

# DISTR0

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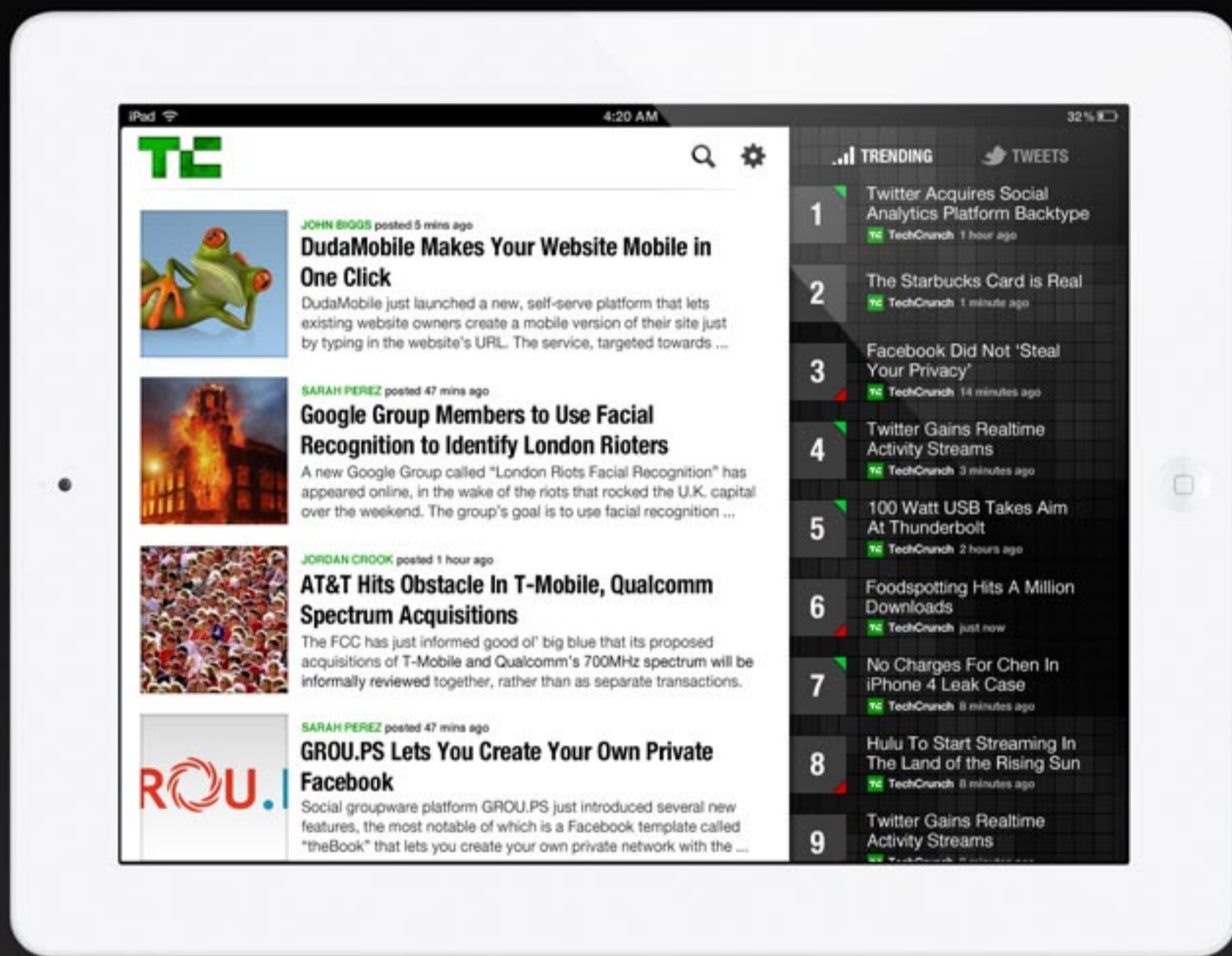
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# ISSUE 42

DISTRO

05.25.12

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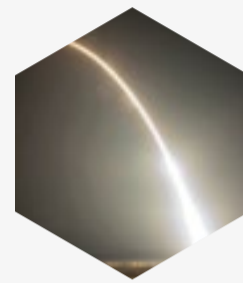


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## ESC



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Illustration by  
ILoveDust  
for Distro



# DIG THAT FRESH NEW DESIGN



DISTRO  
05.25.12

EDITOR'S  
LETTER

**W**elcome to the latest and greatest, a new look and feel for Distro that you're going to love. It all starts with a new, bold logo up front that ushers you into a refreshed layout and organization. There's a new, hexified Table of Contents that will make all the *BattleTech* players out there take notice. *Eyes-On* invites you to focus on various portions of a specific device for more detail and, at the other end of each issue, the new Time Machines feature will challenge your geek cred. We'll strip away the branding on a classic piece of gadgetry and you get to see if you can identify it.

The new sections and style tweaks look amazing, and there are even more refinements to come very, very soon. Right now, though, it's time to talk about the news.

Over this past weekend we got word that Google had cleared regulatory hurdles in China to let its acquisition of Motorola go through, the final such obstacle before it could enter into the blissful union of Googorola. The US and European powers-that-be have already granted their blessings, but it's still unclear what the next step for the couple

is. There've been rumblings of layoffs at Motorola, leaving some to speculate this was a simple patent grab and not a holy matrimony of hardware and software. The optimist in me is still hoping for a mind-blowing Motorola Nexus device, but I'll try to temper that enthusiasm for another few weeks.

Google also got some good news on the patent front, as it looks like the painfully drawn-out battle with Oracle is finally coming to a close. Google was found to not infringe on any of the eight total claims across the two remaining patents that Oracle was still holding desperately in the courtroom. Google *did* seem to do a little bit of code-related copyright infringement, but the maximum penalty there is a relatively paltry \$300,000. Pocket change compared to the \$2.6 billion Oracle previously demanded.

A victory for legal eagles there, though Samsung went out of its way this week to put its own legal counsel in its place. Response to the styling of the company's upcoming Galaxy S III has been lukewarm to put it mildly, leading some to accuse Samsung of letting fears of courtroom drama temper the thing's design purity. Quite to the contrary,



says Samsung: the new design is part of an ongoing five-year plan to establish a new visual identity. We believe them, if only because we have to imagine Samsung's legal team is far too busy to do any such moonlighting.

The effects of the burgeoning post-PC era continue to be felt, with Dell and HP both taking a beating this week. Dell posted a \$635 million profit for the quarter, which sounds fine, but that's a slide of 33 percent from the same quarter a year ago. Good things do not come from trends such as these.

HP did a little better, but only a little. Its profits dropped 31 percent over the same period, bringing in a \$1.6 billion profit. To stem this tide, HP made official a plan to cut 27,000 jobs — about eight percent of its total workforce. I wish I could say I thought this would be the last.

LG finally gave us a few real details on the stunner of a 55-inch OLED TV that it debuted at CES a few months ago. At a glitzy event ahead of this weekend's Monaco Grand Prix, the company showed off the set again, this time giving an idea of cost: around €8,000. That could put it just over \$10,000 in the US — far from a bargain, but about \$5,000 less than we'd feared. A July release date was dismissed, but it is looking like those hoping to mount one of these in their living rooms don't have too many more months left to save.

Finally, Yahoo did something surprising this week, launching its own



New  
feature  
alert!  
See an  
arrow?  
Tap for  
more!

web browser for iOS. (An Android version is supposedly on the way.) It's basically a mixture of Pocket-like functionality, letting you tag and track content for later reading or share it on a number of social platforms. Desktop browser plugins let you push bookmarks to the mobile browser, but since it's only on iOS, it can't replace the default browser, meaning that functionality is more than a little limited. Oh, and its name? Axis. A curious choice given the general lack of success of the world's *last* major axis.

In this week's Distro we're going to help you spend some of your excess summer cash on devices that can help you make better use of your excess summer time. Laptops, phones, bags, headphones, even apps — we have you covered, but we also have a hands-on with the gTar, columns from Ross Rubin and Ludwig Kietzmann and a Q&A with Fusion-io's David Flynn. It's all bundled in a fresh, new touch-friendly package that looks as good as it feels. So, go ahead, dive in.

TIM STEVENS  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF,  
ENGADGET



# ENTER

EYES-ON

DISTRO  
05.25.12

## DYSON DC39

Tap for detail



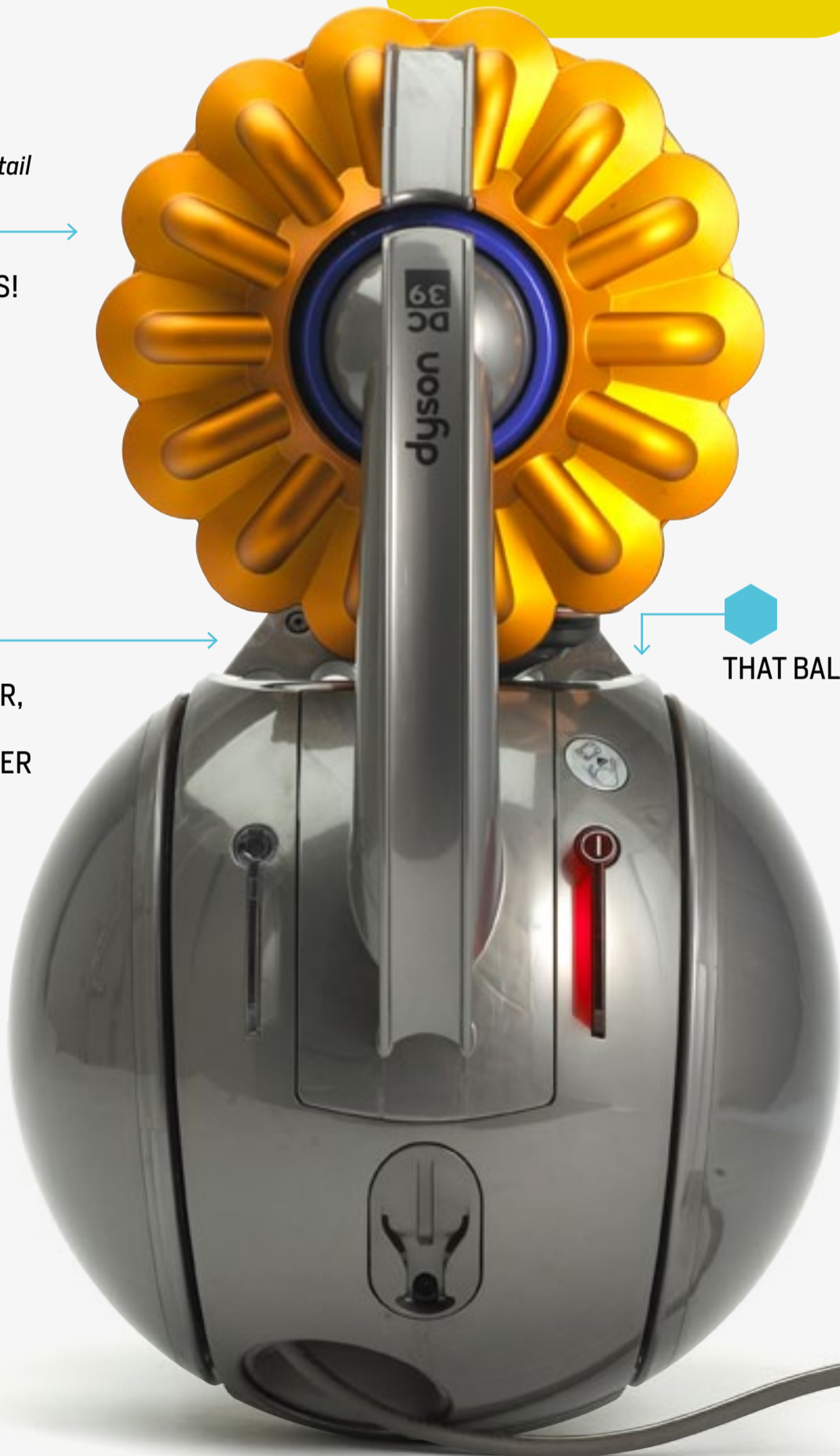
IT SUCKS!



SMALLER,  
FASTER,  
STRONGER



THAT BALL!



### BELLE OF THE BALL

**THE APPEAL:** This isn't your grandparents' vacuum. Dyson's ability to rethink and redesign everyday appliances makes this little sucker a must-have for the modern neat freak.

**THE DESIGN:** Ditching fixed wheels for a rolling ball and the common bag-and-filter setup for its so-called Root Cyclone technology, the DC39 is not only more attractive than its predecessors but more efficient to boot.

**THE BILL:** \$450



# ENTER

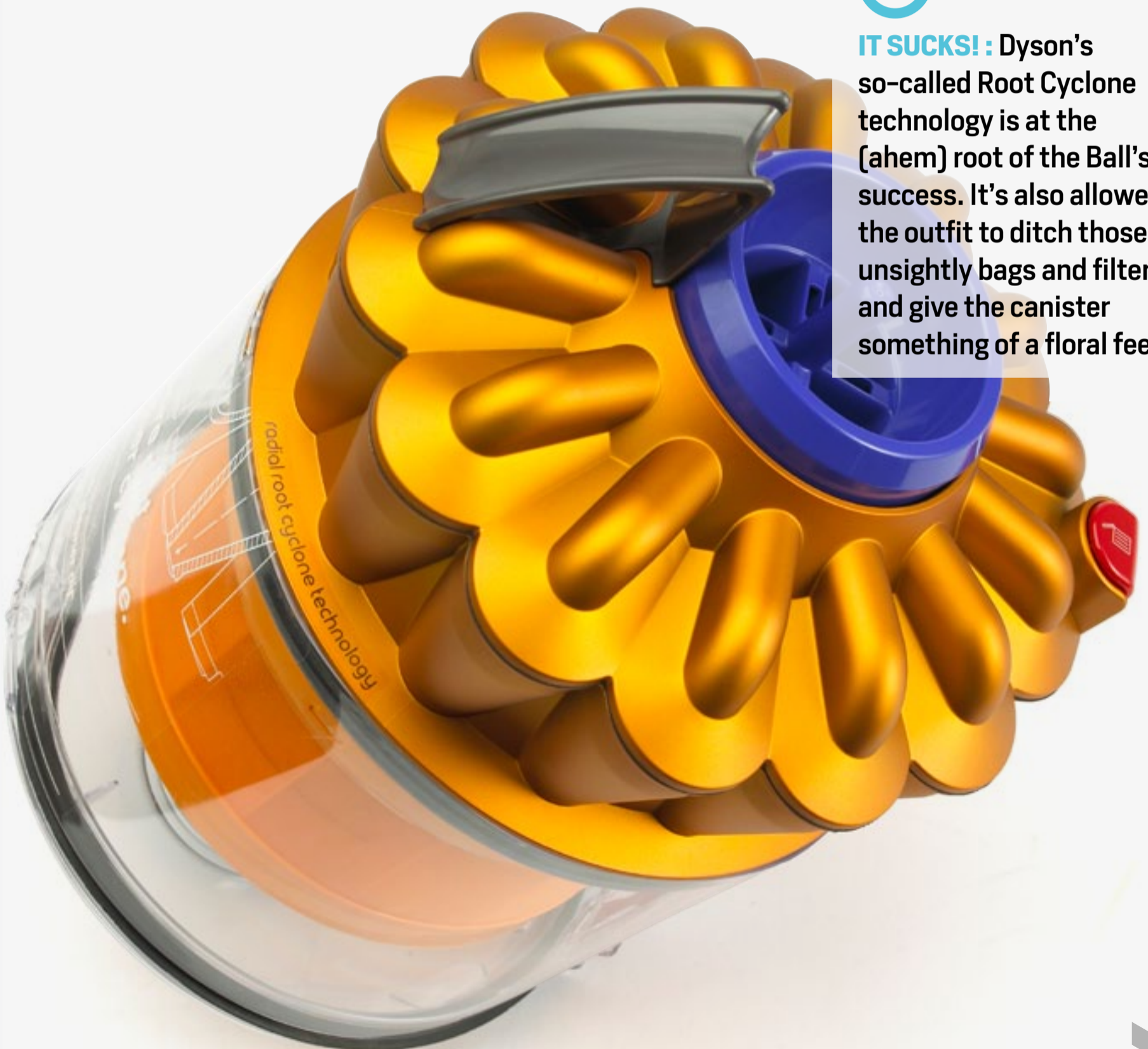
DISTRO  
05.25.12

EYES-ON

## DYSON DC39



**IT SUCKS!** : Dyson's so-called Root Cyclone technology is at the (ahem) root of the Ball's success. It's also allowed the outfit to ditch those unsightly bags and filters and give the canister something of a floral feel.



# ENTER

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05.25.12

EYES-ON

**DYSON DC39**



**SMALLER, FASTER, STRONGER:** If you can believe the stuff you read in press releases, Dyson's digital motor, housed inside the Ball, is "smaller, lighter, cleaner and more power-efficient" than the competition.



# ENTER

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05.25.12

EYES-ON

DYSON DC39



**THAT BALL:** Not only does it house a majority of the vacuum's mechanisms, but the Ball — in conjunction with a “central steering mechanism” — makes the DC39 a smooth operator.



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ENTER

HANDS-ON



Click on  
product  
names to  
read full  
stories

# GTAR IPHONE GUITAR

**PRICE: \$450**

**AVAILABILITY: Summer**

**THE BREAKDOWN: After some time with the gTar we can say, definitively, that this isn't just some cheap, plasticky toy.**

**When we first** caught word of the gTar, it was a bit of a mystery. Details are still a little scarce, but here's what we know: the company is looking for a summer release for the educational instrument. In the meantime, Incident Technologies has thrown up a Kickstarter page, so you can get in on the action. A few investors can get their hands on a unit for the low, low donation price of \$350, once it goes into production — \$100 off the estimated \$450 retail price point. Make no mistake, this feels like a real amateur-level electric guitar.





## HTC DESIRE C

**PRICE:** Under \$300

**AVAILABILITY:**  
Coming Soon

**THE BREAKDOWN:**  
While the specs may not seem too exciting, it still manages to eke out a Sense-skinned Android 4.0 UI.

**HTC gave us** a quick session to play around with its latest handset, the Desire C. No, it's not part of the consolidated One series, nor is the company revealing precisely what that "C" stands for. A 5-megapixel camera and a microSD slot are some other welcome specifications and it's all wrapped up in an attractive matte finish — you can take your pick from black and white in the UK. Despite the weedy processor and 512MB of RAM — specs that echoed the ghosts of smartphone past — it kept up with our swipes and several apps launched without much waiting around.

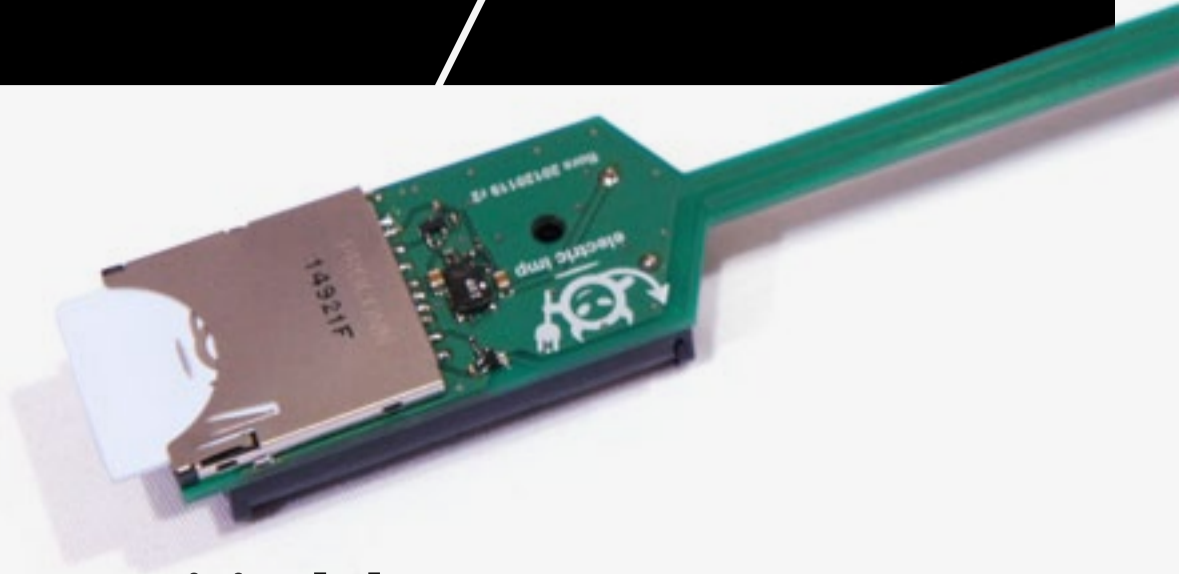


# ELECTRIC IMP

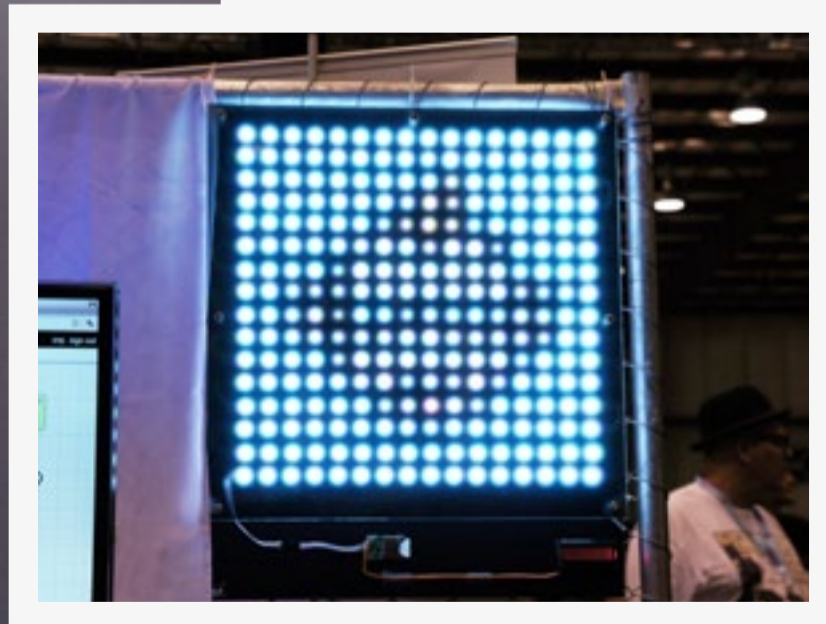
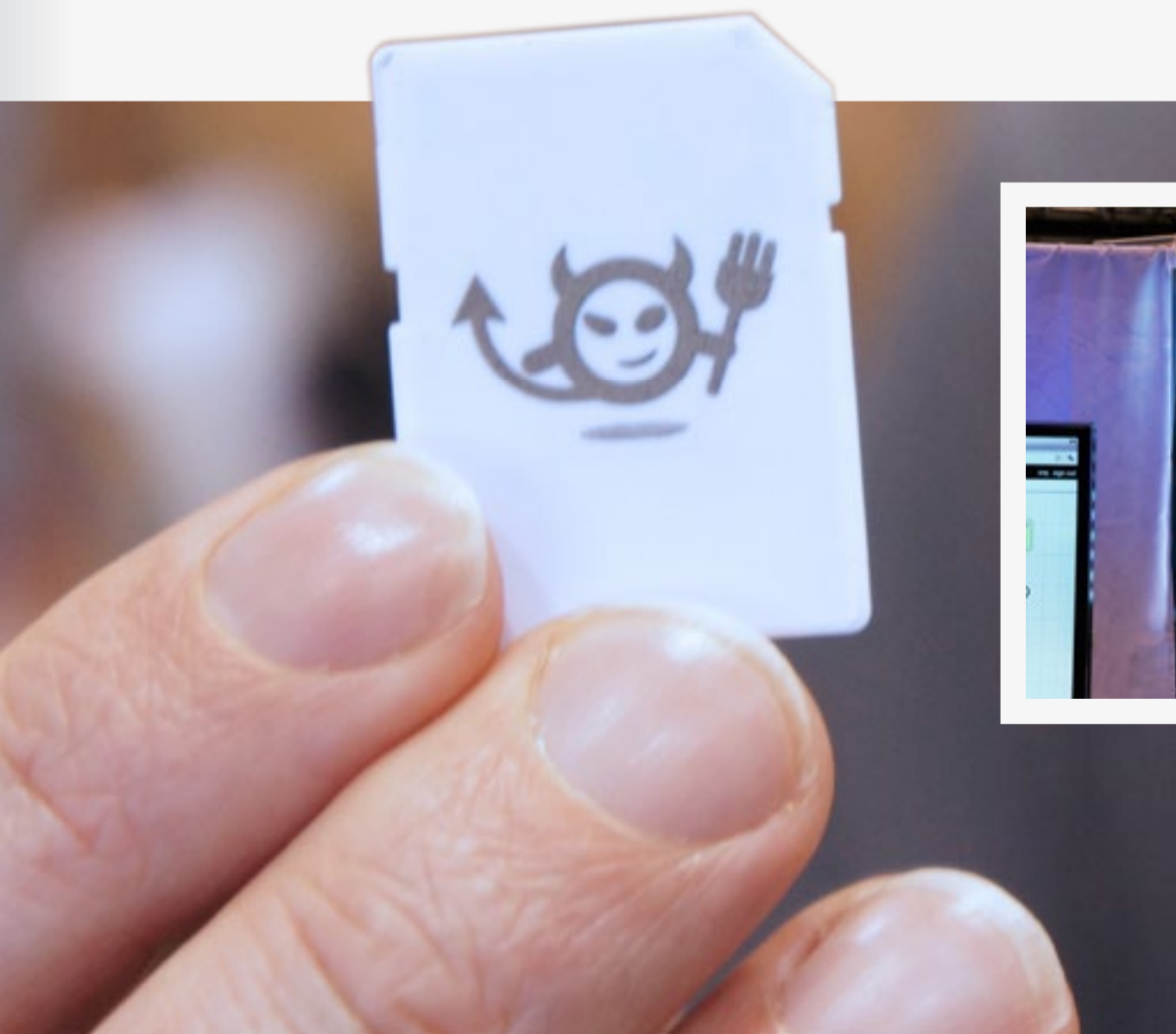
**PRICE: \$25+**

**AVAILABILITY: Late June**

**THE BREAKDOWN: An SD card-sized mini computer that allows you to control *almost* anything wirelessly.**



**We visited the** Electric Imp folks to get some hands-on time with the tiny wireless computer. It's a module containing an ARM Cortex M3 SoC with embedded WiFi that's built into a diminutive shell. While the device looks just like an SD card, it's not pin-compatible with the standard — the idea is to leverage a reliable and affordable connector for the kit. The module only comes to life when inserted into one of several boards, which provide power and access to the *real world*. Eventually, the outfit hopes that appliance manufacturers will incorporate Electric Imp slots into products to make them network aware.





# RASPBERRY PI

**PRICE: \$25-\$35**

**AVAILABILITY: Late June**

**THE BREAKDOWN: A credit-card sized PC that brings ARM/Linux to the Arduino form factor.**



**Unless you've been** hiding under a rock lately, we're pretty sure you've heard about the Raspberry Pi by now. The system features a 700MHz Broadcom BCM2835 SoC with an ARM11 CPU, a Videocore 4 and 256MB RAM. The board includes an SD card slot, HDMI output, composite video jack, 3.5mm audio socket, micro-USB power connector and GPIO header. Model A (\$25) comes with one USB port, while Model B (\$35) provides two USB ports and a 100BaseT Ethernet socket. The company expects that "there will be approximately 200,000 units in the field by the end of June."



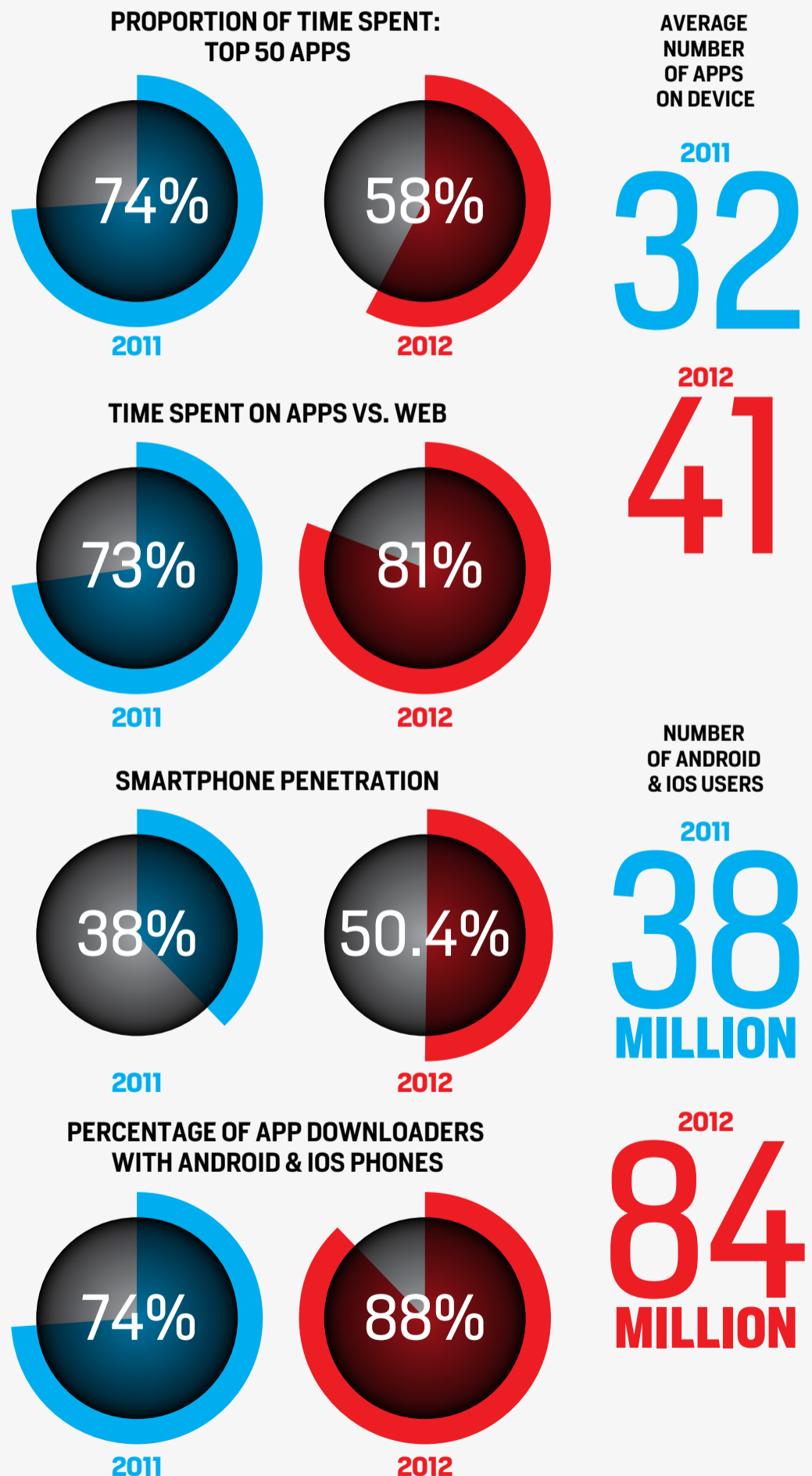
A SNAPSHOT OF THE STATE  
OF MOBILE APPS  
IN THE US: 2011 VS 2012

# Mobile App Mania

It's not hard to see that Americans love their mobile apps, and Nielsen can now tell us by how much. The average US smartphone owner circa mid-2012 now brandishes 41 apps, a pretty hefty 28 percent increase from a year earlier. They're preferring native apps to the web, as well: they're more likely to spend time with that direct port of *Cut the Rope* than the HTML5 version. Along with reminding us that smartphone owners are now the majority in the country, Nielsen has added that there are a total of 84 million Android and iOS users in the US, or more than double what we saw just a year ago. We're a bit disappointed that the figures mostly exclude BlackBerry and Windows Phone owners, although they still paint a picture of a country that's entirely comfortable in its smartphone shoes.

—Jon Fingas

SOURCE: NIELSEN



# NEXT-GEN DOESN'T START UNTIL WE SAY IT DOES



DISTRO  
05.25.12

ENTER

REACTION  
TIME

BY LUDWIG KIETZMANN

**If the world does come to a wailing and irreversible halt** in 2012, the most terrible loss (besides billions of lives, the infrastructure of civilization, your dog, etc.) will be the glaring glut of video games already scheduled for 2013. Promising brand builders like *BioShock Infinite*, *Tomb Raider* and *Devil May Cry* are all bailing on 2012, and inevitable behemoth *Grand Theft Auto V* has yet to pick a landing zone. Most of these games are massive, costly undertakings that can't afford to stumble out with stuttering marketing campaigns, let alone compete on a stage crowded with other huge products.

If we're to predict the emergence of powerful, next-generation platforms, care of Sony and Microsoft, the movements of third-party publishers should give us our first clues. No manufacturer is in a position to escape the Catch 22 of a new console launch on its own: You need standout games to get the system out there, but it's tough to support

those games properly with an install base that starts at zero.

If Square Enix, THQ and Take-Two are content with moving some of their heavy hitters into early 2013, it's likely with the expectation that they won't be drowned out in a din of new console buzz and technically superior launch games for some time. Meanwhile, the Xbox 360



and PlayStation 3 (and possibly Wii U) will remain the most affordable and commercially viable platforms for a few more years, long after they've gotten long in the tooth. Stuck with a measly 512MB of memory, the most ambitious developers must feel like they're wrestling sabretoothed tigers at this point.

Though it doesn't yet seem like major franchises are stepping away from the current lineup of consoles, there are signs of preparation, more so than there were before we bid adieu to the Xbox, Gamecube and PlayStation 2. For instance, the PC, always a few steps ahead of consoles, has been used as a lead development platform for games that run on more sophisticated engines (including Capcom's MT Framework and EA's Frostbite 2 engine). Games running on these new engines then get pared down — with, say, simpler lighting or less complex geometry — for current-gen consoles. The hardware to support advanced rendering, lighting and physics simulation is there; it just hasn't been squeezed into an affordable box yet.

Publishers are pairing major franchises with new engines — *Assassin's Creed 3* gets Anvil Next, *Hitman: Absolution* runs on Glacier 2 — that seem to shine brightest on PC, or a console of similar capability. If games are to continue on their bigger-and-better, Hollywood trajectory, these new development toolsets can be seen as prudent attempts to satisfy current audi-

## 4 NEW RELEASES FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 25<sup>TH</sup>



Click on  
games  
to buy



### **DRAGON'S DOGMA**

Xbox 360, PS3, PC - \$60



### **SORCERY**

PS3 - \$40



### **GHOST RECON: FUTURE SOLDIER**

Xbox 360, PS3 - \$60



### **ALAN WAKE'S AMERICAN NIGHTMARE**

PC - \$15




“We can likely expect this current-gen rollout of adaptable next-gen engines to eradicate the possibility of there being a full stop in 2013 or beyond.”

ences and smoothly transition into the next round of consoles. They’ll look good on your Xbox 360, but the technology is designed with more breathing room in mind.

New consoles represent a long-term financial headache for developers and publishers, who are asked to spend more in order to pursue smaller audiences. As such, we can likely expect this current-gen rollout of adaptable, next-gen engines to eradicate the possibility of there being a full stop in 2013 or beyond – instead, I’d expect there to be some degree of co-existence between the old and new for several months, if not years. If we assume these engines can scale well between older and newer hardware (with the PC as a rough guideline), we can take another step forward and suggest that individual games might exist on more than one generation of platforms.

Whether or not an “enhanced” version of *Halo 5* or *Assassin’s Creed 4: Fatal Fraternity* will be enough to lure you into an upgrade is a more complicated matter, but it’s an analogue solu-

tion aimed at those who are truly in power. Customers are likely to respond more positively when presented with a gradual transition, and publishers don’t have to bet everything on a new game that’s only available to the smallest hardcore market. Manufacturers will do their best to lock exclusive games to their new hardware, but in the early days they’ll have a tough time convincing third parties to join them in the smallest, most expensive pool.

Of course, all this speculation is going to be a waste of time if 2012 is the last year we get. Let’s hope the gods, Mayan or otherwise, let us play some of the good stuff before they smash us into specks of mildly surprised carbon. 





## How Yahoo Killed Flickr and Lost the Internet

By Mat Honan  
*Gizmodo*

It was one of the most interesting internet companies of its day, and one of the more disappointing stories of recent years for those who had invested so much in it. Launched in 2004, Flickr was a photo-sharing site unlike any other — a true social network. It was a rare technology company that managed to deliver on the hype it garnered, and its rapid rise inevitably culminated with an acquisition — a reported \$35 million sale to Yahoo in 2005. Here, *Gizmodo*'s Mat Honan offers a compelling history of the company's rise and fall, and lays the blame for its failures squarely on Yahoo — something Honan suggests also gets to the heart of Yahoo's own inability to build on its earlier successes and compete with the likes of Facebook.

ILLUSTRATION BY JESSE LEFKOWITZ

### Can Anything Take Down the Facebook Juggernaut?

By Steven Johnson  
*Wired*

There's been no shortage of writing about Facebook lately, but this article from Steven Johnson stands out. In it, Johnson suggests that the company may be on the cusp of becoming "a medium unto itself," and examines what that means for its future — and how it might have to change in order to meet its own goals.



Click on headlines to read full stories

### Exporting Copyright: Inside the Secretive Trans-Pacific Partnership

By Cyrus Farivar  
*Ars Technica*

Farivar attempts to peel through some of the secrecy surrounding the Trans-Pacific Partnership, an effort to implement a free-trade style agreement for intellectual property between the US and nine Pacific Rim countries (or what some have dubbed "ACTA plus").

### The Climate Fixers

By Michael Specter  
*The New Yorker*

"If we have to use these tools, it means something on this planet has gone seriously wrong." That's Cambridge University's Hugh Hunt, talking about research into climate engineering as a technological solution to climate change — an area that's seeing more activity than you may think (and controversy to match).

### Tweets from the Trail: Technology Can Enhance Your Wilderness Experiences

By Walter Kirn  
*Outside*

Technology and the great outdoors may be mutually exclusive for many (GPS and the like aside, perhaps), but Walter Kirn argues that need not always be the case, and suggests that tablets, smartphones and other devices can sometimes even enhance your trip into the wilderness.



# SGG

## SUMMER GEAR GUIDE.

In the interest of keeping cool this summer, we've put together a list of the hottest products out right now. From smartphones to e-readers and everything in between, there's no time like the present to re-up that post-spring-cleaning stash. So grab a popsicle or a cold one and dive in — the water's just right.

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By Billy Steele



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By Sharif Sakr





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By Brian Heater



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By Dana Wollman



PORTABLE AUDIO  
By Joe Pollicino



TABLETS  
By Daniel Cooper



HOME THEATER  
By Richard Lawler



SMARTPHONES  
By Zach Lutz

PLUS:  
RECOMMENDED  
APPS

AND:  
SUMMER  
READING LIST



SURE, YOU'LL WANT to snag some new tech candy for your summer mountain expedition or ocean excursion. But once you splurge for that new gadgetry, you'll want something to keep it safe for the duration of your travels. Whether it's a go-to rucksack to carry your mobile workstation or added protection for that shiny, new GoPro camera, we've got you covered. In this portion of the Distro Summer Gear Guide, we'll take a look at the bags and cases that will cradle your valuables — and perhaps even enhance their utility. Read on to view our seasonal recommendations.

**By Billy Steele**



BUY  
**\$210**

## TIMBUK2 ESPECIAL TRES BACKPACK

While it may not have all the individual nooks and crannies to store your cable army, the Timbuk2 Especial Tres should still be a consideration. The bag features a laptop pocket inside its main compartment that is guaranteed to be waterproof. You know, should you get caught in a sudden, torrential downpour or whatnot. Sporting a roll-down closure for the main section in addition to a waterproof zip, the backpack is a bit expandable for larger loads. Not only that, but the \$209 Especial Tres is outfitted with smaller enclaves on both its front and backside for the aforementioned necessities.



## GOPRO DIVE HOUSING

Looking to take that fancy, new GoPro HD HERO on your voyage out into open waters? If so, you may want to throw down an extra \$50 on the Dive Housing. Waterproof up to 197 feet (60 meters), the protective accessory boasts a sizeable flat-glass lens that will keep those underwater stills and videos as sharp as possible at whatever resolution you should choose. The kit also includes the requisite mounting hardware and protective lens cap to help you make the most of that diving adventure. If you're heading to the coast, why not take a few submerged shots too?



**BUY \$50**

**BUY \$155**

## CHROME BURAN LAPTOP BAG

Are you more of the messenger bag / slingpack type? No worries. The outfit known for its over-the-shoulder bags for bikers (and walkers, too) is looking to help keep your computer safe while en route with the Buran. Featuring a built-in padded and zippered laptop sleeve, this pack can cradle up to a 17-inch MacBook Pro or PC of your choosing. Integrated safety measures are here for night riding and an assortment of pockets will house all of your crucial extras. Also, the outer shell is weatherproof, providing some protection against the elements.



**OF ALL THE SEASONS** when you could have bought a new camera, you had to pick summer? When the sun casts its harshest shadows, when thieves go wild over tourists with Lowepro's, and when springtime puddles are still such a heavily neglected subject on Twitpic? Oh well, since you're here, our topic for today is cameras that cost a bit of money — specifically, \$199 and up — but which murder camera-equipped phones on every spec that matters. Perhaps the only area in which the latest smartphones can still contend with our choices is wireless connectivity for the quick sharing of pictures, but as you'll see, dedicated cameras are catching up in that department too.

**By Sharif Sakr**




BUY  
**\$699**

## THE NIKON D5100

The D5100 is already old in tech terms, having celebrated its first birthday, but that doesn't change anything. In general, DSLRs still deliver the fastest focus, the best lenses and the most practical viewfinders on the market. The D5100 adds to that with a surprisingly useful flip-out LCD and a great price tag — just \$599 if you play it smart and go body-only. You can then pick up a good Sigma DC f/2.8 17-70mm lens for around \$460, which will have you covered in most situations. The only catch is that we're expecting to see an update to this model pretty soon — likely supporting Nikon's new \$60 WU-1A dongle for wireless sharing.





## PANASONIC ZS15

Even if you ignore us and opt for another manufacturer or model, we've picked the ZS15 because it represents the type of specs you ought to be looking for in this category. Despite the small form factor (just 1.3 inches wide and 200 grams in weight), it packs a hefty 16x zoom along with image stabilization, which will open up a whole world of intimate shots that smaller, wobblier zooms (not to mention those pesky smartphones) just won't match. No less importantly, the ZS15 also excels at wide scenes, with a 24mm-equivalent minimum focal length that is great for shooting landscapes and architecture. Panasonic's Lumix line has garnered a good reputation for build quality, battery life and intelligent auto exposure, so you're in good hands.



BUY  
\$279



## SONY NEX-F3

Not everyone wants to look like paparazzi, so it's fortunate that the market for so-called mirrorless compact cameras with interchangeable lenses is exploding. A



great lens system remains a priority in this category, which leads us to Sony's E-mount lineup

and to the NEX-F3 (estimated at \$600 for a June release) as our preferred ILC. It builds on the solid reputation of last year's NEX-C3 with nice, new specs like an OLED EVF, up to 16,000 ISO and 1080p video recording. You can accumulate lenses safe in the knowledge that they'll work with a growing range of Sony ILCs, DSLRs, camcorders and even dedicated movie cameras like the NEX-FS100. That said, if we had more money at our disposal, it'd be the \$1,000 Olympus OM-D E-M5 all the way, but there's no point in dwelling.





## DESKTOPS ARE AMAZING.

They deliver serious computing power to the places where you need it most, and with much better bang-for-the-buck than laptops. Moreover, they're constantly evolving: low-power PCs can now do more with fewer watts, regular gaming PCs can achieve 3D effects that would have required extreme setups just a year ago, and all-rounder desktops have become, well, even more rounded. Which brings us to the recommendations: three PCs that range from \$799 to \$1,199 and beyond, and that represent each of these three categories. If you're going cheaper, don't be afraid to build your own — that way you'll only spend money on specs you actually need. **By Sharif Sakr**

## 27-INCH IMAC 2012

Okay, this option doesn't exist yet, but we're pretty certain it's just around the corner. The 2012 refresh should at least bring an Ivy Bridge processor and a more up-to-date graphics card, so it's worth holding out for. If you really can't wait, then try to get a discount on a 2011 iMac. It'll deliver everything you'd expect from an Apple all-in-one: seamless functionality right out of the box, a huge, LED-backlit display with great viewing angles and color rendition, and specs that will happily cope with media creation rather than just consumption. Don't be afraid to open it up and add more memory and an SSD — it'll work out far cheaper than paying Apple to do it.



BUY  
**\$1,200**



## TRANQUIL PC IXLS

This little creature doesn't have to sit on a desk. It's perfectly happy beneath your TV or next to your stereo amp, where it can stream video and music without polluting your entertainment with the constant whir of a fan. You see, this PC is part of a wider trend towards fanless computers that stay switched on 24/7. Thanks to Intel and AMD pushing the boundaries of low-power chip design, you can do much more than play content — you can run

productivity software on your TV or through remote desktop apps, use the PC as a NAS, or even indulge in a spot of gaming. Pro tip: splurge on an SSD as your primary drive and you'll make the ixLS totally and blissfully silent, not to mention faster.



## DIGITAL STORM MARAUDER

Sure, it's three times the cost of a PlayStation 3 but it can do three times more, with up to three times the resolution. Added bonus: it looks like an ammo crate. We'd actually pick the \$1,199 option that comes with a cutting-edge and overclockable Intel Core i5-3570K, a capable mid-range AMD Radeon HD 7850 graphics card and a 1TB hard drive. If your desk is big enough, save some cash for a triple-monitor setup too: it sounds crazy, but three 22-inch panels shouldn't set you back more than \$400-\$500 and they'll transform games, video editing and other tasks.

BUY  
**\$800**



\*Ammo Belt & Box Not Included



SO, YOU'VE GOT a new fancy-pants smartphone and filled it up with pictures, movies and music. That's great for when you're on the train and all, but sometimes you'll want to share your music with the world (whether they like it or not) and this is where docks come in. If you've done even the quickest of web searches for one, you'll have no doubt been dazzled by the sheer amount of choices. They literally come in all

shapes and sizes, and with prices to match. Good thing we made this summer buyer's guide to help you make your mind up then...

**By James Trew**

## JBL ONBEAT XTREME

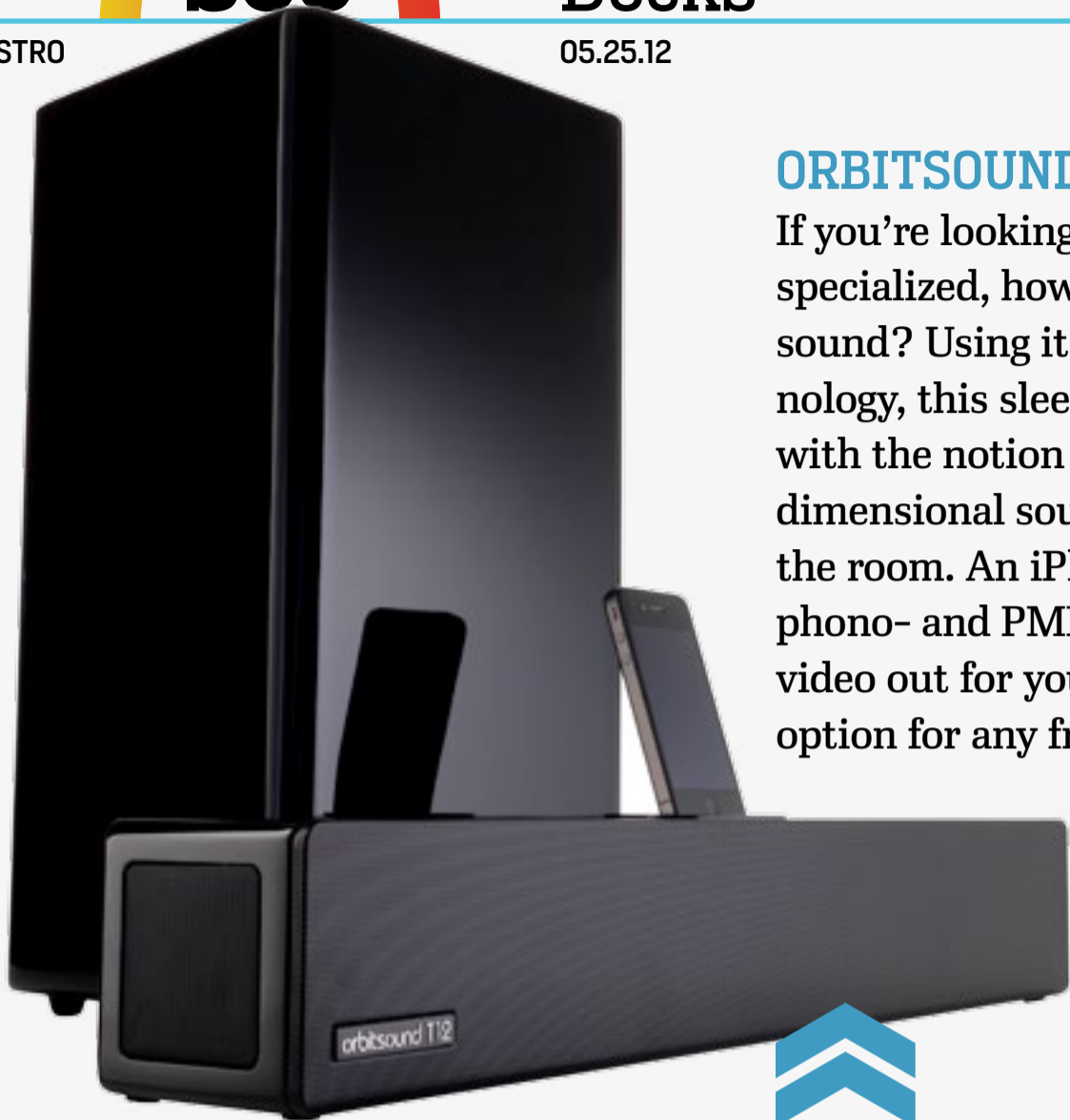
We gave this fella the full review this past December, and it's fair to say we were impressed. JBL seems to have really considered the product from the ground up, rather than just creating another audio box with an iDevice dock. Bluetooth and auxiliary options make this more than just an iPhone speaker, and the funky mounts even keep a tablet nice and snug. Loud and clear sound is, of course, the real winning factor here, but it's the combination of versatility, quality and price that ultimately place it here at the top of our list.



**BUY \$500**

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**





## ORBITSOUND T12V3

If you're looking for something a little more specialized, how about the T12v3 from Orbitsound? Using its patented "spatial sound" technology, this sleek dock / soundbar does away with the notion of sweet spots, and dishes out dimensional sound no matter where you are in the room. An iPhone dock is joined by digital-, phono- and PMP-friendly 1/8-inch inputs, plus video out for your iDevice, making this a great option for any front room. We're not going to lie, the recent addition of different color options also helped cement our affection. Great looks and great sound? Never a bad combination, eh?

BUY  
\$480

## TDK BOOMBOX

Sometimes you want something the moment you set eyes on it. The Boombox from TDK is one such thing. It's hard not to fall in love with its modern take on a retro-classic design. While not strictly a dock, it does come with a 30-pin iDevice cable, plus 1/8-inch, 1/4-inch and USB inputs, making it friendly for guitars, pen drives, MP3 players and more — there's even a built-in radio. Sound-wise, it is a little brash, but at least that's in keeping with the looks. You won't be able to resist popping this up on your shoulder, but only once, as it's quite a weighty chap!

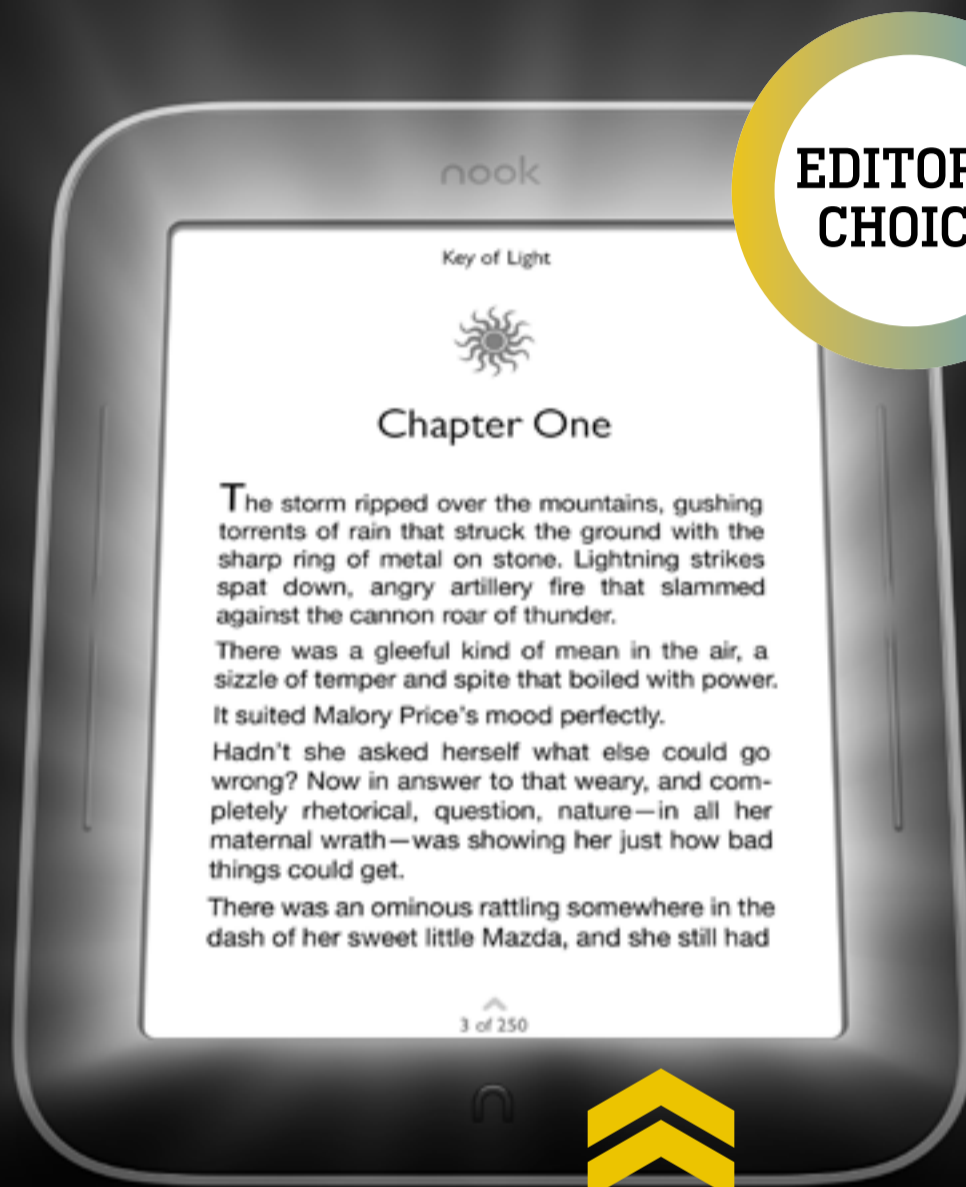
BUY  
\$499



## SUMMER IS COMING.

Time to relax by the pool with a good book — though, judging by what’s on your reading list this year, perhaps it’s time to go for the anonymity of an e-reader. No one needs to know how you’ve been slogging through “Fifty Shades of Grey” for the past two months, right? Thankfully, there’s no better time to buy one of these devices — there’s plenty of choices and, thanks to competition, some seriously good deals. One thing all of these readers have in common: E Ink displays — way better for reading out in the summertime sun than their LCD counterparts.

**By Brian Heater**




**BUY  
\$140**

## NOOK SIMPLE TOUCH WITH GLOWLIGHT

The original Nook Simple Touch was an excellent e-reader. A hefty price drop and a zippy software upgrade make the package that much more appealing. Barnes & Noble clearly didn’t see a lot wrong with the device when it introduced the awkwardly named Nook Simple Touch with GlowLight, leaving most of the elements in place, while adding the titular patent-pending technology to assure that you can still read after the sun goes down. Of course, that added technology comes with a bit of a premium. The latest Nook will run you \$139 new — \$40 more than its predecessor, but, all in all, not a bad deal.

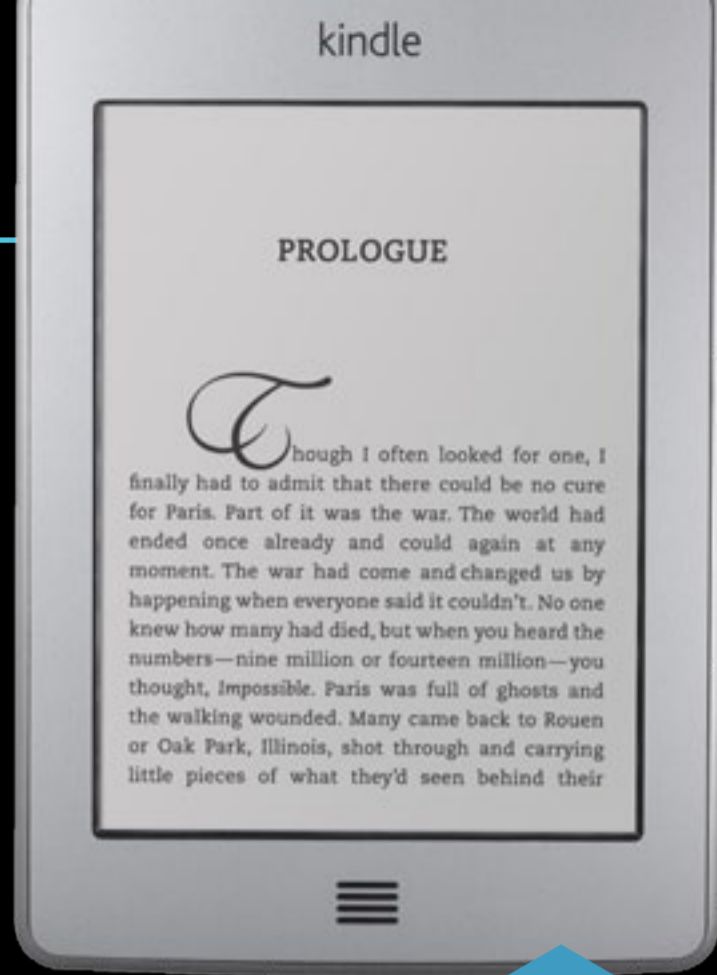




DISTRO

## KINDLE TOUCH WITH 3G

Sure, you can snag a Nook Simple Touch for \$99, or you can pick up a Kindle for \$79 — that is, if you're willing to part with touch functionality and add on some localized "special offers" (read: ads). If you want to go all out, however, this Kindle's the ticket: no ads, a touch screen and 3G functionality so you don't have to be tied to a WiFi hotspot to get new books, making this an ideal choice for frequent travelers. Of course, all of those details will cost you.



**BUY  
\$150**

**BUY  
\$130**

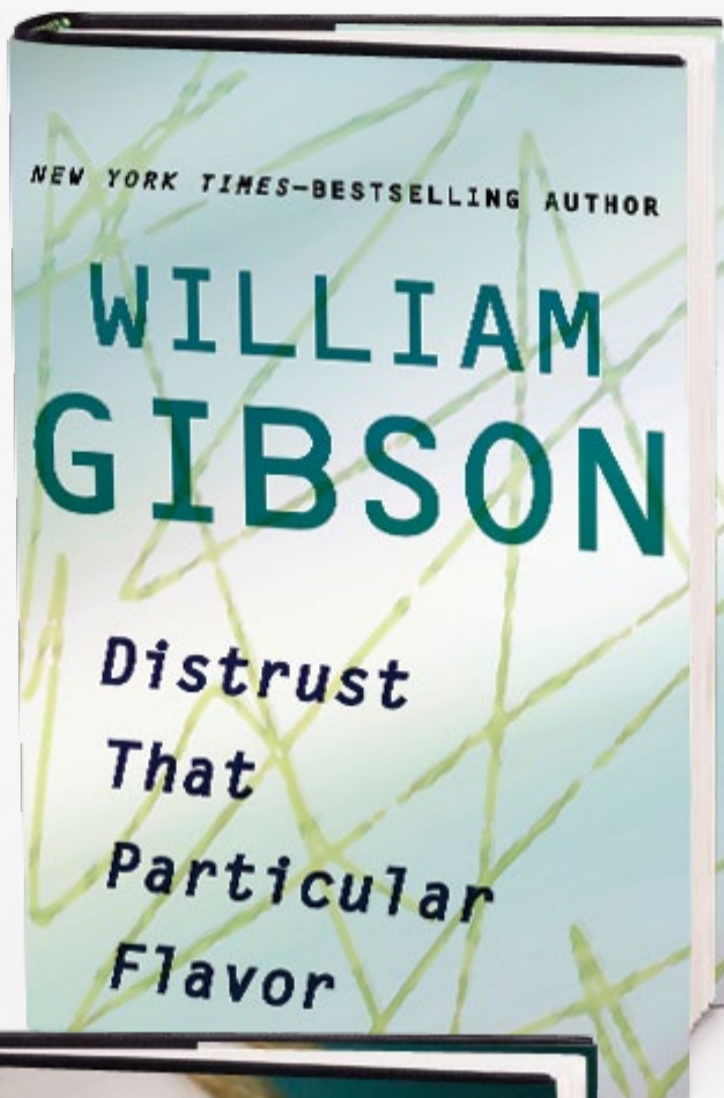


## SONY READER WIFI

Want bells and whistles? This reader brings music playback, hand-writable note-taking functionality and pinch-

to-zoom via dual-touch. Also on board are built-in access to library lending and Google Books — all in a lightweight package. Best of all, thanks to a \$20 price drop, the reader is now more in line with its direct competition.





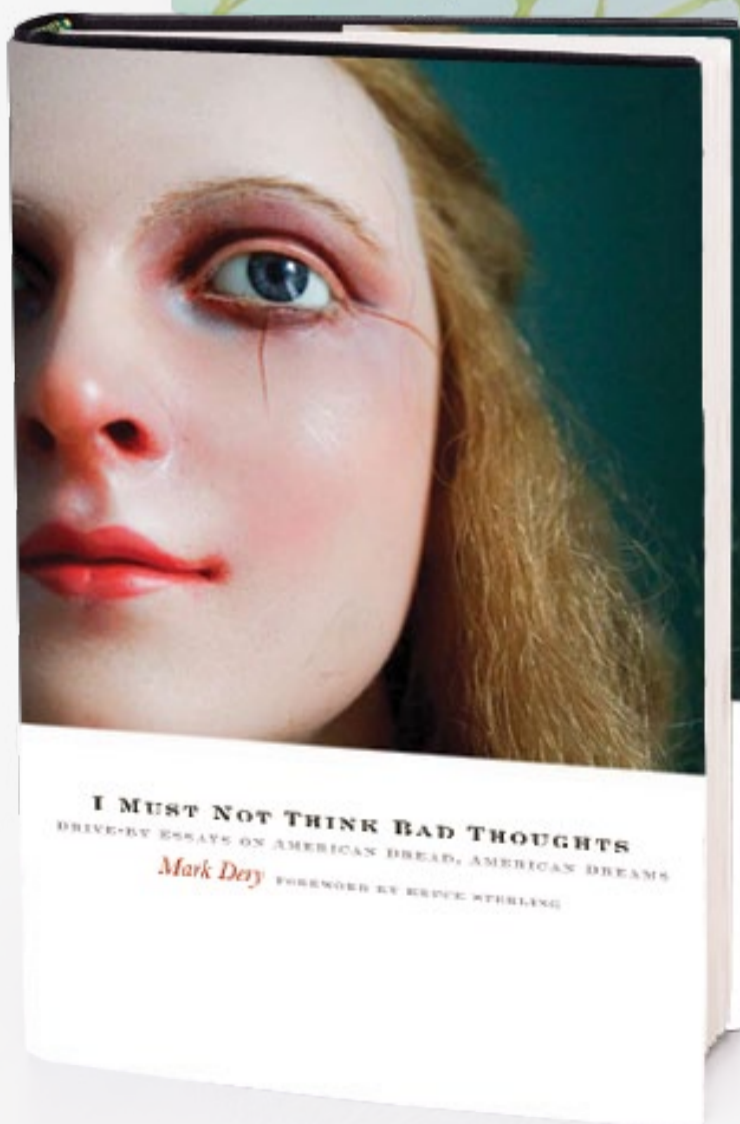
## DISTRUST THAT PARTICULAR FLAVOR

by William Gibson

William Gibson's long-awaited first collection of non-fiction finally arrived earlier this year and didn't disappoint. Featuring essays originally written for *Wired*, *Rolling Stone* and other publications, the collection offers the clearest distillation yet of Gibson's ability to pinpoint the future creeping out of the present — all the while still managing to occasionally sound like science fiction.



Click on titles to buy

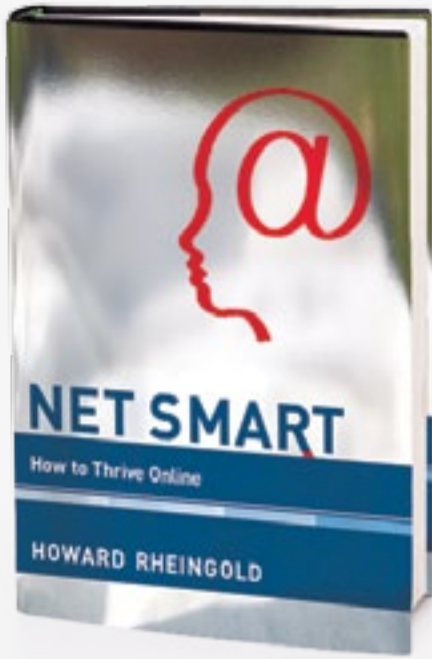


## I MUST NOT THINK BAD THOUGHTS

by Mark Dery

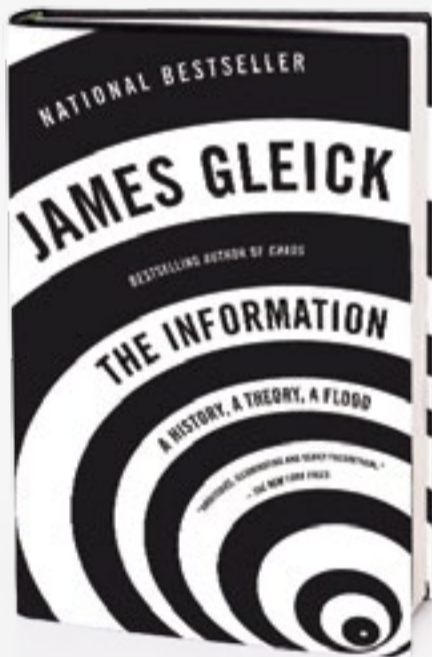
Perhaps best known for his work in the '90s with books like *Escape Velocity*, Mark Dery has (like Gibson) been a keen observer of our digital culture from its earliest days. This darkly titled collection gathers together a number of essays that touch not just on technology and its cultural impact, but on the broader American culture, or what Dery calls the "pathological sublime."





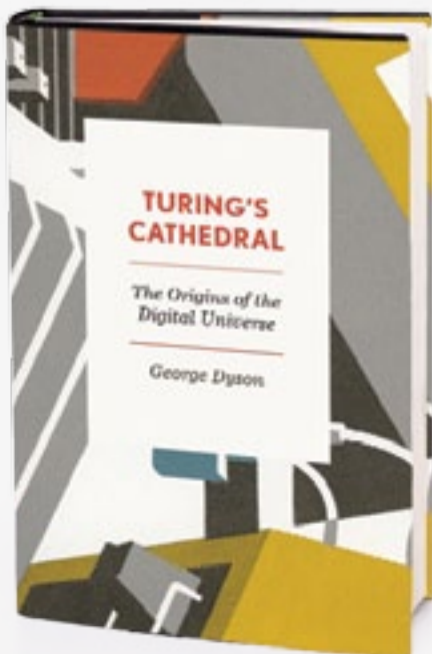
**NET SMART: HOW TO THRIVE ONLINE** by Howard Rheingold

The title may sound a bit like a how-to book for beginners, but Howard Rheingold knows on-line culture like few others, and is always worth reading for a deeper understanding of the connected technologies we use. His first book since his prescient “Smart Mobs” from 2002, “Net Smart” outlines what Rheingold sees as five fundamental digital literacies, and how they can lead to a more mindful use of online media.



**THE INFORMATION: A HISTORY, A THEORY, A FLOOD** by James Gleick

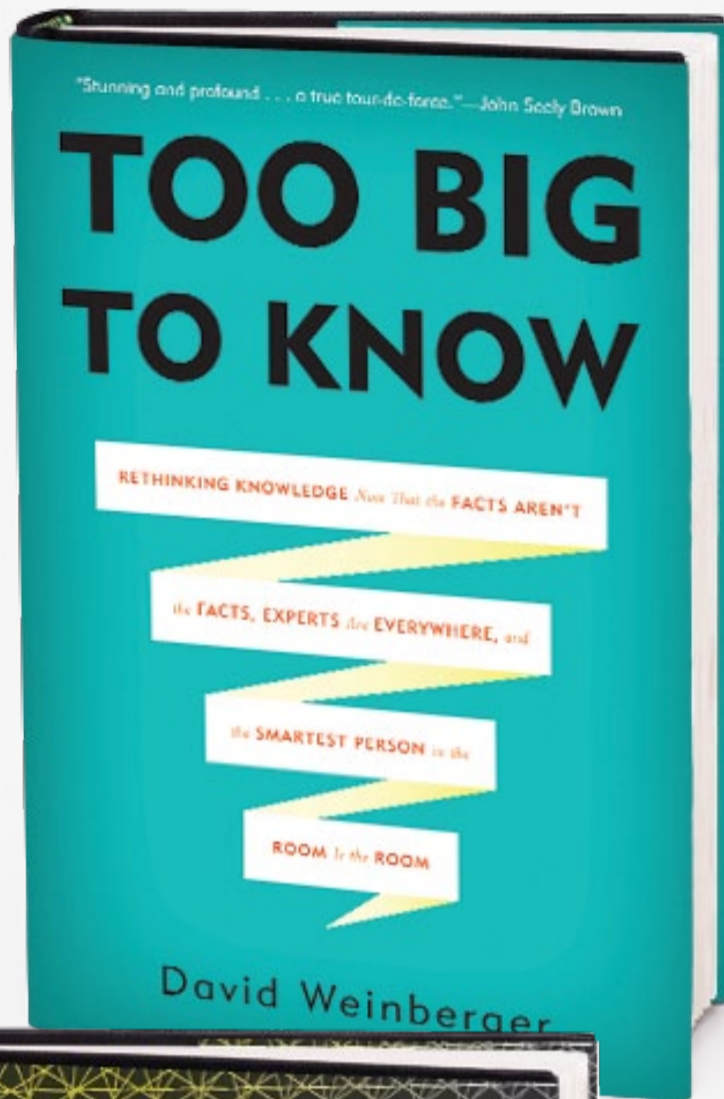
The latest from James Gleick (author of “Faster” and “Chaos”), “The Information” is possibly his most ambitious book to date, taking a long view at the way information itself has changed human nature. It’s a dense and wide-ranging book, connecting the dots from the telegraph to Wikipedia (and far beyond), and it’s proven to be hard to ignore, winding up on countless best-of-2011 lists.



**TURING'S CATHEDRAL: THE ORIGINS OF THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE** by George Dyson

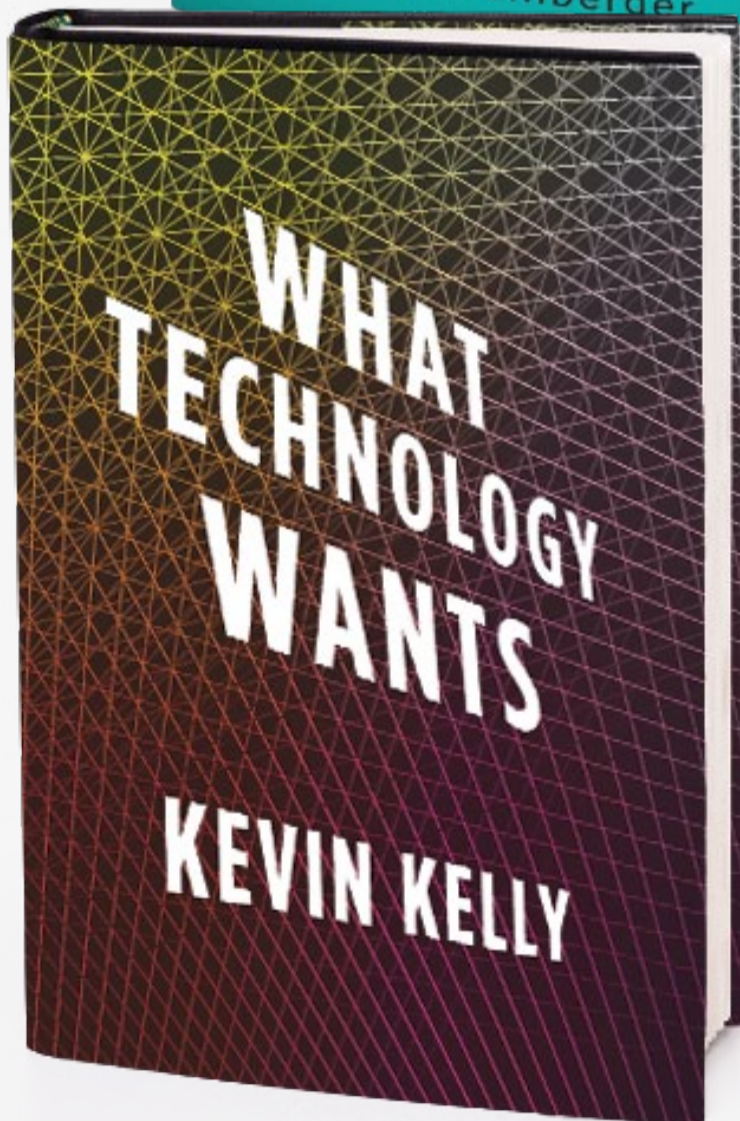
After tackling the story of Project Orion — an effort to build a nuclear-powered spacecraft — historian George Dyson turned his attention to the dawn of the information age and its creators. “Turing’s Cathedral” looks not just at the central figure of that time, Alan Turing, but brings new attention to another key player whose contributions haven’t been discussed as much: John Van Neumann.





**TOO BIG TO KNOW:  
RETHINKING KNOWLEDGE  
NOW THAT THE FACTS  
AREN'T THE FACTS,  
EXPERTS ARE EVERYWHERE,  
AND THE SMARTEST  
PERSON IN THE ROOM IS  
THE ROOM** by David Weinberger

Another book that tackles a big idea, this one comes with a big subtitle to match. At the heart of all that change is, of course, the internet and the knowledge sharing it enables — something Weinberger argues has profoundly changed knowledge itself.



**WHAT TECHNOLOGY  
WANTS** by Kevin Kelly

Kevin Kelly's fascination with the biological properties of technology continues with his most recent book, "What Technology Wants," in which he coins the term "technium" to describe the interconnectedness of technology and all that entails. For more in the same vein, Kelly's 1994 book "Out of Control" can be read for free on his website, [kk.org](http://kk.org), or downloaded as a PDF.

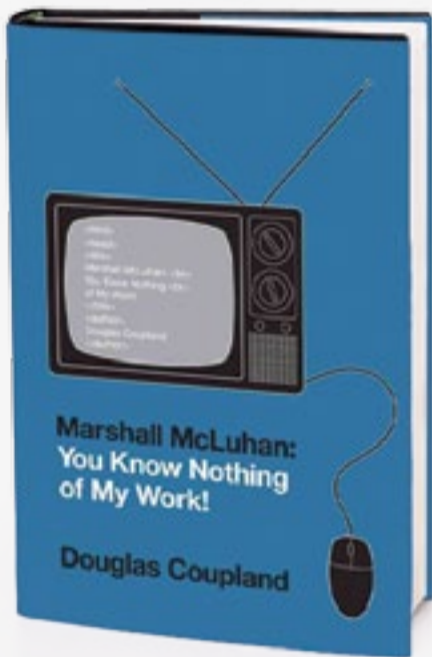




## THE IDEA FACTORY: BELL LABS AND THE GREAT AGE OF AMERICAN INNOVATION

by Jon Gertner

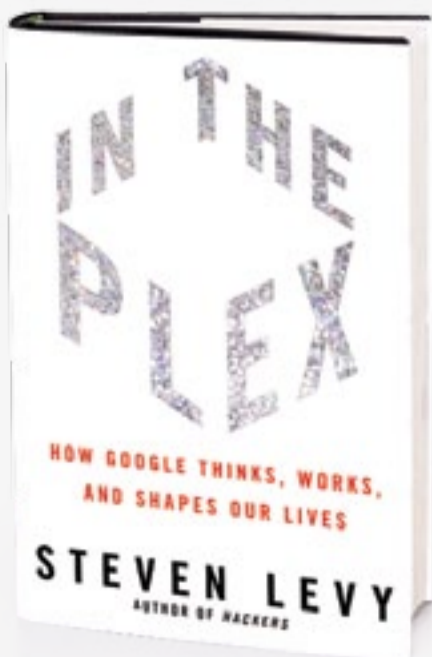
It wasn't the only bright hub of technological innovation in the 20th century (Xerox PARC, for one), but few places had quite the run that Bell Labs had from the 1920s all the way through to the 1980s. In "The Idea Factory," Jon Gertner looks at both the technologies that emerged from the labs during that time, and the people that made them happen.



## MARSHALL MCLUHAN: YOU KNOW NOTHING OF MY WORK!

by Douglas Coupland

It's perhaps best read after you've familiarized yourself somewhat with McLuhan's own work (outside of his own books, "The Essential McLuhan" is a good place to start), but Douglas Coupland writing a biography of Marshall McLuhan is a combination that's tough to ignore — the result of which is something that's as much a Douglas Coupland book as it is a book about McLuhan.



## IN THE PLEX

by Steven Levy

Widely considered to be the definitive account of Google to date, Steven Levy's "In The Plex" traces the company's history back to Larry Page's and Sergey Brin's days at Stanford, and goes inside the massive organization it became (albeit before Larry Page took over as CEO last year) to examine both its successes and its stumbles (including the long-running controversy surrounding its operations in China).



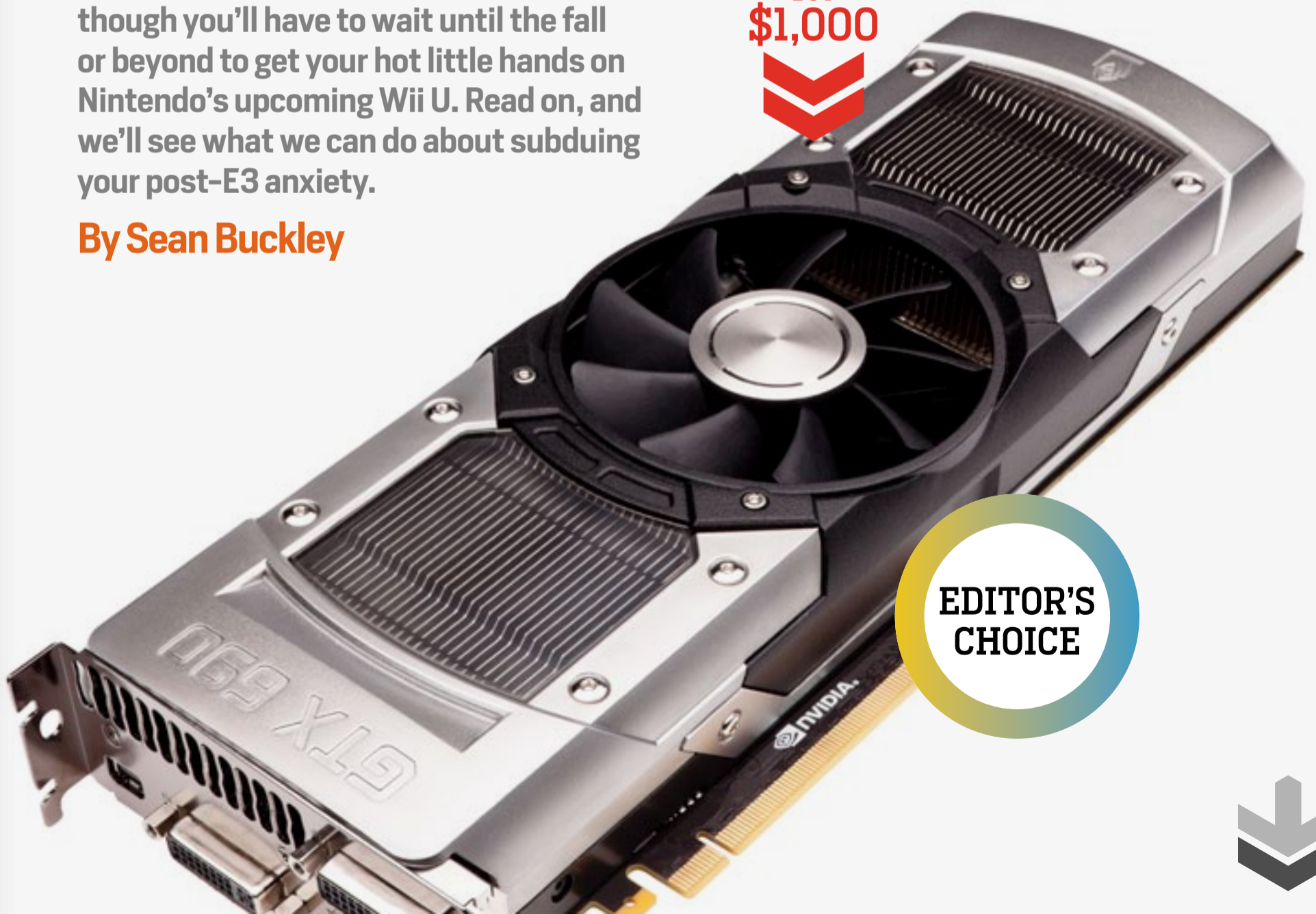
**THE SUMMER MONTHS** are home to one of the most bittersweet events in gaming: the Electronic Entertainment Expo. E3 flaunts the year's biggest news in video games, exciting players with peeks at upcoming titles, glimpses of new consoles and soul-crushingly distant release dates. Need something to kill time with? We can help. Sony and Microsoft may not be unveiling next-generation hardware at this year's expo, but there are still a few things you can do to put yourself on the bleeding edge without a console. If you simply can't live without dedicated gaming hardware, however, you still have some options — though you'll have to wait until the fall or beyond to get your hot little hands on Nintendo's upcoming Wii U. Read on, and we'll see what we can do about subduing your post-E3 anxiety.

**By Sean Buckley**

## NVIDIA GTX 690

Looking for something to lord over the competition at your next LAN party? Try the GTX 690, NVIDIA's flagship Kepler graphics card. The epitome of overkill, this \$999 beast features two chunks of silicon based on the firm's latest GPU architecture, giving users the benefits of running a dual-card, SLI configuration with a smaller energy footprint. Too rich for your blood? Take a look at the \$499 GTX 680 and \$399 GTX 670 to melt your eyes without liquefying your assets.

BUY  
**\$1,000**



**EDITOR'S  
CHOICE**

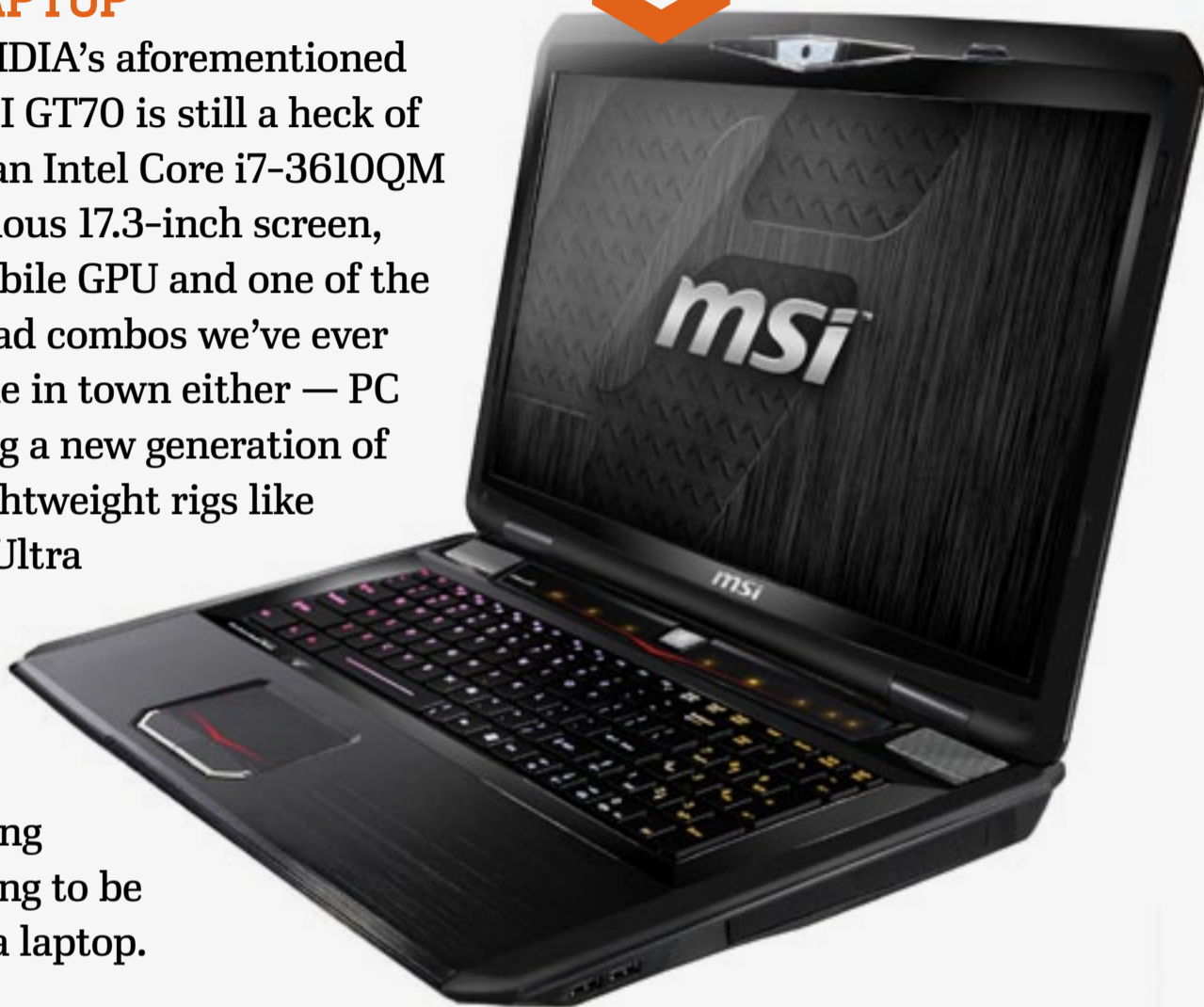


BUY  
\$2,000



## MSI GT70 GAMING LAPTOP

It may not be sporting NVIDIA's aforementioned Kepler silicon, but the MSI GT70 is still a heck of a gaming beast, flaunting an Intel Core i7-3610QM 2.3GHz processor, a luxurious 17.3-inch screen, an NVIDIA GTX 670M mobile GPU and one of the best keyboard and touchpad combos we've ever used. It's not the only game in town either — PC manufacturers are building a new generation of gaming portables, from lightweight rigs like the Acer Aspire Timeline Ultra M3, to oversized behemoths like MSI's latest number. Sure, you may miss out on the geek cred of building your own gaming setup, but there's something to be said for the portability of a laptop.



SONY

## SONY PLAYSTATION VITA

If you're looking for the latest in console gaming, the PlayStation Vita is your ticket — not to mention the industry's most powerful handheld to date. Dual-analog controls, a vivid 5-inch OLED touchscreen and killer handheld graphics put the portable in a class of its own. Watch out for that battery life, though — three hours isn't going to get you through even one state in that big cross-country road trip you were planning. If you're itching for a successor to the home consoles the Vita's meant to emulate, however, you'll need to wait for E3 and beyond. Until then, viva la Vita.



BUY  
\$240


PSVITA



**IF YOU'VE BEEN** in the market for a new laptop, you've done the wise thing in waiting until now to buy: both Intel and AMD are putting the finishing touches on their newest mobile chips, which means a torrent of fresh notebooks is on the way. (Power users can already pick up a gaming machine or desktop replacement running one of Intel's new quad-core CPUs.) For the widest selection, we suggest waiting until mid-June or so, but in the meantime, we present you with three of the best laptops money can buy right now. Enjoy, and do stick it out, if you can, for the inevitable Ivy Bridge refreshes.

**By Dana Wollman**

BUY  
**\$1,500**

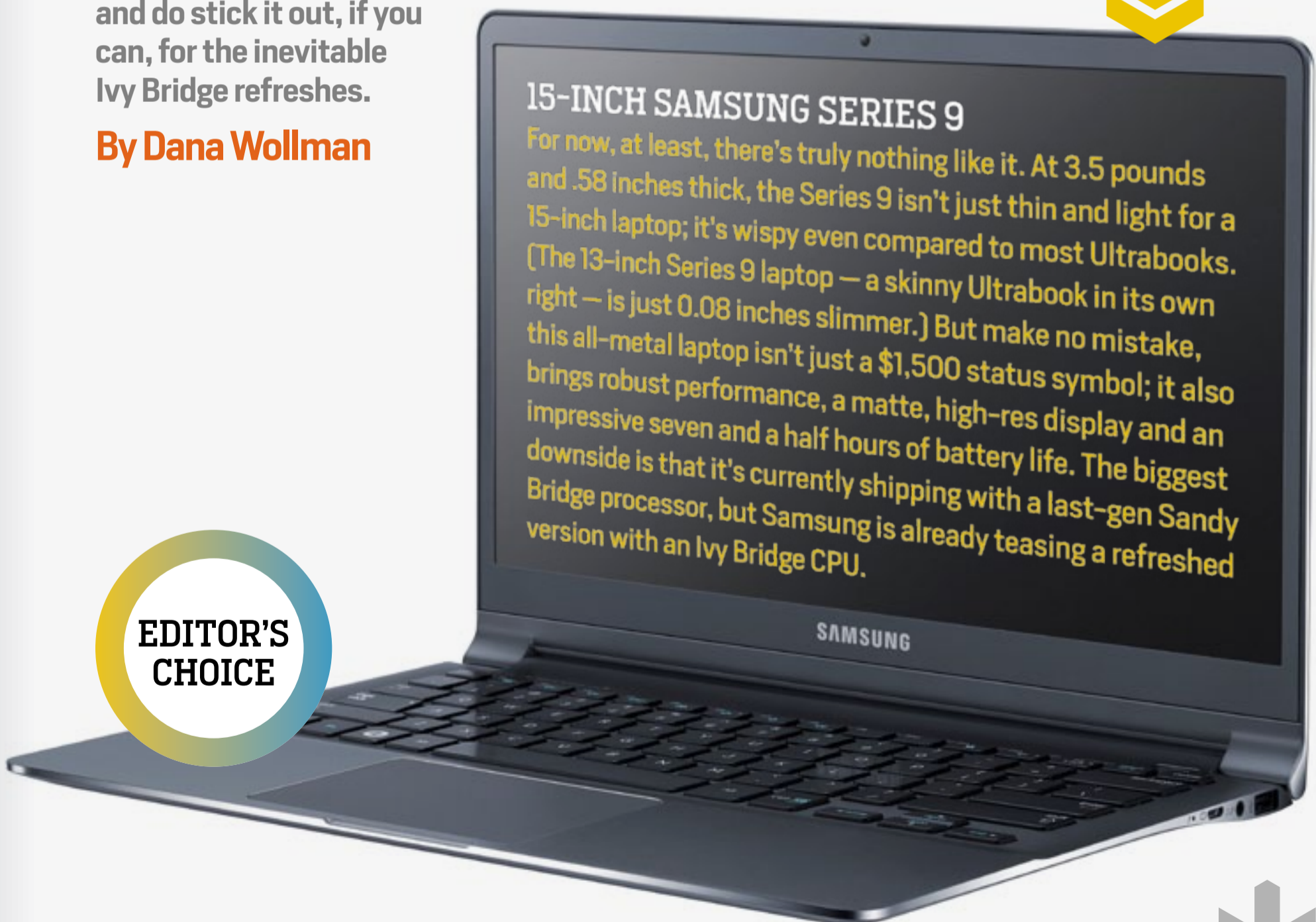


## 15-INCH SAMSUNG SERIES 9

For now, at least, there's truly nothing like it. At 3.5 pounds and .58 inches thick, the Series 9 isn't just thin and light for a 15-inch laptop; it's wispy even compared to most Ultrabooks. (The 13-inch Series 9 laptop — a skinny Ultrabook in its own right — is just 0.08 inches slimmer.) But make no mistake, this all-metal laptop isn't just a \$1,500 status symbol; it also brings robust performance, a matte, high-res display and an impressive seven and a half hours of battery life. The biggest downside is that it's currently shipping with a last-gen Sandy Bridge processor, but Samsung is already teasing a refreshed version with an Ivy Bridge CPU.



**EDITOR'S  
CHOICE**



## APPLE MACBOOK AIR

Though Apple's featherweight ultraportables are growing long in the tooth, they remain best-in-class, with elegant aesthetics and a comfortable keyboard-and-trackpad combo — something far too many Windows-based Ultrabooks are lacking. Even with its aging Sandy Bridge processor, the performance in the 13-inch model is twice as fast as what you would have enjoyed with the previous generation, though smart shoppers will hold out a month or two longer until Apple invariably refreshes its lineup with Ivy Bridge CPUs and more powerful integrated graphics.

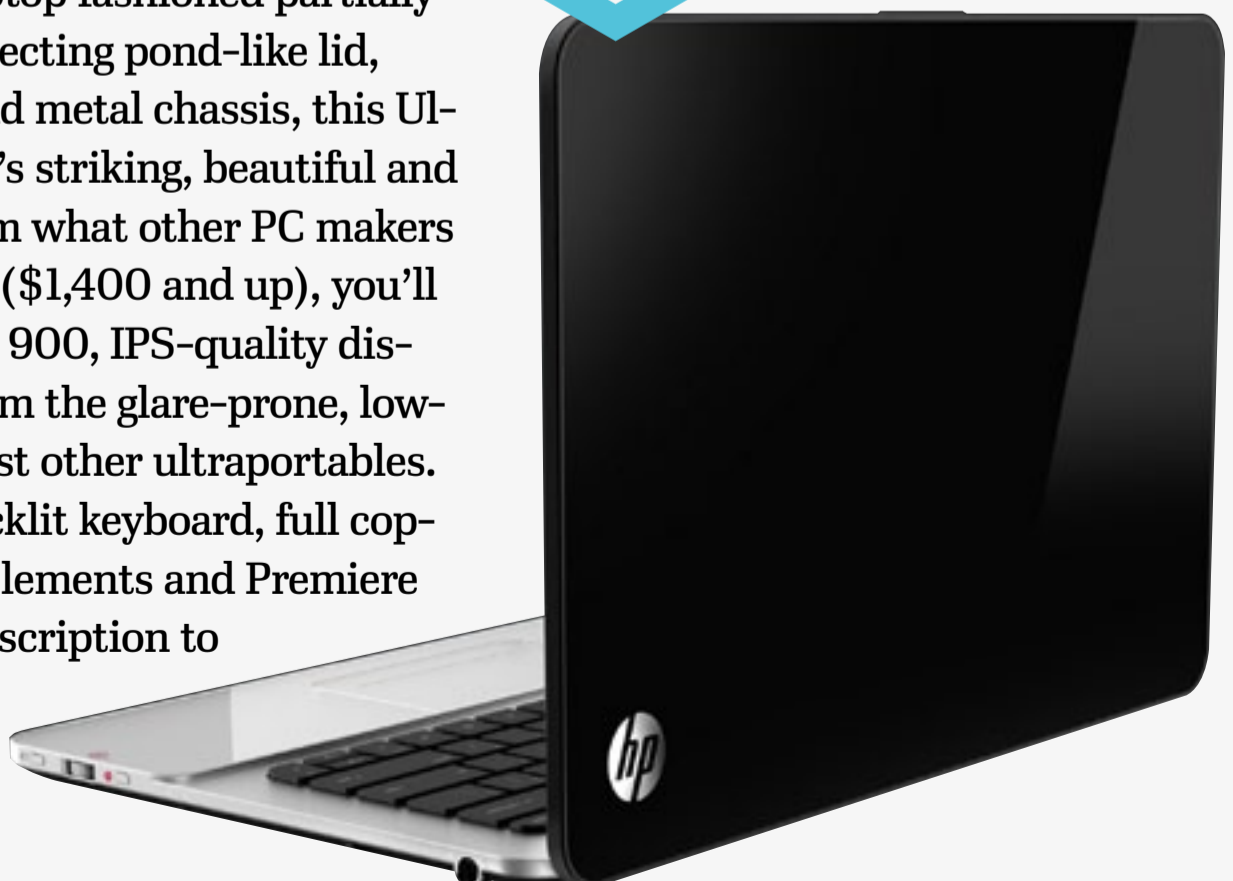


**BUY**  
**\$1,000**

## HP ENVY 14 SPECTRE

Even amid the flood of Ultrabooks making their way into stores, the Spectre is memorable: after all, who could forget a laptop fashioned partially out of glass? With its reflecting pond-like lid, glass-coated palm rest and metal chassis, this Ultrabook has a design that's striking, beautiful and refreshingly different from what other PC makers are doing. For the money (\$1,400 and up), you'll also get a 14-inch, 1600 x 900, IPS-quality display — a clear step up from the glare-prone, lower-res panels used on most other ultraportables. Other perks include a backlit keyboard, full copies of Adobe Photoshop Elements and Premiere Elements, a two-year subscription to Norton antivirus software and a generous two-year warranty.

**BUY**  
**\$1,400**



WITH SUMMER APPROACHING, you're likely looking to get away from that stuffy apartment and out into the fresh air — and if you're like us, you probably like to take your music with you wherever you go. Keeping that in mind, if you're ready to ditch the (likely) passable in-ears that came with your smartphone / PMP or want to find speakers that can move with you, we've rounded up a few new listening devices that might be worth having on your radar. Ready to bite the bullet and enter the big leagues of portable audio? Scroll down for the ear-tingling details.

By Joe Pollicino




BUY  
**\$300**

## JAWBONE BIG JAMBOX

Headphones are great for zoning out during the commute, but what about when things get more communal? Meet Jawbone's Big Jambox (\$300), the company's second Bluetooth speaker and speakerphone combo. Like the palmable Jambox from 2010, this bigger version packs more volume than meets the eye — it's only 2.7 pounds and sized for one-hand carrying. The speaker can be paired to two devices at once (remembering up to eight) and you'll get up to 15 hours of listening time thanks to its 2,600mAh rechargeable battery. The Big Jambox also features Jawbone's MyTalk voice prompts / apps for customization and LiveAudio DSP to enhance the sound of games and movies. Whether you're scurrying from room to room taking calls or want some jams going while you're having lunch out with friends, the Big Jambox should have you covered.



## PLANTRONICS BACKBEAT GO

Not a fan of plugging into your device's audio jack? Prefer the isolation provided by in-ear headphones? Say hello to Plantronics' new BackBeat Go. The only cord you'll find here is its anti-tangle cable connecting the earbuds, which also houses a noise-cancelling inline mic with remote. Although it can only be paired to one device at a time, you'll get 4.5 hours of listening time and 10 hours of battery on standby. The BackBeat Go weighs in at just 13 ounces, and at \$100, the price is light, too.

BUY  
\$100



## BOWERS & WILKINS P3

Looking to travel with a morsel of luxury wrapped around your ears? Although the P5 headphones (\$300) are some of our favorite on-the-go cans for walking and talking, the leather-clad design means you'll likely be sweating in the heat. Fret not, because its new P3 headphones swap out the leather for a cloth interior and soft-touch outer, while maintaining a similar aesthetic. The P3s have hinged earcups — perfect for storing 'em in a cramped bag — and an iDevice-compatible remote / mic to keep you in touch with your playlists. Best of all, they can be yours for a more wallet-pleasing \$200.



BUY  
\$200






# Tablets

DISTRO

05.25.12

SUMMER GEAR GUIDE



  
BUY  
**\$500**

## IPAD (2012)

Consistently raising the bar for the rest of the world to follow, Cupertino's slate is the unsurprising choice for No. 1. Beating rivals both in user experience and specifications, the 2012 model is the first that hasn't felt like a luxury purchase. We've seen people using the 5-megapixel camera in place of a point-and-shoot, the Retina display has to be seen to be believed and it's ideal for photos, video and working on the go. Legendary build quality, elegant design and user-friendly software mean it remains our default choice — deservedly so.

**IN THE THREE YEARS** since the iPad fell from the sky, these humble devices have become ideal ways to surf the internet, play games and, most importantly, create. Here's three of the best for you to enjoy over the summer, with the notable exception of the Galaxy Note 10.1. We're excited to see the stylus-centric slate in action, but it's still not ready for prime time, so we have to hope it's here before the new school term.

**By Daniel Cooper**



## ASUS TRANSFORMER PAD TF300

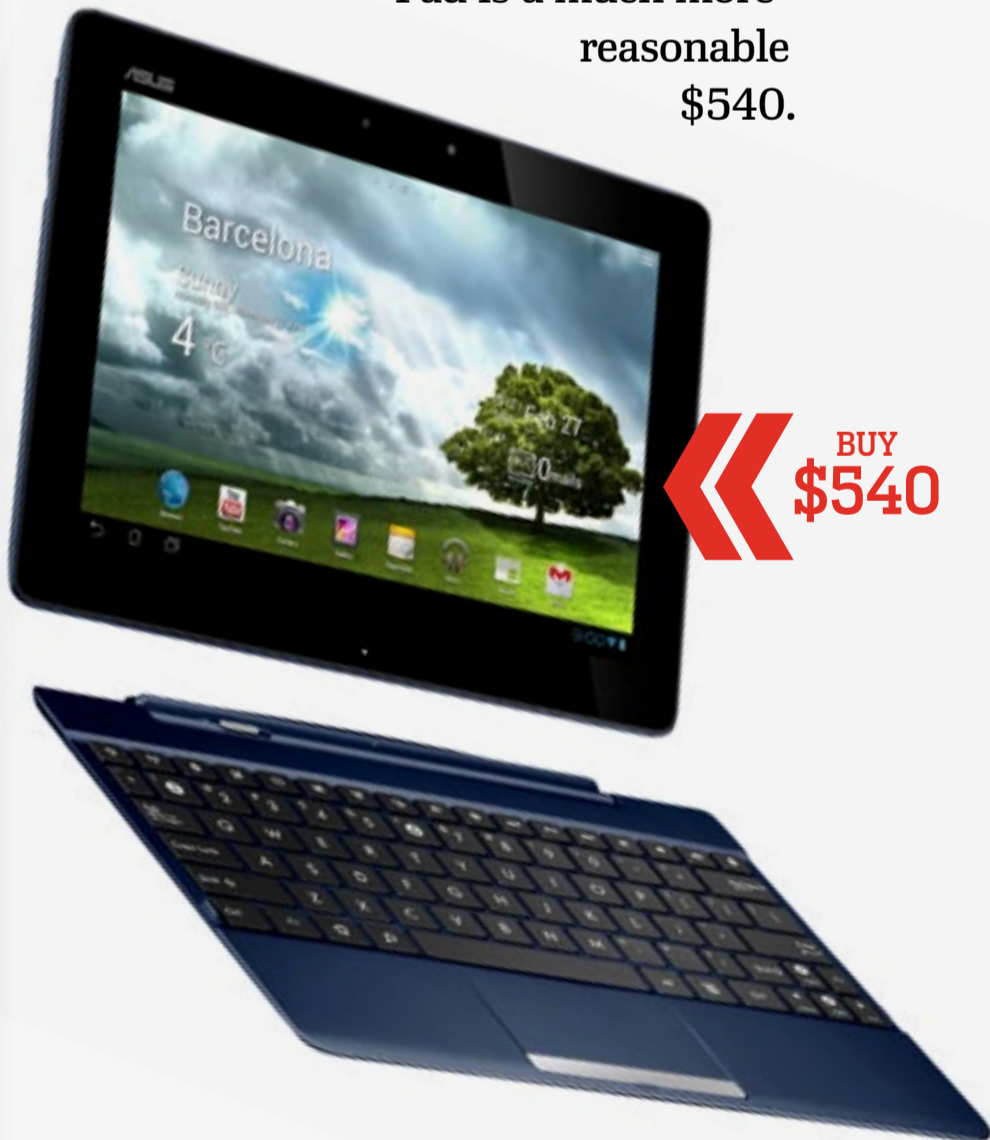
ASUS' adherence to the three P's (Power, Performance and Price) enabled the company to produce a budget version of its Transformer Prime that really doesn't make too many compromises. Powerful Tegra 3 internals and 8-hour battery life impress, while the keyboard dock adds four hours of extra power, a USB 2.0 port and an SD card slot — although a word of warning: it's not comfortable enough to help you finish that term paper. Best of all, while the feted (if sometimes troubled) Transformer Prime costs a

hefty \$700, the Transformer

Pad is a much more

reasonable

\$540.



BUY  
\$450



## SAMSUNG GALAXY TAB 7.7

If you're waiting for the 10-inch Note to arrive, then might we suggest the equally impressive (if not stylus-friendly) Galaxy Tab 7.7? It's not cheap, but inside that slender shell is a battery rated for 12 hours, a 1280 x 800 Super AMOLED Plus display and performance that puts bigger tablets to shame. Eschewing flimsy plastics for a brushed metal body, it feels sturdy and expensive when in use. Best of all, you can buy it with an LTE/CDMA modem inside, which will turn it into the biggest novelty cellphone you'll ever see... or use.





# Home Theater

DISTRO

05.25.12

SUMMER GEAR GUIDE



EDITOR'S  
CHOICE

**FORGET HEADING OUTSIDE** to battle the sun, bugs and whatever other dangers may lurk in the wild — we'll be inside near the TV. Of course, the summer programming schedule can often leave something to be desired so we've taken that into account in our hardware suggestions.

Also key is access to our preferred programming wherever it might be, broadcast or online. So, which devices are absolute must-haves to keep you chilling where the AC blows through October and beyond? Read on to find out.

**By Richard Lawler**

  
BUY  
**\$400**

## TIVO PREMIERE XL4

If you're going to enter full hibernation mode then that puny cable or satellite company DVR just won't cut it. Snag the TiVo Premiere XL4 DVR so you can put all four of its tuners and 2TB of storage space to work archiving any programming that suits you. If you need a boost from the internet then you're in luck because it packs just-updated Netflix and YouTube apps, plus support for Amazon VOD and Hulu Plus to pick up any shows you might have missed. Just add a CableCARD and you're good to go, with support for a nicely tied-in iPad app (Android version coming) and new hardware on the way. Need any more convincing? One of the reasons this unit is repeating from our holiday list is not only the updated software, but also its lower price — \$399 up front and \$15 per month for service.



## LG G2 HDTV

Feeling adventurous? Kick off your summer with LG's G2 series, the first entry into the next generation of Google TV hardware. This will require a leap of faith since production models are only just starting to hit shelves, but we had a chance to try out its funky, dual-sided QWERTY remote and customized interface at CES and came away impressed. Whether your preference for programming is pay TV or free streaming, the re-worked interface and updated apps in Google TV 2.0 do a much better job of bringing you the things you want to watch. The improvements also help to personalize the experience to fit the user, and not the other way around. LG has squeezed a powerful dual-core ARM processor into a standard, slim TV frame that leaves the first-gen Google TV units in the dust and keeps things running smoothly. The app market is starting to expand as developers try the big screen on for size. 3D support and sizes in the 47- to 55-inch range also make these more mainstream-friendly than their predecessors. Sure, you could keep living in the past with your grid guides and dumb, disconnected displays, but investing in one of these is taking a shot at TV's (possible) future.



BUY  
**\$1,600**



BUY  
**\$60**

## ROKU HD

This one is for you, last remaining Engadget reader who doesn't have a media streamer plugged into their HDTV already. Roku's Swiss Army knife-style family of streamers fits any situation and meets a variety of needs with support for hundreds of popular channels including Netflix, Hulu Plus, Amazon Instant Video and HBO Go (assuming your provider isn't DirecTV, Comcast or Time Warner). In the revised Roku HD, the company has added a dash of purple to make it stand out and trimmed the feature set, leaving things like an SD slot and Bluetooth gaming remote support for higher-end models and ditching the dongle for simpler, old-school component video outputs. At just \$60, it gets the job done in a variety of ways (one word: Plex), and with new, official mobile remote apps for iOS and Android, you'll always have the controller in your pocket.



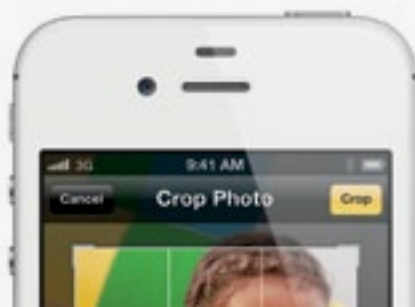
AS YOU PREPARE for adventures with friends and fun in the sun, just remember that a great smartphone should be at the top of your gear list. Whether you're looking for travel tips, a new place to hang or even directions to get there, your smartphone will have you covered. It can help you check-in for flights, rent a car and even get great deals on places to stay. Go ahead and leave your point-and-shoot camera at home, because many of today's best smartphones excel at photography and allow you to immediately share your memories as they're captured. If you plan to travel abroad, be sure to spring for an unlocked handset to avoid those nasty roaming fees. Whatever your particular needs, our smartphone selection is geared to make your decision as painless as possible — and more importantly, ensure that you have a fun and rewarding summer.

**By Zach Lutz**



## HTC ONE X

If you're truly wanting to start your summer off with a bang, look no further than the HTC One X, which is available in an unlocked, international model (approx. \$600), or domestically through AT&T for \$199 — the latter of which sports longer battery life and comes with LTE connectivity. The One X best represents many of the qualities that we look for in a handset, and along with its stellar build quality and gorgeous, 4.7-inch 720p display (of the non-PenTile variety), it also features one of the best cameras available in a smartphone and boasts wicked performance. Put simply, the One X adheres most closely to the ideals of the ultimate Engadget smartphone.





BUY  
\$400

## SAMSUNG GALAXY NEXUS HSPA+

We're big believers in unlocked handsets 'round these parts, and now that the Galaxy Nexus is available directly from Google on the Play Store for a mere \$399 — with a full warranty, mind you — it's a deal that you'd be hard-pressed to refuse. In addition to providing users deliverance from carrier bloatware and being first in line for updates, unlocked smartphones offer owners the unique advantage of using their mobile phone on any compatible network. This particular Galaxy Nexus features a pentaband HSPA+ radio, which means that you'll be ready to roll on either T-Mobile or AT&T, along with a large number of international carriers.



BUY  
\$200

## APPLE IPHONE 4S

Many Engadget editors use the iPhone 4S as their daily driver, and for good reason — it offers simplistic integration with Apple's incredible ecosystem and access to a selection of apps that's beyond reproach. The phone's famed Retina display remains a hallmark in the mobile industry for its stunning clarity, and while some may scoff at its 3.5-inch screen size, the iPhone 4S is easily the best choice for those who'd like a compact handset. We're also big fans of its excellent camera and Siri voice assistant. The 16GB iPhone 4S is available from AT&T, Sprint and Verizon for \$199, along with a number of regional carriers. Frequent international travelers should seek out the unlocked model directly from Apple, which starts at \$649.



BUY  
\$100

## NOKIA LUMIA 900

If you'd like to dive into summer with an excellent handset, yet don't want to blow your budget along the way, the Nokia Lumia 900 will be the savior of the season. At just \$100 on-contract through AT&T, it's unequivocally the best smartphone deal by a country mile. The vibrant, 4.3-inch ClearBlack display features a polarization filter that'll let you view content in direct sunlight, and its 8-megapixel camera will go a long way toward accurately preserving the memories of your travels. What's more, the Lumia 900 can also access AT&T's speedy LTE network, which you can then use to provide an internet connection to your laptops and tablets.



## Smartphones



Whether you're looking for ways to spend your days or just seeking an escape from the rat race, nothing says summer like wasting time. Herewith, a few of our favorite apps for whiling away. **By Landon Peck**



Click on OS icons to buy



## 5. GIFBOOM



We waste so much time taking pictures in the summer. Road trips, beach parties, bonfires; the list goes on and on. Why not capture and share the memories with a GIF? GIFBoom does this with a series of up to 20 images and supplies additive text as well as retro-inspired filters to personalize each moment in time.

**The Breakdown:** Turns memories into memes. **The Bill:** Free



## 4. PETERSON BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA



*oong-ka' choonk, kok-kok* "What was that!?" "That's the flushing call of the American Bittern, *Botaurus lentiginosus*," you'll say sitting back in your chaise, calmly sipping an Arnold Palmer. Based on "Peterson Field Guides," this app offers the same beautiful illustrations, an easy-to-use search interface and sound clips of real birdcalls. Bird watch this summer and fritter away the hours identifying all your feathered friends.

**The Breakdown:** Because you've been dying to eye that red-breasted sapsucker. **The Bill:** \$0.99



## 3. NASA APP (HD)



Even now, after the retirement of space shuttles and NASA's waning budget, we continue to look up at the stars. Since its creation, NASA has provided the world with astounding data about the universe. That tradition continues with this app. Now we can literally touch the things we cannot reach from this planet. Explore late into the evening gazing at the high-res photographs and vivid descriptions that pepper the app from Earth to interstellar space.

**The Breakdown:** The universe in your palm. **The Bill:** Free



## 2. NPR MUSIC



If you prefer spending your time thumbing through records in a musty store, a playlist constructed by a piece of software is seldom enjoyable. NPR Music is different. It houses hundreds of artists of all genres. Programs, concerts, blogs and music news – it has substantially more to offer. Waste your summertime finding the latest tracks and interesting tidbits on your favorite new artists.

**The Breakdown:** A better streaming music app. **The Bill:** Free



## 1. FINAL FANTASY TACTICS: THE WAR OF THE LIONS



A dream come true. This classic *Final Fantasy* port delivers with beautiful graphics, a truly divine score and a surprisingly usable interface. The game can be played for hundreds of hours (and that's excluding the 57 optional tutorials). This is a perfect addition to cross-country car trips.

**The Breakdown:** A *Final Fantasy* port worth the scratch.

**The Bill:** \$17.99



# ESC

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## **SPACEX FALCON 9**

After multiple aborted attempts, the Falcon 9 rocket launched from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station on Tuesday, May 22. Among other things, the rocket, pictured here during a time exposure, reportedly carried the ashes of Star Trek's Scotty (James Doohan).

AP PHOTO/JOHN RAOUX



# DAVID FELYNIN



**THE CEO & CHAIRMAN OF FUSION-IO CONFESSES TO his love of Flowbee and coveting Woz's gear.**

**What gadget do you depend on most?**

My iPhone. I'm on the road a lot and it helps me keep in touch around the world.

**Which do you look back upon most fondly?**

Well, I learned programming on the Commodore 64, so that really stands out for me. My more well-off friends had Apple II's. Luckily, [Fusion-io chief scientist] Steve Wozniak has forgiven

me for not learning to write code on his machine.

**Which company does the most to push the industry?**

No question, it's Apple. It's increasingly not just their gadgets, but also the integration with their cloud-based services that are driving things forward.

**What is your operating system of choice?**

As a programmer, I always used



**“It sounds a little geeky now, but my first calculator watch is my most memorable childhood gadget.”**

Linux, but now I use OS X for convenience in business applications. Since OS X is UNIX under the hood, now I’ve even started doing my hobby development on OS X as well.

**What are your favorite gadget names?**

The “Wii” is a pretty memorable name that describes the fun of playing as a group on Nintendo’s console.

**What are your least favorite?**

If Nintendo had doubled down, “WiiWii” would have been quite awful.

**Which app do you depend on most?**

Mail.app

**What traits do you most deplore in a smartphone?**

I find that the actual phone service is pretty terrible. And it’s frustrating that AT&T attempts to cancel my worldwide unlimited data plan every time I upgrade phones.

**Which do you most admire?**

GPS services are essential for me since I travel so much.

**What is your idea of the perfect device?**

I’d love to have everything all built into a stylish pair of sunglasses, without it being bulky. So I’m watching what Google is up to with their Glasses.

**What is your earliest gadget memory?**

It sounds a little geeky now, but my first calculator watch is my most memorable childhood gadget.



**What technological advancement do you most admire?**

Clearly, the Flowbee takes the cake on this one. That, or the integrated circuit. They are both pretty cool.



**“Whatever Woz has this week! He is always checking out the coolest new gadgets.”**

**Which do you most despise?**

I'd say most of humanity would agree that automated phone systems are incredibly annoying.

**What fault are you most tolerant of in a gadget?**

Since I rely so much on GPS apps, I wonder why in Calendar, the location field doesn't pop up into a map, but it can recognize addresses in the body of the appointment. I can deal with that but it would be great for it to be fixed.

**Which are you most intolerant of?**

I hate dropped calls.

**When has your smartphone been of the most help?**

It's always a huge help when I'm on the road.

**What device do you covet most?**

Whatever Woz has this week! He is always checking out the coolest new gadgets.

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

Improved call quality would be a very welcome improvement.


**What does being connected mean to you?**

It means I don't have to worry about gaps between time and place. Wherever, whenever, things can get done.

**When are you least likely to reply to an email?**

When I am trying to take time for my family.

**When did you last disconnect?**

My family took a road trip in early April and I was offline as much as I could be while we were on the road. 





# Facebook's Ecosystem Dilemma



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ON

BY ROSS RUBIN

**D**espite amassing something close to a billion users, Facebook has mainly stayed true to the startup mantra of staying focused on a few core things. In this case, that has been promoting openness and sharing among friends and, increasingly, the world at large. Such was the case for its rival Google at the launch of the search company's IPO. Since then, however, the company has launched a pair of operating systems powering handsets and tablets around the world, a digital media store selling everything from apps to books, and its own social sharing service (at least twice).

With the vast capital infusion that comes with an IPO, Facebook has an opportunity to expand far beyond its own site and Like buttons that now line up in a row next to sharing buttons using Twitter and Google+. The company certainly has no love for Google and has kept Apple at arm's length, but it has had a strong partnership with Microsoft, which made a financially shrewd \$240 million investment in Facebook back in 2007. Windows Phone would be a poorer experience

were it not for its tight Facebook integration. The giant social network would gain from entering the device market or spinning its own version of Android as Amazon has done, but there would also be significant challenges to striking out into its own ecosystem.

First, while Facebook may be a master at helping people connect with each other online, it has been a laggard in connecting its users in the real world despite launching its own check-in services and acquiring former Foursquare



rival Gowalla. Mark Zuckerberg has vowed that the company will focus strongly on mobile apps moving forward, but what can be done in an app cannot compare to what could be done by owning a platform designed from the ground up for creating new social connections and reinforcing existing ones. None of the major mobile OS providers have really taken this approach.

That said, they all appear to be active in driving location-based technology initiatives. Google continues to invest not only in navigating maps, but also in driverless cars to take us to points on them. Nokia, which owns map provider Navteq, saw integration of its location-based services as a lynchpin in its decision to use Windows Phone, and Apple has been the subject of perennial rumors over the past few years regarding its location initiatives as the iPhone's implementation of Google Maps has lagged behind its Android counterpart.

Second, one of the knocks against Facebook has been that the company has done a relatively poor job of monetizing its users. Getting into devices and services the way that Google has could provide new revenue streams from users and lock out — or at least push aside — competitive services the way Apple has favored Twitter on the iPhone and the way we can ex-

**“One of the knocks against Facebook has been that the company has done a relatively poor job of monetizing its users.”**

pect Google to integrate Google+ more deeply into Android. Engineering such products, however, is so expensive that even many in the device business tend to outsource such affairs and Facebook, while a company with a deep software engineering culture, would be late to market.

For all its user appeal, Facebook has been more of a facilitator than a disruptor. Compare it to Amazon, which has been building its ecosystem steadily since it stepped outside its retailer box to launch Kindle and new bundled services around Prime, its multifaceted subscriptions service. While it is starting to play in the tablet big leagues with the Kindle Fire, Amazon has also been clever about not diving headfirst into the smartphone bloodbath, at least not yet. The first Kindle, though, was released a decade after Amazon's initial public offering. Expanding from Web platform to mobile platform may be a few chapters away in this Facebook. 



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**TIME  
MACHINES**

**WHAT IS THIS?** TAP TO FIND OUT



## APPLE NEWTON MESSAGEPAD 2000

MODERN  
EQUIVALENT:  
The iPad



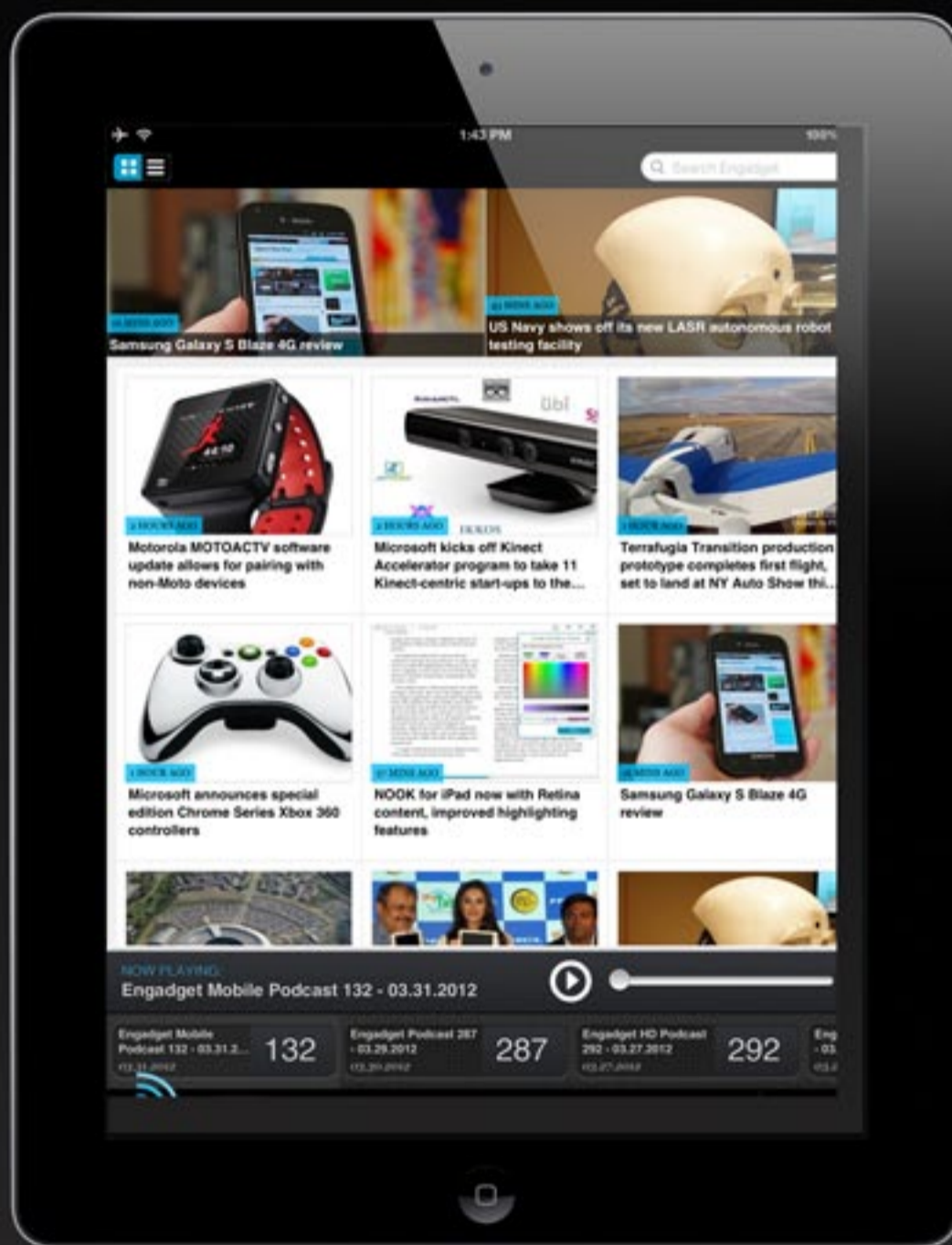
Okay. So, we gave you an easy one, but if it wasn't for the Newton you might not be reading this magazine right now. Largely understood to be the predecessor to the iPad, Apple's first tablet was launched in 1993 and given the axe following Steve Jobs' return to the company in 1997. This particular model, the MessagePad 2000, was introduced in March of 1997, and was touted as being a lighter alternative to clunky laptops. It weighed in at 1.4 pounds, reportedly offered more than 24 hours of battery life and came equipped with 4MB of internal storage. By contrast, Apple's third-gen iPad weighs 1.44 pounds (WiFi only), provides up to 10 hours of battery life and offers as much as 64GB of onboard storage. How do you like them Apples? PHOTO: PHILLIP RENATO

MessagePad 2000



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