javascript apps**. Unlike its fruity family member, this Windows wouldn't see a release by year's end.

06
06

The portable formerly known as the NGP made its debut at E3 this summer, touting prices of \$250 and \$299 for WiFi and 3G models, respectively, and aiming to revolutionize on-the-go gaming. While the Japanese **PS VITA** we reviewed came up short in terms of battery life, we ultimately dubbed this machine a "beast."

06
20

Perhaps the most bitter-sweet handset launch of the year, a victim of Nokia's new Windows Phone strategy, the N9 was **THE FIRST AND LAST** to run the **MEEGO** operating system. The combination of a fine body and a refreshing OS would make it an Engadget favorite, but, alas, it just wasn't meant to be.



And, another one bites the dust! Just three years after its launch, word spread that **TESLA'S ROADSTER** was not long for this world (or its roads). CEO Elon Musk confirmed that there were just a "handful of cars left to sell in the US," while the company solidified plans to focus on the rather less flashy Model S sedan.

06
2306
07

This year's E3 also saw the introduction of Nintendo's next console, the **WII U**. The most notable addition to the Wii-fresh came in the form of a 6.2-inch touchscreen controller that demonstrated the far-reaching influence of the tablet. Other notable additions include the ability to pump out 1080p video over HDMI.

06
28

While it still hasn't led to the great social networking migration of the 21st Century, the **LAUNCH OF GOOGLE+** did give Zuckerberg and company a much-needed kick in the pants. With features like **Hangouts**, which ushered in group video chats, the service proved it wasn't just any social network.



BRIAN HEATER

Senior Associate
Editor



...The first handset to showcase Google's excellent Android 4.0 is a truly worthwhile piece of hardware.



KINDLE FIRE The game = changed. Sure the Kindle Fire isn't the first budget tablet — or even the first budget Android tablet — but it's the first to go truly mainstream. It's not as high-powered or sexy as the iPad or the latest Honeycomb tablet, but as with previous Kindles, Amazon has harnessed its ecosystem and massive resources to deliver a standout content delivery service for under \$200. Consider the Fire a handheld portal for movies, music and, yes, e-books.

SAMSUNG GALAXY NEXUS

Maybe it's just the fact that it landed in mid-December, but the handset of the moment really does feel like the handset of the year. Android manufacturers have been engaging in a perpetual round of one-upsmanship, and as a result, the first handset to showcase Google's excellent Android 4.0 is a truly worthwhile piece of hardware.

APPLE MACBOOK AIR The first MacBook Air was neat, sure, but it was the 2011 model that helped transform the product from an expensive toy into an honest-to-goodness laptop replacement. In fact, a number of our editors are now rocking Apple's super slick laptop — myself included.

NEXT: July ►

JULY

Click on any date to view the original story...



PHOTO: AFP / GETTY IMAGES

07
07

Despite its designation as ‘North American Car of the Year,’ sales of Chevy’s Volt fell behind that of **NISSAN’S LEAF**. Nissan outpaced Chevrolet by 1,121 units, selling 3,875 Leafs (Leaves?) in the first six months of 2011. That victory came in spite of a month-long setback in production due to the earthquake that hit Japan in March.

NETFLIX

07
12

What started out as a straightforward separation of **NETFLIX’S STREAMING** video and DVD rental services would fast become one of the year’s most notable marketing fiascos. Following an internal leak and errant advertisement, the outfit officially cut its service in two, offering either DVD-only or streaming-only unlimited plans for \$7.99 each or \$15.98 as a package... But the worst was yet to come.

Space nerds and science geeks everywhere took time out to celebrate and mourn the **SPACE SHUTTLE’S LAST MISSION**. Taking off just four days after July 4th and touching down at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida less than two weeks later, the Atlantis would close the book on NASA’s Space Shuttle program.

PHOTO: AFP / GETTY IMAGES

07
08



07
14

One day after CCO Ken Parks announced that Europe’s much-loved music service was going the way of Prince Akeem, **SPOTIFY** was ready to stream on American shores. The initial launch was an invite-only affair, but gave paying customers the chance to jump the queue for a **\$5 Unlimited** or **\$10 Premium** account.

07
20

Not to be outdone by its own software announcement, the big Apple introduced a number of refreshes rocking the **THUNDERBOLT I/O**. While the company announced the

impressive 27-inch Thunderbolt Display and a re-upped Mac mini, we were most taken with the Sandy Bridge-equipped MacBook Air. On a somewhat more morose note, that was the day the MacBook said goodbye.

07
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Holding true to Steve Jobs' declaration

that we live in a "post-PC world," the launch of OS X LION brought us ever closer to a mobile OS for desktop computers. While it touted some 250 new features, it was its similarity to iOS that stood out most. All told, the world's "most advanced" operating system ultimately proved more evolutionary than revolutionary.

07
26

Making its debut well before Microsoft's new fruit was ripe for the picking, Fujitsu Toshiba mobile communication's IS12T would officially become the world's first MANGO handset. Alas, the phone wasn't destined for American soil, but it did give us a very colorful look at Windows Phone's future.

Nintendo®

07
28

Following lackluster sales and a significant downgrade in its financial projections for the fiscal year, **NINTENDO** announced that it would cut the cost of the 3DS by a full \$80. The August **PRICE REDUCTION**, which put the 3DS at \$169, would lead to a reported 260 percent increase in sales and a Merry Christmas for Mario's papa.



MICHAEL GORMAN

Senior Associate
Editor

EDITOR'S CHOICE



SONY NEX-C3 As someone who regularly shoots photos and video under the duress of trade-show conditions, I've grown to appreciate the NEX-C3 more each day. While I sacrifice some (not much) image quality, the tradeoff is well worth the increased portability and the ability to shoot HD video on the show floor — that's why it's more than earned its status as one of my most beloved gadgets.

SAMSUNG GALAXY S II Sure, the newest Nexus is the hottest handset on the block, but its roots are in the Galaxy S II. I still love the original version with its tactile home button and gorgeous Super AMOLED Plus display. Throw in its quality camera and that oh-so-sexy profile, and you've got the best phone of 2011.

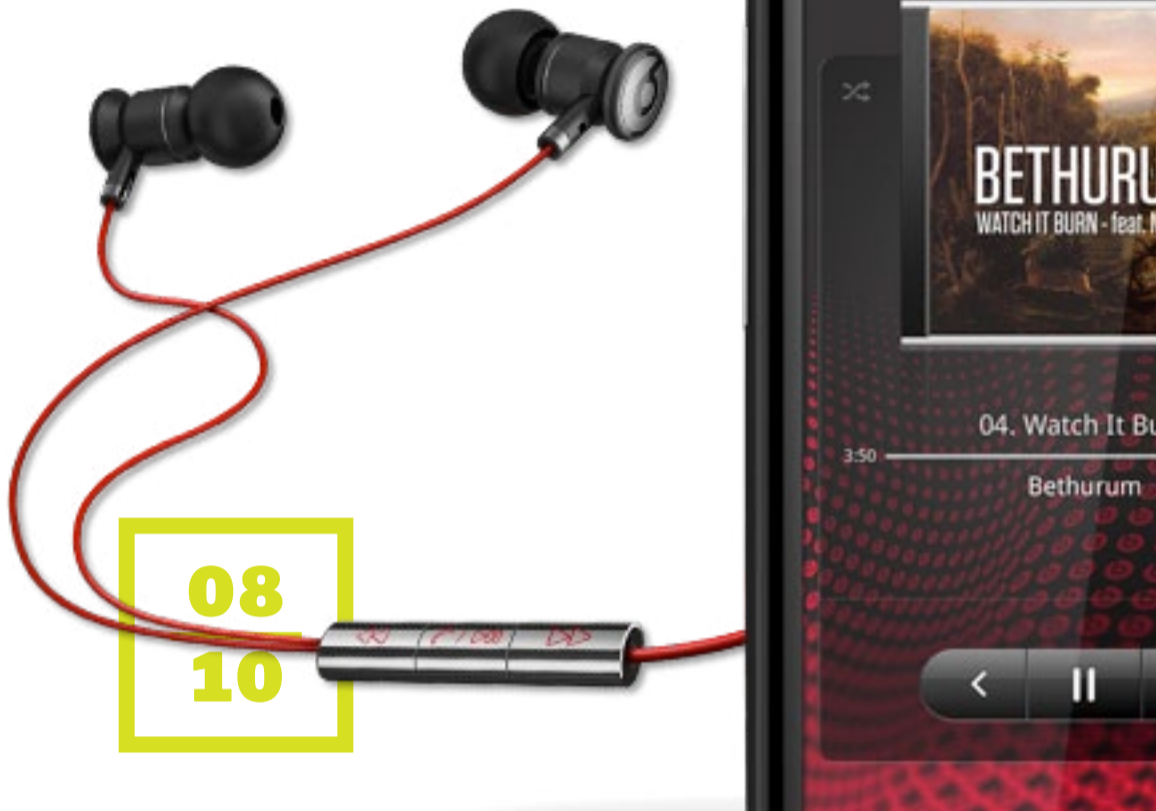
FISKER KARMA I'm a sucker for low-slung sports cars and sexy saloons, and Fisker's Karma makes me tingle in all the right automotive places. I got to see one in person, and I've been captivated ever since. Sure it's expensive, and its 32-mile range makes it far less practical than other EVs... but just look at it!

“
Fisker's
Karma
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tingle in all
the right
automotive
places.
”

NEXT: August ►

AUGUST

Click on any date to view the original story...



HTC's investment in **DR. DRE'S BEATS** was no AT&T, but it did birth a whole new slew of well-hyped handsets. The Taiwanese company took a \$300 million bite out of Beats, resulting in a partnership that brought handsets like the Sensation XE to market. Our review of that phone would prove that the Beats hype was largely just that.



A little over a year after HP sucked up Palm and webOS, the company announced its plans to put a **STAKE THROUGH THE HEARTS OF DEVICES RUNNING THE OPERATING SYSTEM.** The discontinuation of such products

as the newly minted TouchPad came as part of a larger announcement that the outfit was considering a spinoff of its personal systems group.



Whether you saw it as a match made in heaven or a hasty grab at much-needed patents, **GOOGLE'S GOBBLING OF MOTOROLA MOBILITY** was one of the most talked-about acquisitions of the year. The two company's became one for \$12.5 billion and raised questions about what the partnership would mean for Android competitors going forward.



And just like that, **HP's flagship tablet** became one of the most sought after pieces of hardware on the market; no doubt thanks to its newly acquired \$99 price tag. The **TOUCHPAD** fire sale would lead to the poorly received slate taking the number three spot in worldwide tablet shipments in Q3 2011, according to IDC.

08
2408
24

We fell in love with its little brother, the NEX-C3, but **SONY'S NEX-7** was the real heartbreaker, or should we say, record-breaker. With its announcement, it became the first APS-C camera with a 24.3 megapixel sensor. It also became the first of its size to be a worthy replacement for a DSLR (if you ask us, anyway).

08
30

Over half a year since its initial debut, one of the year's most sought-after smartphones was finally ready to hit American shores – well, almost. The **SAM-SUNG GALAXY S II** was given a September 16th release date for Sprint customers under the name Epic 4G Touch and would soon after make its debut on T-Mobile and AT&T.

Apple founder STEVE JOBS STEPPED DOWN from his position as CEO after years of struggling with pancreatic cancer. He would remain on as Chairman of the Board, with then-COO Tim Cook filling the open position. Jobs said he believed “Apple’s brightest and most innovative days are ahead of it.”



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

08
31

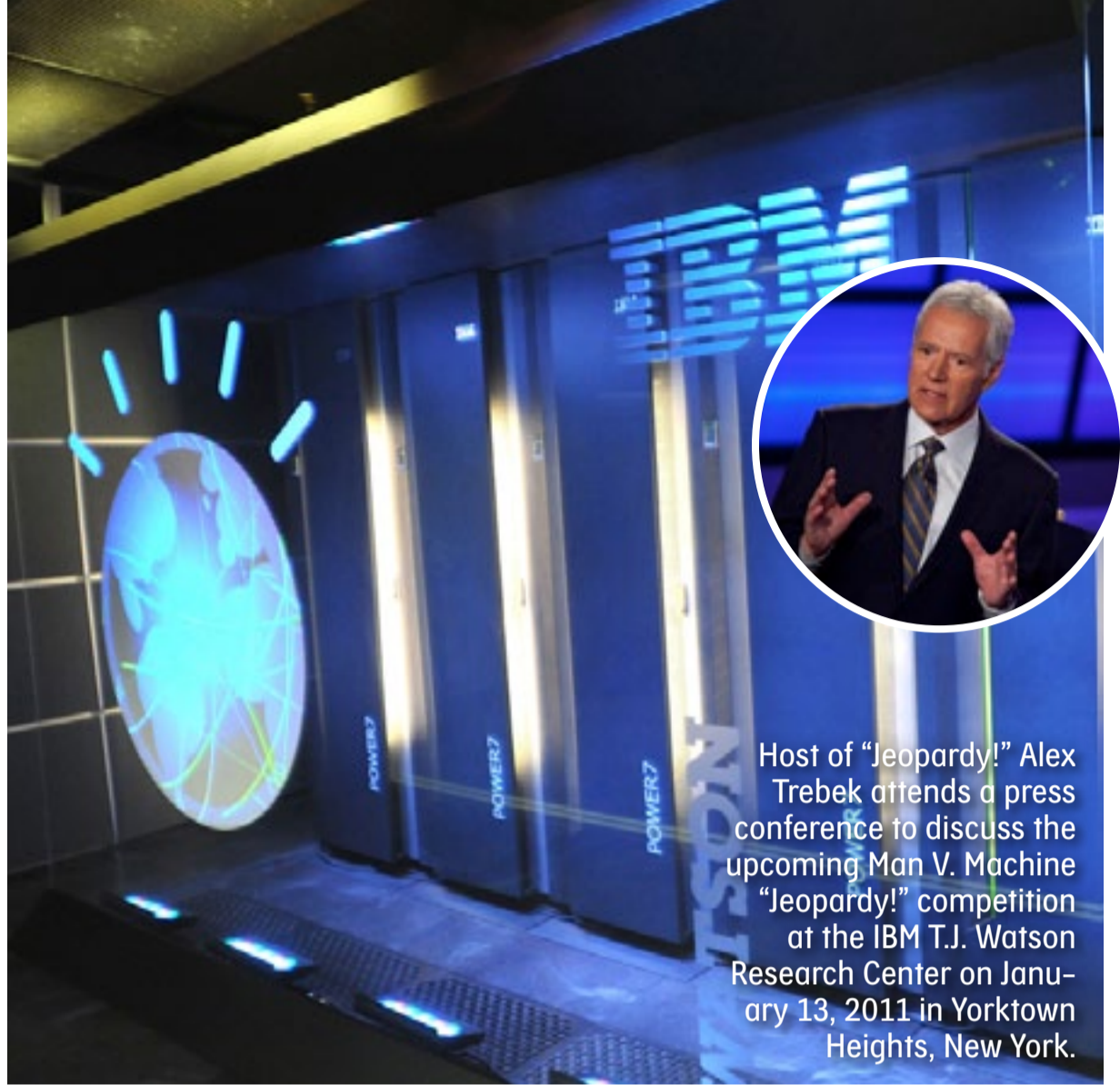
T-Mobile

AT&T'S ACQUISITION OF T-MOBILE had some very obvious opponents at the outset, but one perhaps surprising foe came in the form of the US government. *Bloomberg* reported that the Justice Department filed to block the marriage of the two telcos, citing concerns that the merger would “substantially lessen competition” in the wireless space.



AMAR TOOR
Senior Associate
Editor

“
... IBM's
Watson
supercom-
puter may
have been
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compelling
thing I saw
on television
this year.
”



Host of “Jeopardy!” Alex Trebek attends a press conference to discuss the upcoming Man V. Machine “Jeopardy!” competition at the IBM T.J. Watson Research Center on January 13, 2011 in Yorktown Heights, New York.

PHOTO: AFP / GETTY IMAGES; INSET: BEN HIDER / GETTY IMAGES

IBM'S WATSON IBM's Watson supercomputer may have been the most compelling thing I saw on television this year. Throughout the *Jeopardy* showdown, I felt a gnawing sense of finality – a very present, if still inchoate realization that artificial intelligence had suddenly outgrown the realm of science fiction, and now stood at our doorstep in the faux-flesh.

KINDLE FIRE “iPad killer” was a term we heard quite often this year, and a crown that has yet to be worn. It certainly can't be bestowed upon the budget-friendly Fire at this point, but the fact that Amazon even dipped its toes in the tablet waters generated a buzz that seemed to transcend the product itself.

APPLE MACBOOK AIR No joke, my 11-inch MacBook Air is probably the best thing that's happened to me since [name redacted]. I finally made the jump in August, and I can honestly say that my existence as a nomadic, cafe-hopping writer has never been more enjoyable. Basically, it's everything I could ever ask for.

NEXT: September ►

SEPTEMBER

Click on any date to view the original story...



At its IFA press conference, Acer announced the **ASPIRE S3** and the Ultrabook race was officially on. Weighing in at a mere 1.4 kilograms and mustering 13mm in thickness, the laptop features instant-on access and near-instant connectivity. The 13.3-inch displays were grouped with low voltage Core i3, i5 and i7 CPUs alongside a choice of solid-state storage or HDDs.

09
02



NETFLIX

09
19

For about a month, Netflix planned on spinning its DVD-by-mail service to another entity known as **QWIKSTER**. After much backlash, CEO Reed Hastings issued a string of apologies and backed off the split, keeping the division internal. Customers would remain virtually unaffected, as one site with one log-in still provides access to both DVD and streaming queues and the company said it's "done" with price hikes.



09
01

Back at IFA, Samsung rolled out the 5.3-inch **GALAXY NOTE** alongside the Galaxy Tab 7.7 and Wave 3. The Note, which blurs the lines between phone and tablet, features a stowaway pen for note taking and a number of other tasks. Not to be overlooked, the Gingerbread-running LTE and HSPA+ handset featured the same processor as the 7.7-inch slate.

09
13

Microsoft kicked off its Build conference with a full-on developer preview of its next major desktop operating system, **WINDOWS 8**. The company opened up downloads for devs to give them a leg up on the desktop, laptop, and tablet platform app building process. Featuring a "metro-styled" UI, graphical elements of Windows Phone 7 were brought front and center for use across devices.

09
21

After journeying to a secret location in midtown Manhattan, we got our first look at the **NIKON V1** and **J1** mirrorless cameras. While both included 10.1 megapixel CMOS CX-sized sensors, these were significantly smaller than the APS-C counterpart in Sony's NEX cameras. The specs left something to be desired, but signaled a shift toward the entry-level market.



09
28



Perhaps no single announcement had a more widespread impact on the tablet market in 2011. With a \$199 price tag, **AMAZON'S KINDLE FIRE** became arguably the most viable budget tablet yet. While it lacked access to the Android Market, its access to Amazon's vast media library made it a contender for casual users.



With less than a year under his belt at HP, **Leo Apotheker** was ousted and former **eBay CEO MEG WHITMAN** took over. After seeing its stock price plummet 47 percent, ceasing production of webOS devices and considering spinning off its PC business, the company was indeed in hot water. Whitman said the "strategy is right," but not the execution.

09
27

Despite a fit of stops and starts for the line's rollout, **Boeing** handed off its long-awaited **787 DREAMLINER** to **All Nippon Airways** in Everett, Washington. Even with all of the delays, **Boeing** expects to meet ANA's 55-plane order, producing an additional 20 fuel-efficient aircraft for the Japanese airline by the end of 2013.

GETTY IMAGES



RICHARD LAI
Senior Associate
Editor

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Here's
hoping that
next year
will bring
more bizarre
devices with
Ice Cream
Sandwich.
”



SONY ERICSSON XPERIA PLAY AND XIAOMI PHONE Despite the unfortunate disasters that claimed many lives and severely damaged the tech industry, 2011 still saw the rise of Android and interchangeable lens cameras. For the former, my favorites are the Xperia Play and the Xiaomi Phone — one for its unique form factor to show off Android's adaptability, and the other for its extreme price-to-performance ratio. Here's hoping that next year will bring more bizarre devices with Ice Cream Sandwich.

NIKON D5100 As for cameras, my Nikon D5100's been fantastic thanks to its portability, high-res swivel screen and full HD video recording function.

NEXT: October ►

OCTOBER

Click on any date to view the original story...

STEVE JOBS died at the age of 56 after stepping down as CEO of Apple and naming Tim Cook his successor. His profound effect on the world of technology was endlessly memorialized in the press. A celebration of Steve's life was held for Apple employees some weeks later.



PHOTO: JUSTIN SULLIVAN / GETTY IMAGES

10
05

Google took the stage in Hong Kong to unveil the next version of its Android OS, version 4.0, aka **ICE CREAM SANDWICH**. The update featured a comprehensive interface redesign and showcased a host of new features. Among the highlights were the NFC-enable Android Beam, Face Unlock and the controversial "Roboto" font.



10
18



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04

Sure, the iPhone 4S looks just like its predecessor on the outside, but it's what's on the inside that counts? Right? For the first time, Apple launched three new handsets in a year (including VZW's iPhone 4) and this time around, it jammed a dual-core A5 CPU under the hood. But it was the **VOICE OF SIRI** that got everyone talking.

10
13



RIM founder Mike Lazardis issued a public apology following a **GLOBAL OUTAGE OF BLACKBERRY SERVICES**. In a video address, he acknowledged that RIM dropped the ball and assured customers that the company was working hard to remedy the situation. He later admitted it was "the largest outage we've ever experienced."

10
18

The long-awaited **GALAXY NEXUS** was made official in Hong Kong as well, becoming the first handset to feature ICS. The 4.65-inch behemoth features an HD Super AMOLED display, a 1.2GHz dual-core processor, dual cameras and an embedded NFC module. Also on offer, a newfangled panorama mode and an onboard barometer.

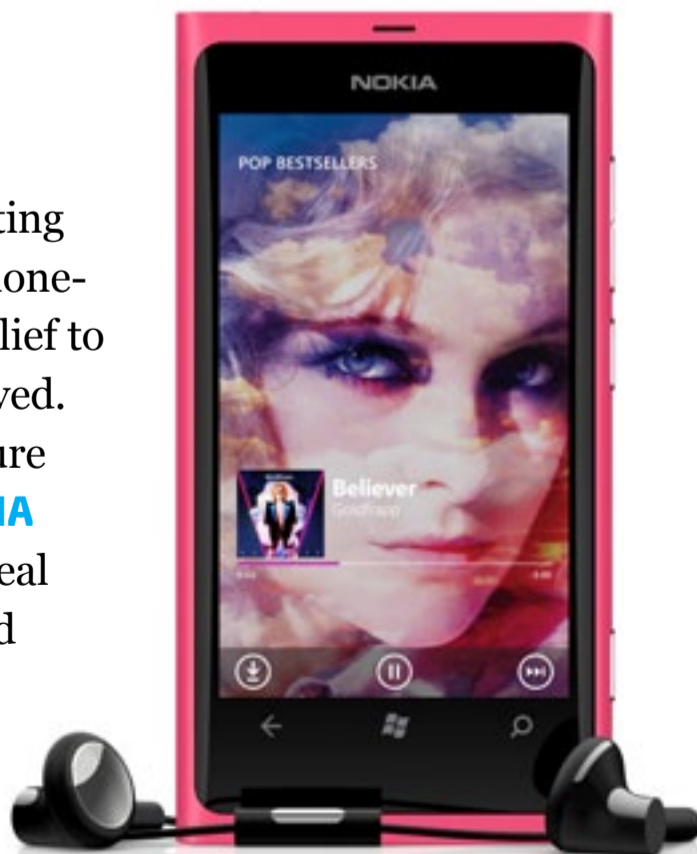


Lytro introduced the world's first consumer LIGHT FIELD CAMERA, bringing infinite focus to eager photogs everywhere. Within an anodized aluminum frame, the camera houses an f/2, 8x zoom lens with 11-mega-ray light-field power for all the infinite focusing magic. It's expected sometime in 2012 with a base price of \$399.

10
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10
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The device Nokia was counting on to bring smiles to our phone-loving faces and a sigh of relief to its shareholders finally arrived. While it was similar in stature to our beloved N9, the **LUMIA 800** was dubbed the “first real Windows phone” — it would set the standard for future Nokiasoft handsets.



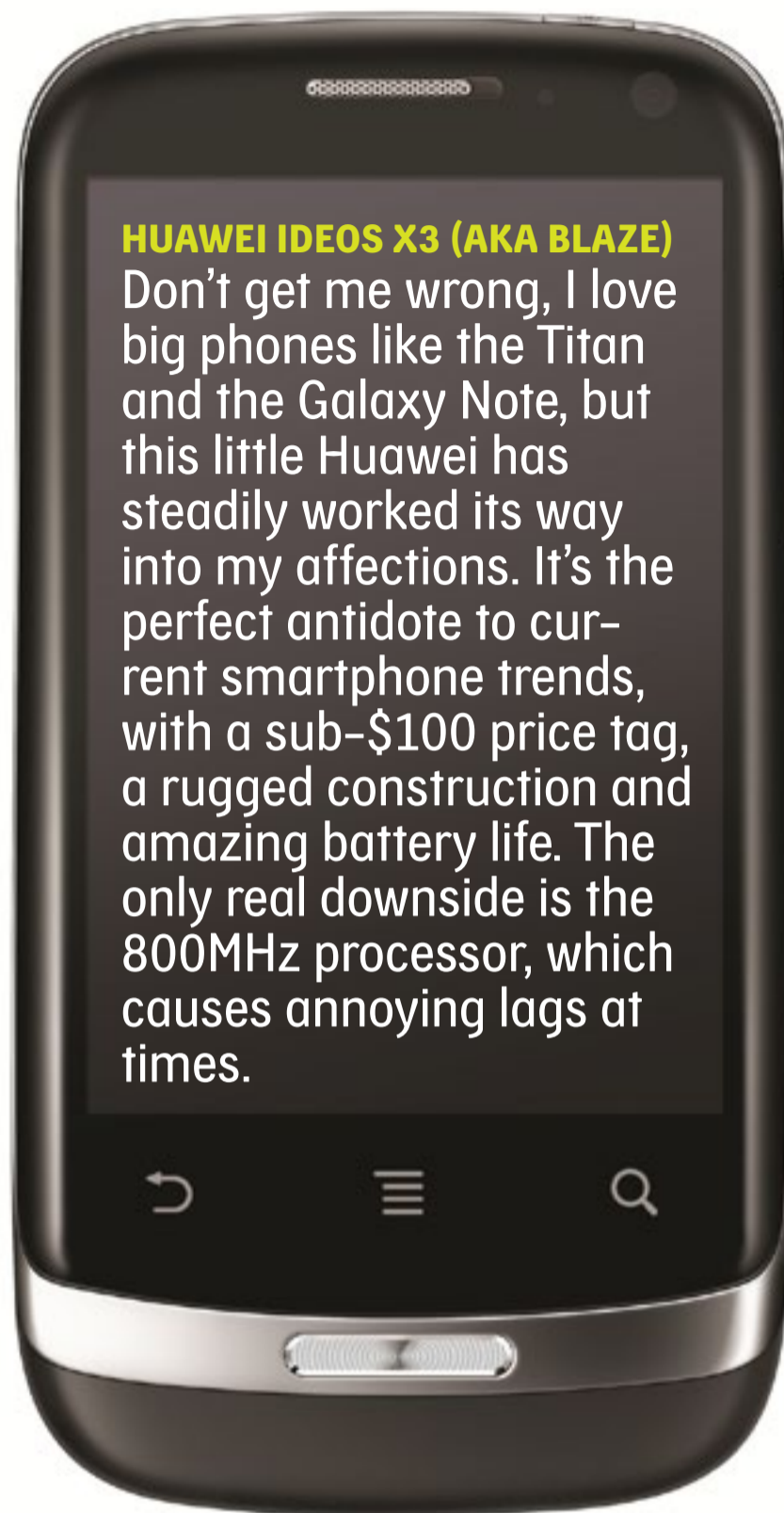
10
20

ARM unveiled its CORTEX-A7 processor, which is built using a 28nm process, making it five times smaller and more efficient than the current Cortex-A8. Cheap enough to power sub-\$100 phones, the Cortex-A7 can be combined with higher-power cores like the Cortex-A15; a concept ARM labeled “big.LITTLE computing.”



SHARIF SAKR
Senior Associate
Editor

“
I don't care
about being
cutting edge:
all that
matters is
that a device
helps me
to cope with
work and
life...
”



HUAWEI IDEOS X3 (AKA BLAZE)

Don't get me wrong, I love big phones like the Titan and the Galaxy Note, but this little Huawei has steadily worked its way into my affections. It's the perfect antidote to current smartphone trends, with a sub-\$100 price tag, a rugged construction and amazing battery life. The only real downside is the 800MHz processor, which causes annoying lags at times.

HTC FLYER (3G) This amazing tablet has received relatively little attention — probably because of its price. If the next wave brings prices down, I might just buy one. I don't care about being cutting edge: all that matters is that a device helps me to cope with work and life, and the Flyer does that admirably.

INTEL SANDY BRIDGE The Core i5-2500K in particular is a great balance of price and performance, and it deserves to be the staple of mid-range gaming rigs everywhere. Maybe it wasn't until AMD's eight-core FX 8150 came out, and regrettably flopped, that I truly appreciated what Intel had accomplished.

NEXT: November ►

NOVEMBER

Click on any date to view the original story...



11
07

The introduction of Barnes & Noble's **NOOK TABLET** proved Amazon wasn't the only book dealer with a budget tablet up its sleeve. Ringing in at just \$50 more than the Kindle Fire, the Nook tab looked nearly identical to its predecessor, the Nook Color. While it would run Gingerbread, it had its competition beat with open access to the Android Market.

11
09

Mere months after its shape-shifting predecessors made it to market, ASUS' **EEE PAD TRANSFORMER PRIME** would become the first-ever quad-core tablet. Sporting Google's freshest OS, Ice Cream Sandwich, and packing NVIDIA's Tegra 3 SoC, it would become our favorite Android tablet of the moment.

11
03

The **XOOM 2'S** predecessor (you can guess the name) was the first tablet sporting Google's tablet-only Honeycomb, but failed to impress. With the second generation, **Motorola** improved in just about every respect, but stuck with the sticky sweet OS and a rather unpalatable price, making it yet another Android tablet in the crowd.



11
09



And just like that, **FLASH PLAYER FOR MOBILE** was dead. Citing its dedication to "aggressively contribute" to HTML5, Adobe gave the axe to the once-ubiquitous platform. Soon after, a product lead came forward to point the finger at Apple's reluctance to adopt Flash Player for iOS. Adobe said it would continue to nurture Flash for the desktop.

11
22



It's been a long and twisted road to market for Mirasol color displays. Just a few months after Qualcomm CEO Paul Jacobs announced the death of its 5.7-incher, the **KYOBO EREADER** became the first device to sport the screen. It wouldn't appear stateside, but it would make its South Korean debut for about \$310.

11
16

The proposed **STOP ONLINE PIRACY ACT** ruffled more than a few feathers, including those of heavy hitters like Google and Facebook. Taking out an ad in the *New York Times*, a group of nine Internet companies voiced its concern that the act would impose unwanted restrictions, including monitoring of websites, and pose a threat to innovation.

11
29



A little over eight months after it asked for T-MOBILE'S \$39 BILLION HAND IN MARRIAGE, **AT&T** withdrew its application with the FCC, hoping to focus its attention on dealing with the DOJ. The FCC approved the move, but went on to publish its report on the proposed merger. **AT&T**, for its part, reaffirmed its commitment to the magenta one.

11
27

Following a May crash-test that saw one damaged Volt battery set a car ablaze, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration launched a formal safety investigation into the North American Car of the Year. The incident led **CHEVY TO OFFER REFUNDS AND LOANERS** and consider a new battery for future models.



ZACH HONIG
Senior Associate
Editor



“
The Sony
NEX-C3
meets nearly
all of my
DSLR needs
in a super
compact
package.
”

SAMSUNG GALAXY NOTE My hands-down absolute favorite gadget of all time is the Samsung Galaxy Note. Having an unlocked dual-core 5.3-inch tablet-like smartphone in my pocket means I'm always connected, regardless of where I am in the world. Its battery life is phenomenal as well, but the one area where it doesn't totally rock is with stills and video.

SONY NEX-C3 AND CANON S100 That's where the Sony NEX-C3 comes in — it meets nearly all of my DSLR needs in a super compact package. And the Canon S100 is there when I need a powerful camera that I can easily slip in a pocket.

NEXT: December ►

DECEMBER

Click on any date to view the original story...



12
02

There's no denying that RIM had a tough go of it in 2011, and, unfortunately for the troubled company its flagship tablet wouldn't be the harbinger of good news. The outfit announced that it would take a **\$485 MILLION HIT** in the third fiscal quarter thanks to the PlayBook, which saw a sharp decline in sales following Q1.

12
12

Microsoft

In a rather vague restructuring, Microsoft's developer-loving Steve Ballmer announced plans to replace Andy Lees as head of the company's Windows Phone division. He would be replaced by engineering head, **TERRY MEYERSON**, but would maintain his position, at least temporarily, as president of the Windows Phone Group.

12
01

Calling to mind the year's location-tracking debacle, Trevor Eckhart revealed that wireless providers and handset makers were secretly running a sneaky program on our phones called **CARRIER IQ**. The software had the ability to track an awful lot of information, record keystrokes and, apparently, make the mobile industry squirm.

12
03

While Apple and Samsung continue to wage a **PATENT-FUELED WAR** the world over, a US District Court judge shot down the fruity one's request to block the sale of Galaxy devices stateside. Of course, that battle goes on, but the decision would guarantee that devices like the Galaxy S II and Galaxy Tab were still fair game for holiday shoppers.

12
15

Perhaps the year's most talked about handset, aside from the nonexistent iPhone 5, the **SAM-SUNG GALAXY NEXUS** finally got the LTE treatment thanks to Verizon Wireless. While we were pleased with the ICS smartphone, the lack of Google Wallet and poor battery life on LTE made it less enticing than its HSPA+ predecessor.



PHOTO: AP



12
22

It may have suffered a bitter blow in its attempt to acquire T-Mobile, but AT&T wasted no time picking up its spectrum grab. The FCC approved Ma Bell's \$1.9 billion purchase of **QUALCOMM'S 700MHZ SPECTRUM**, formerly used to facilitate FLO TV, solidifying Ma Bell's plans to put the airwaves to use on its LTE network.

12
19



Ma Bell set out for a twelve-month run of jumping regulatory hurdles to secure the acquisition of T-Mobile, but just nine months later it was throwing in the towel. The **ILL-FATED PLAN** faced a massive amount of backlash from the industry as well as the government and ultimately cost AT&T \$4 billion and a whole lot of heartache.

12
21

MICROSOFT announced its plans to scale back its presence at CES following this year's conference. Frank Shaw said the company's "product news milestones generally don't align with the show's January timing," adding that it won't have a keynote or booth in coming years. This year's keynote is expected to go out with a whimper.



CHRISTOPHER TROUT

Executive Editor,
Distro

“
Now, if Siri
could only
fetch me
a martini
when
the clock
strikes five.
”

MY KEEPON So it doesn't talk, it lacks a high-def display and comes with *zero* cameras, but Keepon's the cutest damned device I've covered in the past year. With its move from the laboratory to a prime slice of real estate on the shelves of Toys R Us, this little yellow body-rocking blob is a refreshing and unusual addition to the consumer robotics market.

SIRI A piece of software that has more charm than a majority of the adult population *and* knows when my next dentist's appointment is? Sign me up. Sure, she's not perfectly polished quite yet, but like the handset she lives in, she's bound to make an indelible mark on the mobile industry. Now, if she could only fetch me a martini when the clock strikes five.



APPLE IPAD 2 As the Executive Editor of this here tablet magazine, the second-gen iPad has proven indispensable. Not a single device has served me better or more consistently over the past six months. And as someone who reads and (sometimes) responds to email in questionably inappropriate spaces, it's a far better fit than my MacBook Pro.

NEXT: Engadget's 2012 CES Preview ►

Engadget's 2012 CES Preview

Believe it or not, the holidays are once again coming to a close and we find ourselves just over a week away from the geek's ultimate holiday – the 2012 Consumer Electronics Show, arguably the biggest event of the year for the tech world. Hundreds of companies gather in the Nevada desert to show off their latest innovations, setting the stage for what will no doubt be another stellar year in electronics. In anticipation of the onslaught we're about to experience, we want to offer up our predictions of what you can expect at the show. There are always a few wondrous surprises that nobody could ever see coming – which is part of what makes CES fun – but aside from those jaw-dropping moments, we have a pretty solid idea of what will take place next week. So join us as we break down CES 2012, one category at a time.

Smartphones

Last year's CES brought us a flood of devices with dual-core mobile processors and the innovation that was the Lapdock (and we all saw how that panned out for Motorola). This year, we'll likely witness the introduction of superphones with quad-core CPUs and other stellar specs like HD displays and 12+ megapixel cameras. We're looking forward to gazing upon the first handsets with custom ICS skins and NFC will be littered all over the place. And watch out for Windows Phones this year – it's quite possible we'll find the platform finally blessed with dual-core and LTE-enabled handsets.

Sony Ericsson (or perhaps just Sony?) will finally show off the long-rumored Xperia Arc HD and it may actually have a bigger brother, complete with a larger Reality display and more horsepower. Motorola is expected to debut the LTE-laden Droid 4 QWERTY slider on Verizon, and we've heard whispers that there may be more additions to the RAZR lineup en route – we wouldn't be surprised to see a GSM / HSPA+ version show up on AT&T. Nokia should begin its massive US comeback tour (unless you count the Lumia 710 on T-Mobile, that is) with one or two new high-end devices on AT&T and / or Verizon. Also, be on the lookout for the LG Revolu-

tion 2 – an Optimus LTE / Nitro variant – to pop up on Big Red's 4G lineup, as well as an AT&T-blessed Samsung Galaxy Note. Pantech will come out of hiding by offering up an LTE smartphone and tablet on AT&T, and we're sincerely crossing our fingers that we'll get a sneak peak at the ASUS PadFone with Tegra 3, though we're not expecting it to show up until MWC in February. If all of this happens, we'll definitely be happy campers in Vegas this year.

– Brad Molen

Tablets

Do your end-of-year holiday plans involve giving someone the gift of tablet computing? Yes? Well, that's very generous of you, but maybe you want to put the plastic down for a second while we talk. You see, though now's as good a time as any to take the tab plunge (the ASUS Eee Pad Transformer Prime, anyone?), a boatload of higher-specced, lower-end and smaller-sized slates are literally just around the bend. We'll also finally see availability and pricing officially announced for a couple of a well-known, but still unreleased tablets that've passed through Team Engadget's curious hands. Think you can hold out for January's dizzying array of industry revelations? We promise the innovation will be well worth the wait.

If 10-inches is just too much kit to grip one-handed on-the-go, look for the coming market to be flush with the more manageable 7 and 8-inch form factors that manufacturers have recently begun to adopt. Quad-core tabs will also be on the rise, as an increasing amount of OEMs embrace a Tegra 3 SoC. And there'll be no escaping Google's new crown jewel, Ice Cream Sandwich – that OS will be slathered on a wide array of upcoming slates, including those from major players and no-name brands, as well as shipping across a variety of price points. In fact, 2012 could very well prove to be the year ICS takes the category crown, abolishing the barrier to entry with affordability and ubiquity, all while finally unifying Android's scattered ecosystem. Oh, you'll still see the top companies introducing tablets with Honeycomb pre-installed, but those instances should be few and, really, it's all just an effort to rush products out to market – not a clueless industry misstep. So stay tuned: CES and its Pandora box of revelations is only a week away. – Joseph Volpe

Desktops

Desktops tend to come and go at CES without so much as a whimper, and honestly, we've seen nothing to show that CES 2012 will be any different. We'd love to be proven wrong, of course, but unless some far-flung company trots out some far-flung design, it'll be yet another round of speed-bumped CPUs, GPUs and bragging rights over who has the most USB 3.0 ports.

In all seriousness, we're expecting a decline of new desktops at CES. Conversely, there ought to be a continued surge in the release of new laptops. Desktops are becoming more and more of a niche product, but for gamers who need the best, we're counting on at least one or two workstations with RAIDed PCIe SSDs, four GPUs linked together and a pair of overclocked Core i7s. All for a cool million dollars – give or take a few thousand.

– Darren Murph

Laptops / Netbooks / Ultrabooks

This might be a good time to remind everyone that all those wispy laptops we've been calling Ultrabooks are mere placeholders, filling a need for pinch-thin PCs until the real thing comes along. Not that that's stopping laptop makers. Even though it could be months before we see "full-fledged" models packing Intel's next-gen Ivy Bridge chips, a raft of ultraportables are about to make their debut at CES. Think of it as this year's netbook (or e-reader or Android tablet): all of the major brands that have yet to release one are likely to do so in Vegas, as are scads of smaller players you might not have heard of. All we're saying is, if you've been looking for an impossibly thin-and-fast laptop for less than \$1,000, well, you might want to put your comparison shopping on hold until after the show wraps.

And don't be surprised if you see companies hewing to a very loose definition of "Ultrabook." In addition to the usual suspects (13-inch screens, solid-state drives, sub-\$1,000 price), we're expecting a crop of larger machines with 14 and 15-inch screens and... optical drives. The idea, we're told, is to make these \$1,000-plus machines more palatable to mainstream consumers – folks who still like to burn discs once in a while, or who won't be convinced they're getting a good deal unless there's a DVD burner. What we're going to see, then, is a second tier of

so-called Ultrabooks that reek of Intel's marketing hype, but are actually nothing more than good old-fashioned thin-and-lights (often very attractive thin-and-lights, but thin-and-lights nonetheless). Don't say we didn't warn you. — *Dana Wollman*

E-readers

At CES 2009, it was e-book readers as far as the eyes could see — last year, however, the space was largely eschewed for the impending tablet explosion. This year's show will likely be no different in that regard. The industry is currently dominated by a handful of companies that are on their own release schedules and will likely have little to no presence in that space at the show.

Amazon, who recently announced its latest slate of Kindle devices, will not be in attendance. Kobo's presence will likely be minimal, if the company is there at all. Barnes & Noble has announced its presence at the show, but this will likely be limited to the Pepcom Digital Experience show. There's some possibility that Sony will announce a reader amongst its perpetual deluge of CES products, but given the release of a new flagship product in the space over the summer, there's not likely to be a lot of fanfare around the product this year. Most likely we'll see some much smaller companies dominating the space this year, with a focus on budget readers and perhaps color screen devices.

— *Brian Heater*

Digital Imaging

What's your New Year's resolution? How does 20 megapixels sound? Or perhaps 20.12? Digital imaging is without question one of the toughest categories for marketing departments — how do you convince consumers to replace a camera that already has a double-digit megapixel rating, a long zoom lens, dozens of scene modes and a compact, pocketable design? Well, you add even more features, of course. Social media, map integration and beefier scene mode selections will likely dominate point-and-shoot lineups in 2012, along with the standard (and often unnecessary) crawl to outdo last year's resolutions, perhaps with the promise of shaving a millimeter off the waist line, to boot. If a slim profile isn't what you're after, we're also overdue for some DSLR cams, so you'll want to keep an eye on that space as well.

1080p will also dominate the space at this year's CES, and despite a boost in the video capabilities of our beloved still snappers, the camcorder lives on – for one more year, at the very least. Ironically, improved still image quality will be a theme for motion cams in 2012, along with some fancy new lens tech aimed at improving stabilization. Camcorders are still flying off the shelves, we're told, and are clearly still producing enough revenue for manufacturers to justify the expense of developing new lines. We won't see many new standard-def models this year, though they won't be discontinued just yet – SD cams remain popular enough for retailers to keep them on the shelves, thanks to lower pricing and other incentives. We'll need to wait a couple more weeks before camera makers reveal exactly what's in store for 2012, but with PMA now folded into everyone's favorite CE show, there will definitely be plenty of cams on-hand to capture those desert antics this year. – *Zach Honig*

Gaming

The video game world's big shows have already come and gone, but that doesn't mean the industry is going to be completely silent at CES. Although we don't expect to see much from console gaming's big three (after all, they already brought their A game to E3 and Tokyo Game Show 2011), Vegas is a great place to spot innovative startups, awesome accessories and glorious crapgadgets. PC gaming and peripherals will be CES 2012's gaming bread and butter, but we wouldn't rule out a few console-centric surprises either. Surely we'll get another look at Razer's Blade, if not the vaporous Switchblade. We hope to see at least a few new Tegra 3 slates give the Transformer Prime a run for its (and your) money, and we wouldn't be surprised to see a slew of three-dee laptops trying to push the edge of semi-portable PC gaming, possibly with something fresh from AMD, NVIDIA, or Intel in their pockets. Nyko, Razer, Mad Catz, Cooler Master, Penguin United and other accessory outfits will likely be on site as well, flaunting new PC cases, battery packs, controllers, headsets and other peripheral delights. – *Sean Buckley*

Automotive

Each year CES has more and more cars on the floor – and we're not just talking about the ones with ridiculously large chrome

wheels and trunks full of woofers. Last year Ford unveiled the Focus Electric at CES and, while we're not sure we'll be getting a wholly new car this year, the company will have the Evos concept, a cloud-connected car with gull-wing doors and one of those fancy concept car interiors that will never make it to production.

Audi and NVIDIA will be making an announcement together, not a surprise since the German marque had a big presence last year, talking up its Tegra-powered dashboards. This year we're expecting to see more and better graphics in the center stack, but it's surely more advanced smartphone integration that will make the most and biggest waves. Ford, Cadillac, Chrysler, Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Tesla and plenty of others will be there showing off what will be a slew of fancy new ways to get music and media from your smartphone to your car stereo. **Your commute will be more engaging in 2012 than ever before.** — *Tim Stevens*

Audio

Speakers, headphones and audio-wares get announced year-round, but CES is generally where you'll find sound and the latest technologies converge. One of the biggest areas to gain steam since 2011's show has been wireless — with the clear popularity of cloud-based streaming services like Spotify and Google Music, it's now become easier than ever to get very good sound quality by accessing your music from anywhere there's a connection. While not directly related to plugging into your speakers per se, cutting the cord with wireless audio devices has also increased this year. As predicted, AirPlay has certainly seemed to take off for iOS, DLNA on Android is still kicking with loads of Android-focused wireless docks recently hitting the scene from companies like Philips and Bluetooth-enabled speakers have certainly proven their worth. So, what does it all mean for CES 2012? Well, **now that wireless audio has its feet firmly planted, you can surely expect it as more of a focus and not a subset of entire product lineups.** Furthermore, it's a likely a safe bet that Bluetooth 4.0 will make its way into smaller devices that wouldn't have been as likely to support wireless audio in the past due to power constraints. Of course, we'll also expect to see the latest and greatest in noise-cancelling headphones, gaming headsets and portable media players, not to mention a bevy of new gear that's

been out across the globe finally making its official US debut. Audiophiles who are also gadget freaks should have a lot to love this year. — *Joe Pollicino*

HDTVs / Displays

This year's CES finds many giants of the HDTV industry in a precarious position as some of the newer TV features highlighted the past few years — namely connected TVs and 3D — have failed to translate into major sales drivers. As always, however, there's the hope of new technology that will reignite buyer interest in the segment, and leading the way this year will likely be large OLED displays from the likes of LG and Samsung. Both have been working on the technology for several years but this time around we expect to see production-ready super thin, energy efficient screens in sizes of 55-inches, although the questions of when they will come to market and at what cost have yet to be answered. Another direction we expect to see some move in is higher resolutions. While Sony and JVC have dipped a toe into 4K projection, Toshiba is already first out of the gate with a 4K TV on sale overseas featuring autostereoscopic (no glasses) 3D that we saw in prototype form last year and figure will come to the US shortly. Will other manufacturers immediately follow? It seems likely, although at around \$10k for a 55-inch screen it could be a while before these are available at your local big box retail store.

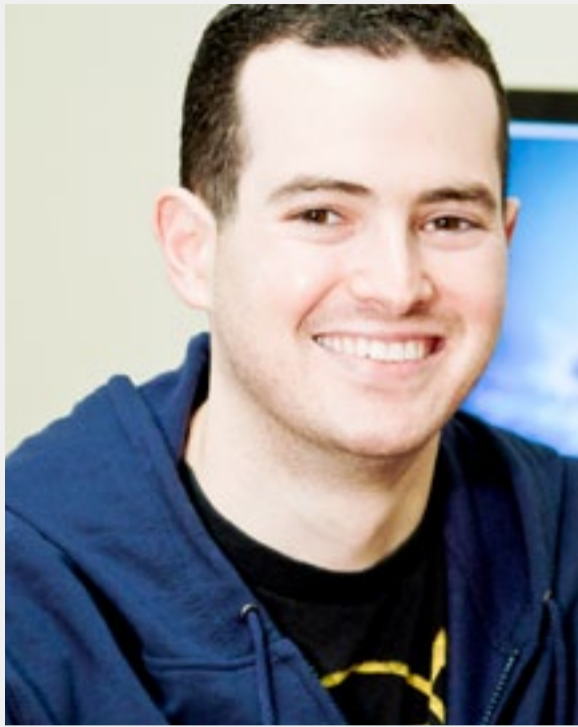
As far as current tech, we hardly expect connected TVs or 3D to just fade away — both will probably be pitched as bigger and better than ever, and for many of the same reasons. Manufacturers with active shutter 3DTVs have banded together (finally) on a standard for glasses. That, combined with additional content from ESPN, an end to pack-in exclusivity for *Avatar's* 3D Blu-ray, movies like *Transformers* and *Hugo* coming home and the 2012 London Olympics may be enough to push it from frequent punchline to solidly-developing niche. We should find out shortly whether Eric Schmidt's prediction of a huge 2012 for Google TV is accurate, although rumors from Samsung could push most of the big Google TV news out until after the show in Las Vegas is over. This also leaves in question what happens to many manufacturer's own connected TV platforms, and the potential of cross-platform apps. Comcast and Time Warner both showed off cable TV without the box thanks

to networked displays last year but it was nowhere to be seen in the real world – we'll keep an eye out for another demo. At this point we'll be surprised if more companies don't go the Vizio route and slather their product lineups big and small with extra features, although the question of battles at the cheap end is as interesting as the question of who will win in high-end display quality. Sharp and Panasonic have been pushing the bar there and neither will stop in 2012, although we expect the battleground to shift to extremely large (70-inch+) display sizes. Of course, we haven't even touched on competing network streamer add-on boxes like Roku and Boxee, the continued growth of phones and tablets as second screen options or voice and gesture control technology – it's going to be a very busy week. – *Richard Lawler*

Households

It'll be what we're not seeing that looks likely to be the major trend for household tech – namely wires. We're expecting to see broader (and closer to retail) takes on inductive charging. We're talking more convenient ways to wirelessly top up your phone, possibly integration into your car and home – all in a way that's far more subtle than that black industrial mat of yesteryear. We'd expect to see it seeping into many more devices beyond smartphones. Leave those remotes on your coffee table as it charges the batteries for you. Or, how about inductive pans perhaps? What seemed conceptual last year could get much nearer to reality in 2012. Similarly, with the staggering uptake of smartphones, expect plenty of Bluetooth and other wireless accessories that tie your phone to your home – like baby monitors that can be viewed and listened to wherever you have reception – and the introduction of even more smart appliances integrated around your home.

Add into the mix even more unusual household appliances from the likes of Samsung and LG, and whether it's a vacuum that automatically trails the user, hovers for effortless cleaning, doubles as an air conditioner or all of the above – heck, we're willing to be thrilled by a cleaning appliance if it's got something new to show us. We'll be getting into CES' every nook and cranny to find all the dirt on our future (hopefully robot-managed) home. Let's just hope there's a clever way of cleaning that dirt up afterwards. – *Mat Smith*



TECHNOBUFFALO'S **JON RETTINGER** GETS CANDID ABOUT HIS DISTASTE FOR FANBOYS AND WHY HE PREFERS LOW-RES DISPLAYS.

JON RETTINGER

Q&A

What gadget do you depend on most? My phone is like a third hand, and is always attached to me. Right now, I'm rocking an HTC Titan as my daily driver. It's integral for work and a few bouts of *Angry Birds*. I also love the contradiction of a Mac user rocking a Windows phone.

Which do you look back upon most fondly? The original RAZR was an awesome time. True smartphones wouldn't come around for years, and people were fascinated by industrial design. The first time I picked up that phone I couldn't believe something so small was a cellphone. It was that phone that sparked my love of tech and started me on my geeky path. I actually still have it.

Which company does the most to push the industry? Apple for sure. Very few entities are as polarizing, but their innovations have pushed the industry forward and forced the competition to step it up. Whenever there is industry competition, the consumer wins.

What is your operating system of choice? My very first video was an unboxing of a MacBook Pro, and ever since then, I've been exclu-

sively Mac. I'd love to give a PC answer about how it's better for me for video editing, but the truth is, I like everything about it better than Windows 7. I'm a bit slutty when it comes to mobile operating systems though, and use just about every OS throughout the year.

What are your favorite gadget names? The cartoon nerd in me loved the Transformer Prime name. I keep expecting Optimus to start talking to me about Cybertron and telling me to 'Roll out'. I love gadget names that make no sense. What's an Atrix? Why is this Samsung phone 'Captivating?'

What are your least favorite? The company Huawei. No offense to the company, I just can't pronounce their name.

Which app do you depend on most? The Twitter app on whatever smartphone I'm using. My wife will tell you, I have a Twitter problem. I love it as a medium to connect my audience, catch up with friends and share tech news.

What traits do you most deplore in a smartphone? I know you were looking for an answer like 'screen size' but what bothers me most

is the consumer's emphasis on specs. A 1.2GHz processor vs. a 1.4GHz chipset is important, but it's only important if it improves the user experience. Maybe I read way too many comment threads about specs, but so many times I want to jump in and yell, "Your Tegra 2 phone is plenty fast! You won't notice a difference if you upgrade!" I guess, though, I'm part of the problem, spreading the tasty tech news. Can we call this the bloggers conundrum? I'm totally going to copyright that.

Which do you most admire? Screens. I can't believe how amazing screen technology is getting. Not just resolution, but the quality of the actual displays. I really think Samsung is leading the way in the screen technology. Their panels are beautiful.

What is your idea of the perfect device? That's a tough one. I'm going to make a Frankenstein phone. WebOS's multitasking, iOS's browser and App Store, Android's customization, and Windows Phone's Metro UI.

What is your earliest gadget memory? Maybe I'm dating myself, but I remember not having internet. My first real nerd memory was when my family got Prodigy and I could finally get online. E-mail changed my life. My earliest memory, though, is the glory that is *Pong*.

What technological advancement do you most admire? Processors. It's incredible we are living in a quad-core mobile world. My laptop from a few years ago wasn't as powerful as most phones and tablets today.

Which do you most despise? I know I'm not answering the question, but the whole fanboy thing. Why people

I'd love Windows Phone 7 to be able to truly multitask... with some fun way to close apps.

feel so strongly about a mobile OS is beyond me. Can you imagine the same passion for other things? Reese's fanboys duking it out with Snickers lovers? It's absolutely beyond me, but the phenomena is fascinating. That sounded a bit pretentious... Can I have another Soy Latte?

What fault are you most tolerant of in a gadget? Low resolution. Looking at monitors all these years has killed my eyes, so I often prefer a larger, lower resolution screen (one of the reasons I'm using the Titan now) so everything looks huge. I used to make fun of my mom for having the font on her BlackBerry so big she had one word per line... now I get it.

Which are you most intolerant of? Battery life. Don't give me a dual-core badass phone then tell me I can't use it for a full day. I expect to have to charge at night, but when it's noon and I have 20% left, that's just not acceptable. If only battery technology could evolve at the same rate as the processors.

When has your smartphone been of the most help? I have the world's worst sense of direction. Like really bad. I get lost driving home. Having GPS on my phone has literally been a lifesaver.


What device do you covet most? The Samsung D9500 LED TV. This 75" monster stole my heart at IFA... then I saw its 13K price tag.

If you could change one thing about your phone what would it be?

ANSWER

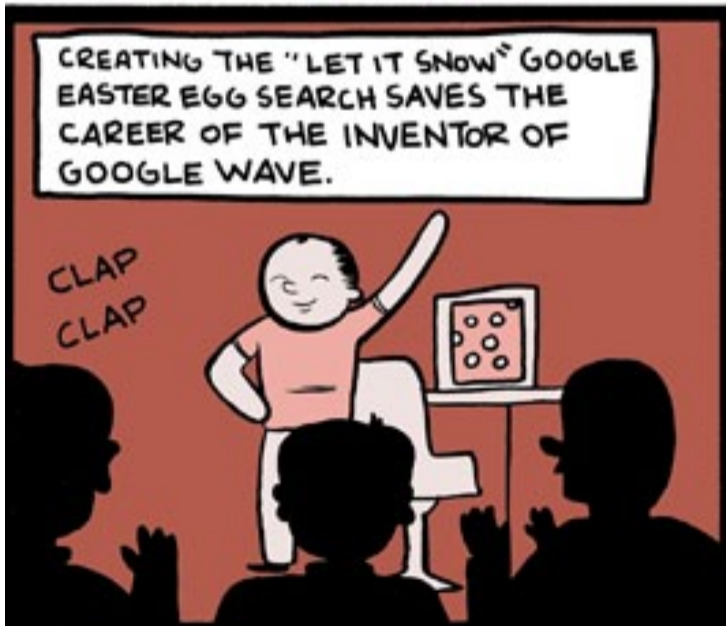
What does being connected mean to you? It means always having a phone or tablet in front of me. It means I can be one of the first to report news or reply to an e-mail, but it also means I'm often distracted during my 'off hours' by what I might have missed. There was a period of time when I switched to a BlackBerry because of its OS limitations, so I could better separate my professional and personal life.

When are you least likely to reply to an email? The middle of the night is really the only time. I've been battling insomnia recently, so now there really isn't a time.

When did you last disconnect? My honeymoon a year and half ago. We were on a cruise ship in the Mediterranean without internet. It was heavenly. 

Q&A : Jon Rettinger

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1 HOUR AGO iPhone 5 to have 21Mbps HSPA+ data? China Unicom says so

Dell confirms XPS 14z will go on sale in the US in the 'coming weeks'

Remember that XPS 14z Dell teased at IFA? Yeah, well, it's arriving soon. As in, "the coming weeks" soon. The company just confirmed it's on the cusp of shipping here in the states, and while the outfit stopped short of giving a starting price, it's good and ready to talk specs. As we reported last month, it has the same industri...

By Dana Wollman September 29, 2011 12:35PM

30 MINS AGO

iPhone 5 cases and realistic unibody dummy show off incredible slimness

While we're only five days away from finding out the true appearance of the next-generation iPhone, our good friends over at BENM.AT went ahead and crafted their very own unibody dummy using CAD drawings, CNC tools and a block of aluminum -- seriously, that's how they roll! Granted, this work's only based on...

By Richard Lai September 29, 2011 12:13PM

54 MINS AGO

Kobo's Vox Android tablet appears online briefly, gets Canadian release date and pricing

A day after another little-known e-reader manufacturer announced a tablet, a new Android slate from Kobo made a brief online appearance on Future Shop's site, only to be quickly taken down. According to the Canadian retailer, the FCC-approved tablet will offer up a 7-inch display with a 1024 x 600 resolution, WiF...

By Brian Heater September 29, 2011 11:53AM

1 HOUR AGO

Iceland gets a data center to call its own, still believes in fairies

You say Iceland, we immediately think Eyjafjallajökull -- and no, we haven't had a narcoleptic collapse upon these very keys. It's been over a year since that volcano swept the headlines and interrupted air travel, providing outsiders with a skewed

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