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MAGAZINE

THE PHILIPPINES' FIRST TECH

REVIEWED

Nokia 3.4

Lenovo Yoga Duet 7

Vivo Y31 (2021)

TP-Link Tapo C200

THE FINTECH ISSUE

MORE THAN JUST ADD TO CART.

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DIGITAL CONTENT PRODUCER	Jerico Lutrania
LEGAL COUNSEL	Alba Law Office

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Maribelle M. Alba
 EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
 @bellealba



Presy Alba
 EDITOR-AT-LARGE
 @presy1121



Arnel Doria
 MOBILITY CONSULTANT



Jay Alba
 DIGITAL INITIATIVES LEAD



Jose Alvarez
 CONTRIBUTOR
 @josealvarez



Gerry Gaviola
 CONTRIBUTOR
 @gerry.g626



Ren Alcantara
 EDITOR-AT-LARGE
 @hisnameisren



Gabriel Pe
 STAFF WRITER
 @pe_gab



Jerico Lutrania
 DIGITAL CONTENT PRODUCER
 @_easyo



Carmela Birao
 VIDEOGRAPHER
 @carmelabirao

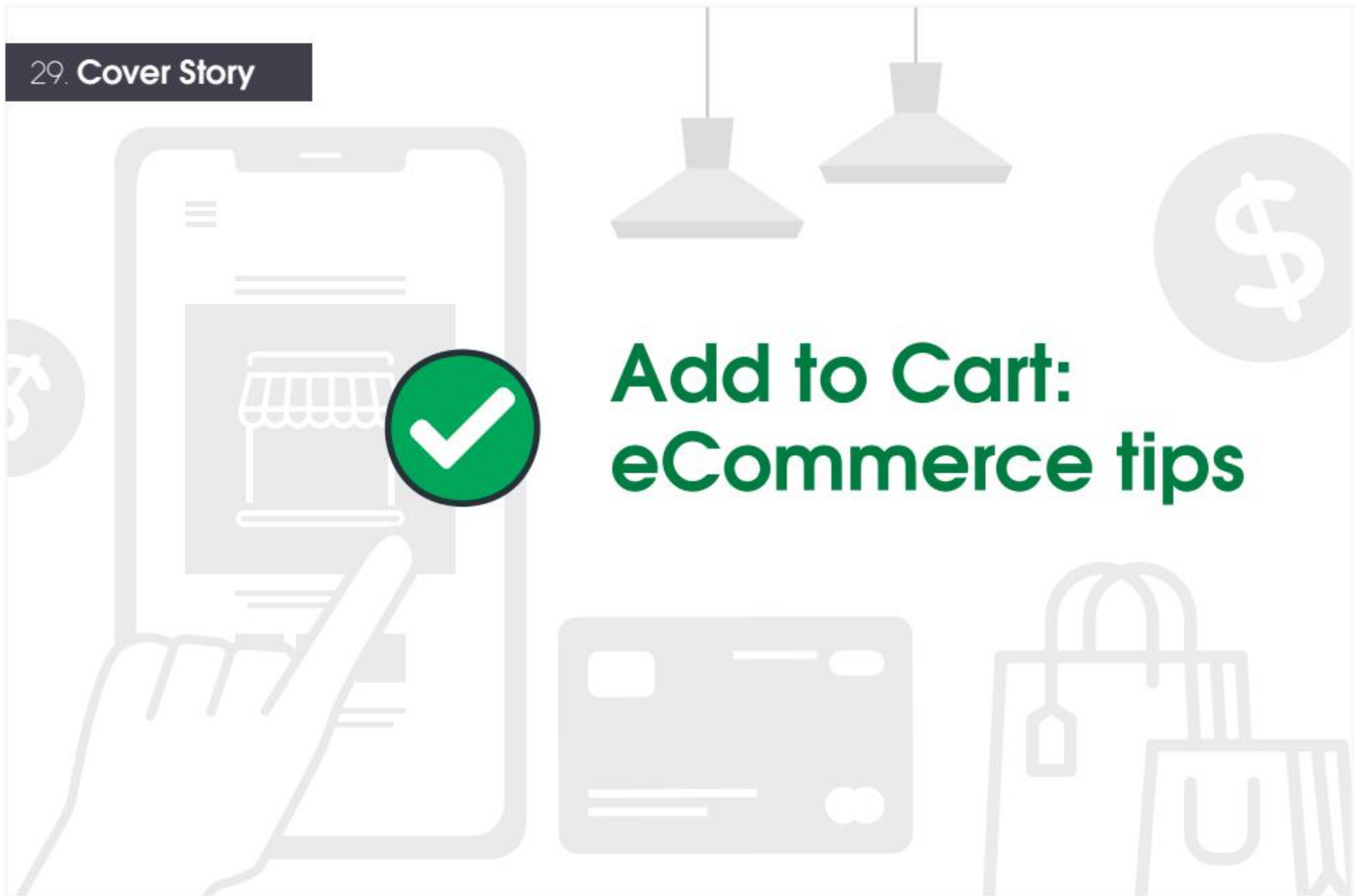


Zeil Romero
 GRAPHIC ARTIST
 @zeil_heyo



Chini Yu Soriano
 GRAPHIC ARTIST
 @chinisoriano

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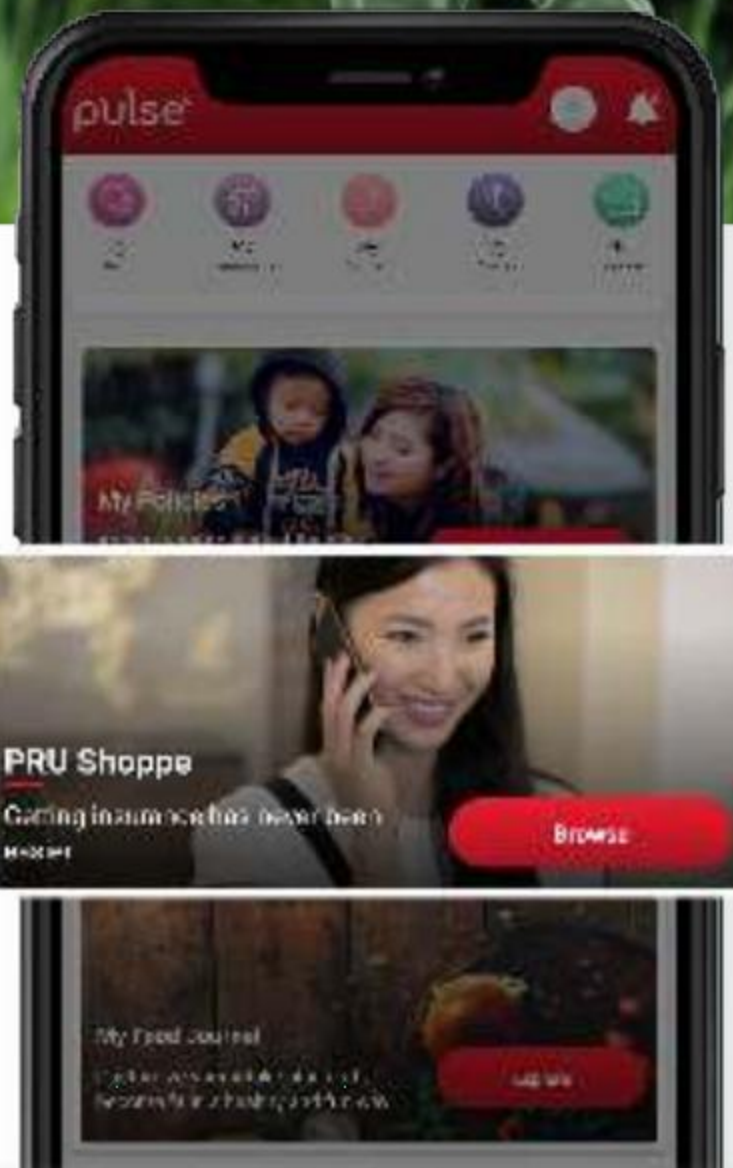
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◀ Samsung Galaxy Buds Pro True Wireless Earbuds

Samsung's newest true wireless earbuds, the Galaxy Buds Pro, takes enjoying music to the next level. Tune in and tune out noises with this earbud's Intelligent Active Noise Cancelling Technology. It's Voice Detect feature listens to when you speak and switches from ANC mode to Ambient Noise mode so you can focus on the person talking without taking your buds off. The Galaxy Buds Pro provides immersive audio thanks to its 360 Audio courtesy of Dolby Head Tracking technology. The Galaxy Buds Pro gives you up to 18 hours of playback time with ANC, and up to 28 hours when turned off.

PHP 9,990

Samsung Galaxy S21+ ▶ Smartphone

Samsung's new flagship baby, the Galaxy S21+ is made for the everyday epic. The Galaxy S21+ features a 6.7-inch Infinity-O display with a 120 Hz refresh rate. The whole device is protected by Corning's latest Gorilla Glass Victus, their toughest glass yet. It's powered by the latest Qualcomm Snapdragon 888 processor with 8GB of RAM and up to 256GB of internal storage. What makes the Galaxy S21+ epic is its 8K capable cameras. The main shooter is a 64-megapixel telephoto camera, the secondary a 12-megapixel ultrawide angle lens, and a 12-megapixel wide-angle camera. Expect the phone to last you the whole day, with its 4800 mAh battery. If you do run out, the Galaxy S21+ has a 25W fast charging and 15W wireless fast charging.

PHP 57,990





Samsung Galaxy S21 Ultra ▲

Smartphone

Samsung's newest flagship device, the Samsung Galaxy S21 Ultra is epic in every way. The Samsung Galaxy Ultra has a 6.8-inch Infinity-O Display with a 120 Hz refresh rate. Take epic pictures and videos with its 8K capable cameras. The main shooter is a 108-megapixel beast, the secondary camera is a 12-megapixel ultra-wide-angle lens, and has a hybrid zoom lens capable of 10x optical zoom. The Samsung Galaxy S21 Ultra is powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon 888 SoC with up to 16 GB of RAM and 512 GB of internal storage. The phone also features a large 5000 mAh battery that will last you the whole day.

PHP 69,990



◀ HP Pavilion 14 Laptop

The HP Pavilion 14 is getting a boost for 2021. The new HP Pavilion 14 will be powered by the latest 11th Gen Intel Core processor with its Iris Xe graphics. The HP Pavilion 14 will also have an option for up to an NVIDIA GeForce MX450 graphics. Like the large Pavilion 15, the new Pavilion 14 will feature longer battery life, bigger storage, and faster Wi-Fi 6 connection, and more immersive built-in audio. It comes with a variety of colors including warm gold.

PHP 47,990

HP Pavilion 15 ▶ Laptop

HP's beloved Pavilion line is receiving an upgrade. The HP Pavilion 15 is receiving the new 11th Gen Intel Core processor with Intel Iris Xe graphics and an option of up to an NVIDIA GeForce MX450 graphics. The new Pavilion 15 is highlighted by its 15.6-inch display with an impressive 86% screen-to-body ratio thanks to the new micro-edge bezels. The new Pavilion 15 has been upgraded with bigger PCIe storage of up to 512GB and dual-band memory. It has a new longer battery life, a variety of I/O ports, and a faster internet connection with Wi-Fi 6. It comes with four elegant designs including natural silver.

PHP 59,990



HyperX Alloy Origin 60 ▶

Keyboard

The HyperX Alloy Origins 60 is HyperX's first 60-percent keyboard. The Alloy Origin 60 was designed to maximize space for more mouse movement space. The mechanical keyboard features HyperX's own red linear mechanical switches that are designed with shorter actuation point and shorter travel time for more responsive action. The HyperX NGENUITY software also allows users to personalize the keyboard's LED lighting, game mode, and macro settings which has up to three profiles on the keyboard's on-board memory.



◀ HyperX Pulsefire Haste Mouse

The HyperX Pulsefire Haste was made for the gamers who want to click on heads with speed and accuracy. It utilizes an ultra-light honeycomb hex shell design that offers quicker movements and increased ventilation. The mouse also features Golden Micro Dustproof switches that capable of up to 60M clicks, six-programmable buttons, and onboard memory. The Pulsefire Haste is also built with low-friction, pure virgin-grade PTFE skates that enable effortless glide movements. The mouse is also customizable with HyperX NGENUITY software.



◀ **Lenovo Legion 7** Gaming Laptop

Lenovo's flagship gaming laptop is getting a major upgrade in 2021. The new Lenovo Legion 7 will feature the new AMD Ryzen 5000-series mobile processor with the new NVIDIA GeForce RTX 3000-series graphics. The updated Lenovo Legion 7 will also feature the world's first 16-inch QHD 16:10 displays offering more screen real estate so gamers can see more and win more. Additionally, the screen will feature a fast 165 Hz refresh rate. As part of Lenovo's new line of gaming laptops, the new Legion 7 will sport Lenovo's Legion AI which leverages AI technology to adapt the laptop's components to pump out more frames in games. The new Lenovo Legion 7 will also feature Lenovo's new ColdFront 3.0 cooling technology to keep the device cool for long gaming hours.

Lenovo Legion 5 ▶ Gaming Laptop

The Lenovo Legion 5 brings a balance of style and performance to gamers. The new Lenovo Legion 5 will be equipped with up to a Ryzen 9 5800H processor and up to an NVIDIA GeForce RTX 3070 Max-Q graphics. It has either a 15.6-inch FHD IPS Display with a 165 Hz refresh rate, or a larger 17-inch FHD display with a 144Hz refresh rate. The new Lenovo Legion 5 will also leverage the new Lenovo Legion AI so gamers can get more from their devices. Also in the new Legion 5 is the Coldfront 3.0 cooling solution so the laptop can push out performance without getting too hot.





Lenovo Legion H600 ▲ Wireless Headset

The Lenovo Legion H600 is made for the gamer who wants to win, who prioritizes great audio for his games, and who wants to move around without the mess of the wires. The Legion H600 provides tournament-grade audio and features a 2.4 GHz wireless connectivity with a connectivity distance of up to 12m. This wireless headset also features blazing-fast latency of under 35ms. The Lenovo Legion H600 has 50mm drivers and a unidirectional mic with a flip-to-mute feature.



◀ **Nokia C1 Plus** Smartphone

The Nokia C1 Plus is an affordable 4G capable smartphone. Part of the brand's C-series smartphones makes affordable smartphone experiences for everyone. The Nokia C1 Plus runs on Android 10 Go Edition. It has a 5.45-inch HD+ screen with a 5-megapixel camera on the front and at the back. The Nokia C1 Plus has 16GB of memory which can store up to 3,000 songs or 13-hours of HD Video. It also has a 2,500 mAh so you can enjoy your multimedia all day without the need of grabbing the charger.

PHP 3,590

Ambi Climate Mini ▶ Smart Thermostat

The Ambi Climate Mini is the newest way to cool down or warm up. The smart thermostat uses data-driven foresight to adjust the temperature to the user's preferred without the need of lifting a finger. If you need to manually adjust the temperature, the companion app provides easy and intuitive remote controlling from their phones. It also can be paired with voice assistants and even IFTTT. With built-in sensors, GPS and Scheduling, and Advanced AI technology, the Ambi Climate Mini makes every home the most comfortable ever.



Brother DCP-T420W ▶

Multi-function printer

The printer is the bridge between the digital and the real world, so you can't compromise. Brother knows this, and they offer solutions that increase productivity while keeping costs low. The DCP-T420W is a multi-function printer that lets you print, scan, and copy all in one device. With up to 16 IPM output and 6.5-second first print-out time, it's just the device you need to create fast, quality prints. With an internal ink tank system that can deliver up to 7,500 pages of mono prints, and 5,000 pages of colored prints per bottle, and wireless printing capability, it's an extremely cost-effective solution to your printing needs.

PHP 7,650



◀ Brother DCP-T720DW

Multi-function printer

The Brother DCP-T720DW is the perfect companion to any office. With a 17 IPM print speed, and 6-second first print-out time, it offers the speed and volume to meet the heaviest office printing requirements. With a 20-sheet automatic document feeder for scanning and copying, and a 150-sheet paper tray, along with automatic two-sided printing, it's ready to take on long documents, presentations, forms, and collaterals without breaking a sweat. The internal ink tanks can be refilled from bottles that deliver 7,500 pages of mono, and 5,000 pages of colored prints, for low down time, and cost-effective performance.

PHP 11,950



◀ **LIVA Q1A** Mini-PC

This new Mini-PC from Taipei Elitegroup Computer Systems (ECS) offers great desktop performance at just the heft of your mouse. The LIVA Q1A is powered by a quad-core Rockchip RK3288 SoC, with an onboard 2GB DDR3 memory. As for storage, it has either 32GB or 64GB eMMC storage with a MicroSD slot of up to 128 GB. This mini-PC is capable of displaying at 4K60 resolution and a variety of I/O ports to cater to all of your needs.

LIVA Q1A Plus ▶ Mini-PC

The LIVA Q1A Plus is a new mini-PC from ECS. The LIVA Q1A Plus is powered by a Rockchip RK3399 SoC that is configured either to a dual-core Cortex-A72 or a quad-core Cortex-A53. The LIVA Q1A Plus has the same small form factor as the Q1A coming in at a mere 74 x 74 x 34.6mm in dimension, which you place wherever you might want it. It has eMMC 32 GB or 64GB internal storage with a MicroSD slot capable of up to 128 GB. Unlike the Q1A the Q1A Plus has a DisplayPort 1.2 that can display 4K resolutions at 60 fps along with its HDMI. It also has a variety of I/O ports.





Nokia 3.4 ▲ Smartphone

Nokia is further strengthening its position in the local smartphone market with the 3.4. The phone has a large 6.39-inch IPS screen with a 269 ppi display, as well as a triple main camera module that takes 13 MP snaps. It runs the Qualcomm Snapdragon 460 chipset for great cost-effective performance and 4GB of RAM coupled with 64 GB of storage. You also get a large 4,000 mAh battery for all-day performance with the power-efficient chipset, and a rear-mounted fingerprint scanner for security. The cherry on top is that this is an Android One device, which means it has a clean install of android with minimal bloat, and guaranteed updates for a couple of years, all that with the renowned Nokia badge. What's not to like?

PHP 6,990



Vivo Y31 (2021) ▲

Smartphone

The Vivo Y31 is back, and it's better than ever. This mid-range smartphone from Vivo packs a punch, with its Qualcomm Snapdragon 662 processor and 8 GB of RAM, and 128 GB of internal storage. The Vivo Y31 has a 6.58-inch display FHD+ display, a 5000 mAh battery with 18W fast charging, USB-C, side-mounted finger print scanner which doubles as the power button, and of course face unlock. The main highlight of this device is its triple camera setup at the back with a 48-megapixel main shooter, a 2-megapixel macro lens, and a 2-megapixel depth sensor. The Vivo Y31 comes in Ocean Blue and Racing Black.

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Nokia 3.4

Reviewed by Ren Alcantara

No matter your budget, you can find a smartphone that will suit your needs. However, few brands have the kind of trust Nokia has. The smartphone manufacturer continues its return to the consumer electronics stage with a series of releases that bank on the solid reputation they have built over decades. In the lab today is the Nokia 3.4, one of Nokia's more affordable options for those who want quality without breaking the bank.



DESIGN ★★★★★

The Nokia 3.4 is standard fare for a phone made in 2020. It's got a large, non-curved screen up front, a punch-hole selfie camera, a textured back case with a circular camera module placed above a fingerprint scanner, and a USB-C port at the bottom edge. Buttons are on the sides, and there's a headphone jack at the top. Our review unit came in a shimmering, iridescent blue-purple when it gets hit by the light in just a certain way.

Some people might not like the plain design, but the simplicity of it appeals to me, and the textured back case gives it enough grip to keep from slipping out of your hands.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

The Nokia 3.4 is a modestly specced phone that was designed to handle daily tasks well. The heart of this phone is the Qualcomm Snapdragon 460 chipset that runs an octa-core processor and a capable Adreno 610 GPU. It comes with up to 4 GB of RAM, and a comfortably large 6.39-inch, 720x1560 resolution screen. The main camera snaps 13 MP photos and can shoot 1080p video. Keeping the device running is a large 4000 mAh battery with 10W charging.

The 3.4 is a 4G phone with Wi-Fi b/g/n and Bluetooth 4.2 connectivity and has a dedicated microSD slot, along with dual-SIM capability.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

Manufacturers have lately been putting out a lot of great phones in the lower tiers. More and more surprisingly capable devices have been hitting the market, and we couldn't be happier. Not to be left behind, the 3.4 is Nokia's attempt to ride the wave of capable, affordable phones.

Right out of the box, the 3.4 is pleasantly light. The plastic back case and sides help keep the weight down significantly. More than once, I fell into a slight panic because I didn't realize that

the phone was actually already in my pocket. It's a little on the wide side and, coupled with how thin it is, can be unwieldy to hold in a single hand. Slipping it into the included clear plastic case would be a good idea from day 1.

The performance of the Nokia 3.4 is very pleasantly fluid, even considering the price point. The rear-mounted fingerprint scanner works faster and more consistently than my personal flagship phone's in-screen scanner, and the location high center on the back case does make it convenient to tap regardless of what hand you use. It also has face unlock, though you do have to press the button to get it to start looking for a face to recognize, which slows the process down somewhat. That same power button is also quite tough to press—great for keeping unintended taps out of the way, but not as good when you want to unlock the phone with gloved hands, for example.

Once awake, the phone reacts quickly, with only the slightest beat before reacting. Once it gets going though, the experience itself doesn't feel too far removed from any other smartphone from a reputable brand, regardless of price tier. It's an Android One phone, which means some optimization and guaranteed future updates from Google, which is more than can be said for a lot of other manufacturers out there. As it stands, the OS is stable, and there was even an update midway through our review process, which is a great sign for things to come.

Battery life was likewise impressive, managing to last two days between charges, though with limited use of mobile data.

While the phone is quite pleasant to use on the whole, with snappy performance and a reasonable price tag, the corners cut to make this possible aren't hard to find. The camera, for one, lacks sharpness, and even in decent lighting, details are fuzzy, and can't take much cropping before it becomes quite obvious. Colors are at least quite faithfully reproduced, which was a pleasant surprise.

VALUE ★★★★★

Because of the brand, and being an Android One smartphone, the Nokia 3.4 gets our nod. Finding that balance between price and hardware is a trick lots of manufacturers do, but guaranteeing software updates and delivering a cleaner Android experience makes this device a winner, despite a few flaws.

SPECIFICATIONS:

- Dimensions: 6.34 x 2.99 x 0.34in
- Weight: 180g
- Display: 6.39 inches
- Resolution: 720 x 1560 pixels, 269 PPI
- Chipset: Qualcomm Snapdragon 460
- GPU: Adreno 610
- RAM: Up to 4GB
- Storage: Up to 64GB, microSD expandable
- Camera: 13MP main, 5MP wide, 2MP depth, 8MP Front
- Battery 4000mAh, 10W charging

What's Hot:

- Android One
- Light
- Good battery life

What's Not:

- Poor camera performance



BOTTOMLINE

Great value from a great brand.

Lenovo Yoga Duet 7

Reviewed by Ren Alcantara

Lenovo has always been one to bring innovation to the table—innovation that is most apparent in the Yoga line of devices. Today, we're taking a look at the Lenovo Yoga Duet 7, a convertible laptop that aims to take on the convertible tablet space.

DESIGN ★★★★★

The Lenovo Yoga Duet 7 is a looker. It's almost pretty enough to think of as a fashion accessory. Our review device came in a gorgeous Orchid, an eye-catching shade of purple, and the keyboard has a nicely textured fabric covering that makes the entire package stand out in a world of slate gray and black laptops. The large screen is surrounded by thin bezels, and a handy kickstand that folds flush with the rest of the device's back. It's tantalizingly thin, and to keep up with heat, it has vents at the top for the active fan to exhaust out of. Take this device out at a meeting, and you'll turn some heads for sure. The magnesium case gives it structural rigidity, and keeps the weight down.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

Apart from being easy on the eyes, The Lenovo Legion Duet 7 is a monster. First off, the processor. It runs an Intel Core i7-10510U, with a clock speed of 4.9GHz. Sure it only has integrated graphics, but it's really not intended for gaming, so that's a non-issue. You do get 16 GB of RAM, a 1 TB SSD, and a gorgeous 13-inch WQHD touchscreen. The detachable keyboard is backlit, and also offers Bluetooth connectivity with the flick of a switch, so you should be able to use it with other devices as well, should the need arise. The cherry on top is the active stylus that doesn't just let you create artwork and take down notes, it also lets you capture colors IRL to use in your digital art. The future is here, folks. You also get an IR front camera for logging in with a glance via Windows Hello. There aren't any USB-A ports, but USB-C ports abound—there are three in total, including two for power and image output.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

Even stuck at home, I use a laptop just for the convenience of being able to move around a little bit. It has come to a point though that I move around so much at home, that even regular laptops have a difficult time keeping up. I've switched to using a tablet for the most part now, and while that's certainly serviceable, it still just can't compare to the full Windows desktop experience.

Fortunately, our friends from Lenovo sent over the Yoga Duet 7. This is an extremely versatile convertible that delivers the performance I was needed, with the portability I wanted. As a laptop, the i7 processor and generous 16 GB of RAM makes short work of various tasks, even up to multi-layered audio tracks on Audacity and video editing on Lightworks, both of which are tasks I would normally have to do on my gaming laptop. You do need a flat, stable surface for the kickstand to properly prop the tablet portion of the Yoga up, but

thanks to Bluetooth connectivity on the keyboard, what I've been doing is setting the tablet on the coffee table while I work from the couch with the keyboard and a mouse. When more precise work is needed, I simply pick the display up, set it on my lap and get work done that way.

That screen, by the way, is gorgeous, bright, and extremely sharp, letting you get right in there for details in photos, and remaining clear even if you're like me and have ridiculously small fonts for all your desktop applications. Speakers are loud, firing from the tops of both the left and right edges of the tablet portion of the device. The front-facing IR camera works great for unlocking the device as well, not registering any false positives, and unlocking the Yoga to desktop in a few blinks of the eye. Very impressive.

The Yoga Duet 7 also has an optional stylus that makes digital art much more accessible to the user. No, I can't draw, but I love taking handwritten notes. Simply pick the software of your choice (the market is rife with these), and get writing. The pen is more than responsive enough for writing, and feels quite natural, if a little slippery. Windows pan integration has made a lot of progress through the generations, and I'm quite happy to report that at least in my opinion, this is ready for prime time. If you're painting or sketching furiously, there's a slight delay, but not nearly enough to be disruptive.

The pen has an extra little trick. Apart from USB-C charging, that allows you to plug it in to any of the side ports of the Yoga to recharge, it also lets you capture colors from the real world to use for your digital art. By simply tapping the non-writing end of the pen onto a surface, the Yoga Duet's software captures the color you tapped on, and loads it into the Lenovo Pen's software, ready to use for your creative endeavors.

One of my biggest gripes with changing locations while working is the need to constantly be hunting for an outlet. My daily driver is a gaming laptop, and as such, can't really keep up with a full day of work without a wall outlet nearby. There's no such concern with the Yoga Duet 7. It stays with me through a whole day of writing articles, doing research, and procrastinating on YouTube, with no difficulty at all, and if I need a little boost, 45W charging tops the internal battery up quickly.

VALUE ★★★★★

Lenovo Yoga Duet 7 might be the perfect device for digital creatives on the move. The pen, powerful software, and additional features such as color capture really make it shine in that regard. Even if you don't do a lot of digital art, it's perfectly portable,



has superb battery life, and enough power to work as a mobile production studio, or work-anywhere office laptop. Once you've gotten all your work hours, it'll gladly double-duty as a convenient entertainment device to boot. Win-win. At PHP 84,995 in this configuration, it's a hefty chunk of change, but easily worth every Peso.

Overall, I'm quite enamored with the Yoga Duet 7. Beautiful design, powerful internals, and additional features that are more than just cute gimmick give it a spot in the tech arsenal of people who are looking for portable performance.

SPECIFICATIONS:

- Dimensions: 11.7 x 8.16 x 0.36 inches, 11.7 x 8.70 x 0.23 inches (Keyboard folio)
- Processor: Intel Core i7-10510U (4C / 8T, 1.8 / 4.9GHz, 8MB)
- Graphics: Integrated Intel UHD Graphics
- Chipset: Intel SoC Platform
- Memory: 16GB Soldered DDR4-2666
- Memory Slots: Memory soldered to systemboard, no slots
- Max Memory: 16GB soldered memory, not upgradable
- Storage: 1TB SSD M.2 2242 PCIe 3.0x4 NVMe
- Battery: Integrated 42Wh
- Max Battery Life: MobileMark 2014: 10.8 hr
- Power Adapter: 45W USB-Cv

What's Hot:

- Great design
- Useful form factor
- Stylus is a huge plus

What's Not:

- Price (though more affordable configurations are available)



BOTTOMLINE

If you need a portable, convertible powerhouse, this is it.

Vivo Y31 (2021)

Reviewed by Gabriel Pe

Following their X50 line, Vivo is bringing some much need power and update their Y-series of mid-range smartphones. The new Vivo Y31 (2021) takes some of the beloved features from the flagship X50 line and V20 Series but tweaks it a little bit to lower the price to let more people enjoy it.



DESIGN ★★★★★

Like the X50 and V20, the Y31 is a gorgeous phone looking phone especially with the gradient color scheme at the back. Our unit was the Ocean Blue variant which in my opinion is the better looking between the two.

The phone feels premium when you hold it. It's firm with a bit of heft, even with the smooth back the slightly curved edges at the back helps with holding the phone. It is a fingerprint magnet though, luckily, Vivo has included a jelly case inside the box to help with that.

The Vivo Y31 sports a 6.58-inch Halo FullView display with the notch housing the 8-megapixel selfie camera. At the back is the triple camera setup (more on this later). The top of the phone has the sim card tray along with mic holes. The bottom has the downward-firing speaker, the headphone jack, a mic hole, and the USB Type-C charging. Lastly, the right side of the phone has the volume buttons and the fingerprint reader/ power button.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

The Vivo Y31 packs a punch, sporting a Qualcomm Snapdragon 662 processor with an Adreno 610 GPU. The SoC is paired with 8GB of RAM and 128 GB of internal storage that is also expandable via a dedicated MicroSD card slot. It's powered by a 5000 mAh battery with an 18W fast charge.

The highlight of the Y31 is definitely its triple camera setup at the back. It has a 48-megapixel main shooter, a 2-megapixel macro lens, and a 2-megapixel depth sensor. Don't let the mundane specs fool you, the Y31's camera features an electronic image stabilizer (EIS) which I found to be comparable with that of the X50. Just note that video is limited to 30fps at 1080p which is good enough for most modern devices.

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

I had a blast during my time with the Y31. The device was snappy thanks to the Qualcomm Snapdragon processor and the great optimization of Vivo's FuntouchOS 11 over Android 11.

In terms of gaming performance, the Vivo Y31 was able to run esports titles such Call of Duty: Mobile and League of Legends: Wild Rift with ease at high resolutions. But it did struggle in heavier titles like Genshin Impact, only playable in extremely low settings.

I was amazed by the performance of the Y31 during long gaming hours. The device didn't get uncomfortably warm, and the 5000 mAh battery lasted me throughout the day in heavy use. Charging time was also decent, lasting about two and a half hours from 5% to full charged.

Another thing that I liked about the Vivo Y31 is its camera. Images came out great, it was sharp and colors were more or less accurate. The EIS built-in in the camera was also great. I took some videos walking around and the results were stable and without any noticeable artificial tearing unlike other EIS out there.

The Vivo Y31 is also great for binge-watching on the go. The screen was great even outdoors, with colors staying vibrant and sharp. I do have some qualms with the speakers. I found it lacking in some form. If you do activate the Audio Boost feature, the volume does get louder but the sound does get messy. I found that the best way to enjoy the phone was with the included headset in the box over the built-in speaker.

VALUE ★★★★★

The Vivo Y31 (2021) retails for 12,999 PHP which is a bit on the higher side compared to devices that have a similar spec. But unlike those devices, the Vivo Y31 does give you higher RAM capacity with better looks and feel.

SPECIFICATIONS:

- Display: 6.58-inch FullView Display
- Processor: Qualcomm Snapdragon 662
- GPU: Adreno 610
- OS: FuntouchOS 11 over Android 11
- RAM: 8 GB
- Storage: 128 GB (expandable via MicroSD slot)
- Camera: Front: 8-megapixel; Rear: 48-megapixel, 2-megapixel (macro), 2-megapixel (depth)
- Battery: 5000 mAh (with 18W fast charging)
- Connections: USB Type-C, WiFi (dual-band), Bluetooth 5.0, GPS, OTG
- Features: Side-mounted fingerprint reader, Audio Boost, Electronic Image Stabilization
- Dimensions: 163.86 x 75.32 x 8.38mm
- Weight: 188g

What's Hot:

- Good Camera
- Video Stabilization
- Qualcomm Snapdragon 662

What's Not:

- Not the greatest speaker out there
- No ultra-wide-angle camera



BOTTOMLINE

The Vivo Y31 (2021) is your next phone

TP-Link Tapo C200

Reviewed by Gabriel Pe

Smart cameras have started gaining traction in recent years. Brands such as Realme, Xiaomi, and many others have started including smart cameras in their smart home portfolios. Among the many who have integrated smart cameras in their lineup is TP-Link with their Tapo series. The Tapo C200 is their version of a budget smart camera and it just cost PHP 1,200.



DESIGN ★★★★★

In terms of design, the TP-Link Tapo C200 looks like your typical security camera but in a smaller form factor.

Of course, the lens is the first thing you'll see when you take it out of the box. The microSD slot and the reset button. Also included in the box is the power brick, and mounting tools which is great for those who want to position this in an inconspicuous location.

HARDWARE ★★★★★

The TP-Link Tapo C200 has a 1 / 2.9-inch camera sensor that captures video at Full HD resolution. The camera has infrared to enable night vision but only up to 9 meters. In terms of audio, it has a built-in mic and a single speaker. As for the connection, it has Wi-Fi at a single band (802.11 b/g/n).

USER EXPERIENCE ★★★★★

If there is one thing that I liked the most about the C200, it was its painless setup. You just need your smartphone and the Tapo app and you're good to go. You'll need to create a TP-Link Account first since the camera mostly saves videos on the cloud.

So why would you want a smart camera? For us it was a cheaper alternative than setting up a full pledge security system. But you can also use it as a monitor for your loved ones (babies, elderly, and even pets).

I was amazed at the quality the C200 offers for its price. Full HD resolution is great in seeing the subject clearer. While its just 15 fps, it was ok especially since you're not watching it 24/7.

Everything is accessible within the app, even when you have multiple cameras setup around your place. You can set up notifications within the app including how often it triggers. The default setup has the motion trigger sending you notifications every time.

You can only control the C200 on a single account, but the host can share the camera with other users provided they have their own TP-Link accounts. Unfortunately, the secondary users can't control the camera and only see the stream as is.

One of the bad things I found while using the camera, was its short IR focus. Ours was set overlooking our garage and if I panned the camera to an area with spider webs the camera would focus on that and darken the background.

Another thing I found was that the speaker was on the quiet side. But since we were using this as a security cam this was not a major issue. However, if you plan to use this as a camera to connect with someone (elderly monitor, baby monitor) you might have some issues.

VALUE ★★★★★

Coming in at less than PHP 1,200 the TP-Link Tapo C200 is a great value for those who want to secure their home or get a camera where they can see their loved ones despite circumstances.

BOTTOMLINE

This budget Wi-Fi Camera packs a ton of features in a small body

SPECIFICATIONS:

- Camera Sensor: 1 / 2.9-inch
- Resolution: 1080p Full HD
- Lens: F/NO: 2.4; Focal Length 4mm
- View Range: 360-degree (horizontal); 114-degree (vertical)
- Night Vision: Yes, 850nm IR LED up to 9 meters
- Audio: Built-in Mic and Speaker
- Storage: MicroSD (up to 128 GB)
- Video Compression: H.264
- Frame Rate: 15 fps
- Video Streaming resolution: 1080p
- Connection: Wi-Fi

What's Hot:

- Easy Setup
- Pairable to Assistants (Alexa and Google Assistant)
- Full HD
- Included Mounting Mechanism

What's Not:

- Pan is not 360-degrees
- Speakers is not that loud



PHOTO
FEATURE



10200

FINTECH ISSUE

It's February, and time to shake off the last remnants of the previous year! What better way to do that than with these amazing gadgets? Get back into the groove of things with the gear you need to make a killing in 2021.



Nokia 3.4

This looker from Nokia runs the cost-effective Snapdragon 460 chipset which delivers great performance, while keeping power use low, for superb endurance, and as part of the Android One program, gets guaranteed updates for longer than your average phone. It's a clear winner



BROTHER DCP-T720DW

Automatic feeder? Check. Automatic two-sided printing? Check. Ink tank? Check. Wireless connectivity, scanning, and copying? Check on all that as well. The Brother DCP-T720DW has everything you want in your next office printer.

LENOVO YOGA DUET 7

It's a tablet. And a laptop. And an entertainment device. And a graphic artist's dream. The Lenovo Yoga Duet 7 makes portable digital creation a snap, with a powerful Intel processor, touch screen, folio case, and smart pen that can capture real-world colors for use in your digital art.



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HISENSE ULED 65A6505

It's big, it's bright, and it's smart. The Hisense ULED 65A6505 is the next king of your living room, with 4K images, wireless connectivity, and super-sharp picture clarity. Stop pining for the cinema, and take the movie theatre home instead.



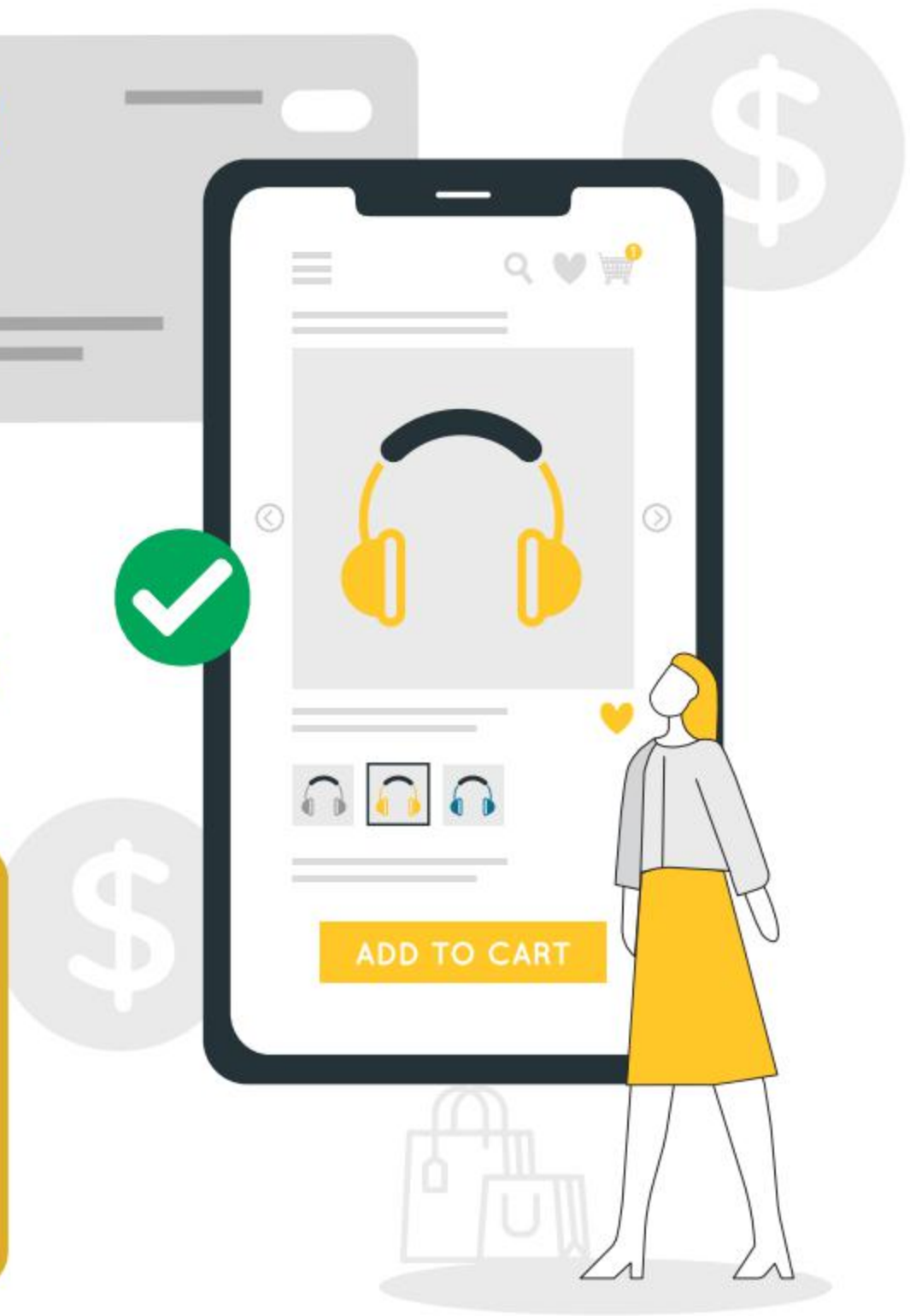
Add to Cart: eCommerce tips

Money is an important part of how the world works. Whether it's to buy lunch, a car, or a house, money makes the whole business of buying and selling much simpler. As technology progresses though, more and more methods of exchange come into existence. In this month's CoverStory, we look at some of the newer ways the world can go 'round.

Tips for safe shopping online

Words by Ren Alcantara

For various reasons, not the least of which is the need to stay home because of the pandemic, making purchases online has become almost exclusively how many of us shop. This is great because it helps smaller businesses stay afloat and keeps buyers from having to expose themselves to the virus. There are, however, some things we should keep in mind when shopping online, so we aren't just trading one set of risks for another. Many people are out there trying to pull a fast one on anyone they can, so be careful and keep yourself from being one of their victims.



Consider using prepaid cards

Lots of local financial services offer prepaid cards that work in place of credit cards for making purchases. They come with their card numbers, can be tied to your name, and are reusable, but come with a crucial difference. Unlike actual credit cards that are funded by banks whom you have to pay back at a later date, or debit cards that are directly tied to your bank accounts, prepaid cards need to have money loaded onto them before they can be used. Since you still have to transfer funds from your account, this doesn't give you any free money (nothing does). It does, however, serve as a buffer between your purchase and your main account. If you were unfortunate enough to have your credit card compromised, whoever did it could rack up quite a bill. Worse, if someone got access to your debit card, they could empty your account. The prepaid option means whoever uses it can only spend as much as is available in the prepaid account, not a centavo more.

This also has the added benefit of being another check for you to go through before making a purchase. Financial responsibility and only making purchases you need and can afford rests in your hands, but this can be a helpful thing for some.





Use the app

If it's available, use the app of the service you're shopping on to make the purchase. This is not to say that their websites are unsafe; they're some of the more secure places you can go online. It's just that with the app, you're a little more certain that you haven't (or aren't going to be) redirected to a phishing page by some cybercriminal trying to make a quick buck. If we can't compel you to do that, at least make certain you have the correct URL in your browser when you go on a shopping spree.

We admit it's significantly easier to browse on websites, but a way to get around that is to browse on your desktop and finish the purchase on the app. You can't be too safe with your payment information. CoD is also an option if the vendor allows it.

Be smart about your deals

Wherever you shop, whether it's on Soc Med, a Viber group, or online shopping service, be wary of the deals. This is an age-old warning that thanks to the anonymity of the web, holds true now more than ever: If the deal is too good to be true, it's probably a scam. You're parting with your hard-earned money, so do yourself a favor and compare prices, check reviews, and get informed. Scams don't have to be high-tech phishing, skimming, or website hijacking. Sometimes it's as simple as a bait-and-switch. It is getting harder and harder to tell what's going on, but if you take your time, don't get overwhelmed by excitement, and out in your due diligence, you'll get what it is you're looking for without getting scammed a few times first.

Check the seller

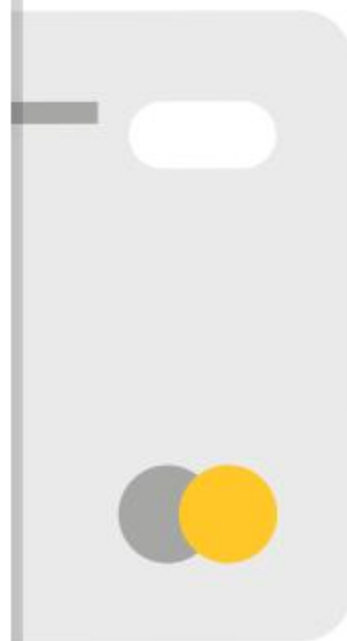
This one should be obvious. Lots of platforms have options to review the sellers of particular items, so give that a look. While you're there, beware of planted reviews. Those can be a bit hard to spot but trust your gut. If reviews look copy-pasted, or a lot of reviews are repeated verbatim, maybe check out other places. Try to avoid confirmation bias--look at the most negative reviews, and see if the seller is responsive to queries. You are, after all, going to be giving them your money.

Browse where it's safe

This should go without saying, but don't go using your credit card at unsecured locations. If you're on public WiFi, forget about it. Basically, unless you trust whoever you're getting a connection from with your account info, maybe save the shopping for when you're at home. It might not be the most common cybercrime, but packet sniffing or gathering info that goes through a network can happen, and if you're unlucky enough to have your transaction sniffed out, your card might get compromised.

Go for delivery

Because of the pandemic, it might be in your best interest to have the item delivered. This, of course, isn't a problem for the big online sellers who rely more or less solely on delivery, but if delivery can be arranged for smaller vendors or when buying secondhand items, go that route. The extra hundred or so bucks is more than worth staying at home and keeping from possibly worsening the pandemic.

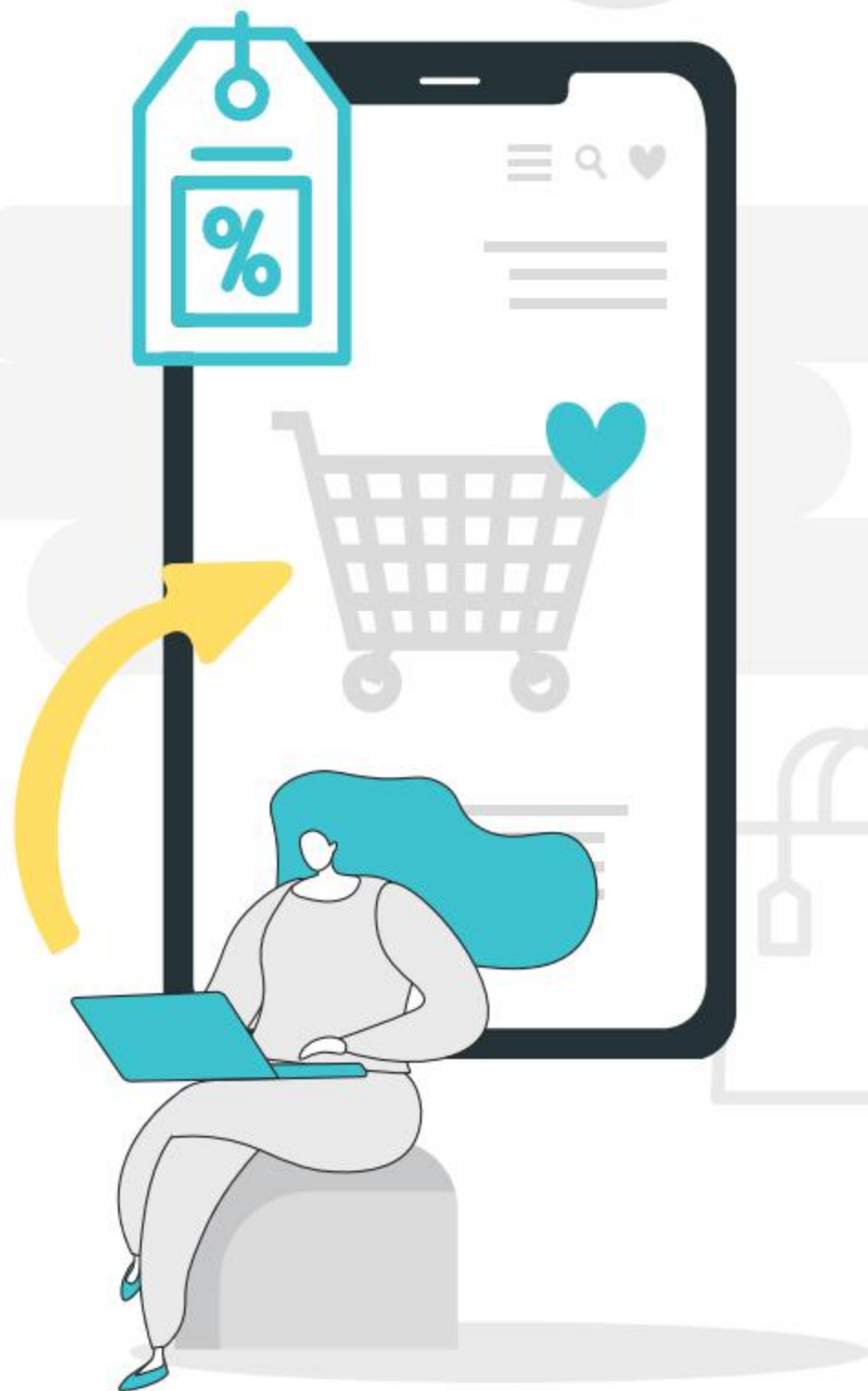


A briefer on e-commerce platforms.

Words by Gabriel Pe

Since the start of the pandemic, people have turned to online shopping to get their essentials and other things. New technologies and platforms have made it easier to buy things online and accessible through your smartphone.

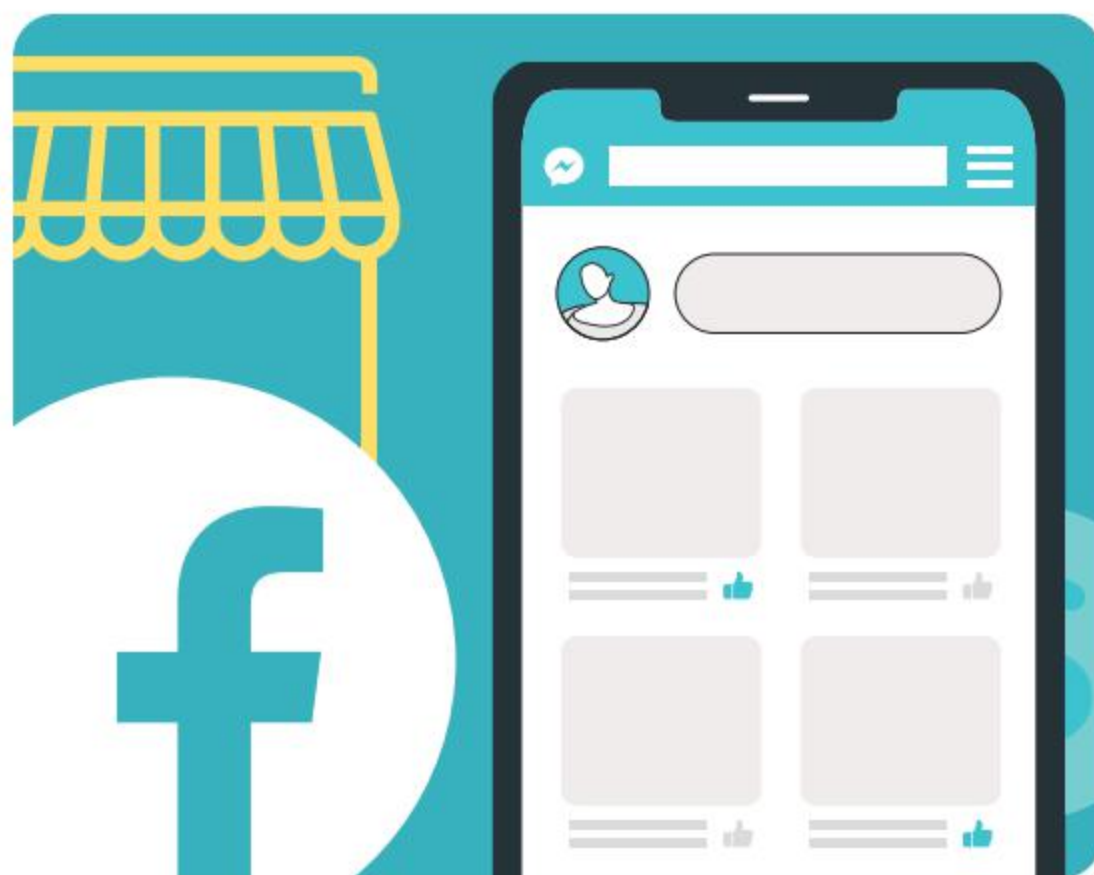
The pandemic has forced many traditional brick and mortar shops to quickly digitalize their stores in order to follow their consumers. While others who needed new revenue turned to online selling to fill the gap left by the pandemic.



Facebook Marketplace

Since its launch in 2016, Facebook Marketplace has grown into one of the biggest online selling and buying platforms in the world largely thanks to the social media's giant user base. Facebook Marketplace caters to all types of businesses, from the usual merchandise, to preloved goods, and even to service and advertising.

Using the platform is easy as well, with sellers able to post pictures of products just like uploading vacation pictures, and customers instantly messaging the seller for details of the product. If you do plan to sell products in the Facebook Marketplace, remember that the Department of Trade and Industries (DTI) has reminded sellers to post the legitimate price of their product pursuant to Republic Act 7394 or the Consumer Act of the Philippines.





Lazada/ Shopee

Lazada and Shopee are undoubtedly the most recognized e-commerce platform in the country and why not? The two house the largest online marketplace in the country and caters to basically anything you want and need. From your groceries to tech needs, and even selling cars and motorcycles, the two e-commerce might have something for you.

The two is also one of the easier to access for first-time sellers. Sellers who want to sell on these platforms can start as soon as their profiles are verified. Customers can chat and ask questions about the products and sellers can customize pages (shops) to help customers easily navigate. The platform also offers support to both seller and buyer if ever something goes awry, such as an error in payments or order refunds and cancellation.

Carousell/ eBay

Carousell, formerly OLX.ph, and eBay are the country's largest "preloved goods" e-commerce platform. These sites initially catered the majority to secondhand goods, but a number also used the sites as their main platform for their merchandise. Now the two sites cater to both new and preloved goods.

Online sellers have often used multiple platforms to promote and sell their products and these two are no exceptions. It has all the same safeguards the larger platforms offer minus warranty for preloved goods with the responsibility going to the seller and buyer for that one.

Viber/ Instant Messaging apps

One of the main facets of selling is communication, so it comes to no surprise that instant messaging

apps such as Viber, WhatsApp, and others are now used as another online selling platform. Viber for

example has created Viber groups made especially for businesses to sell using the platform. The messaging app also has different features that utilizes AI chatbots to help sellers easily respond to frequently asked questions about products.

Meanwhile, smaller sellers have turned the power of groups within instant messaging apps as a sort of advertising platform for their products. A simple message declaring what you are selling to friends, homeowners associations, and even colleagues is the necessary step to begin an online selling journey.

Social Media (Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, etc.)

Like instant messages, social media sites have become the largest online selling platform. Users/ sellers can post pictures of their products along with the price. While you cannot directly transact on social media, payment details can be made in the platforms' direct messaging feature.

Social media is also useful in promoting your products. A simple post generates quite a traction depending on the time of your post. This will help businesses who are just starting gain new customers easily.

Other platforms

Aside from social media and messaging apps, other platforms are available for online selling and e-commerce. Depending on your business chances are there new platforms ready to cater to your needs.

For food stalls and other necessities, Grab, FoodPanda, and LalaFood are opening their platforms

to help reach customers who previously dined in their restos. For existing businesses that want a push, MetroDeal and other dealing-selling sites give customers more reason to walk through your shops.

And for the small-time sellers who want to make a name for themselves first, online forums might be an alternative. Web forums such as those found in Reddit is a good place for small-time selling. Like social media, you can post your products on your own subreddit page and users can message you for orders and further details. Plus you can advertise for free in other subreddits (if the moderators allow it).

The biggest downside in selling in online forums is the lack of seller and consumer safeguards. If you were defrauded there is little you can do to get that money back and that goes the same ways to consumers.

Build your own website

Building your own website for your e-commerce needs is also a necessity for success. This gives you a bit more legitimacy and for customers to have another way to access you and your product. Another reason why you might want to create your own site is the fees of the other platform. You can also display your whole portfolio and services in a website compared to the limited space in some other platforms.

Building a website for ecommerce is now easier than ever. Online website makers have integrated ecommerce in their templates for new websites. Web hosting has also become cheaper throughout the years as providers expand and innovations make it accessible and cheaper to run.





THE NEW

**TMX
125α****ANGAT KA!**

THE NEW HONDA TMX125 ALPHA RIDE SOLO, MAKE A LIVING

Honda Philippines Inc. (HPI), the country's No.1 motorcycle manufacturer, responds to commuters' ever-changing needs as it unveils the New TMX125 Alpha to help Filipinos ride solo and continue with their livelihoods even as quarantine guidelines are still being implemented nationwide.

"Honda has always been committed to ensuring that Filipinos' everyday needs are met through our motorcycles. With the new normal changing industries and lives, we want to help riders have the upper hand in facing these challenges to continue providing for their families, guaranteeing that with The New TMX125 Alpha, Angat Ka!" said HPI President Susumu Mitsuishi.

Known for its durability and reliability, the New TMX125 Alpha is equipped with both kick and electric starters for convenience. It has manageable dimensions of 1,904x754x1,026mm (LWH) with a relatively low seat at 760mm, making it very approachable for Filipino riders.

The New TMX125 Alpha is powered by an Overhead Valve (OHV) engine that uses a push rod to balance acceleration and control for hours of easy and

hassle-free operations while being fuel-efficient at 62.5km/L at 45kph constant speed. For the best balance of engine power and acceleration, the rear sprocket has been improved from 44T to 38T, making it the perfect bike for daily commuting usage.

As one of the country's most efficient commuter bikes, riders will appreciate the New TMX125 Alpha as it allows them to travel solo, ensuring safe journeys to work, home, or anywhere they need to be.

It comes in two basic colors, candy ruby red and black, plus a new premium color — matte armored silver metallic — for those who want to stand out on the road. Its suggested retail price is PHP 51,400, to make it more appealing to new riders. It is available at all Honda dealers nationwide.



Husqvarna Motorcycles now in the Philippines



Adventure Cycle Philippines, Inc. (ACPI), the motorcycle distribution subsidiary of Ayala Corporation, has brought in Husqvarna Motorcycles as its second European motorcycle brand.

The Husqvarna models are proudly assembled in Laguna at AC Industrials' KTM Asia Motorcycle Manufacturing Inc. (KAMMI), which opened in 2017. The KTM Group-dedicated production plant is a strategic joint venture with KTM AG, the parent of both the KTM and Husqvarna brands. Over the last three years, the growth of the factory underscores the combination of outstanding Filipino skills and world-class motorcycle manufacturing capability by AC Industrials. It is a testament to the strength of the partnership between AC Industrials and Europe's largest motorcycle manufacturer.



With the sustained success of Philippine-made KTM models for local distribution and exportation in Asia, Husqvarna Motorcycles now debuts three models, the Svartpilen 200, Svartpilen 401, and Vitpilen 401.

"We are now expanding the products we are doing in KAMMI. More than three years after launching KTM production for both the Philippines and export, we now bring in one of the most iconic motorcycle brands in history. Husqvarna started in Sweden in 1903, and today it builds and produces motorcycles that are purpose-built and driven by passion," enthuses Art Tan, group president & CEO of AC Industrials.

"I am a convert. I have always ridden larger bikes, and this is the first time that I have owned a 400cc bike—the Svartpilen 401. I'd encourage everyone to take time to understand not only the brand but the product. These products are built here, hand-made by Filipinos," Tan continues.

Meanwhile, Dino Santos, concurrently president & COO of ACPI and president & CCO of KAMMI, notes: "In 2021, we now don't have just one weapon. We have two weapons now—we have KTM and now Husqvarna Motorcycles. We have a great battle, and with these weapons, I am confident that together, we would be able to conquer 2021's races. We also see strong potential in the motorcycle market itself, as we expect the continued presence of the pandemic to drive elevated demand for both personal mobility and social distancing."

ACPI is the motorcycle distribution arm of AC Industrial Technology Holdings Inc. (AC Industrials), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ayala Corporation. AC Industrials operates and manages the Ayala group's interests in industrial technology, covering manufacturing, engineering, specialty solar, as well as vehicle assembly, distribution, and retail.



READY FOR THE UPGRADE: SEVEN REASONS WHY THE ECOSPORT SHOULD BE ON YOUR SHOPPING LIST

Over the years, Filipinos have developed a penchant towards SUVs for a lot of reasons - versatility, capability, and space. Not to mention that modern-day SUVs have been equipped with technological features that enable a more interactive and safer driving experience.

Since it was first launched in the Philippines in 2014, the Ford EcoSport has become a familiar sight on city streets across the country, having gained wide appeal for its unmistakable combination of agility, affordability, and fuel efficiency of a compact car with the ground clearance, flexibility, and spaciousness of an SUV.

This year, Ford is bringing the Ford EcoSport closer to Filipino drivers, particularly value-seeking customers who are looking to have an SUV as their first vehicle or those who are planning to upgrade from a sedan to an SUV. Here are seven (7) reasons why the Ford EcoSport will give you the most bang for your buck:

It is a globally-renowned SUV

The EcoSport's signature design, performance, and driver-assist features earned itself an outstanding reputation across the globe. To date, the EcoSport is sold in many countries and regions around the world, including the United States, Europe, Middle East and Asia, and are enjoyed by customers for its versatility, fun-to-drive qualities, and efficiency.

It offers the right balance of power and efficiency

Equipped on EcoSport variants are either a 1.0L EcoBoost engine or a 1.5L engine, each offering the right balance of power and efficiency. The 1.0L EcoBoost engine has been a consistent 'International Engine of the Year' award recipient for many years. The Ford EcoSport also comes in the new 6-speed automatic or 5-speed manual transmission, offering an enhanced driving experience with a faster and smoother acceleration.

- **It commands presence on the road with its high ground clearance:** Drive worry-free with the EcoSport's high ground clearance of 209mm that outclasses the average sedan, expanding its versatility to more diverse driving environments and road conditions.
- **It allows you to park safely with the rearview camera:** Parking has never been made easier with the EcoSport's built-in rearview camera



which automatically activates when shifting into reverse gear. This handy feature makes parking hassle-free and saves you time when travelling to different destinations.

- **It keeps you connected while staying safe on the road:** The enhanced SYNC³ system with Apple Carplay and Android Auto capability on the Ford EcoSport allows you to stay connected while your hands stay on the wheel and your eyes on the road. Use simple voice commands to make calls, listen to text messages, and play your favorite music.
- **It is an interactive SUV with a touchscreen display:** The EcoSport is smarter than ever with its touchscreen display that allows you to access vehicle controls and settings while driving with the simple touch of your finger. Enjoy the EcoSport's redefined interface and intuitive smartphone-like functions. Enjoy a 9-inch color touchscreen display with the EcoSport Trend.



It's now made more affordable with the same amount of great features

The Ford EcoSport is now available at a starting price of P799,000 or P23,000 all-in low downpayment. With the new starting price, the EcoSport is now one of the best value-for-money SUVs in the market today, as well as a better option for customers looking for a sedan because of its new price point. For this price, customers can own an SUV that offers a world-renowned design, performance, versatility, and the Ford driving experience.

"We are happy to bring the Ford EcoSport closer to more Filipino customers this year with more competitive pricing but still retaining its quality design, standout look on the road, performance and capability, and segment-leading features all rolled into a fun-to-drive SUV," shares Ryan Lorenzo, director for marketing and field sales operations, Ford Philippines.

Visit the Ford Philippines website or any Ford dealer to get the best deals for the Ford EcoSport today.

GET YOUR BUSINESS BOOMING WITH THE HYUNDAI REINA



When faced with difficult situations, Filipinos are quick to adapt by starting their own businesses to make up for lost income. With the digital economy booming, entrepreneurs have taken to social media to meet customer demand. From fresh farm produce to home-cooked specialties, from house plants to flower arrangements, from tutorial services to used books—you can get almost everything online these days.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) reports nearly 840,000 business registrations in the first 10 months of 2020, or a 32% increase from FY 2019. Of these, more than 10% were online enterprises.

To get ahead and be more productive, entrepreneurs need an everyday vehicle that they can use for work and for play and which gives them more bang for their buck.

This is why the **Hyundai REINA** is counted among the country's top vehicle choices well below the million-peso price tag that doesn't compromise on style, space, safety, and power.

Under the hood is a 1.4L gasoline engine with dynamic power of 95ps for quicker maneuverability in and around the city. It's mated to either a 5-speed manual transmission or a 4-speed automatic transmission, offering a more versatile and convenient driving experience.

The REINA also has important safety features: dual airbags that provide significant occupant



protection for the driver and front passenger and an Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS) that gives you better control when making a delivery or keeping an appointment.

The Hyundai REINA is counted among the country's top vehicle choices well below the million-peso price tag that doesn't compromise on style, space, safety, and power.

It's spacious and can fit up to five. The ample 2,570mm wheelbase gives driver and passengers the right room for comfort, while the generous trunk space can store up to 475 liters of cargo—perfect for those extra loads.

Thanks to **Hyundai's Boom! Boom! Vroom!** promo, you can get one of Hyundai's best-selling sedans with savings of up to P110,000.00.

The offer is on till February 28, 2021.

To learn more, visit www.hyundai.ph or the Hyundai Philippines Facebook Page. Maintain social distancing by requesting for a quote and applying for an auto loan at the Hyundai Online Market Experience (HOME) Page <https://www.hyundai.ph/shop/HOME>.

MCF8 MOBILE HYBRID CONTAINER SOLUTIONS FOR COVID-19 VACCINES



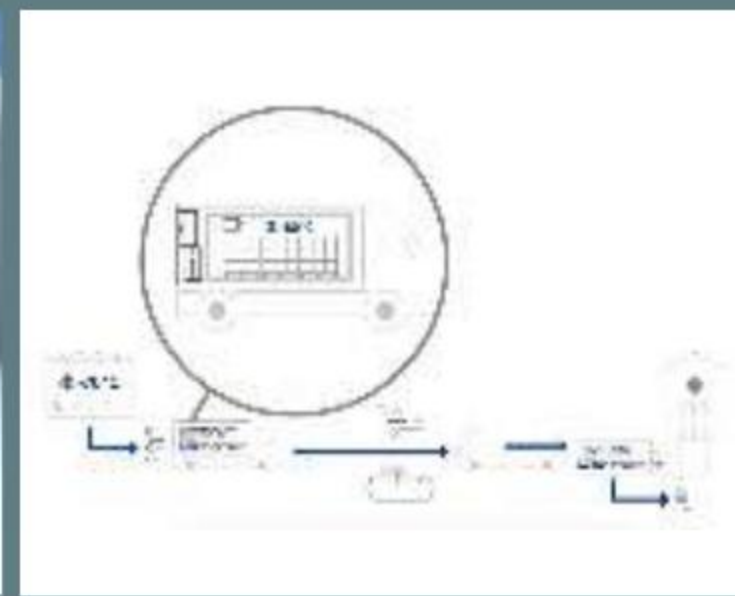
MECOTEC GmbH, a German cooling technology provider, announced an exclusive distributor partnership with local company Deutsche Motorgeräte Inc (DMI) to provide specialized mobile, hybrid containers customized for the Philippine market.

The MCF8 is a mobile, hybrid container that allows for the proper freezing, transport, storage, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to ensure its extensive administration to communities across the Philippines.

"Vaccine manufacturers, governments, hospitals, and local communities are facing significant challenges in transporting, storing, and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine options due to the requirement of maintaining a constant temperature from -20°C down to -80°C in order to retain their effectiveness. Currently, very few options are available to handle the distribution requirements of these vaccines," said Enrico Klauer CEO of MECOTEC.

"Through our partnership with DMI, we aim to help equip the Philippines with an effective solution that addresses these concerns as the local distribution of COVID-19 vaccines is on the horizon," he adds.

"The local distribution of these vaccines require a thorough understanding of our geographical complexities. To address the lengthy logistical lead time often associated with transporting goods within our borders, we need a solution that would allow these vaccines to be stored and transported at the required temperature for a longer period of time." shares Jess Co, president of DMI.



"With MECOTEC's technology, we can efficiently address these concerns, and even reach smaller and more remote communities," he adds.

Designed to address these challenges, the MCF8 is equipped with the following beneficial features:

- Active deep cooling technology to freeze contents from a low of -20°C down to an ultra-low -80°C to meet the handling requirements of the various vaccine options
- ISO container sizes of 20- or 40-feet that meet current transport standards for truck, railway, ship, and air
- Storage of up to 1,000,000 vaccination doses in one 40-foot container and up to 500,000 doses in one 20-foot container

- Dual-use as a distribution center where vaccines can be taken out in small or large amounts
- Access/Preparation chamber within the containers with -20°C temperature designed for more comfort during distribution
- 2 cooling units with 2 backup Diesel generator; allows for cooling and redundancies without the need for dry ice or thermal shippers
- GPS based tracking and data exchange
- Access control security from source to destination

The MCF8 will be available starting the first quarter of 2021.



Mitsubishi Xpander is back-to-back winner of 2020-2021 AFPCA Van/MPV of the Year



Owners of the highly popular Mitsubishi Xpander have another reason to celebrate as the 2020-2021 Auto Focus People's Choice Awards recognizes the highly popular 7-seater MPV as its Van/MPV of the Year. This is the second year in a row that the esteemed Philippine automotive award-giving body has accorded the Mitsubishi Xpander this award, which it has earned consistently since its introduction in the Philippine market in 2018. This latest Van/MPV of the Year Award follows the selection of the bestselling Xpander as AFPCA's Automobile of the Year in 2019-2020.

The Mitsubishi Pajero was also recognized as the Best Value for Money Large SUV/ Crossover by the Auto Focus Media's Choice Awards this year. The two awards reaffirm Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corporation's commitment to providing the best vehicles to the motoring public in terms of quality, functionality, and overall value.

"It is with great pride and honor that we thank the general public who voted again for the Mitsubishi Xpander as their van and MPV of choice. And to the motoring press for acknowledging the Mitsubishi Pajero as their Best Value for Money Large SUV," says Mutsuhiro Oshikiri, MMPC president and CEO.

"Mitsubishi remains committed to providing the Filipino family the best vehicles that not only complement their lifestyles but also accompany them throughout their growth and journey over the years. Both the Mitsubishi Xpander and the Pajero represent the best of what the public has

come to love about the Mitsubishi brand. We will continue to provide excellent quality and unparalleled value with all our models so Filipinos will continue to enjoy the rewards of mobility in everyday life."

With 43,026 units sold since its Philippine debut in 2018, the Mitsubishi Xpander's modern and dynamic design, along with its 3-row and 7-seat versatility, are the main reasons for its consistent popularity in the market. Its 205mm (225mm for the Xpander Cross) ground clearance combined with its 1,630-liter cargo carrying capacity give it a distinct edge in the compact crossover and MPV space.

Together with its standard comfort and safety features such as the 7-inch Touchscreen Navigation head unit, second-row aircon vents, cruise control, Hill Start Assist, Active Stability Control, keyless entry, and its fuel-efficient 1.5-liter DOHC 16-Valve Mitsubishi Innovative Valve Timing Electronic Control (MIVEC) engine, the Mitsubishi Xpander offers unrivaled value, convenience, comfort and performance for the Filipino family, and thus truly deserving of the Van/MPV of the Year award.

The Mitsubishi Pajero has been the quintessential Sport Utility Vehicle since its inception 39 years ago. Its legendary reputation as a stylish and tough true off-roader has earned for it the continued respect of car buyers and car enthusiasts who put a premium on all-around performance and reliability. Its powerful 3.2-liter DOHC inter-cooled turbocharged DI-D engine

provides a consistent, smooth, and relaxing drive. Along with its commanding presence on the road, the Mitsubishi Pajero provides the essentials of a large and proper SUV that is much sought after in the Philippine setting.

"I would like to congratulate Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corporation for bagging two distinctive awards for this year's Auto Focus People's Choice and Media's Choice awards," says Ray Louis Gamboa, online operations manager and host of STV's Motoring Today and Auto Focus television programs. "The Mitsubishi Pajero has captured a lot of Filipino hearts throughout the years and has taken its fame to a whole new level since then and has been turning heads for more than 30 years. Needless to say, the Pajero has come a long way since." Gamboa adds, "Relatively new to the segment is the Mitsubishi Xpander, who took the MPV scene by storm and became a staple choice for the Filipino buyer as it is one of the fastest-selling MPVs in the market."

Sunshine Television Ventures has been organizing and conducting the AFPCA since 2005. The annual public poll aims to determine the country's most popular automobile brands and models in order to help car buyers make the right choice for their vehicle purchase. For 2020, public voting was held from April 1 to November 30. This composed 80% of the score of each of the models in contention for the nine People's Choice Category Awards. The remaining 20% of the points were based on annual sales as reflected in new car registration data from the Land Transportation Office last year.



Hyundai volts in with EV Owners Society

Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), the country's distributor of Hyundai vehicles, joins fellow advocates of the newly-formed EV Owners Society to recharge interest in electric mobility in the country.

The EV Owners Society, the sub-group of electric vehicle owners formed by the Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines (eVAP), aims to bring together private EV owners and other industry stakeholders to discuss and advance the future of the local EV market.

Society adviser and current eVAP president Edmund Araga underscored the group's important role in promoting sustainable mobility in the country. At the same time, Society president and Philippine Parts Maker Association (PPMA) president Ferdi Raquelsantos assured everyone that EVs are exempt from the new DTI safeguard measures on vehicle imports.

"We welcome and support this development," said HARI president and CEO Ma. Fe Perez-Agudo. "It's been a long time coming. Globally, Hyundai has been leading the charge in commercializing new energy vehicles, while HARI is one of the first local car companies to introduce EVs to the Philippine market."

HARI debuted the full-electric variants of the IONIQ hatchback and the Kona crossover at the 2019 Manila International Auto Show.

In August 2020, Hyundai Motor Company (HMC) launched the IONIQ sub-brand for its line of customer-centric electric vehicles.



LET'S VOLT IN! The well-attended launch of the EV Owners Society gathered private owners and stakeholders in a motorcade that showcased the available EV brands in the Philippines.



AN EV-OLUTION. The Hyundai IONIQ Electric Vehicle joined other electric vehicles at the EV Owners Society's motorcade along Daang Hari Road. The IONIQ Electric was named by C! Magazine as the best EV in the Philippines in 2020.

The Hyundai IONIQ Electric boasts zero emissions, smart aerodynamics and sets the standard in electric drive technology. It has an estimated range of over 373 kilometers powered by a high-efficiency, high-power permanent magnet-type electric motor, which produces 136 PS. It has all the bells and whistles, including a multimedia information center, drive mode selector, electronic gear shift, six airbags, and 357-liter luggage capacity. In 2020, it won top awards, beating other emerging local EV brands, at the first virtual C! Magazine Awards, adding to its string of global citations.

The globally-acclaimed KONA Electric, powered by a lithium-ion polymer battery, which is lighter and more compact, offers a seamless travel

experience. Its top variant can accelerate 0-100 km/hr in about 7.6 seconds while consuming less energy. Hyundai's first and multi-awarded electric subcompact SUV was top-listed by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) as America's greenest car in 2019 and cited by Car and Driver USA as 2019's best subcompact SUV for its electric-only driving range and standout styling. It brings a seamless travel experience with up to 400 kilometers on just one full charge.

"We join the eVap in seriously looking beyond our current situation," added Agudo. "The pandemic will pass, but environmental concerns are here to stay. Hyundai's EV lineup is out to help create a better future for all by making these technologies accessible to a greater number of people."



LIQUI MOLY becomes title sponsor of the MotoGP race in Germany

LIQUI MOLY has been represented in the MotoGP Motorcycle World Championship for eight years. It is now further expanding its commitment. The oil manufacturer will be the title sponsor of the race in its home country, which is to be called the LIQUI MOLY Motorcycle Grand Prix of Germany.

"This increases our brand visibility all over the world," says Ernst Prost, managing director of LIQUI MOLY.

Last year, LIQUI MOLY ventured this step for the first time and became the title sponsor of the race in Teruel, Spain. "The response and success at the time were so great that we decided to continue to be the title sponsor of a race in the coming years," smiles Prost. "This is, of course, perfect in our home market of Germany." Up until 2023, the MotoGP races at the Sachsenring circuit will be named after LIQUI MOLY.

"LIQUI MOLY has a good reputation in the paddock," explains Pau Serracanta, managing director of MotoGP marketer Dorna Sports. "I am delighted that the company is again strengthening its commitment to MotoGP."



In 2013, LIQUI MOLY drew attention to itself for the first time as a sponsor of a team in Moto2. This was followed up by extensive advertising along the racetracks and a very special contract: LIQUI MOLY has been the exclusive oil supplier to all Moto2 and Moto3 racing series teams for five years now. "This is only possible if you offer absolute top quality," Prost points out. "We provide racing drivers with this top quality, just like any other motorcyclist or car driver."

The title sponsorship of the German race is in addition to the other commitments in MotoGP. "MotoGP is a unique platform for coming into contact with motorsport enthusiasts around the world," says Prost. "I am already looking forward to 20 June, when we will say for the very first time: Welcome to the LIQUI MOLY Motorcycle Grand Prix of Germany!"



Kia PH poised for a big rebound in 2021; targets triple-digit sales growth

In a virtual round-table meeting with the media, Kia Philippines President Manny Aligada projected that the Korean brand is poised to hit triple-digit sales growth on its way to doubling its market share in the local automotive industry this 2021.

That's how big a rebound Kia Philippines can show in the next 12 months, after selling 2,129 units in 2020—the year in which the entire local automotive industry suffered a 40-percent decline in sales (for a year-end total of just 240,000 units sold) due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and its resulting community and business lockdowns.

Aligada's optimism stems from Kia Philippines' plan to "unbox" at least two new models this year, thus adding significant sales firepower to the company's top three sellers in 2020—the Soluto subcompact sedan, the K2500 business and utility truck, and the recently launched Stonic crossover.

The Soluto held steady at the top with 39 percent of the company's total sales, followed by the K2500 with 17 percent. The Stonic—albeit being unveiled only in the last quarter of the year, sold 200 units in December alone en route to cornering 16 percent of the volume of total deliveries. The Seltos, Sportage, Picanto, Sorento, Carnival, and the rest of Kia's roster also contributed to total sales.

Aligada also cited Kia Philippines' shift to the digital sphere in 2020, enabling the carmaker to gain a wider audience and tap varied markets. He stressed

that their efforts to go digital would intensify this year.

It will also be a year of going beyond just making the sale. In line with the Kia global brand's focus on creating an emotional bond with its customers, Kia in the Philippines will also showcase its roster through a series of activities, beginning with the "My Year, My Kia" program that would help customers acquire modish Kia units that would truly represent their renewed hope and optimism as they face the future. Then, in the early second half of 2021, the Kia brand refresh would shift the positioning from "value-for-money" to just simply "valuable"—forging an enduring connection with customers.

Dealership expansion is also on Kia Philippines' to-do list, as it moves to grow its current dealer network of 40 with five more openings and appointments. This expansion would make Kia's products more accessible to more Filipinos while boosting the customer experience through parts and service programs.

To strengthen brand relationships, Kia Philippines has committed to the following: Improved parts availability using reliable partners for direct delivery, wherein parts would be available at the dealer within seven days; enhanced service quality and lead time with real-time technical support using a remote diagnosis system, and; lower cost of ownership. These are on top of the Promise to Care program, in which customers are assured of a



worry-free experience with the five-year warranty or 160,000 kilometers, whichever comes first (the K2500 comes with a three-year or 110,000 km-warranty), and the 24/7 Roadside Assistance that's free for the first five years.

Despite the thorough plans, Aligada concedes that the future is not set and that new challenges may present themselves along the way. "These new challenges will always be there, but Kia Philippines will remain resilient and strong-willed. After all, our Power to Surprise springs from our drive to serve," he concluded.



Isuzu PH donates mobile kitchen' to Philippine Red Cross

Isuzu Philippines Corporation (IPC), true to its corporate mantra of being Your Responsible Partner, donated one mobile kitchen truck to the Laguna Chapter of the Philippine Red Cross for the "Hot Meals on Wheels" emergency mass feeding program.

The Isuzu mobile kitchen is equipped with a complete mini kitchen that can cook, prepare, and serve hot meals quickly and efficiently right where they are needed. This is ideal for the daily operation of the Philippine Red Cross, especially for their various feeding programs and disaster response operations nationwide.

For this donation, IPC was joined by its long-time dealer group INTECO as represented by its president Raymond Jarina and trusted body builder Truckmaster headed by Johnny Pronaci, in customizing the mobile kitchen body of the Isuzu truck, making sure it will be safe for long-distance travel and can efficiently connect to water and power supply as needed.

The formal turnover of the Isuzu mobile kitchen truck happened last January 8 at the Philippine Red Cross headquarters. Representatives from



(L-R): Joseph Bausio, division head for sales; Maria Diales, department head-DSA; Frank Sorromero, chapter administrator-Laguna Chapter; Hajime Koso, IPC president; Richard Gordon, chairman and CEO of the Philippine Red Cross; Raymond Jarina, Inteco president; Johnny Pronaci, Truckmaster president; and Philippine Red Cross officials.

IPC led by IPC president Hajime Koso, as well as Philippine Red Cross officers led by chairman Richard Gordon and Philippine Red Cross Laguna Chapter head Frank Sorromero witnessed the simple ceremonies.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, life's emergencies don't stop, and neither does the work of Philippine Red Cross. Each day, indigent Filipinos rely on them to help prevent and lessen their suffering. Philippine Red Cross ensures that Filipino families have access to food and other



basic needs in light of the heavy economic cost of the pandemic," said Koso.

IPC and the Red Cross have had an active partnership in responding to disasters and national emergencies in previous years. Last year, the Philippine Red Cross was among the partner recipients of IPC's Kasama Mo campaign, IPC's continuing response to the global pandemic. IPC also donated a D-MAX pick-up to the Red Cross to assist in their relief operations during the Taal Volcano eruption.



Honda wins Dakar Rally motorcycle category for second straight edition

Monster Energy Honda Team rider Kevin Benavides rode his HONDA CRF450 RALLY factory bike to overall victory in the motorcycle category on Friday, January 15, after completing the 12th stage of the 2021 Dakar Rally held in Saudi Arabia. Last edition's winner Ricky Brabec came in second place, giving Honda its first 1-2 victory since 1987 and its second consecutive victory in the motorcycle category.

2021 marks the 43rd edition of the Dakar Rally, which was first held in 1979 (then known as the Paris-Dakar Rally), and the second edition since moving to Saudi Arabia. Honda first competed in the Dakar, dubbed the most grueling motorsports competition, in the third edition in 1981. Five years later, in 1986, Honda won its first Dakar with the NXR750 and went on to win the three following editions as well. Honda left the Dakar competition in 1990 and returned in 2013 (when the Dakar was held in South America) with the CRF450 RALLY. In 2020, Honda won for the first time since returning to the event.

Yoshishige Nomura | Honda Racing Corporation president Yoshige Nomura extended his congratulations, saying: "Congratulations, Kevin Benavides! I am also truly grateful to Ricky Brabec for completing such a grueling rally in a manner as good as winning, José Ignacio Cornejo, who led the rally until his unfortunate retirement, and



Kevin Benavides (right) Ricky Brabec (left)

Joan Barreda. Monster Energy Honda Team riders could only perform as well as they did despite the COVID-19 situation because of the team staff and everyone in the development team working smart to overcome the many difficulties. I am truly grateful. I would also like to share our elation in victory and our gratitude with our sponsors and all of our fans. And last but certainly not least, I respect and thank the race organizers and the other teams for making this event a reality despite the extreme circumstances."



Kevin Benavides and his HONDA CRF450 RALLY

The 32-year-old Argentine Kevin Benavides rode his first Dakar Rally in 2016, racing for the Honda South America Rally Team, finishing his debut race in 4th place. Since then, Benavides has raced for Monster Energy Honda Team. In this year's edition, Benavides won the fifth stage, giving him the overall lead. Despite relinquishing his position once, he regained the lead in Stage 10, which he defended with a solid performance until the end, earning his first Dakar victory.



Geely opens new dealership in General Santos City

Geely Philippines is expanding its presence in the country's south with the opening of another dealership in Mindanao — Geely General Santos. This Geely dealership in Soccskargen is owned and managed by Sojitz G Auto Philippines' (SGAP) partner dealer Angcore Motor Group.

"Our partnership with Angcore Motor Group is another step forward in Geely Philippines' bid to expand its dealer network throughout the country. I would like to welcome the Angcore Motor Group to Geely's growing family," SGAP president & CEO Mikiyama Takayama said.

Angcore Motor Group founded the Southern Mindanao Automotive Association (SMAA). For over 4 decades, it has proven its credibility in the automotive market with its diversified business group established in 1976. "As Geely started to get noticed and make headlines last year with its sales performance and good market reception, I believe this year would be better for the brand. We are pleased to be



part of Geely's expansion in the country," Angcore Motor Group president Tobi Ang said.

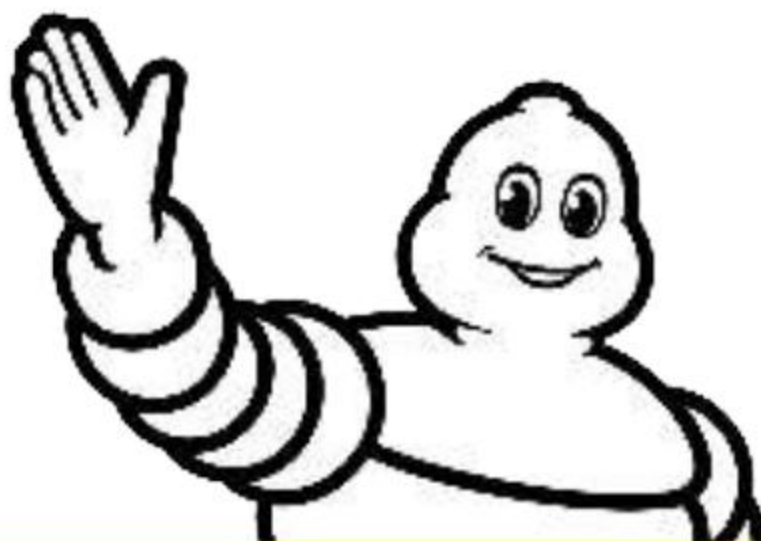
Geely is starting the year with 7 dealerships all over the country located at North Edsa and Quezon Avenue in Metro Manila; Lipa City, Batangas and Imus, Cavite in southern

Luzon; and Cagayan de Oro, Zamboanga, and General Santos City in Mindanao. An additional 21 dealerships in key markets are in the works and are expected to rise in 2021.

Geely General Santos is now fully operational and is open Mondays through Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM.



New Michelin Agilis 3 launched for commercial light truck tire market



MICHELIN



Michelin, the world's leading tire company, introduces the Michelin Agilis 3 into the commercial light truck tire market, targeting conventional load customers involved in people and goods transportation activities. The newly launched tire aims to capture the larger high-potential, light-load segment with exceptional solutions in terms of safety, performance, and environment.

Shane Chadderton, B2B Marketing – Urban Mobility, Michelin East Asia and Oceania, reveals: "In line with Michelin's Performance and Safety Made to Last brand promise, the new Michelin Agilis 3 is outfitted with innovative technologies and sophisticated features for long-lasting performance with optimum safety and environmental friendliness. These attributes not only provide a competitive advantage over current competitors in the same market segment but also reinforces Michelin's commitment to more sustainable mobility. Essentially, this tire is well-positioned to be a sustainable urban growth engine. The latest breakthrough is further evidence of Michelin Group's sustainable performance strategy in favor of safer, cleaner, more accessible and more efficient mobility."

Key technologies and features incorporated in Michelin Agilis 3 include: **Stone Ejectors**,

horizontal bars in the tread groove designed to minimize stone trapping, resulting in a tire that keeps customers' downtime to a minimum and lowers their running costs; **Sidewall Shields**, made with an abrasion-resistant rubber compound, that provide extra sidewall shoulder protection of 1.5mm thickness versus the current generation, without compromising the casing flexibility; **Innovative Compound** with a higher density of silica & carbon black materials for improved wet grip, fuel-saving, and mileage performances; **U-Shape Grooves** that allow a higher water clearance for lasting wet grip performance; **Full Depth Sipes** that help ensure good flexibility of the tread blocks, resulting in market-leading wet grip performance, both when new and when worn; and **Undertread** which keeps the operating temperature cooler, thus reducing fuel costs.

With the aforementioned technologies and features, Michelin Agilis 3 delivers 3 outstanding benefits: **shorter wet braking distance**, 5% or up to 1.9 meters shorter when new, and 11% or up to 3.8 meters shorter when worn, when compared to its major competitors¹; **superior mileage performance**, 25% more mileage compared to its previous generation, with less downtime caused by tire damage²; **12% superior rolling resistance**, plus 90ml/100km

less fuel consumption and 228g/100km less CO₂ emission, than average competitors.

Also mentioned during the virtual launch, "As 97% of Michelin Agilis 3 are sourced within the region, it ensures effective on-demand delivery across Asia Pacific countries, as well as minimizes environmental impact and shipment costs. Moreover, the newly launched tire is specifically designed with reinforced casing to meet the challenges of the region's usages and road conditions. With uncompromised performance plus all the benefits and advantages that come with it under the *Safer for Longer* slogan, we are convinced that Michelin Agilis 3 will be warmly received and greatly appreciated in the Philippines."

The new Michelin Agilis 3 is now available at Michelin's authorized commercial light truck tire dealers across the nation. You may check dealers near you on this link: <https://www.michelin.com.ph/auto/dealer-locator>. All size ranges (including 4 new sizes), from 13- to 17-inch diameter, cover the entire light 1-to-3-ton load segment of the Philippines' commercial light truck tire market. For further details, please visit <https://www.michelin.com.ph>.



Subaru PH Introduces the FORESTER GT Lite Edition



Motor Image Pilipinas, Inc., the exclusive distributor of Subaru vehicles in the Philippines, introduces the latest variant in the Forester line-up – the GT Lite Edition.

Aimed at drivers who find thrill and excitement in driving a stylish extraordinary SUV, the Forester GT Lite Edition offers add-ons such as the GT Full Body Kit and GT Exhaust Cutter, adding that sporty look to the extraordinary SUV.

Below is the pricing for the Forester GT Lite edition

- Forester GT Edition - Php 2,170,000
- Forester i-S EyeSight - Php 2,068,000
- Forester GT Lite Edition - Php 1,980,000
- Forester i-L EyeSight - Php 1,938,000

This February 2021, Subaru PH is extending a discount of up to Php 50,000 for all Forester GT Lite Edition purchases.

Customers who set for Test Drives and Appointments for the GT Lite edition will also be entitled to a pick a-prize and can win exclusive Subaru merchandise worth up to Php 1,000. So visit your nearest Subaru showroom today and experience the thrill of the Forester GT Lite Edition.

Isuzu PH, IADI ink contract for soon-to-open Bacoor dealership

In a simple ceremony on January 29, Isuzu Philippines Corporation (IPC) and the Isuzu

Automotive Dealership Inc. (IADI) signed the contract for the soon-to-open Isuzu Bacoor dealership.

The signing was held at the IPC headquarters at Biñan, Laguna. IPC was represented by its President Mr. Hajime Koso, and IPC Executive Vice President Mr. Shojiro Sakoda, while IADI executives Chief Operating Officer Mr. Alex Paguio and Isuzu Bacoor Branch Head, Mr. Valance Mauricio was also on hand.

Isuzu Bacoor is scheduled to formally open and commence operations in March this year. By then, it would become AC Motors' 11th dealership in Isuzu Philippines' dealer network that spans the entire country. The new Isuzu Bacoor dealership also extends AC Motors' reign as the number one dealer group in Isuzu Philippines' dealer network—a recognition it earned in 2020.

In his remarks during the signing ceremony, Koso lauded IADI for its perseverance, particularly during the most challenging stretches in 2020. "We are all aware that it was not an easy road leading to this day, given the challenges we all experienced in 2020. But in the end, we can now see the light at the end of the tunnel. We are almost done. We are one step closer and we cannot wait for the grand opening of this newest addition to the Isuzu network."

"I would like to thank IADI for supporting our expansion project and complying with our Isuzu Outlet Standardization or IOS. Rest assured that Isuzu will continue the years with the same spirit of achieving great success," Koso added.

Isuzu Bacoor located at Lot 4652-B along Molino Boulevard, Brgy. Bayanan, Bacoor City, Cavite covers a total land area of over 5,000 sqm. Upon its grand opening this March, the sprawling dealership will showcase Isuzu's latest IOS showroom design, highlighted by a very spacious showroom that can display two light commercial vehicles, two commercial vehicles and a service shop that can cater from small vehicles to big tractor head trucks.

The establishment of Isuzu Bacoor is part of a two-pronged strategy of IADI to capture one of the fastest growing market in the region. Isuzu Bacoor will serve customers in the northern part of the province, while a second dealership will be established in Dasmariñas by the end of this year to cater to the southern municipalities.

For more information about the IPC dealership network and its roster of products and services, log on to www.isuzuphil.com.



THE ALL-NEW

AIRBLADE 150

THE CUTTING EDGE



SMART KEY
SYSTEM



POWER
SOCKET



PHP 109,000 (SRP)



ONE DREAM



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Honda Philippines, Inc.



[Hondaph_mc](https://www.instagram.com/hondaph_mc)

THE BEST OF CES 2021

Words by Gabriel John Pe

The Consumer Electronics Show IS the go-to event for up and coming tech each new year. But with the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, the event moved to the digital space from its home in Las Vegas. Still, CES 2021 gave a sneak peek at what's to come in the coming months.

Products for the new normal

The biggest elephant in the room for this year's CES was, of course, the on-going pandemic. While the world is learning to adapt to living with the virus, CES offered some solutions to help us embrace the new normal.

LG released some new air purifiers from its PuriCare line, including portable air purifiers and a mask with a built-in air purifier. But the most surprising candidate to showcase a technology like this was gaming brand Razer, who unveiled their Project Hazel, a smart mask designed with medical-grade protection while offering smart stuff. It's see-through, has an intake and outtake valve, a built-in mic and speaker to amplify the user's voice, and RGB lighting.





Displays brighter, sharper... clearer?

CES has always been a haven for TV technology, and this year was no different. Major players in the display industry: Samsung, LG, TCL, and Sony had new toys to showcase. Aside from the usual high-resolution TVs, one of the talking points for this year was Mini/Micro-LEDs. Samsung, LG, and TCL all had their own version of this up and coming TV tech. Mini/Micro LEDs enable TVs to have much brighter and sharper colors so consumers can enjoy more immersive and realistic movies in their homes.

Another trend in this year's CES was clear, see-through OLED displays. The most impressive see-through display concepts came from LG, with its concept of a see-through display built-in your bed frame.

Aside from the clear displays, another new trend we saw was rollable displays for mobile devices. LG and TCL both showed a concept of their rollable phones to rival the folding phones of Huawei and Samsung. These rollable phones expand their display size by unrolling parts of the display hidden within the phone itself. Rollable displays didn't stop with phones; Razer showcased their concept Project Brooklyn, a gaming battle station (much like the Acer Predator Thronos) but with a rollable OLED display.

Processor wars heat up... on laptops.

As always, CES was the battleground for the two biggest CPU makers in the world. Every year both Intel and AMD try to one-up each other, and this year might have been one of the biggest contests yet. Intel showed off its newest 11th Gen Core processor for both desktop and laptop. AMD hit

back with their upcoming Ryzen 5000 mobile processors for laptops and their third generation EPYC server processors.

NVIDIA also used the event to announce their GeForce RTX 3000 mobile processors, which brings their highly successful second-generation RTX graphics card to laptops. The company also announced a new budget desktop graphics card, the NVIDIA GeForce RTX 3060, that the company hopes will bring the new Ampere architecture to more users.

With the new processors and graphics coming to laptops, it was no surprise that makers had all sorts of new devices made for gamers. The most notable of the new laptop launches was Asus' ROG Flow X13, a convertible gaming laptop (yep, you read that right) that has a portable external GPU called the XG Mobile, which can carry up to an NVIDIA RTX 3080 graphics to supplement the GTX 1650 in the laptop itself.

AI everything.

If there was one thing that dominated CES 2021, it was AI and Machine Learning. Most of the products launched leverage AI and Machine Learning of different variations. From televisions, laptops, car tech, and even smart home devices, AI was the biggest thing for CES 2021. NVIDIA leveraged AI on its new RTX 3000 graphics to optimize laptops' use of all available resources. Samsung leveraged its own AI in TVs to produce an immersive and realistic video/image quality. Using AI is Samsung's new JetBot 90 AI+, a smart robot vacuum cleaner that uses a complex sensor system to clean your house. It even has a camera which you can access to see your pets or as an added security.

Gearing up FOR cheap

Words by Ren Alcantara

Putting together a get-home bag or building one for somebody can cost quite a bit. If it's a less-critical kit, a spare, or maybe a gift to get someone started, you don't necessarily have to go high-end for everything. There are some options and brands that are great, perform reasonably well, and don't leave you eating expired MREs for the next month. Here are a few options we've tried and love.

Every kit needs a knife. While you certainly aren't lacking in options for the knife in your kit, we always find ourselves recommending Byrd knives. Designed by Spyderco, these knives have more than a passing resemblance to their mother company's offerings. While they do have Spyderco design, they're actually manufactured in China, lowering the price significantly. As such, they're a little rougher around the edges compared to their equivalent Spyderco models but are of solid quality. I myself have carried one for years, and it has lived through more abuse than it deserved. The brand really does offer some great value-for-money options that are worth checking out. Expect these to be hovering around the PHP 2,000 mark.



If you want more variety, or maybe a fixed blade, CRKT has a great lineup as well. I have carried the Hissatsu folder and SPEW for years, and neither has let me down. These are a little more expensive than Byrd knives, but there is much more variety and there are more than a few fixed blades in the lineup. The Hissatsu comes in at around PHP 6000, and the SPEW can be had for less than PHP 3,000.

If you want a really superb beater knife that you can just toss in a kit and practically forget until you need it, Morakniv has an almost legendary lineup of knives that has been proven to do the business without bleeding your wallet to death. From neck knives to bushcraft knives, they offer versatile blades that can take a beating and sharpen fairly easily. Best of all, they come fairly inexpensive, with some models coming in at just a bit over PHP 1,000.



Lights are another essential for any kit. While it's important to give you an idea of what to get, it's just as important to mention what not to get. A lot of ads on social media push flashlights with tens of thousands of lumens, military-grade toughness, and a number of other claims to get your attention. Chances are good those are scammy products that are looking to take your money in exchange for an inferior product. It can be a little tricky to tell which lights are a scam, but if it's saying it outputs tens of thousands of lumens, that's a good sign it's lying to you. Lights that actually offer output in that range cost upwards of PHP 30,000. In fact, my FW3A, a particularly great, reasonably priced pocket light that puts out 2800 lumens, costs around PHP 2,000.

"Zoomable" flashlights are also usually suspect. It's not really a feature that more reputable brands include, as it isn't optimized for output, and will likely have a strange, square-shaped beam pattern and a poor reflector. While we're at it, multiple LEDs aren't a guarantee that light is going to be brighter, so saying the device has 12 LEDs or even a thousand won't necessarily mean anything useful. More important is the brand and model of the LEDs installed, which is something a reputable manufacturer lists (Cree and Nichia are examples). Since the market is rife with options, it's hard to know which brands of light are good. If you really want to be sure, Budget Light Forum (BudgetLightForum.com) is a great resource for learning more. Brands I've tested and can recommend are Olight, Fenix, Nitecore, Imalent, and Lumintop, none of which are overly expensive.



A nice thing to have to round out your kit is a multitool. If you're old-school, you can go Victorinox, or if you find you need a more specific set of options, perhaps something from Gerber, like the excellent Gerber Dime is more your thing. While not cheap, neither is super expensive and expands your ability to fix things immensely. If you need something a little more stow-and-forget, cheaper brands exist as well. I've tried Ganzo multitools, which work well as long as they're kept securely.

There's a lot that goes into putting together a kit, and that can cost a good buck. We hope that some of the options we have here help you get started on yours, without the high cost of entry that can often keep people from putting something together themselves. Keep browsing online, check reviews, and pick what's best for your needs!



BLIZZCONLINE 2021

The champions of Azeroth, the defenders of Sanctuary and the Koprulu Sector, and the heroes of Overwatch and the Nexus are invited to a virtual celebration of community, creativity, 30 years of Blizzard gaming, and the decades of epic adventures yet to come at BlizzConline, coming February 20 and 21 to [BlizzCon.com](https://www.blizzcon.com)—and everyone can watch the full show completely FREE.

BlizzConline is an all-digital community event and exhibition of all things Blizzard, offering players around the globe a chance to connect in the online world while circumstances keep everyone from gathering in the real one. On two consecutive days and across six channels of programming, Blizzard developers will be sharing the latest game news with the world, and cosplayers, artists, and makeshift murlocs will be sharing their talents through events such as the Community Showcase. In addition, as Blizzard celebrates its 30th anniversary this February, players everywhere will have a chance to mark three decades of exploring epic games and universes together as they look forward to what the future holds for their friends, guildmates, and allies.

“We couldn’t let too much time go by without connecting with our community in the spirit of BlizzCon, and that’s what this show is all about—getting together with friends from around the world and celebrating the bonds and experiences we share through games,” said J. Allen Brack, president of Blizzard Entertainment. “We’re also excited to share some updates on what the teams have been working on—and while this won’t be the usual BlizzCon, the all-online format gives us a unique opportunity to shake things up a bit and create a show specifically for a community at home.”



Day one of BlizzConline will kick off at 6 a.m. on Saturday, February 20, with an opening segment that includes a first look at some of the latest game content now in development. Then for the next three-plus hours, players will have the option to tune in to one of six different themed channels digging deeper into the games they're most interested in.

Day two will pick back up at 4 a.m. on Sunday, February 21, with multiple channels once again, until the event concludes later that afternoon. On this second day, Blizzard will be answering players' questions through Q&A sessions and shining a spotlight on its global player community, including the winners and outstanding entries in the Community Showcase cosplay, movie, talent, and art contests and exhibitions.

Players who miss out on events as they're broadcast will be able to watch them after they premiere (also free) in the BlizzConline video archives. A detailed schedule of events and segments will be announced in the weeks leading up to the show.

In addition to the anniversary celebration activities taking place during and around BlizzConline, an array of commemorative in-game goodies is available for sale starting today, giving players fun new ways to mark the epic occasion in their favorite Blizzard games during BlizzConline and beyond. Players can now pick up one of three Celebration Collections in the Blizzard Shop on **Battle.net**:



Essentials Pack (USD 19.99)

Get in on the fun with a Moon-Touched Netherwhelp pet for *World of Warcraft*, Tracer's OSV-03 Rogue mount with Tracer Hero in *Heroes of the Storm*, *Overwatch* player icon and spray (coming soon), a set of *StarCraft* portraits (coming soon), and a *Diablo® III* pet and portrait (PC version; coming soon). Plus, get 10 *Madness at the Darkmoon Faire* card packs for *Hearthstone*, 5 *Overwatch* Loot Boxes, and a code to receive 15 percent off one order in the Blizzard Gear Store (restrictions apply).



Heroic Pack (USD 39.99)

Upgrade to add the mighty Snowstorm bear mount to your *WoW* collection and give 'em some hammer as legendary "Raynhardt" in *Overwatch* (coming soon). Plus, score a random legendary *Hearthstone* card from the *Madness at the Darkmoon Faire* set, and don cosmetic wings in *Diablo III* (PC version; coming soon).



Epic Pack (USD 59.99)

Go for the gold and get everything in the Heroic Pack plus five Golden *Madness at the Darkmoon Faire* card packs including all Golden cards; three Golden Loot Boxes in *Overwatch*, each with a guaranteed legendary; 30 days of *World of Warcraft* game time; and a set of *Diablo III* transmog items (PC version; coming soon).



ASSASSIN'S CREED

VALHALLA

Words by Gabriel Pe

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft Montreal
Platforms: PC, PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One,
Xbox Series X and Series S, and Google Stadia

The *Assassin's Creed* franchise is my all-time favorite video game series. The open-world and the free-running mechanic had always captivated me ever since I played the PSP spin-off of the first game in the series. *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla* is the latest in the long history of the game and takes players into the mystical world of 10th Century England, where Vikings, Anglo-Saxons, and many others vie for control of the islands.





Reliving a Viking's life

In *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla*, you play as Eivor (either male or female), a Viking raider, and his/her journey in fighting against the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of England as they find a new settlement.

As much as I enjoyed playing the game, I was hesitant with the choice of Dark Ages Englands and Vikings as the new era setting. In terms of stealth, Vikings were by far the most opposite. But boy, was I wrong.

The game story managed to interweave the story of the Assassins and the Order of the Knights Templars, as well as mixing Norse Mythology and Celtic mystery of England. While the main story is linear, *Valhalla* has changed the world experience. Instead of specifically marked locations, markers appear for areas of interest when you summon your trust avian companion.

Adding to the story is the gorgeous world of the Dark Ages. From the snowy land of Norway to England's vibrant and green land, the world of *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla* is a whole experience to behold.



Raids and Assaults

Assassin's Creed: Valhalla takes some of the best mechanics of its predecessor *Assassin's Creed: Odyssey* and improved upon it.

In *Odyssey*, the Conquest mechanic allows players to beat a certain number of enemies to conquer an area to their current allegiance. In *Valhalla*, Ubisoft has created a new immerse Castle siege where you Assault a castle fortress. During Assaults, players could take over enemy castles with the people they have recruited and gain the loot for diplomacy points to friends or take the riches for themselves.

Ubisoft changed the boat mechanics for *Valhalla*, removing the combat and replacing it instead with Raids. You can raid English villages, monasteries, and other communities to earn loot or materials to upgrade your own settlements, which can help you in the latter part of the game.

Another changed mechanic is the weapons and inventory system. You can now use a weapon in both hands. Taking this chance, I tried out the double shield and whacked enemies that came my way.



Choosing the right words

Like *Origins* and *Odyssey*, Ubisoft has changed the way you play *Assassin's Creed*. Words and decisions matter most in *Valhalla*. Like most modern RPGs, your ending and gameplay vary by decisions you make in-game.

Aside from the dialogue options, you can also choose how to tackle the game. While the game can be done by the usual stealth and massacre method, you can now also take a more diplomatic approach. The game lets you form alliances with other Viking raiders and other smaller English kingdoms against the larger opponents. With alliances, you can avoid spilling blood and gain more troops for assaults.

Yggdrasils many roots

Of the new mechanics in *Valhalla*, the new character trait tree is by far the most divisive. Previous games such as *Origins* and *Odyssey* already had a character skill map where you can unlock and learn the iconic and brutal assassination moves. In *Valhalla*, you can learn most of these new skills by finding them in loots around the world or via side quests, not on the tree. Instead, the character map focuses on passive abilities such as health, strength, bow damage, and accuracy.

While it was not the game I expected (a World War II-era would be nice), *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla* was still able to blow my mind and is a great new addition to the franchise.

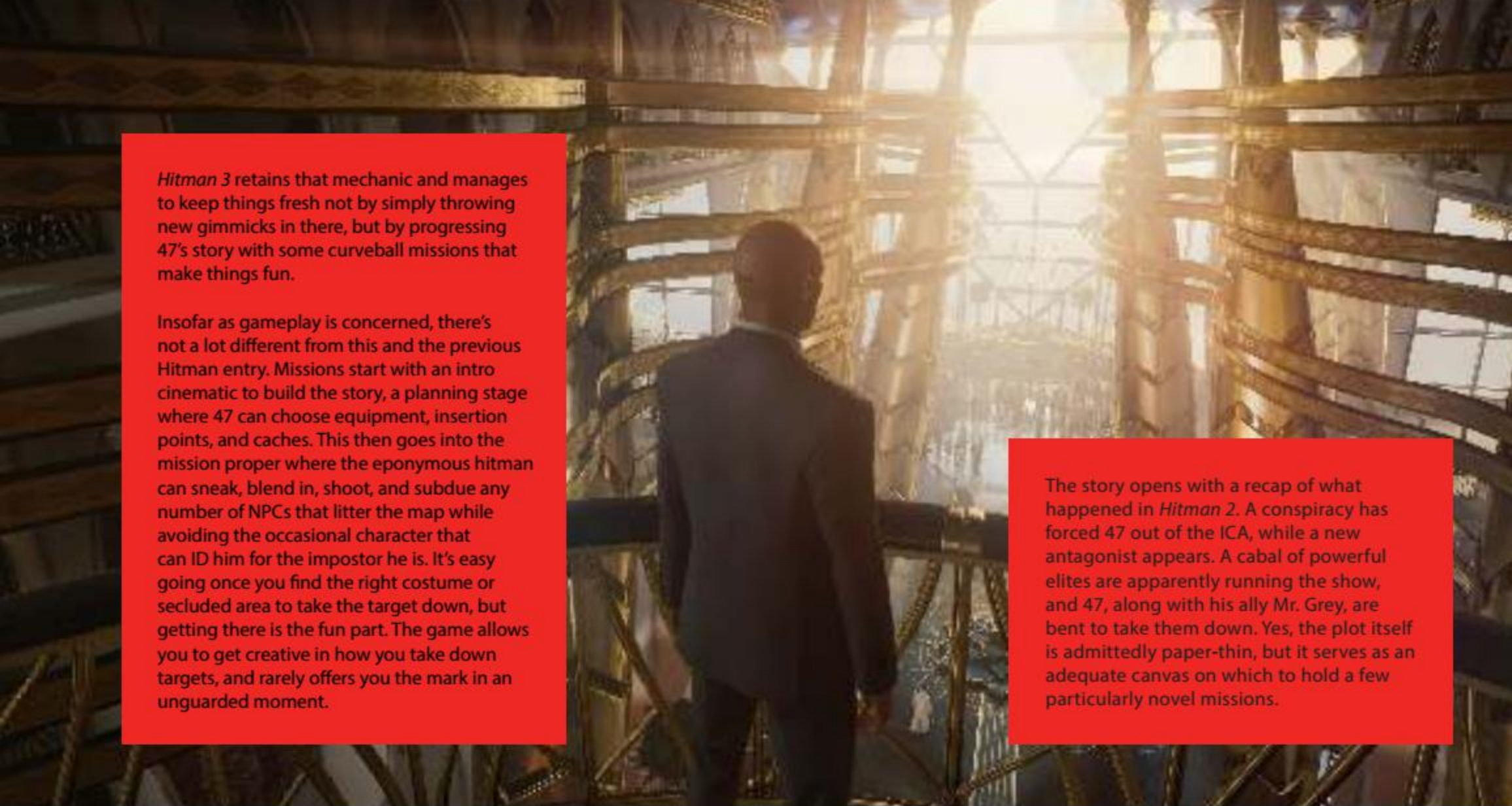


H I T M A N III

Publisher: IO Interactive | Developer: IO Interactive
Platforms: Microsoft Windows, PS4, PS5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S,
Stadia, and Nintendo Switch

Words by Ren Alcantara

***Hitman* is a game franchise that's very close to my heart. I dislike stealth games with a fierce passion, but I'm more than willing to put up with all the quirks of sneaking around for this series. When the first *Hitman* first came out more than two decades ago, I had a PC that barely had the specs to handle it, but I played and replayed it so many times, I can't even recall. Having multiple ways to finish missions was revolutionary back then—it played like a mini sandbox game, with the freedom to approach things as the situation changed.**



Hitman 3 retains that mechanic and manages to keep things fresh not by simply throwing new gimmicks in there, but by progressing 47's story with some curveball missions that make things fun.

Insofar as gameplay is concerned, there's not a lot different from this and the previous *Hitman* entry. Missions start with an intro cinematic to build the story, a planning stage where 47 can choose equipment, insertion points, and caches. This then goes into the mission proper where the eponymous hitman can sneak, blend in, shoot, and subdue any number of NPCs that litter the map while avoiding the occasional character that can ID him for the impostor he is. It's easy going once you find the right costume or secluded area to take the target down, but getting there is the fun part. The game allows you to get creative in how you take down targets, and rarely offers you the mark in an unguarded moment.

The story opens with a recap of what happened in *Hitman 2*. A conspiracy has forced 47 out of the ICA, while a new antagonist appears. A cabal of powerful elites are apparently running the show, and 47, along with his ally Mr. Grey, are bent to take them down. Yes, the plot itself is admittedly paper-thin, but it serves as an adequate canvas on which to hold a few particularly novel missions.

One of my favorites reminded me very much of the movie *Knives Out*. 47 has a hit on a character that has made her way to her ancestral home where, as luck would have it, a murder has just taken place. In order to get the mark alone, 47 actually has to determine which of the family members committed the crime, so a little sleuthing becomes necessary. 47 even throws in some very clever one-liners that are actually quite funny given the situation and the knowledge that the one speaking is in fact an assassin in disguise. I do wish there were more of those.

There are also some interesting locations in the game, including a visit to the ICA datacenter where the organization apparently stores all the information regarding past hits, and a meetup with series regular Diana Burnwood, 47's handler. There are more than a few bones thrown in there for long-time fans of the game, making the title all the more enjoyable for them.

Gameplay is as slick as ever, and while there are quite a few actions the keys for which you have to memorize, it's not particularly overwhelming. The first levels are thankfully simple, and before long, control issues fade, freeing up brainpower to focus on more pressing thoughts like "should I dress up as a guard or a waiter to get into the VIP area and kill the mark?"

Graphics are gorgeous in this game. 47 seems to have aged very well, thanks to the improved graphics. Wrinkles, blemishes, and expressions are convincing enough and make the journey through the uncanny valley a little less painful. An effort has also gone into the sound design. Conversations can be heard dynamically, and if there's chatter on your left side, you might want to skip that area, as guards are probably doing their routes. 47's voice acting is as cold and lifeless as ever, but it's completely intentional, so it is actually a plus in that sense.

Replayability is also quite good. If you're in it for more than just the story, completing a certain task per mission unlocks things such as costumes, weapons, insertion zones, and additional weapon caches for greater variety in later runs. There are also multiple ways to take targets out, and finding those other methods is really the point of this series.



Despite all the iterations of the game, it's still not perfect. Since it's a stealth game first and a shooter second, shooting is less polished. It feels glassy and imprecise and lacks the punchy feel of a modern FPS like *Overwatch* or *Modern Warfare*. I'm willing to give that a pass, though, since if you're going through it like a shooter, you aren't exactly playing it as the game intends.

There's also what I like to call Groundhog Day syndrome. There's a temptation to compulsively save and load the game the moment things don't go your way. While this is, of course, down to the player, it also speaks to game design and how cues are communicated. While there are modes that offer limited saves, forcing you out of the eternal loop of saving and loading, it would be more interesting to see some sort of mechanic that rewards a more careful play style. The pressure to run a mission quickly is there thanks to rewards for fast times, but I do feel it has the tendency to contribute to that save-load habit to an unhealthy degree.

Once the dust settles, *Hitman 3* is a great game, worthy to be the closing title of the franchise. If you've played the other games before, this won't leave you disappointed, and if you're new to the series, you're going to want to try the others as well. It's a master class in stealth and has some nifty game mechanics that will keep you playing over and over.

CYBERPUNK

Words by Ren Alcantara

So it finally happened. A pen-and-paper RPG has finally pulled our circle of boardgame friends into its grip. While some of us have tried one tabletop RPG or another in our lives, we haven't really gotten to playing one together; strange considering that our friendships are essentially built on a foundation of cardboard punch-outs and wooden meeples. But here we are.

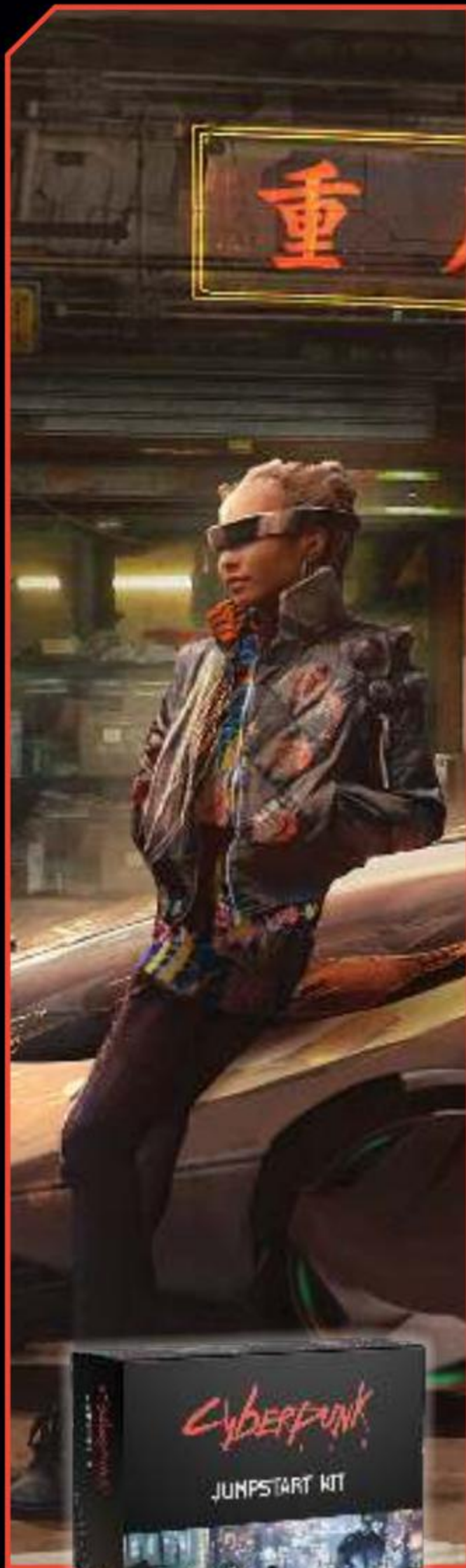
The RPG that finally got us to try it is *Cyberpunk Red*, the latest in the *Cyberpunk* series of RPGs that started in the 80s, also serves as a prequel to the events in *Cyberpunk 2077*. Set in fictional Night City somewhere in California, it's as rich in *Cyberpunk* lore as the current hit video game. The main draw of this title, though, is that it's not merely a coat of neon purple and blue paint on top of D&D; it's actually its own system, built with its own rules, with features that are unique to it, and the genre in general.

I was fortunate enough to have received a hardbound copy of the sourcebook for *Cyberpunk Red* and, if you're interested in trying the game out, this is a necessity. Digital copies are also available, so don't fret if you're not within easy shipping range of the US.

The book is glorious—equal parts novel and rulebook. If you haven't been exposed to a lot of *Cyberpunk* fiction, don't worry, the book does a great job at giving you the foundation you need to get immersed. My main gripe is that it could have been organized just a little better to make referencing tables easier on the GM. After the first playthrough, I found that I had to dust off the printer to get some tables printed out, even after placing sticky tags on important pages Amy Santiago-style.

The only other thing you're going to need is a bunch of six-sided dice, a ten-sided die, and players. All other things are standard GM things like a notebook for notes and writing story ideas and a creative mind.





Character creation starts as usual, by picking a class. From there, the game allows players to take one of three paths for completing a character. There are pre-generated characters, an option to create a semi-custom character, and a fully customized, do-everything-from-the-ground-up character creation process that lets you distribute every last skill point and spend your whole budget on gear and add-ons. Because of the nature of the game, it's recommended to start with one of the pre-gen characters, just to get a feel for the world. It's complicated and quite lethal to the point of internet humor, so spending effort on a character that probably isn't optimized and then getting that character killed isn't really the best way to get started.

Classes are varied and give players plenty of freedom to develop a character that will suit their playstyle. It's not just the usual Brawler/Magic-user/ Thief/Healer that you might be used to, though those are also available. Some options are unique to the game, such as the Rockerboy, that's basically an influential musician that uses their art to attempt to topple the megacorporations that have a stranglehold on the population. There's also the Media class that sways public opinion and reveals truths that the corpos don't want people to know. There's also the netrunner class that hacks into enemy digital infrastructure to get information, control systems, and battle other netrunners in the virtual space, at a different pace than actions in the "meatspace." These classes give players (and the GM) a lot of material to work with, as long as they're willing to do the roleplaying work.

Once classes are assigned, there are the usual stat and skill assignments to do, as well as shopping for any hardware and clothing that the players want. Then, since no futuristic megacorp dystopia would be complete without it, players select cyberware to install into their bodies. These augments let players do some pretty amazing things. Want to have Wolverine-style claws? Maybe Mantis Blades or an internal grenade launcher? How about cyber eyes with dart guns? This is where things get really interesting.

There is a cost to installing the hardware, though, and it's a little steeper than just the Eurodollars each one will cost. Each piece of cyberware and each attachment that goes into them decreases your humanity stat. This, in turn, drops your empathy, and when that drops below a threshold, you basically go insane and enter a state of cyber psychosis, handing your player over to the GM to be controlled according to their whim. It's a delicate balancing act between abilities and humanity loss, and one you have to get right for maximum effect.

The rest of the game runs on a simple system of rolls. Basically, it's a Stat value plus a skill value plus a 1d10, vs. either a set difficulty value (DV—there are tables) or defending character's own stat+skill+1d10 roll. It's built for simplicity and speed of play, and once you have the basics down, it really lets the game move at a brisk pace.

There are the usual RPG elements such as initiative, turns, rounds, and actions, and all work smoothly with the simplified d10 system. It's not a very strict ruleset, which is great in terms of versatility but does put some pressure on the GM to really step up. Preparing beforehand is absolutely critical to make the system work. You have been warned.

Everything flowed smoothly in our first playthrough, without any real sticking points aside from the initial unfamiliarity with the rules and tables. Once that was sorted, the game got into a good rhythm, and we were able to keep the action going without any snags. Combat, in particular, is very straightforward, particularly with the interplay between damage, armor, and health. Even non-RPG players will be able to grasp how it works without too much difficulty. Actions are all rolled with a simple stat+skill+1d10 check vs. a set value for tasks or an enemy's own stat+skill+1d10 roll. Damage is some combination of d6 dice, and that's about it. As such, it doesn't take that much time to get familiar with the relevant stats, so players can get going fairly quickly.

Being a cyberpunk title, though, there is another layer to the action, which is netrunning, or hacking terminals. Players can choose the Netrunner class, which gives them the ability to navigate networks to access data and control connected devices such as computers, turrets, and even attack robots that do your bidding. It's not a totally safe space, though. Aside from the dangers going on in the "meatspace" around the hacker, the net has its own attack programs and even hostile netrunners that seek to fry your brain.

There are a few problems, though, namely that there aren't that many enemies to face. The sourcebook lists a few bad guys, but since there aren't any fantastic beasts, you're basically stuck facing humans with varying amounts of cybernetic enhancements. Weapons are also rather limited to a few classes, though there's a nice set of exotic and legendary gear to be found as well. A good GM can more than make up for the shortcomings and will likely appreciate not having to look through so many sourcebooks, so it's not all bad.

At the core of it, *Cyberpunk Red* is simple, which makes for relatively easy pick-up, and lessens the load on the GM so they can focus more on weaving a story for the players. If you're into *Cyberpunk* as a theme and want to give it a try, don't let the fact that this isn't D&D stop you. It's got solid mechanics, a huge world, and the potential for campaigns that span years.

5G

IS CHANGING THE GAME FOR NETWORK PERFORMANCE AND SECURITY

Words by Gabriel John Pe

In 2020, remote work became the norm as organizations worldwide were forced to rapidly shift their operational models. However, even once the COVID-19 pandemic subsides and some employees move back into the office, many others will continue working from home into the future. Indeed, “work” is increasingly viewed as something we do as opposed to a place we commute to and from. With this in mind, security and IT teams must adjust their strategies to manage this new hybrid workforce at scale effectively. Below we highlight the factors that play into the security of these environments, including the cloud, general security infrastructures, and employee cybersecurity awareness.

Accelerating Trends and 5G for Network Performance and Security

Organizations have long been cautioned against the dangers of a piecemeal security approach that can leave gaps in protection. They have also been warned that a lack of a comprehensive, coherent digital transformation strategy with an integrated security solution presents long-term challenges. And this was before the pandemic hit.

When COVID-19 entered the picture, workforces around the world transitioned to a remote structure with little warning. This meant networks that were already in a precarious position were stretched even further in size and scale to maintain business continuity. The need for such rapid expansion meant that many businesses let security fall by the wayside.

This rapid network expansion, however, was less of a journey into uncharted territory and more of an acceleration of trends that were already occurring. Now, with 5G entering the picture, additional security challenges are presenting themselves. Moreover, many do not realize how unprepared they may be for the additional changes coming down the pipeline.

The 5G that many companies are familiar with has low bandwidth and is generally under six gigahertz, a stark contrast to what is emerging on the scene – new smartphones can use 5G bandwidth at performance levels of 24 gigahertz and above. This will fundamentally change network performance requirements on the edge for both devices and applications; it will also require the appropriate security infrastructures to monitor and manage this new level of performance.

The new 5G is expected to power everything from manufacturing and energy grids to autonomous vehicles and consumer brands. Businesses that do not proactively prepare for this shift will start to encounter latency issues and severely diminished user experiences and will ultimately get left behind.





Tackling 5G Security

Demands on networks will increase significantly, particularly at the edge, and increased complexity will simultaneously lead to evolving security needs. But simply adding security on top of the network can create bottlenecks. The key is to find a way to increase network capabilities securely in a way that doesn't impact the user experience.

Two approaches are on the table for addressing the challenges of 5G. The first approach is to deploy security at the 5G carrier level. The second requires focusing on edge security since the edge is where 5G is used either as a backup connection or, increasingly, as a primary connection. No matter the approach, the edge will require AI-predictive and ASIC-accelerated performance.

The cloud edge, in general, will require new levels of highly optimized security even if 5G isn't considered a priority. Complex hybrid networks now span collections of clouds and data centers, requiring more virtual devices and firewalls to handle the load. And while 5G will make transactions and applications faster, it will also enable faster cyberattacks. Proper management requires extreme consistency in security policy and deployment strategy.

The Time to Prepare is Now with 5G

Today, 5G represents about \$5 billion in operator-billed revenue opportunity. This is projected to grow to an astounding \$357 billion by 2025, representing a significant shift in how and where 5G is used. Therefore, meeting the performance and security needs of 5G will be crucial to any company wishing to remain viable.

Many organizations do not currently have this capability. Moreover, previous strategies of chasing best-of-breed devices mean that many organizations have a legacy security setup made of a hypercomplex patchwork of increasingly difficult-to-manage infrastructures. Certainly, last-minute deployments in the wake of the pandemic did not help matters. Adding 5G on top of such architectures is likely to compound the issue and lead to a whole host of problems and vulnerabilities.

Workarounds are no longer the answer. Now is the time for organizations to deploy coherent and comprehensive 5G network security strategies. But they must act quickly as the needs of a 5G world will only grow from here, and 6G is less than a decade away.



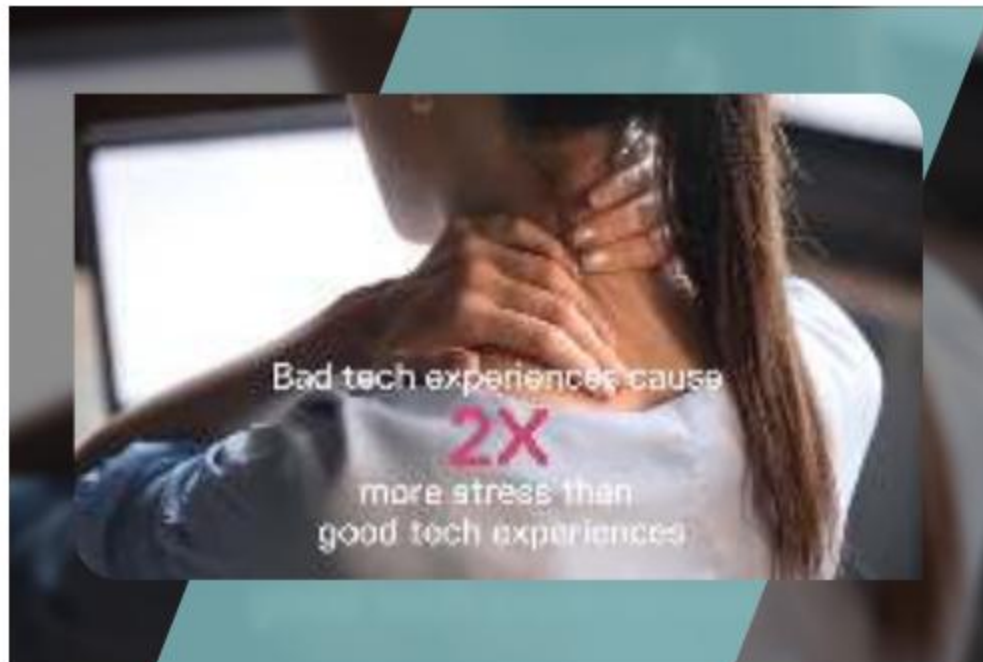
BRAIN ON TECH:

How technology experiences affect overall wellbeing

A recent study by Dell Technologies revealed that high-functioning technology or failing technology could directly affect productivity and how humans feel. This is according to the firm's first-ever neuro-scientific research called Brain on Tech that measured how technology can impact our ability to work and our overall well-being.

"Technology helps us connect, learn, get work done and reimagine our daily lives. Yet as we rely more on technology, we become more sensitive to its performance highs and lows," said Brooke Huling, Vice President, Software Solutions and Experiences, Dell Technologies. "At Dell, we use research to understand our customers' needs and to drive innovations as those need change. Businesses that understand the impact tech has on people are at an advantage. Not only can they offer a better experience - they can help employees become more efficient and effective."

In collaboration with EMOTIV, the global leader in portable brain-sensing technologies and consumer neuroscience, Dell used brain-sensing headsets that measured the participants' reactions when they completed cognitively-challenging tasks under time using both good and bad PC technology. Levels of stress, focus, excitement, and frustration were assessed in real-time leveraging EMOTIV's proprietary machine learning algorithms.



Using technology to supercharge productivity and efficiency

Insights from the study showed that a great experience with a work PC is vital and ensures optimum productivity. Employees can achieve an astounding 37 percent more in a workday when using technology that is not only newer but supported with the correct software and services, which can save them 23 minutes per hour or fifteen hours in a 40-hour workweek.

On the other hand, bad technology experience impedes employee performance by more than 30 percent on average, regardless of a user's perceived computer literacy. Generational differences also come into play, and younger Millennials and Gen Zers were most affected by a bad tech experience, performing twice as poorly as older participants in the study.

Delivering the best technology experiences impact how employees feel

Research showed that well-functioning technology could positively impact feelings and relieve stress for employees, creating both emotional benefits as well as a lasting impact on retention.

The majority of participants' reactions from receiving different technology-enabled with the necessary power and tools end-users after dealing with faulty technology showed that they are as excited as watching videos of puppies. On the other hand, when participants received better-functioning computers, it induced more excitement than receiving a monetary reward.

Employees with bad technology experiences during their workday feel twice as stressed, which is almost 30% more stressful than being asked to sing a song in public. Those experiencing high-stress moments take three times longer to relax and recover even when listening to relaxing music when compared to those experiencing less stressful moments in the workday.

"Keeping employees productive and happy is a top priority for companies today as they try to combat burnout, and businesses have the power to address this with great technology experiences," said Huling. "It is important that employees have the right technology set-up — including software and peripherals — or have the opportunity to customize their set-up to best fit their needs. In the 'Work from Anywhere' world, people, productivity, health, and well-being matter. The best investment any business can make to reduce stress and improve productivity is to provide reliable, seamless technology experiences to reduce friction and help employees achieve their work goals."



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Mac rumor mill: What Apple has in store in the coming year

Words by Gerry Gaviola

If there was one tech giant who won 2021, it was definitely Apple. Their new M1 processor blew away critics and competition, their new iPad Air looks to change tablets for the better, and the new A14 chips on the iPhone 12 series is their fastest and most powerful ever.

Of course, Apple continues to innovate; and after that incredible year it's hard not to be excited for Apple. The rumors of the upcoming products does help contain our excitement to see what's in store for the Cupertino-based innovators.



New Macs with more powerful Apple Silicons



First and foremost, Apple's new M1 silicon showed us how great Apple was at making their own processors (from phones to laptops). Apple is expected to wow consumers, even more, when they announce the new upcoming MacBooks and new iMac with an even powerful Apple Silicon.

Based on online rumors, the new MacBook Pro 14-inch and 16-inch will come with a new Apple processor and redesign, including the comeback of the MagSafe charging. Aside from the new MacBooks, a new iMac is expected to be announced in the early part of the year. The new iMac will of course come with the new Apple processor and new Retina displays.



New AirPods



The Apple AirPods have redefined the earbuds ever since their launch in 2016. Last year's AirPods Max was a great addition to the AirPods family, and won't be the only over-the-ear version soon. It has been speculated that Apple is working on either a cheaper AirPods Max (an AirPods Max Lite) or a professional AirPods Max for music studios.

While the over-ear headphones look good, Apple isn't forgetting the earbuds and in-ear lovers. Leaks have popped up all over the internet of a stemless AirPods Pro 2. Aside from removing the stem, leaks and renders have noted a smaller charging case and a slightly rounder design from last year's AirPods Pro.



New iPad Pro, iPad Mini, and iPad



The iPad Pro 11-inch was a hit last spring when it launched with the new A12Z chip making it a great laptop alternative. Fast forward to October 2020 and Apple seemed to upend the iPad Pro as the flagship with the 4th gen iPad Air with a comparable A14 Bionic chipset. Well not for long.

Apple is expected to announce a new iPad Pro with a new processor either in their upcoming March event or September event. The rumor mill has been churning out a lot of conflicting info for the new iPad Pro. Some have pointed that it might be running on a variation of the Apple M-processor others a better A14 chip, whatever it may be it will be the best iPad yet.

Speaking of updates, it has been a while since we had an iPad Mini update. The iPad Mini 5th Generation was launched way back March 2019 and is deemed to be due for an update. The new iPad Mini is expected to follow the footsteps of the iPad Air with a redesign and of course, a new processor.

Lastly, Apple will still reportedly give us an update to their iPad. The iPad has been the king when it comes to value for your money and the upcoming 9th generation hopes to build on the momentum of the two previous generations.



A foldable phone and AR/VR goggles



Patents have long been the measure to know what companies are doing behind closed doors. Recent Apple patents filed in the US Patent Office have pointed to two new products the company is working on, a foldable mobile phone screen, and AR/VR goggles.

Apple's foldable phone is designed to be as big as their Max-series of iPhones and might come with either a triple fold or a dual-fold based on various rumors and patents. Not much is known about the foldable phone but it has been said that it won't be until next year (2022) when the product might be announced officially.

Aside from the foldable phone, Apple has been reported to be working on AR/VR goggles. According to reports, the product is in its later stage of prototype testing and will come in 2022. The Apple AR/VR concept will feature 8K displays and a lot of eye-tracking cameras to help give a better immersive experience than current generation VRs.

These products are not yet confirmed and mostly come from internet rumors and "insider" leaks so take all of these with a grain of salt. But despite being rumors, Apple seems to have a lot in store in the coming months and even years.

Escape to a World of Entertainment

Smart Signature SIM-Only Plans now come with a Netflix Mobile Plan

Escaping to a world of entertainment especially after a hard day's work or during a well-deserved break is now simpler than ever as mobile services provider Smart Communications, Inc. has upgraded the Smart Signature SIM-Only Plans by exclusively bundling them with a Netflix Mobile Plan subscription.

When they sign up for any Smart Signature SIM-Only Plan, subscribers also conveniently get a monthly Netflix Mobile Plan subscription throughout their 12-month contract so they can enjoy thousands of award-winning shows, series, documentaries, specials, and feature films right at their fingertips.

This way, subscribers won't have to shell out for a separate subscription just to immerse in the worlds of their favorite Netflix Originals like Crash

Landing On You, Money Heist, Stranger Things, The Umbrella Academy, Extraction, Bridgerton, Kingdom, The Crown, and more.

Signature SIM-Only Plans start at PHP 999 per month with Plan S, which is inclusive of 10GB open access data monthly, unlimited All-Net texts, unlimited All-Net calls, and 150 minutes of calls to PLDT – along with the bundled Netflix Mobile Plan subscription. Other plan options are also available.



A world of entertainment easily at your fingertips

"Goal slayers who hustle also deserve their time off, and now with just a simple tap on your phone, you can be transported to so many different worlds. This is especially relevant during this time when we all miss traveling and exploring new places," said Jane J. Basas, SVP and head of consumer wireless business at Smart.

"This is why we're glad to team up with Netflix to launch our upgraded Smart Signature SIM-Only Plans that come with a Netflix Mobile Plan subscription, making it so much easier for our customers to stream and enjoy their favorite shows for a complete streaming experience — with the plan, the subscription, and the network," Basas added.

Complete and easy streaming experience with Smart Signature

Smart Signature SIM-Only Plans offer a complete streaming experience on the go. With generous data inclusions, users won't have to worry about running out of data while watching the latest film or doing a marathon of the latest hit series. The Netflix Mobile Plan subscription that comes with the plan also offers a wide catalog to suit every taste, preference, or mood.

Subscribers can definitely make the most of their plan and Netflix Mobile Plan subscription powered by Smart, the country's fastest mobile data network as reported by third-party mobile analytics firms such as Opensignal and Ookla.

A report by Opensignal, an independent mobile analytics firm, shows that Smart has been

providing a much better Video Experience for subscribers compared to the competition for the past several quarters starting in Q4 2018.

In its November 2020 Mobile Network Experience Report for the Philippines, Smart also remained ahead of the competition in terms of Upload and Download Speed Experience, 4G Availability, and 4G Coverage Experience.

On the other hand, Ookla, the global leader in internet testing and analysis, named Smart as the country's fastest mobile data network in the second half of 2020 after it achieved a Speed Score of 24.99, with average speeds of 20.08Mbps for download, and 7.42Mbps for upload, based on 3,915,679 user-initiated tests taken with Speedtest.

Take full control of your plan with the GigaLife App

Smart Signature subscribers may also take better control of their plan using the GigaLife app. Downloadable on Google Play Store and the Apple App Store, the GigaLife App enables postpaid customers to check their usage, link their accounts, and pay their bills with just a few taps on their smartphone.

Through the app, postpaid customers can keep track of their data, call, and text usage as well as monitor their bill in real-time so there's no reason to worry about incurring unwanted charges.

Customers can also use the app to avail of Data Boosters and other add-ons to enjoy more of their favorite online activities as well as accumulate GigaPoints to earn rewards for every add-on or bill payment through the app.

To sign up for the new Signature SIM-Only Plan bundled with Netflix Mobile Plan subscription you can book an online or face-to-face appointment with the nearest Smart Store, or by visiting the Smart Online Store.

To know more about the latest Smart offers, follow Smart's official accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Ready for Your K-Drama Marathon?

Kick-off 2021 with Viu's latest K-dramas!



True Beauty

This rom-com features a high school girl who rises to stardom with her expert makeup skills. No one has ever seen her bare face, and she prefers to keep it that way – until Lee Su Ho sees her without makeup. That is just the beginning of their love story. First on Viu, this highly anticipated webtoon turned drama stars Moon Ga Young, Astro's Cha Eun Woo, and Hwang In Yeop.



The Penthouse

Achieving high ratings in South Korea, *The Penthouse* is a nail-biting story of an ambitious woman who is determined to do whatever it takes to both enter high society and a luxury penthouse in the Gangnam District. First on Viu, this drama is the highly anticipated reunion of writer Kim Soon Ok and PD Joo Dong Min, who worked together on the popular SBS drama *The Last Empress*.



Cheat on Me, If Y

Starring Go Joon and *Parasite's* Cho Yeo Jeong, *Cheat on Me, If You Can* features an unconventional yet intense story about love, marriage, and the guilt one feels from making bad decisions. With a novelist wife obsessed with the idea of killing people further thickening the plot, the turnout of events will leave the viewer on the edge of their seats.



Queen

We love a period piece with a twist! The story revolves around Jang Bong Hwan, a chef at the President's Blue House, and how his world turns upside down when his spirit somehow transcends into the body of a queen from the Joseon period. First on Viu, *Mr. Queen* is set to make your days even more interesting this year.

Samsung is giving a free Viu Premium subscription for one year, for Samsung Smart TV purchases until March 31, 2021.

Samsung Smart TVs are made for K-drama marathons. Not only do they come pre-installed with the Viu app, the Samsung Crystal UHD (2020) boasts an upscaling feature

to enhance picture-quality to the next best resolution, and customized audio modes so you won't miss out on the details on your favorite shows and have greater kilig moments.

K-drama fans, now is the best time to level up your viewing experience.



Home



Explore



Subscriptions



Library

Most Engaging YouTube PH Ads in 2020



YouTube released a local roundup of Ads Leaderboard winners for 2020 which consists of the monthly top ads determined by factors such as watch time, organic views, and audience retention. These 12 ads showed brand resilience and relevance, the power of storytelling, and the new realities of life as a result of the pandemic.



Ang Chibok ng Puso ni Piolo
Andok's

Andok's *Ang Chibok ng Puso ni Piolo* dominated the month of January, showcasing an epic storytelling about how a favorite food from childhood can reignite love, with Pinoy celebrity Piolo Pascual capturing the hearts' of the viewers.

Jan



One Shot at Love
CIMB Bank Philippines

Anchored on hope, CIMB Bank's *One Shot At Love* garnered the most views in February 2020 showing that taking a leap of faith can pave the way to great rewards.

Feb



Lazada 8th Birthday Sale
Lazada Philippines

The funny *Lazada 8th Birthday Sale* ad won the hearts of many Filipino viewers in March, thanks to the influence of "your girl" Mimi Yuuh. This month signaled the start of creative yet impactful storytelling with brands adjusting their messaging to the current climate brought about by the pandemic.

Mar



The All New Suzuki S-Presso
Suzuki Philippines

Interestingly, in April where Filipino viewers have been in lockdown for almost a month, car ad *The All-New Suzuki S-Presso* emerged as the winner which might have indicated Filipinos' wishful desire to be able to go out and freely hit the road again.



Alagang Ramdam ng Bawat Pilipino
Lactum 3 & 6

COVID-19 might have changed a lot of things—but not celebrating the unconditional love of Filipino moms. Lactum's Mother's Day campaign *Alagang Ramdam ng Bawat Pilipino* aimed to pay tribute to the frontliners—the heroes of the pandemic—some of which are mothers at the same time.



The Captain has landed ahead of time!
Smart Communications

Filipinos proved that the Philippines is the heart of K-drama as Smart Communications' *The Captain has landed ahead of time!* ad won in June, thanks to the fans of Hyun Bin, popularly known as Captain Ri in the series *Crash Landing on You*.



#LiveAllOut with Alex G and Matthaiois
OPPO Philippines

Campaigns, like the winning ad for July OPPO's *#LiveAllOut with Alex G and Matthaiois*, continue to convey meaningful messages including how people can be creative at home to fight the quarantine burnout.



[AirDresser] Enjoy Your Passions Better with Samsung AirDresser
Samsung Philippines

One of the latest innovations of Samsung captured the interest of the viewers as proven by its direct yet effective ad *[AirDresser] Enjoy Your Passions Better with Samsung AirDresser* which can keep clothes extra-clean and odor-free while being stored and not worn for long periods.



Join Kathryn Bernardo, Mimi Yuuuh, and Sam YG on September 9 at the 9.9 Lazada Big Brands Sale!
Lazada Philippines

For the second time in 2020, Lazada reigned supreme among other digital ads on YouTube as e-commerce accelerates. The joint influence of Kathryn Bernardo, Mimi Yuuuh, and Sam YG, plus the promise of Lazada's 9.9 Sale earned a lot of viewers for the ad.



HUGAS NA RIN 'YAN—Fred D' Germ ft. Gloc-9 #Safeguard #SafeWash
Safeguard

Safeguard demonstrated that in a world restricted by a pandemic, brands can lean on animation as an efficient way of producing ad content. The *HUGAS NA RIN 'YAN* ad featured Fred D' and Gloc 9 rapping the do's and don'ts of proper handwashing.



Join our Lazada Queen Kathryn Bernardo and our Regional Brand Ambassador Lee Min Ho for #Lazada1111
Lazada Philippines

As e-commerce has become more competitive during the pandemic, Lazada continued to go big with its marketing investments by using the winning combination of Kathryn Bernardo and Lee Min Ho for its 11.11 sale campaign.

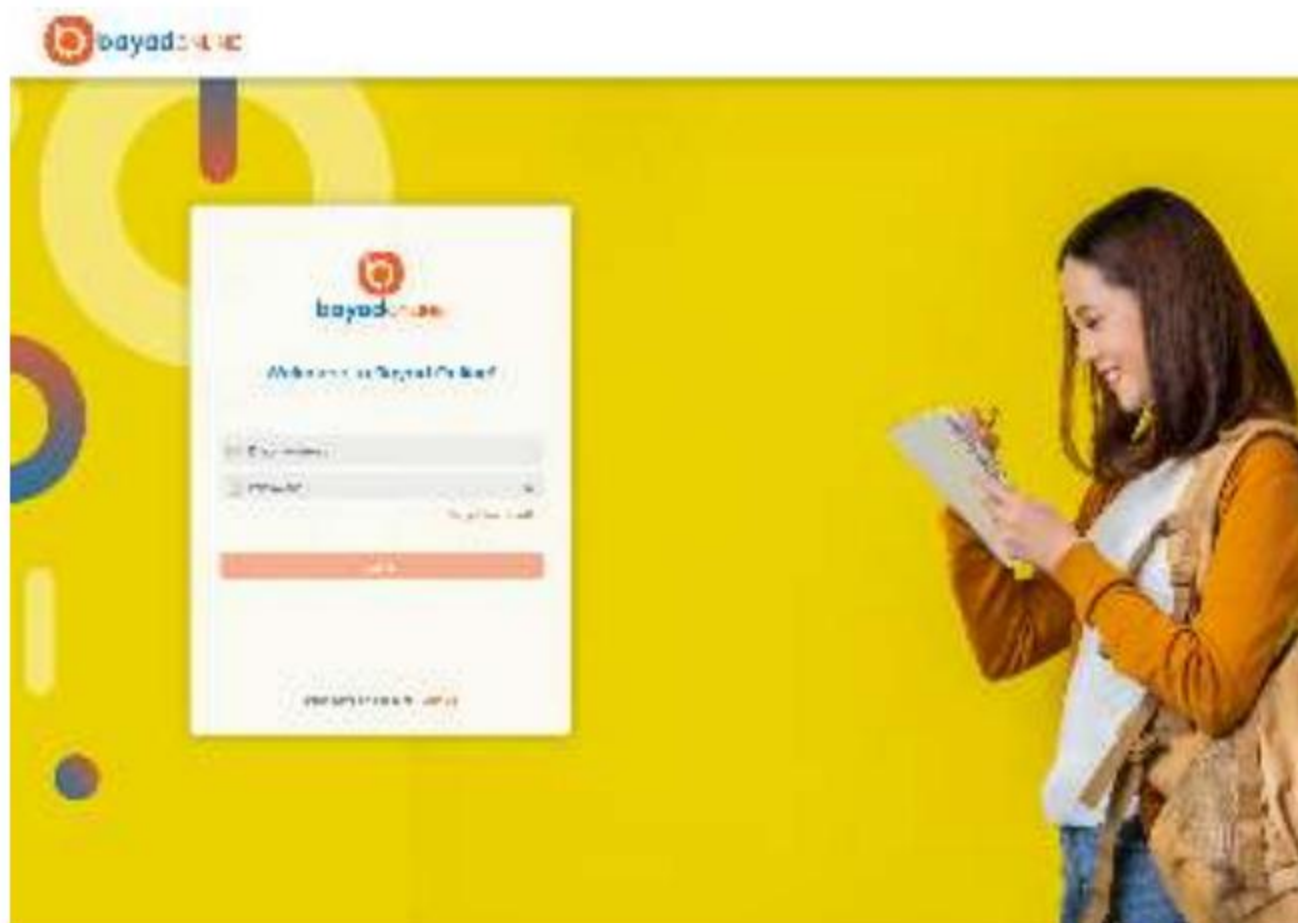


Pepsi Loves Christmas
Pepsi Philippines

Pepsi's local ad, featuring several celebrities and content creators, is a mirror of how technology can keep us connected in the middle of COVID-19 which shows that Filipinos can still spend a meaningful holiday season. The ad garnered a whopping figure of 7.8 million views.



Bayad Center rebrands as BAYAD, elevating Filipinos' financial experience



Bayad Center, the country's most trusted payments authority has rebranded with a new brand identity, logo, and tagline as it connects with the new generation of payers, expands its digital footprint, and further contributes to the advancement of the country's finance sector.

Now known as Bayad, the brand's transformation was driven by the company's commitment to elevating the payment and financial experience of Filipinos. Building on its 20-year history and market leadership, Bayad reinvents itself as a bigger, better, and younger brand to adapt to the evolving financial needs of Filipinos in the face of accelerating digital transformation and recovery from the ongoing pandemic.

Bigger, better, younger Bayad

With the rebranding, the paying public can expect a Bigger Bayad as the company expands its service and solutions portfolio, biller, and channel partner network, as well as its onsite-to-online platform. It is a Better Bayad because all the trusted payment solutions - Bills, Instasure (insurance), Load, Travel, Pay-out (loan disbursement), Withdraw (ATM transactions), Remit, and Med-assist (medical reimbursement) - are now under one name. And finally, it is a Younger Bayad as the brand sports a new look and vibe that resonates with the modern generation of consumers who lead dynamic lifestyles, as they establish themselves or build a good life for their families.

Bayad president and CEO Lawrence Ferrer elaborates, "We see a new world order emerging from advances in technology, business, and social spaces. We are transforming to keep pace with the times and people we serve. But always, we are guided by our belief that Filipinos deserve to be rewarded for their hard work, and so we always think of ways to make payments and other financial services simple, fast, and readily available in every home and community."

Bayad in the new normal

Since its inception, Bayad has been revolutionizing financial services through technology and has been supporting the advancement of fintech in the country. It further boosts its digital presence with the introduction of its revamped mobile app and online payment facility.

The Bayad app is an all-in-one per transaction platform that provides an accessible, easy, and reliable way of managing funds and earning incentives with family and friends. It is designed for digitally-savvy Filipinos who want to live responsibly and keep their personal expenses in check while earning exclusive rewards. The app carries an array of valuable features such as e-wallet & e-load, bills viewing and payment, personal financial manager, QR payments, rewards, insurance, savings accounts, personal loans, and credit scoring system.

The new Bayad Online, as an extension of the Bayad Centers, offer the same safe, hassle-free, and reliable payment acceptance that is available 24/7 and can be accessed from anywhere in the world.

As a trailblazing feature, both Bayad digital touchpoints significantly benefit Meralco customers by being the first to introduce a real-time posting of Meralco payments through its system. With a few clicks and taps, every Meralco customer is assured that payments made through the Bayad App and Online are immediately posted in their accounts.

From its humble beginnings as an over-the-counter payment center solely for Meralco, Bayad has evolved to be a full-service fintech company, offering a whole suite of financial products and services available through its extensive physical and digital channels.

In so many ways, Bayad is continually shaping the payment landscape in the country - from pioneering outsourced payment collection to expanding its network, and creating a robust payment ecosystem seamlessly bridging the physical and digital spheres. Today, Bayad moves forward with a new approach while keeping its mission and the Filipino consumers at the center of it all.

Bayad is available at Google Play Store for Android users and App Store for iOS users. Bayad Online is accessible through <https://www.online.bayad.com>.

GO WELL

STUDIO

An on-demand wellness platform

As part of its commitment to help Filipinos live healthier lives, Sun Life Philippines has launched a premier on-demand holistic wellness platform dubbed GoWell Studio.

GoWell Studio offers top-notch content such as follow-along exercise programs, guided meditation sessions, various master classes, short courses, as well as healthcare awareness and education. These will be led by some of the country's leading fitness coaches, doctors, allied health professionals, and educators.

The platform will also provide members with a directory of experts from whom they can seek personalized health and wellness advice. The line-up includes Ginastica Natural Philippines founder Mark Cupino; Bukodon, Yin and Vinyasa

Yoga instructor Anna Manalastas; Myotherapist and traditional Chinese medicine practitioner Filbert Tan; Pilates coach and Animal Flow instructor Trisha Buhat; founder of Awake.ph and modern-day Kriya yogi Neil Salang; sound healer coach Yeyette San Luis; World Kettlebell Club strength and conditioning coach Tim Ayson; Alab Pilipinas, UP men's basketball, and Petrogazz Angels volleyball team's strength and conditioning coach Chappy Callanta; and sports performance specialist and F45 Functional Strength coach Andro Amador, among others.

Access to the GoWell Studio may be enjoyed exclusively by Sun Fit and Well, Sun Senior Care, and Sun Cancer Care policyholders simply

by registering on the GoWell website (gowell.com.ph).

"We take pride in GoWell Studio's team of highly credible experts and carefully curated content, all of which a member can access in the comforts of his own home," Sun Life chief marketing and client experience officer Gilbert Simpao said. "Taking care of ourselves remains crucial now that we are still in the middle of the pandemic. We invite everyone to become members of GoWell, Sun Life's community that promotes holistic wellness through a fit and active lifestyle, healthy eating, and living a healthier life."





ASENSO PILIPINAS

Building Digital Resilience 2021

January 28, 2021
9:00 AM

Over 10,000 public officials and students across the Philippines participated in Microsoft Philippines' largest-ever public sector cloud summit to date, **Asenso Pilipinas: Building Digital Resilience**, held last January 28, 2021.

The gathering aimed to enable stakeholders across the Philippine government and broader public sector to accelerate digital transformation on a national scale. These support the Philippine government's ambitions to reignite economic growth in 2021 and beyond and return the Philippines to the ranks of high growth developing economies.

"We confront the same challenges in 2021 that we did 2020," said Microsoft Philippines country general manager Andres Ortola. "Management of the Covid-19 public health crisis will drive daily agendas for months to come. Meanwhile, as access

to vaccines becomes more prevalent, the transition to economic recovery will be the top concern for governments across the world, including the Philippines. We at Microsoft seek to serve partners across the Philippines' public sector guided by three core principles: Reset, Rebound & Recover."

"We envision Asenso Pilipinas to be a catalyst event," added Ortola. "By working closely with leading private and public organizations across the Philippines, we know we can jointly and successfully drive innovations and power purpose-driven digital transformation whenever and wherever it is needed."

Upskilling public sector professionals for better governance

The summit enabled different departments and sectors from across the Philippine government to accelerate efforts at reigniting economic growth in 2021 and beyond by achieving digital transformation on a national scale. The summit highlighted innovative solutions available to reinvent, reimagine and transform the framework and processes in the public sector.

The event featured four learning tracks focused on

- People:** how to close skills gaps and enhance productivity and employability
- Process:** how to stimulate digital transformation across the board
- Data:** building stronger coalitions for responsible digital innovation
- Technology:** leveraging technological advances to create societal impact sustainably.

An esteemed roster of national leaders from both public and private sectors joined the sessions.

Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones delivered a keynote speech focused on digital transformation and how education in the Philippines will look in the post-Covid 19 environment.

Department of Information & Communications Technology (DICT) Undersecretary for Legal Affairs, Policy, Planning & Finance, Jose Arturo de Castro participated and discussed plans to upskill government employees with digital skills in partnership with Microsoft.

The learning tracks also featured Supreme Court of the Philippines Court Administrator Justice Jose Midas Marquez; Department of Environment & Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Analiza R. Teh; and Asian Development Bank (ADB) Director for Digital Innovation and Architecture Ozzeir Khan.

Preparing students with digital knowledge and skills

Meanwhile, thousands of students from across the Philippines' 7,600-plus islands attended a parallel student track, gaining valuable, inspiring insights, and learning how to access the right tools, experiences, and learning opportunities to build the digital skills necessary to fuel the future.

The student track featured three skilling sessions aimed to empower students in job-seeking and professional networking, digital tools, and resources to strengthen job readiness and essential skills and competencies needed in real-world settings, led by DITO CME Chief Operating Officer Donald Lim; LinkedIn Channel Partnerships Lead Chi Ming Loh; Grab Philippines Country Marketing Head RJ Cabaluna; Western Digital Country HR Director Gil Paolo de Guzman; and PJ Lanot of Pino Group of Concepts.



How a Culture of Innovation can build resilience and accelerate digital transformation

Daniel-Zoe-Jimenez, Associate Vice-President of International Data Corporation (IDC), APAC, presented the results of an Asia-Pacific-wide, Microsoft-commissioned IDC study, Culture of Innovation: Foundation for business resilience and economic recovery in Asia.

The study surveyed 213 business decision-makers and 231 workers in the Philippines within a 6-month period, before and since the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Philippines study comprised part of a broad survey of 3,312 leading business decision-makers and 3,495 workers in 15 markets across the Asia Pacific.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, 56% of organizations in the Philippines—like leaders across the Asia Pacific (64%)—have found innovation to be easier. The study also indicated that 88% of business decision-makers in the Philippines remarked that innovation is now a “must” to quickly respond to market challenges and opportunities and ensure business resilience.

Microsoft Para sa Bayan: Empowering and enabling better government through technology

The Asenso Pilipinas summit forms a core service offering from Microsoft Philippines' Para sa Bayan

initiative, a nationwide, holistic series of programs, technology interventions, and skilling efforts to empower stakeholders across the Philippine government, public and private sectors.

Four core strategies drive the Para sa Bayan program: stimulate digital transformation; build coalitions for responsible innovation; close the skills gap to enhance employability; and create societal impact sustainability. The program was built to support and empower the different national digital initiatives of the government and strengthen the Philippines as a digital nation—ready to meet the challenges and capitalize upon the opportunities that will become available for post-Covid-19 pandemic governance.

“Through Para sa Bayan, our national goal is to serve as a proactive agent of positive change for at least 25 million Filipinos by 2023. By working closely with government and stakeholders across the public sector, we can help deliver improved digital skills, inclusive opportunities, and digital citizen services for every single Filipino,” said Microsoft Philippines Public Sector Director, Joanna Rodriguez. “In 2020, Microsoft celebrated its 25th consecutive year operating in the Philippine market. We are committed to continue our service for the Filipino people and look forward to building—through technology—a stronger, more resilient nation together.”


 The Payoneer logo features the word "Payoneer" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A red, curved brushstroke underline is positioned beneath the "y" and "o" of "Payoneer".

Global demand for online educators increasing

A recent study initiated by Payoneer revealed that online teaching is on the rise and is seen as advantageous for freelancers.

A challenging year has passed and as the world slowly recovers, people have a newfound sense of hope. With this, many wonder which adopted practices from the past year will continue to stick around, even after the pandemic. After all, this experience has taught people many tough lessons on a global scale that one cannot simply unlearn or change, in an instant.

One of the most talked-about topics is the adoption of online learning. With over 1.2 billion students worldwide, now being taught outside the four walls of the classroom, technology has indeed played a major role in enabling both educators and students to re-channel their schooling from brick-and-mortar to online platforms.

A recent study initiated by Payoneer — a digital payment platform that empowers businesses to grow globally, analyzed today's e-learning industry based on an exclusive survey done with virtual teachers. Based on the results, 87% of online educators — both professional skills and foreign language teachers, think that the demand for their services will only increase in the long-term.

In the Philippines, one of the leading factors when choosing a school is its location. Given the worsening traffic situation in larger

cities, online programs are generally seen as more efficient and cost-effective with people very seldomly signing in late for their class. Everyone can now have access to good teachers regardless of their location. All that's needed is a good and stable internet connection.

Online learning has likewise given more opportunities for educators who have the passion and flair for teaching, yet do not have the required formal qualifications. For example, TESL or TOEFL are usually pre-requisites in teaching foreign languages. However, 22% of teachers do not have this certification. Interestingly enough, virtual classrooms present them with an opportunity to teach and earn income via this medium.

The boom in e-learning has also paved the way for an increase in earning potential for teachers. In a time when budget cuts and reduction in force are at an all-time high, 77% of teachers said that online teaching has become their primary source of income.

Since the start of the pandemic, many people have found themselves funneling their extra time into honing new skills. This reflected a sharp increase in online course enrolment, according to 82% of professional skills instructors and 55% of language learning teachers.

While 'blended learning' has been around in the Philippines for quite a while, the pandemic has certainly put online schooling in the spotlight. As a result, the industry has been propelled forward at a greater speed, expanding to an audience that is global in scope.

Payoneer supports online teachers worldwide by helping them get paid easily and securely. With Payoneer, online teachers can further pursue their passions, at the same time take advantage of their earnings with great conversion value to their local currency.

T.I.P. & PAASE:

Science, engineering, and research partners

The Philippine-American Academy of Science and Engineering (PAASE) and the Technological Institute of the Philippines (T.I.P.) formalized their partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) virtual signing ceremony held last January 25, 2021. The PAASE-T.I.P. partnership encompasses the training of future science and technology leaders as well as close cooperation in T.I.P.'s innovation center projects.

PAASE president Dr. Gisela Concepcion and T.I.P. president Dr. Elizabeth Quirino-Lahoz represented the two organizations. Serving as witnesses were Dr. Mariano Sto. Domingo, PAASE president-elect 2022-2023; Dr. Jose Cruz, PAASE founding member and 2nd PAASE president; Angelo Lahoz, T.I.P. senior vice president; and Dr. Cynthia Llanes, T.I.P. Quezon City vice president for Academic Affairs.

"This MOU is a milestone for PAASE. It is our first agreement to be signed with a higher education institution—T.I.P.—to offer Filipinos the highest quality of STEM education. T.I.P.'s aim to likewise promote science and engineering research, development, and entrepreneurship also resonates well with our mandate and goals at PAASE. The collaboration between PAASE and T.I.P. is very likely to succeed and to yield positive outcomes," commented PAASE president Dr. Gisela Concepcion.

PAASE is a non-profit organization composed of scientists and engineers of Philippine descent who have distinguished themselves in scholarly and research-related activities. It has over 230 members from all over the world specializing in diverse fields of study, including physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, mathematics, computer science, and engineering.

The MOU paves the way for T.I.P. to tap PAASE members as visiting professors who shall teach online courses in the school's undergraduate and graduate programs. The first priority under this term of the partnership is for PAASE industry experts to serve as online guest lecturers in T.I.P.'s Graduate Programs, such as in the Ph.D. in Computer Science and Professional Science Master's in Data Science programs.

"A primary objective of PAASE is to promote contacts and collaborations

PAASE-T.I.P. Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony



among Filipino scientists the world over and to help the Philippines in her efforts to advance science and engineering teaching and research in our country. Today's MOU directly supports this aim," explained Dr. Jose Cruz.

"Raising the economic welfare of the Philippines and the well-being of Filipinos would be more likely to occur with the wise application of science, technology, and innovation. This means a need for more computer scientists and data scientists. Formal degree programs in these fields are the quickest ways to reach critical mass in this sector of the workforce," Dr. Cruz added.

Additionally, T.I.P. may also tap PAASE members to serve as Research Fellows and Research Consultants for projects under T.I.P.'s innovation center called T.I.P. TechnoCoRe. As the engineering school's technopreneurship and collaborative

applied research thrust, T.I.P. TechnoCoRe enables T.I.P. researchers and faculty members to participate in nation-building and solution-generating efforts with the full support of the school. T.I.P. TechnoCoRe has most recently worked with eminent PAASE member Dr. Vince Faustino, an Intensivist at the Yale University School of Medicine, and other civil society groups for the SiglaVent Automated Emergency Ventilator project.

"Collaboration is the only way to go. This was the case before the pandemic, but now, even more so, during the pandemic. PAASE and T.I.P. have a common thrust in strengthening science and engineering teaching and research in the country. With our two organizations coming together, the possibilities are endless. I am in awe of PAASE's credentials and I look forward to a fruitful, working partnership with its members," concluded T.I.P. president Dr. Elizabeth Quirino-Lahoz.

Learn more about PAASE by visiting paase.org/about-paase. For more information on T.I.P. and T.I.P. TechnoCoRe, please visit tip.edu.ph or T.I.P.'s official social media accounts through @TIP1962official for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. You may also visit technocore.tip.edu.ph or email technocore@tip.edu.ph.

VeMoBro e-commerce platform levels up shopping, shipping experience

VeMoBro, a homegrown e-commerce platform, joins the country's e-commerce sector, guaranteeing businesses and customers convenience and efficiency to deliver today's "new essentials" with speed. The newcomer seeks to be the country's preferred essential shopping partner by taking on a new approach to digital shopping.

Launching at a time when Filipino consumers need more e-commerce options, this proudly all-Filipino brand emphasizes providing superior services to both online customers and sellers through its unique take on digital shopping and on the most critical aspect of e-commerce, which is logistics. Furthermore, VeMoBro commits itself to empowering Filipino retailers of all sizes, with a focus on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

Worry-free shopping with leveled-up shipping

Aware of the proliferation of fake products and online scams as online shopping gains more popularity, VeMoBro ensures the legitimacy of the products on its marketplace to protect both consumers and sellers. VeMoBro adopts fail-safe features to filter out fake sellers and implements a system that regulates and ensures accurate, easy-to-read product descriptions to deliver peace of mind while shopping.

VeMoBro Founder and CEO Engr. Vergil Bargola says, "VeMoBro's utmost mission is to create a platform that puts a high value on consumer trust. By carefully filtering out, investing in, and supporting legitimate sellers, we assure our customers that our platform does not only attend to their essential needs but also provides a safe e-commerce space."

The platform offers a wide array of "new essentials" comprising food and grocery items, home essentials, tech gadgets and accessories, and automotive products. VeMoBro's easy-to-use and clutter-free digital platform lets customers track their purchases in real-time.

With its strong logistics system, VeMoBro guarantees a standard 48-hour delivery, putting it ahead of the competition. Customers may even opt for same-day delivery with just a simple scroll and click with VeMoBro's wide range of partner delivery service providers.

Moreover, VeMoBro's flexible payment method provides customers with several payment options. They can opt for cash-on-delivery, online banking, or e-wallet payment through GCash, GrabPay, Coins.ph, and Dragonpay.

Another thing that sets VeMoBro's platform apart is its campaign for fair use between customers and sellers. Both parties in the transaction can rate each other on the site. While the review of sellers has been a long-known feature on online shopping sites, VeMoBro's platform encourages sellers to appeal and report faulty product reviews. Additionally, sellers can give reviews of customers so other merchants can be made aware of fraudulent customers or transactions.

E-commerce with the local community at its core

VeMoBro was created with the local community's needs at its core. As the Philippine economy rebounds from the pandemic, VeMoBro aims to empower local entrepreneurs by providing them with a platform where they can grow their business.

With this in mind, VeMoBro provides merchants with a seamless onboarding system, enhanced delivery service, and efficient customer service. Moreover, business owners can navigate the VeMoBro site smoothly while selling products, managing inventories, and getting sales analysis reports right at their fingertips.

Co-founder and COO Rain Ibajo shared, "One of our goals is to be a platform for growth. We understand how the pandemic took its toll on Filipino businesses, and we are here to work with them to achieve recovery. Whether you're an established brand or an aspiring start-up, you are welcome to join our growing list of partner merchants as we work together to succeed in this industry."

Amid a competitive industry, VeMoBro hopes to be a symbol of hope for Filipino consumers and businesses alike by providing a safe and secure e-commerce platform where consumers can have a quality online shopping experience and businesses can thrive and serve their customers.

Experience VeMoBro's "level up" promise by visiting <https://vemobro.com.ph/> today. VeMoBro's mobile application will also be available on the Google Play Store very soon.

First-time "suki" may also avail VeMoBro's special welcome deal promo. From January 27 until June 30, new customers will be entitled to a PHP 100 off on their first orders with a minimum spend of PHP 1,000. Customers will be provided with the promo code upon signing up on VeMoBro's website or mobile application.

ideaspace

kicks off 2021 with investments in agritech, circular living and sustainability tech, and workplace tech startups

Startup support organization IdeaSpace is closing its 2020 acceleration program with investments in three startups—agritech startup Agro-Digital PH, sustainability and circular living startup Humble, and workplace tech startup Workbean. The accelerator is investing Php1 million each in these three startups.

“These three teams have shown tremendous growth throughout the acceleration program. They address urgent and emerging problems while creating new opportunities for industries,” shared IdeaSpace President Butch Meily.

Agro-Digital PH aims to build a fairer ecosystem where the work of farmers is justly rewarded through developing the tools, knowledge, and networks necessary to leverage social organization in farmers’ groups and cooperatives, establish standards, and coordinate fulfillment. Humble works to help people practice circular living by taking things that people no longer want or need through online bookings for home collections, with the items being reused by non-profit organizations or upcycled into new pieces.

Workbean aims to be Asia’s largest directory of company cultures, helping professionals and companies find the best fit.

IdeaSpace’s 2020 acceleration cohort includes nine other startups: agritech startups Farmvocacy and Urban Greens; edtech startups CerebroLMS and Mash & Co.; medical e-marketplace MedHyve; nonprofit solutions provider Giving Hero, experience gift platform TADAH; outdoor engagement and local marketplace TakeFive Outdoors; and workplace tech Worky.ph. These startups were selected for the acceleration program after three rounds of judging and a six-week pre-acceleration program.

“This year’s batch has proven that the caliber of startups coming out of the Philippine ecosystem has been improving and that local startup support organizations are doing an excellent job at preparing startups for the next phase of their startup journey,” said IdeaSpace Executive



Director Diane Eustaquio. “We’re excited to support this cohort’s growth and development with resources from our donors and partners.”

IdeaSpace is now accepting applications for its 2021 program. The accelerator is looking for startups in the following spaces: agritech and foodtech, edtech (basic education, upskilling/reskilling, digital skills, coaching), healthcare, wellness, and wellbeing, e-commerce and logistics, media and entertainment, fintech, and B2B startups.

IdeaSpace will continue to hold a 100% virtual acceleration program for 2021, and it is also encouraging applications from Filipino founders based abroad who are looking to set up their business in the Philippines and do business with the Philippine market.

For more information on IdeaSpace and its startup support programs, interested applicants can visit ideaspacefoundation.org.



Data Privacy Training and Certification

The Association of Data Protection Officers of the Philippines (NADPOP), the Philippines' first organization for data privacy and protection, will train Filipino micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) that are members of the BounceBack PH (BBPH) movement on data privacy and protection fundamentals to help them manage the privacy of their customers online and offline.

"The shift of businesses online has exponentially increased the reach of MSMEs which brought a lot of opportunities, but at the same time, this increased the risk of their customer databases being breached by hackers," Sam Jacoba, NADPOP founding president said. "Most of these businesses have less than five full-time employees so we are going to provide BBPH members with world-class training and certification programs that they can anchor on with their online business transformation journey."

"We welcome this generous support to our MSME members from NADPOP as now more than ever, protecting the personal information of customers should be top of mind of all entrepreneurs going online," Jason Dela Rosa, founder of BBPH said. "We also welcome the scholarships that NADPOP is going to provide to our members who will not be able to afford the training especially during this time of the pandemic. We thank NADPOP for responding to the call of the Digital Bayanihan Initiative of BBPH, which aims to help our members be better than ever and shine through the pandemic."

NADPOP and BBPH will work together to identify the 100 recipients of the data privacy and protection training and certification program and will make the announcement in the coming weeks ahead. NADPOP and BBPH partner, Bluepoint Foundation will be providing the eLearning infrastructure for the program. Each of the scholarships is worth at least PHP 38,000 based on commercial rates.

"We will conduct four classes of 25 participants each after we've finished the selection process," Jacoba said. "Primarily, the scholarships will be given to

active members of BBPH and its communities, have an ongoing business, currently financially-challenged, diligent with their business requirements, and will implement what they will learn from the course. After the participants have finished the course, they will have to take a certification exam, and if they pass, they will gain a Data Privacy Specialist certification valid for two years."

"BBPH members who won't be selected for the 100 scholarship grants can still avail of NADPOP's Data Privacy training and certification program with a very competitive rate exclusive to active members of the community," Dela Rosa said. "All participants of the program will then be part of a Community of Practice of data privacy and protection practitioners, whom they can consult with as they continue with their online business transformation journey."

Those who are interested to work with NADPOP and BBPH on this program can send an email to privacy@nadpop.org.





The Oasis in a Desert

Q2 HR Solutions provides jobs to over 3,000 Filipinos amidst pandemic

Prior to joining Ninjavan as a sorter, Dominic Antido had a difficult time looking for jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it harder for job seekers like him to look for a stable income source as many businesses were cutting costs and freezing their hiring and onboarding processes.

The same went for Dennis Biason, who was unemployed for four months before joining Jazy Policrete as a warehouse and logistics manager. Prior, with the end of the pandemic almost nowhere in sight, it felt like there was no hope of

landing a job. Fortunately, like discovering an oasis in a vast stretch of desert, both Antido and Biason received job hunting support from Q2 HR Solutions, the leading recruitment and HR consulting company in the Philippines.

Through Q2 HR Solutions' People4People service, Antido was matched with NinjaVan and was able to meet and speak with their HR department through a phone interview. Upon his acceptance into the company, he was also able to easily submit his pre-employment requirements online.

"Q2's assistance created a positive impact on me during these challenging times. Even if you're financially struggling because of the pandemic,

they won't make you spend a single cent. They especially make the initiative of making the job hunting and onboarding processes easy in terms of what they need to submit to you and what you need to submit to them to land a new job," Antido said.

Similarly, Biason was matched with Jazy Policrete and was able to join the company in less than two weeks, which he considered fast given the employment crisis caused by the pandemic. After experiencing Q2 HR Solutions' professionalism and prompt service, he now recommends his unemployed colleagues to work with the HR consulting company as well.

Q2 is always here to help

Antido and Biason were just two of the over 3,000 lives that Q2 HR Solutions uplifted during the pandemic. NinjaVan and Jazy Policrete were also among the more than 130 companies that the Filipino firm assisted in terms of talent recruitment and onboarding.

In addition, Q2 HR Solutions supported its existing client base by conducting over 19,200 background verifications, making the talent recruitment process easier for companies looking to expand their workforce with trustworthy employees.

Even amidst a global crisis, Q2 HR Solutions was able to respond well to the needs of both employers and job seekers. Through one of its law-compliant solutions, People4People, the HR consulting company, was able to follow a 10-step people management cycle that ensures job seekers are properly matched with the best possible employers and vice versa. P4P's

steps are as follows: recruitment and selection, job offer and pre-employment requirements, job orientation with area supervisor, development to client/monitored by area supervisor, collection of DTRs, payroll processing, and issuance, billing to client, business reviews and report to client, separation, final pay, and COE issuance.

Additionally, Q2 HR Solutions wouldn't have been able to support their clients if it weren't for their quick turn around with their own operations during the pandemic. At the onset of the crisis, the company set up an effective work-from-home system for their employees and ensured that they could communicate and work effectively with each other despite the situation. They also created weekly town hall meetings where they provided all employees with updates about the company and their clients.

"These steps helped ensure that we would continue taking care of our clients. Excellence in

everything we do and uplifting lives are what we live by and strive to achieve on a daily basis," said Trixie Whyte, founder, chairwoman and president of Q2 HR Solutions.

Moving into 2021, Q2 HR Solutions vows to take lessons learned from the previous year and apply them as they continue coordinating with their clients and supporting their business. Whyte believes that supporting their clients who are pivoting and reviving their operations is critical for them to succeed. As the world adjusts to the new normal, it is now more important than ever to uplift the likes of Antido and Biason in finding jobs appropriate for their skills and needs in life, while helping businesses their organizational goals.

"As we continue our plans to grow the business, not just in the Philippines but globally, these conversations ensure that we remain top of mind. We will continue to pivot and thrive," Whyte added.

Expert Solves the Five Common Mistakes We Make With Our Personal Data

We live in a world surrounded by advanced technologies which are emerging every single day, and it has become clear over the past five years that smartphones, computers and tablets have (and will continue to) play a huge role in our lives.

Technology aims to make life easier, opening up a world of GPS location tracking and contactless payments directly from our smartphones. Whilst we expose our personal lives every day to these smart devices, we are in fact, making it easier for hackers to gain access and cause damage.

Since 2019, there have been at least 16 billion records of data breaches, including credit card numbers, home addresses, phone numbers and other highly sensitive data, resulting in criminals stealing over £1.2 billion through fraud and scams.

As today is Data Protection Day (Thursday 28th January) Elik Dermer, CEO and founder of Comparisun, business tool comparison site has highlighted the five most common mistakes we are making every day and his expert advice on how to avoid being hacked going forward.

Weak Passwords

One of the most common mistakes people are making every day is their choice of password.

By using the name of a pet or loved one, a street address, you are making it extremely easy for a hacker to find it out, as they can access your social media accounts and map out words and phrases related to your life. You should always create a strong password which contains letters (both upper and lower case), numbers and special characters.

People also tend to use the same password for all their logins (even if it's strong) and this is very dangerous because a hacker will try to log into several of your social sites and bank accounts if they get hold of it. Passwords should be changed at regular intervals.

Where you store your passwords is also very important. Those working in the office will write them in notebooks or sticky notes by their desk, there is always a risk of them being lost or stolen. Alternatively from those working from home, storing passwords on the notes page in your smartphone and tablet or in an email on your computer without using encryption is very risky, because if your device encounters a virus hackers can easily get hold of them.

Elik Dermer says, "LastPass is one of the best ways to protect your passwords, even if you are using one for a few sites (which you shouldn't) its AES-256 encryption tool makes it extremely safe."

To create a LastPass account, you'll have to create a strong master password, which is encrypted when you create it and cannot be recovered, so if any data leaks do happen, your master password won't be in that database.

Use anti-virus software

It seems like an obvious one, but antivirus software is so important nowadays, as you are always just one click away from a malicious website that will bug your laptop and potentially destroy files, steal personal information and damage your computer.

In 2018, there was a 270% increase in malware attacks on Apple systems, and whilst Malwarebytes breaks down where the most common kinds of malware found in personal users, there are the five types of malware and viruses to look out for:

1. **Adware:** a kind of malware that makes advertisements pop up on your screen without your permission
2. **Trojan Viruses:** a kind of virus that's packed inside a legitimate programme and that can be used to gain access to your device and your data. Because they're generally put into software that's legitimate and that you want to download they're particularly easy to get.
3. **Riskware Tool:** a kind of tool that hackers implant into your system and then can use against you.
4. **Backdoor:** a programme that enters your device and "leaves the backdoor open" so that hackers can get into your system.
5. **Hacktool:** similar to Riskware Tool, a tool that hackers send into your system that

Elik Dermer says, "One of the most common mistakes people make is not backing up data correctly. If a cyber-attack targeted you, files can be deleted. Always make sure you regularly back up your systems externally, off-site. This will cover you if you are targeted."

To protect your device, here are the best antivirus software packages this year: <https://www.techradar.com/uk/best/best-antivirus>

Update your operating system

Smartphone and computer brands will regularly make tweaks and changes to their operating software, as it helps patch security gaps and improve your device's overall performance.

Often we are notified we must perform this update at an inconvenient time, and therefore will procrastinate, however leaving it too late can leave your device vulnerable to hackers.

Elik Dermer says, "Ignoring signs for a software update can leave you vulnerable to an attack. Make sure any updates are installed regularly on your device to keep your information secure and protected. However, be wary of any suspicious activity - make sure the software update is from a trusted source."

To update your smartphone/ computer to ensure it's on the latest firmware, follow these steps:

- **Android:** Tap Settings, and then scroll to Software update. On some devices, you'll need to tap System to access the updates page. Tap Check for update.
- **Apple/ MacBook:** Open Settings, then head to General and tap Software Update. If there are updates ready to download, you'll need to be connected to the internet and have the phone plugged in, or have around 50% or more battery, to complete the download.
- **Windows:** Open the Control Panel. If using 'Small icons view', click the Windows Update option. If using the Category view, click the System and Security option, then click the Windows Update option. Windows Update checks for any available updates for your computer.

Responding to Phishing and Spearphishing

Phishing and spear phishing are very common forms of email attack. It happens when you click on a malicious link or attachment which has come from an untrustworthy source, often intending to steal data for malicious purposes. Here is how you can tell the difference between the two:

Phishing emails tend to look like official email, for example from a well-known delivery company saying that "Your package has been delayed, click here for details." By clicking the link, the malware might be downloaded onto your device, or you might go to a fake website where you're asked to enter your name, address, and social security number. That information would then be sold on the black market or used for fraud or identity theft.

Spear phishing is an email or electronic communications scam targeted towards a specific individual, organisation or business. Often intended to steal data, cybercriminals may also intend to install malware on a targeted user's computer.

Links in emails, social media posts and online advertising are often how cybercriminals try to steal your personal information. Even if you know the source, if something looks suspicious, delete it.

Elik Dermer says, "Take advantage of software that will detect and indicate malicious emails as spam. For example, Barracuda Essentials uses artificial intelligence to scan your email traffic to block malicious attachments and URLs, including those in phishing and spear-phishing emails."

Be wary of public WIFI

Using public wi-fi networks means you don't have to burn through your data allowance when out and about (once a day at the moment), but you still need to take care when using these free networks, as it's possible for an attack to happen when you're using unsecured wi-fi.

This is known as a 'man-in-the-middle' attack and involves a hacker intercepting your logins, passwords or financial information as you use wi-fi. Logging in to your bank or entering any credit card or personal details while using free networks is a no-go.

Elik Dermer says, "If you do need to check your bank account or make a payment, use your 3G or 4G connection instead as it is much more secure. Also, make sure your phone doesn't automatically try to connect to wi-fi."

You can turn it off using the steps below:

- **Android:** Swipe down from the top of the screen and tap the wi-fi symbol. It will show green when it's activated and grey when it's off.
- **Apple:** Swipe up from the bottom of the screen and tap the wi-fi symbol. A message will appear to tell you that you've turned off the wi-fi.

By following these five pieces of advice explained above, your personal data and devices will be far less likely to be targeted by threats, but remaining vigilant and on the lookout for unusual behaviour is always important to ensure you and your data stay safe.



Mastercard evolves contactless technology for quantum world



Delivering Enhanced Contactless for tomorrow and beyond

In a rapidly evolving and connected world, more and more consumers are looking for secure and fast payments, especially around touch-free, in-person purchases. Mastercard Ecos (Enhanced Contactless) helps issuers, acquirers and merchants deliver on these expectations, adding more security and privacy to contactless payments.



Mastercard announced it is applying the latest quantum-resistant technologies to develop the next generation of contactless payments so that consumers continue to enjoy high levels of security and convenience for decades to come.

The new Enhanced Contactless (Ecos) specifications are an industry-first and will help ensure contactless technology is future-proofed as the dynamic digital landscape evolves and new technologies like quantum computing are introduced.

The demand for faster, more convenient, safer and now cleaner ways to pay has driven the transition to contactless. This trend will only continue to grow. In fact, in the third quarter of 2020, contactless penetration represented 41% of in-person purchase transactions globally, up 30% from a year ago.

Mastercard has been spearheading the transition to contactless payments for years and developing specifications like Ecos to support industry standardization efforts and ensure the entire ecosystem benefits from higher levels of security.

"Contactless is the present and future of in-person payments. 2020 brought with it a rapid acceleration of digitization and reinforced the importance of digital solutions – like contactless – to help meet our everyday needs," said Ajay Bhalla, President, Cyber & Intelligence, Mastercard.

"As the ecosystem continues to evolve, more connected devices and the Internet of Things are going to create more user demand and an even greater need for constant innovation to build next-generation capability, helping to ensure that technology never outpaces trust."

With Ecos, consumers, merchants and financial institutions will benefit from:

- **Enhanced Convenience** – Over time, Mastercard envisions that the in-store shopping experience will become increasingly contactless-only. These new specifications will help ensure any device truly can be a payment device, while eliminating the need for a backup swipe or dip of a card.
- **Enhanced Trust** – Ecos leverages new

quantum-resistant technology to deliver next-generation algorithms and cryptographic key strengths while keeping the contactless interaction under half a second.

- **Enhanced Privacy** – The new specifications deliver advanced protection when account information is shared between the card or digital wallet and the checkout terminal. Ecos builds on the increased requirements to support various privacy regulations.

As the new specifications are activated over the coming years, consumers and merchants can expect a seamless transition. Digital wallets, mobile payments, contactless cards and point-of-sale terminals will continue to work as they do today.

Compatibility with Ecos and current contactless specifications is simple. Ecos works behind the scenes and is delivered via a software upgrade, meaning no new hardware or terminals are required. This investment complements similar ones in tokenization, 3-D Secure and Click to Pay, delivering a better consumer and merchant experience.



Study shows that Filipino Prosumers use purchasing power for activism

81% of Filipinos believe they have more influence on the society as a consumer than as a voter. This is according to "REACT," a Prosumer report presented by Red Havas, the PR arm of leading communications agency Havas Ortega.

A global initiative by the Havas Group, the Prosumer Report is a proprietary research tool that tracks the mindsets and behaviors of an emerging segment of influential individuals who are concerned about the impact of personal consumption on society and the planet. It surveys consumers across age groups, genders, locations, and income brackets in 32 countries. The findings and analyses are shared through a series of globally distributed thought-leadership publications and bite-sized yet compelling infographics. Launched over 10 years ago, the information and insights continue to be discussed online and have even been featured on leading business and technology sites and magazines Mashable and Fast Company.

"The immediacy of that influence is just faster as a consumer. In two seconds, you can influence a friend not to get a plastic straw for her drink, unlike with elections where you have to wait for months and years to see results," said Havas Ortega Group's communications strategist Gian dela Cruz as he presented the agency's findings.

Prosumers are those the agency considers as trendsetters. They are the first to try out new things and as such are the ones who are consulted by their peers for counsel and recommendations when it comes to brands, ideas, philosophies, and beliefs. The study, which was conducted in 2020, showed that 93 percent of these Filipino Prosumers think that it is their responsibility to make a difference in the world.

Filipino Prosumers have been included in the research only recently in 2016. Their changing relationship with consumption is the subject of Havas Ortega Group's recently launched report *Emerging Shifts in Filipino Consumption Mindsets* (from the global Havas Group's *The Meaningful Shift*). Top-line results from the latest study show that 97 percent consider themselves the first person they know to try the newest things; 88 percent are consulted by their social circles for recommendations on various topics; 80% are actively engaged in pop culture; 67 percent see their social media posts shared or re-posted by others.

This has led to consumer activism, a reflection of strong social movements that have been ignited in the past five years. "This is very evident in the digital space where calls for sustainable business and development through hashtags and young activists such as Greta Thunberg and Emma Watson are trending topics," said Charisse Vilchez, Red Havas Business Director.



Charisse Vilchez, Red Havas business director

"To help save the environment, 94 percent of Prosumers say that they are willing to consume less. It goes the same way for other issues this new generation cares about, like gender equality and mental health. That should serve as an impetus for fairer business practices and more advocacy-driven campaigns among brands," she added.

Another salient point in the study is that the Prosumers also feel that the government should step in with measures to curb pollution and waste. Important issues include finding an alternative to sending trash directly to landfills, banning single-use plastic and unnecessary packaging, banning the use of pesticides and fossil fuels, limiting air transport and cruises, and even banning cars from cities.

"We are proud to present this study because it gives hope for both brands and their consumers," said Jos Ortega, CEO of Havas Ortega Group. "With the REACT report, brands and even the government can take notice of what issues

matter most to Filipinos. The products and services that come out of this will make it easier for Filipinos to make responsible and ethical decisions, leading to a more meaningful connection between brands their consumers."

Announced in the Philippines on August 14, 2018, *Emerging Shifts in Filipino Consumption Mindsets* shares the Filipino-centric information and insights from the *The MEaningful Shift*, the global study from Havas Group that surveyed 12,168 people from 32 countries. The localized report covers 251 respondents and presents the changes in Filipino buying behavior, examines the current tension between the love of shopping and ownership with the desire to help the planet and its inhabitants. It reveals that Filipinos are moving to more mindful and meaningful consumption habits, which poses a challenge to organizations and brands to adapt practices and support issues that resonate with the market. It is the first Prosumer Report for the year and also the first time a Prosumer Report was launched in the country.



Acer PH opens flagship store



(L-R): Sm Supermalls president Steven Tan, Villman Computers president & CEO Manuel Villaroman Jr., and Acer PH general manager Sue Ong-Lim.



Acer laptops on display at the Acer flagship store in SM Megamall Cyberzone.



Acer products are displayed in a long table and shelves.



The Predator section comes in a striking sleek black interior all throughout.



Predator laptops and other products are available at the Acer flagship store.

The much-awaited flagship store of Taiwanese tech giant Acer officially opened at the SM Megamall Cyberzone last January 15, 2021.

This new tech haven will house the best products from Acer and Predator brands, in an interactive and customer friendly display, for an elevated shopping experience.

A sure eye-catcher for gamers and tech enthusiasts, the store is divided into two sections—one dedicated to Acer and the

other to Predator products. The Acer side reflects its minimalistic personality and is designed in light earthy tones with a long table and shelves where the products are displayed. On the other hand, the Predator half is done in a striking sleek black interior all throughout.

In observance of the existing health protocols, Acer requires each customer to wear a face mask and face shield, undergo a temperature check upon entrance, and fill up a health declaration form. Appropriate social distancing will be strictly followed as well.

“We are very excited for gamers and tech enthusiasts to come and experience what the Acer flagship store has to offer. It’s our first opening this 2021, and definitely not the last. We are optimistic that it will allow consumers to get to know our products better and eventually find the perfect device fit for their needs,” said Acer Philippines managing director Manuel Wong.

The formal store opening event was a success and was attended by executives from the ICT giant and its esteemed partners.



Epson establishes Open Innovation Center at Aizuwakamatsu in Japan

EPSON
EXCEED YOUR VISION



Seiko Epson Corporation has established its new Open Innovation Center research laboratory at the AICT ICT offices in Aizuwakamatsu in Japan, at which the company will work with partners to help find solutions to societal issues. Epson has also started participating in the Aizu Open Innovation (AOI) meeting through which it has begun collaborating with the University of Aizu.

Using the internet, cloud, and other digital networks, Epson aims to seamlessly integrate products such as printers, scanners, and projectors with services to offer solutions that help solve issues faced by society. Against a background of changing societal requirements due to the pandemic, the company is, in

particular, looking to create new value in more enriched experiences in lifestyles, learning, working, and the home.

Against this background, the city of Aizuwakamatsu has launched its Smart City Aizuwakamatsu program, at which it aims to harness ICT to foster the growth of a sustainable and revitalized city that supports fulfilled and comfortable lifestyles.

Epson established its new research laboratory after noticing significant synergies with the city's efforts to forge a partnership among the municipality, residents, and university to promote a digital transformation. Going

forward, the company will proactively participate in initiatives such as Smart City Aizuwakamatsu and the AOI meeting as it seeks to generate new value for society.

The pursuit of open innovation is an important aspect of the company's Epson 25 business plan. Epson's efforts to boost collaborations with partners to find solutions to societal issues began in May 2020 at WeWork Shibuya Scramble Square in Shibuya, Tokyo, a site where many startups and other businesses have operations. Moving ahead, the company aims to further strengthen an environment in which it can combine the technology, ideas, and expertise generated from a diverse range of markets and corporate cultures to solve issues in society.



Sun Life financial literacy webinars kick off for 2021

In a bid to help Filipinos achieve their financial goals this 2021, Sun Life Philippines opened the year with back-to-back free financial literacy webinars featuring wealth coach Chinkee Tan and tax expert Atty. Benedict Tugonon.



Sun Life

Over 800 participants joined Tan's virtual workshop entitled Changing Your Money Mindset held last January 16. Designed to be interactive, the event featured lectures such as Reasons Why Some People Are Unlikely to Succeed Financially and How to Reprogram Your Money Mindset for Success, as well as activities that prompted the participants to immediately apply the learnings. Tan, dubbed the Pambansang Wealth Coach, was a hit among the participants with his unique way of engaging the audience while imparting insightful lessons and tips through this financial literacy webinar.

Meanwhile, over 500 participants joined Atty. Tugonon's talk entitled Effective Tax Planning for SMEs and Family Businesses held on January 27. The event was aimed at empowering Filipino entrepreneurs as they navigate through the uncertainty caused by the prevailing pandemic. An internationally renowned subject matter expert, Atty. Tugonon earned praises from the audience for explaining technical matters in a clear and relatable way.

The two virtual events are among the many that financial literacy webinars that Sun Life will be holding this year.

"The new year presents a fresh start in the Filipinos' financial journey. We aim to be of help through learning sessions like these, along with quality advice from our advisors and relevant insurance and investment solutions," Sun Life chief marketing and client experience officer Gilbert Simpao said. "Sun Life is ready to be their lifetime partner in this pursuit."

Those who would like to stay updated about Sun Life's upcoming webinars and other events may follow @SunLifePH on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for updates.



Delta uses tech to empower employees, care for customers

Delta took the 2021 CES stage for the third consecutive year as Molly Battin, vice-president for global brand marketing, talked about Delta's efforts to use technology to better connect with employees and customers.

The panel, moderated by WIRED acting editor-in-chief Megan Greenwell, also featured CVS Health chief marketing officer Norman DeGreve, and IBM senior vice president for cognitive applications, blockchain and ecosystems Bob Lord.

Delta is currently working with CVS Health on a first-of-its-kind comprehensive COVID-19 employee testing program and has a long-time partnership with IBM, through which new tech like quantum computing is now being explored to enable even better customer experiences throughout travel. Together, the trio discussed a range of timely topics, from how COVID-19 has impacted customer expectations to how each company is using tech to guide smarter decisions as we emerge from the pandemic.

While COVID-19 has changed the world, Delta's customer-focused approach remains true. "We are listening closely to customers and looking at ways we can pull new technology and innovation into everything we are doing to create a more seamless experience," said Battin.

The session comes one year after Delta CEO Ed Bastian made history as the first airline CEO to

deliver the opening keynote at CES, where he showcased Delta's vision for the future of travel. And in 2019, Bastian joined IBM CEO Ginny Rometty for her opening keynote.

While much of the panel was focused on technology enabling business, Battin also shared Delta's successes in using technology to power its greatest differentiator — the Delta people. It's a theme that has long been part of Delta's strategy to reduce the number of transactional interactions employees have with customers so they can deliver more meaningful and human interactions instead.

"When we think about technology at Delta, it's about putting the human touch first," Battin said. "We are looking at all the ways we can use technology to empower our people to have more personal connections."

Battin also reiterated Delta's approach to emerging from the pandemic stronger than before by pulling the future forward whenever possible. Among the proof points she highlighted were accelerating the retirement of older, less fuel-efficient fleets and fast-tracking work to bring the future of in-flight entertainment to life.

While Delta's focus in 2020 pivoted to providing a safe experience for essential travel throughout the pandemic, delivering on other customer-centric investments—like faster Wi-Fi, personalized in-flight entertainment, and other innovations Delta debuted



Molly Battin, VP-global brand marketing, Delta Airlines

at CES last year—remain on its roadmap. Delta recently finalized a partnership with high-speed Wi-Fi provider Viasat and took steps to launch a Delta-developed Wi-Fi access portal that will dramatically change how customers interact online from the air.

Other highlights from the last year include:

- Launching the industry's first domestic digital identity test in the U.S., giving customers the option to move through the airport faster and more easily by building on its existing facial recognition technology
- Taking the stress out of planning with a new interactive travel map that details what customers need to know about quarantine and entry restrictions at their destination
- Installing high-tech Vuv antimicrobial LED lighting above high-touch sinks and countertops in lavatories to enhance surface cleanliness



Shopee training and apprenticeship programs groom Filipino talents as e-commerce leaders



Shopee, the leading e-commerce platform in Southeast Asia and Taiwan, continues to power the next generation of e-commerce leaders in the country through in-depth training and apprentice programs.

Reports show that e-commerce in the Philippines is estimated to reach USD12-billion by 2025. To scale their businesses and seize opportunities in the growing e-commerce landscape, companies are constantly looking to hire and retain talents to ensure their product offerings and solutions can meet the needs of the consumers.

To help Filipinos prepare for and adapt to the new normal, Shopee offers three initiatives that aim to shape and improve Filipinos' tech skills in various fields of e-commerce. These include the Shopee Apprentice Program, Global Leaders Program, and the Shopee Code League.

Global Leaders Program

The Global Leaders Program, launched in 2018, is a 2-year graduate program consisting of four 6-month local and overseas rotations, designed for highly enthusiastic and ambitious young Filipino talents. Participants will help drive Shopee's campaigns and new initiatives by working with local and overseas teams. Not only will they gain eye-opening experiences and regional exposure, but they will also contribute to the expansion of Shopee across the region.

Throughout the program, participants will receive dedicated mentorship from Shopee leaders and a structured learning and development program. Participants will graduate from the program with

significant professional and personal growth, which will enable them to excel in their careers in the e-commerce industry.

Shopee Apprentice Program

The Shopee Apprentice Program is a newly-launched internship program in the Philippines, specially designed to build high-performing talents through high-impact projects, specialized learning & development training, and mentorships by Shopee leaders. The program provides interns with tools and programs to launch integral initiatives, and enables them to start making a difference in the e-commerce and tech industry.

Accepted participants for the 2021 Shopee Apprentice program will also receive mentorship from Shopee's leaders, hold key roles in projects that will enhance business operations, and get a real taste of what Life at Shopee is all about. Outstanding performers during the Shopee Apprentice Program can fast-track their paths to the Shopee Global Leaders Program's selection round.

Shopee Code League

The Shopee Code League initiative, launched in 2020, is an online coding competition that offers training workshops to students and professionals across the region. Shopee's tech teams specially designed the challenges, ranging from data analytics to data science. Participants must analyze the data set, draw insightful conclusions, and solve the problems in a specified amount of time.

The competition is open to pre-tertiary, undergraduates, post-graduates, and professionals from all fields keen to show off their coding skills. Interested coders can now apply for this year's competition.

As the leading e-commerce company in Southeast Asia and Taiwan, Shopee continues to build a trusted platform that provides consumers with their everyday needs through an engaging online shopping experience, entertaining in-app features, and a secure and convenient payment option through its mobile wallet, ShopeePay. Shopee also believes in the need for executional excellence, which is made possible by finding and shaping local talents that will push these innovations forward.

Martin Yu, director at Shopee Philippines, said, "As an e-commerce industry leader, it is not just as a responsibility, but a privilege to support the next generation of Filipino talents. Shopee believes in the potential of every Filipino aspiring to work in e-commerce, and we want to strengthen their skills to help drive economic growth. We don't stop with these programs; the learning culture that each Shopee employee enjoys is a big part of how we mold our leaders. We are excited to have even more young talents benefit from these programs and initiatives."

To ensure that high-potential Filipino talents have direct access to these programs, Shopee has reinforced its search for future e-commerce leaders with its career website and dedicated Facebook page.



Converge ICT beats other providers in Netflix's ISP Speed Index

Popular streaming service, Netflix, has long taken the Philippines by storm. With content ranging from animated movies perfect for kids and kids-at-heart, works from talented local filmmakers, to feel-good K-dramas, more and more Filipino subscribers are hooked to Netflix.

As an online streaming service, availing a Netflix subscription and enjoying the millions of hours of its content, uninterrupted and in the highest possible quality, require a stable internet connection for subscribers to fully enjoy their viewing experience.

Netflix's ISP Speed Index is designed to measure which ISPs provide the best prime time Netflix streaming experience.

Great quality streaming is synonymous with Netflix, the online streaming service has come up with its own index to reveal which ISP performs the best and can most likely let a subscriber best enjoy their time on Netflix. Read more about the Netflix ISP Speed Index here.



Why is this important? Because Netflix's stories are best delivered on a strong internet network, which is not only about speed but also about latency, jitter and packet loss. Absent this, video viewers will have issues with buffering, pixelization, etc. Moreover, there is now a lot of 4K or UHD content on Netflix which provides a much better immersive viewing experience but requires more bandwidth. On its website, Netflix recommends a minimum of 25Mbps for 4K video which is very well supported

by Converge's recent permanent free speed upgrades where its entry level P1,500 plan is now at 35Mbps from the previous 25Mbps.

According to the December 2020 Netflix ISP Speed Index, the latest local iteration, Converge tops the board at 3.4 Mbps. Converge has been leading the Philippine ISP leaderboard for the last 6 months as can be seen from the ISP Leaderboard website.



Globe paves way for Our Lady of Manaoag devotees to continue pilgrimage, business online

The Our Lady of Manaoag church in Pangasinan has welcomed hundreds of thousands of devotees. As the pandemic restricted movement decreasing the number of visitors on-site, Globe has paved the way for devotees and vendors in the area to continue their devotions and attend masses online, thanks to improved internet connectivity.

The telco continues to upgrade its sites and improve its network infrastructure to fulfill its commitment to have a 4G LTE, 5G-ready network.

"Nakakatulong — malakas ang naitutulong ng cell site kasi kahit nasaan ka, pwede kang mag manood, mag-misa kahit saan). (It helps — a cell site strongly helps because wherever you are, you may watch online masses anywhere)," said Dolores Villanueva, a Manaoag devotee and vendor, who is able to attend online masses even while watching over her shop.

Globe's aggressive network expansion, which included the upgrading of 10,876 sites to 4G/LTE, has significantly improved the Philippines' 4G experience even during peak hours. This was evident in a report of international mobile analytics firm Opensignal covering August to October 2020*, which showed the Globe network's significant improvements in 4G Download Speeds, 4G Latency Experience and 4G Video Experience.



Dolores Villanueva, Manaoag devotee

In terms of 4G Download Speeds, Opensignal found that Globe peaks at over 19 mbps with average 4G Download Speeds observed by users over the course of the day being more than sufficient for web browsing and apps usage. For Latency Experience, Globe is likewise inching closer to competition with its best score peaking at a low of 36ms (lower score is better) within the day. According to the report, Latency "is a measure of the time it takes for data packets to travel across the network between a user's mobile phone and the servers that host mobile apps and websites."

Globe's 4G Video Experience is likewise pulling up consistently with a maximum score of 50. 4G

Video Experience measures network quality for streaming HD or SD videos on platforms like Youtube and other video on demand apps.

"Diretso 'yung panonood ko. Umpisa hanggang sa matapos ang misa. (I can watch straight, from the start until the end of the mass)," added Villanueva.

Globe strongly supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly UN SDG No. 9 which highlights the roles of infrastructure and innovation as crucial drivers of economic growth and development. Globe is committed to upholding the 10 United Nations Global Compact principles and 10 UN SDGs.



PH posts most improved 5G video experience, among most improved in 5G Download Speed -Opensignal

Emerging markets such as the Philippines have posted the biggest improvements in mobile experience with 5G, according to independent mobile analytics firm Opensignal.

In its latest 5G Insight "Benchmarking the global 5G experience", which covered the period Oct 1 to Dec 29, 2020, Opensignal found that the Philippines was among countries that posted the greatest improvements in Download Speed and Video Experience with 5G.

According to Opensignal, 5G Video Experience in the Philippines was at 77.1, 40% more than its 4G Video Experience, topping the list of the world's most improved countries in terms of 5G Video Experience, which included Thailand, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, United Kingdom and Australia. Meanwhile, 5G Download Speed in the Philippines was at 117.2 Mbps.

To elevate its quality of service to be at par with other countries, mobile services provider Smart Communications, Inc. (Smart), wireless arm of the Philippines' leading integrated telco PLDT, is further ramping up its 5G deployment, as well as improving its product and service offers.

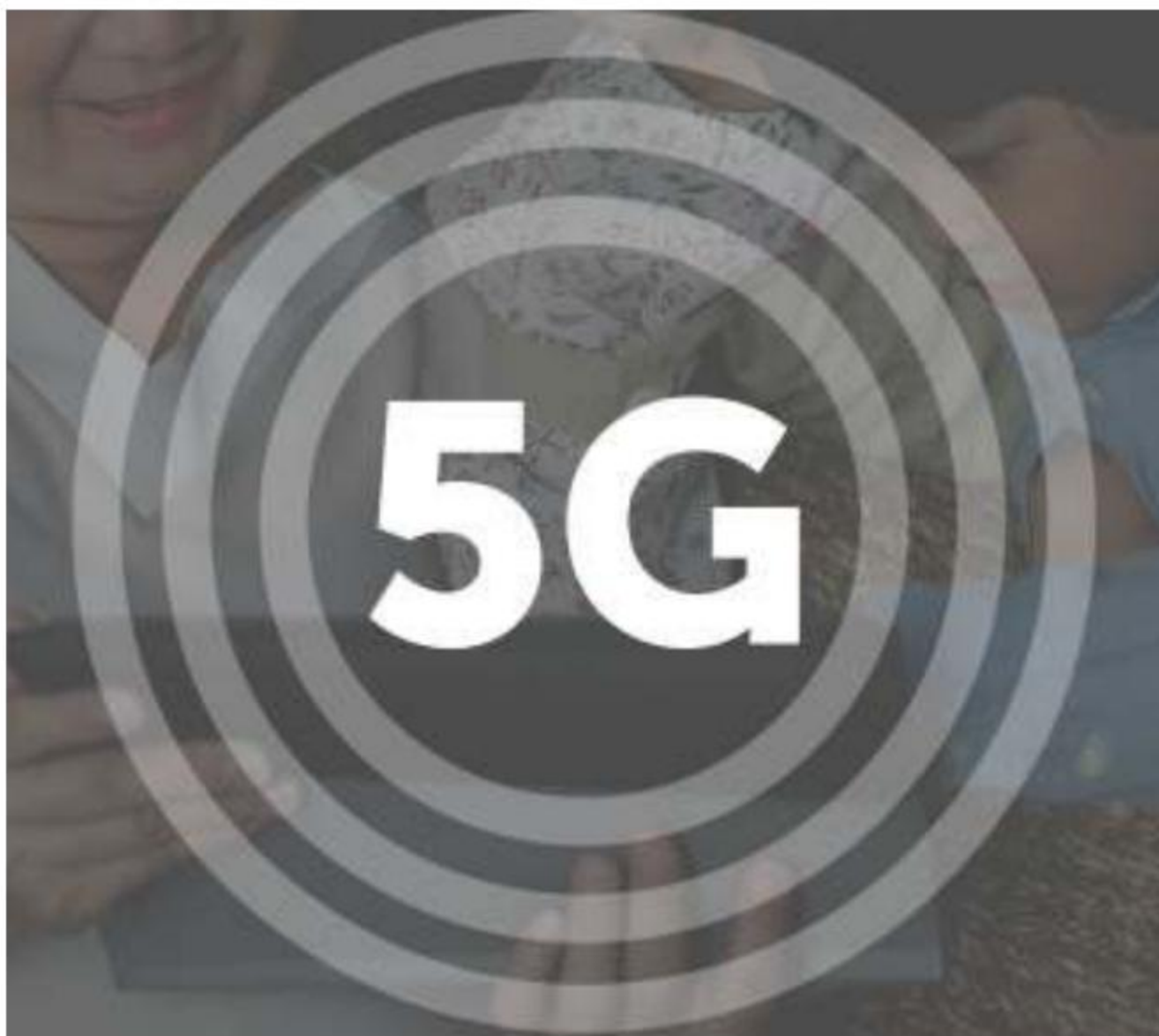
Recently, Smart fired up 5G in Malacanang Park, where a recent internal test using a Smart 5G-certified handset showed Smart 5G speeds breaching 720 Mbps.

"This is testament to our commitment in providing a superior data network and the most relevant content to make the experience of our customers better than anybody can offer," said Alfredo S. Panlilio, Smart Communications President and CEO and PLDT Chief Revenue Officer, adding that Smart's commercial 5G rollout has opened the door to a higher level of customer experience.

"This year, we said we will invest more than P90 billion for network investments, so that we can continue to improve customer experience," Panlilio said. "With this, we are making the Philippines' fastest mobile network--as recently awarded by another third-party analytics firm Ookla--even faster with 5G."

Mario G. Tamayo, Head of Technology for PLDT and Smart, said these network investments over the past years have allowed PLDT-Smart to level up customer experience using the latest technologies available.

"Over the years, we have invested in providing our customers with the best LTE experience, which is the most pervasive in the Philippines right now in terms of both network and device. Moving forward, our 5G rollout will build on this LTE network to provide an even better experience to our customers," Tamayo said.



These latest developments are part of Smart's strategy in deploying 5G across the country. Smart, which launched its 5G service commercially in July, was the first to roll out Smart 5G nationwide.

In December, Smart unveiled its new Signature 5G Plans, which are specially designed with generous data allocations to unlock the capabilities of Smart 5G's superfast speeds, ultra-low latency, and higher efficiency.

Smart also recently upgraded its Smart Signature SIM-Only Plans by exclusively bundling them with a Netflix Mobile Plan subscription to provide better experience to customers and more relevant content.

5G milestones

Smart is at the forefront of the 5G revolution in the Philippines with the continued nationwide roll-out of its ultrafast 5G network, which includes strategic sites in Metro Manila, Boracay, Cavite, Cebu, Davao, Iloilo, Laguna, New Clark City in Pampanga, and Rizal.

Recently, Smart with its technology partners Ericsson, Huawei and a leading 5G smartphone vendor, also successfully tested 5G Carrier

Aggregation (CA), making it one of the first mobile operators in Asia Pacific to test CA in the live 5G network. CA combines two or more separate bands of radio frequencies to create a bigger pipe for even faster data rates, increasing the capacity thus improving the overall 5G user experience.

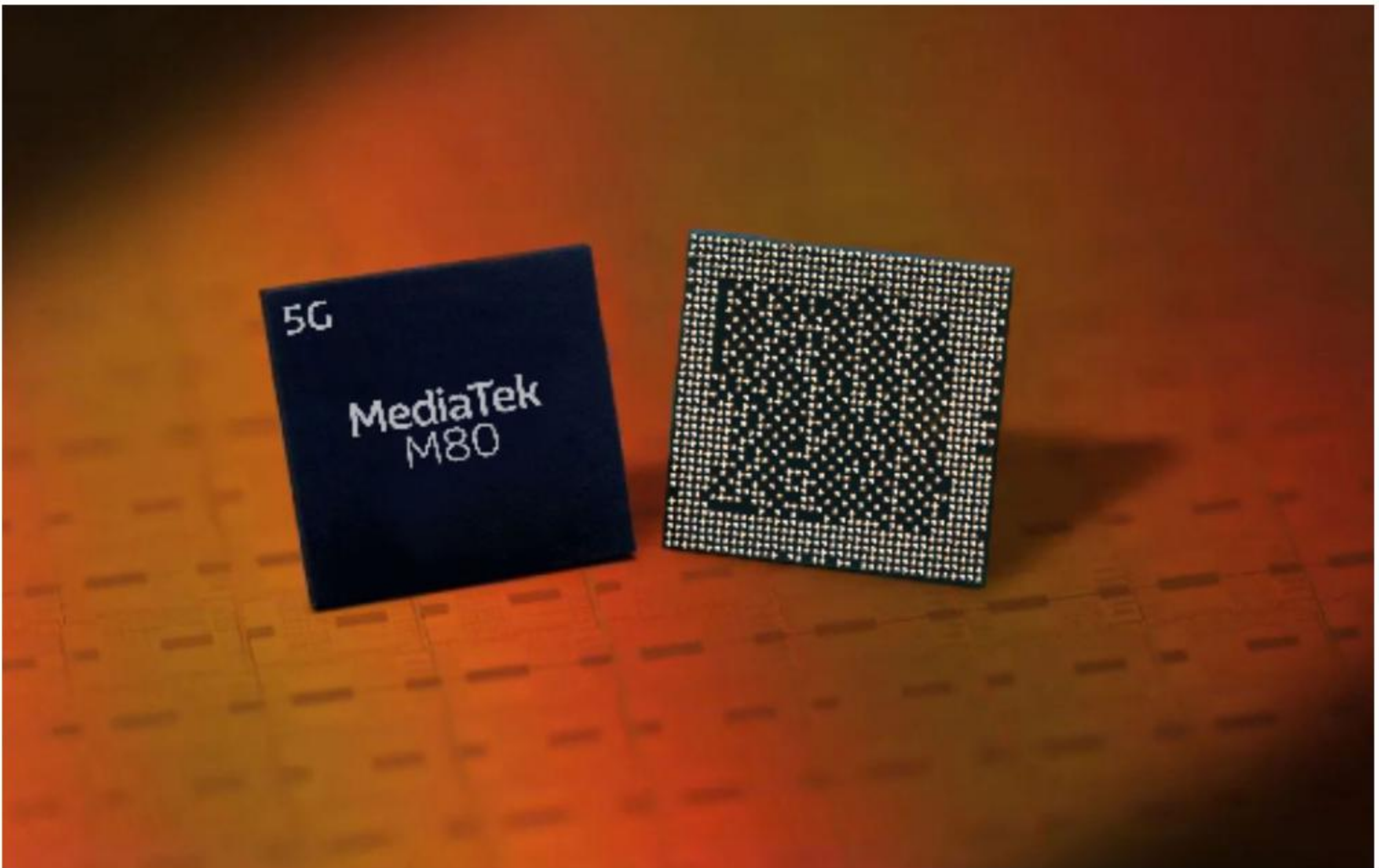
5G has been embedded in Smart's network planning over the past five years, with Smart conducting tests with 5G starting in 2016.

In 2018, it fired up the country's first 5G base stations in Makati with Huawei and the Clark Freeport Zone in Pampanga with Ericsson. In 2019, Smart also launched the first Smart 5G Lifestyle hub and 5G-enabled shopping mall in Araneta City, as well as the first Smart 5G campus at the Ateneo de Manila University with Nokia. These multi-vendor collaborations bring global use cases for Enterprise customers to innovate and fast-track their digital transformation journey.

It also recently fired up 5G at the Gariath Concepts esports venue in Quezon City, the first 5G-powered esports hub in the country, and at the TV5 Media Center in Mandaluyong City, the first 5G Media City. It also recently brought the country's first 5G-powered sports broadcast at the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) in Clark Freeport in Pampanga.



MediaTek Unveils New M80 5G Modem with Support for mmWave and Sub-6 GHz 5G Networks



MediaTek has announced its new M80 5G modem which combines mmWave and sub-6 GHz 5G technologies onto a single chip. The M80 supports ultra-fast speeds on both non-standalone (NSA) and standalone (SA) architectures, with a peak rate of 7.67 Gbps in the downlink and 3.76 Gbps in the uplink. The M80 also supports dual 5G SIM, dual 5G NSA and SA networks, and dual Voice over New Radio (VoNR) for more reliable connectivity.

"As 5G rollouts accelerate, mmWave is becoming increasingly important, especially in the U.S. MediaTek's new 5G modem integrates support for both sub-6 GHz and mmWave networks to address this opportunity and give device makers more flexibility," said JC Hsu, Corporate Vice President and General Manager of MediaTek's Wireless Communications Business Unit. "To advance users' 5G experiences, the new modem supports the latest global cellular standards and specifications and it packs MediaTek's signature power savings technologies along with ultra-fast speeds."

MediaTek's 5G modems are ideal for a range of devices, including smartphones, PCs, Mi-

Fi hotspots, broadband customer premise equipment (CPE), industrial IoT applications and more. MediaTek's first generation 5G modem, the M70, is built into MediaTek's Dimensity series of powerful and power-efficient chipsets for 5G smartphones. The company's 5G portfolio also includes the MediaTek T700, which will power 5G PCs set to hit the market in 2021, along with MediaTek's T750 chipset for 5G fixed wireless access routers (FWA) and mobile hotspot devices.

The M80 has been tested against industry standards and is expected to sample with customers later in 2021. It offers operators around the world support for a full range of radio access technologies:

- 3GPP Release 16 standard
- Sub-6 GHz and mmWave dual connectivity and carrier aggregation
- 5G NR (FR1) with more than two carrier aggregation
- 5G mmWave (FR2) up to 8CC
- 5G carrier aggregation with Mixed Duplex (TDD + FDD)
- Dynamic spectrum sharing (DSS) ready
- 4G LTE Cat-19 DL up to 5CC

The M80 integrates MediaTek's 5G UltraSave technologies which improve on the single-chip design to provide another layer of extensive power-saving enhancements. MediaTek's UltraSave Network Environment Detection and UltraSave OTA Content Awareness technologies dynamically adjust power configuration and operating frequency based on the network environment. The M80 also integrates MediaTek's Dynamic Bandwidth Part (BWP) technology which is designed to optimize bandwidth use to accommodate light or heavy data throughput requests. Additionally, with the M80's Connected Mode DRX (C-DRX) technology the modem will regularly remain powered in connected standby even when there is no data activity.

MediaTek works closely with operators and partners around the world to bring consumers faster and more reliable 5G experiences. As a result, company's 5G technology has been validated by operators in more than 100 markets. MediaTek is also a founding member of the OpenRF Association, which was founded to help to speed up time-to-market for 5G device manufacturers with interoperable 5G RF Front-End (RFFE) solutions.



Lenovo's EdVision empowers educators to expand online teaching capabilities

Six different distance learning solution-based scenarios, offered

- Lenovo offers tech assistance to the education sector amid shift to online learning.
- Teachers must be provided with utmost support as they play a vital role in maintaining quality education during this period.
- A customer-centric set of solutions is key in achieving the highest potential of online learning for both teachers and students.

The Philippine education sector was met with new challenges, having been driven to completely transition to online learning this academic year. To assist the sector and create various solutions for its differing needs, global tech innovator Lenovo developed the EdVision program, in collaboration with Microsoft.

"Lenovo makes sure that the learning experiences of students are prioritized even as learning has moved to digital. We address the struggles of the teachers as we believe that they play a crucial role in maintaining quality education through the online platform. It may be tough, but with the right tech and support from education institutions, both teachers and students can achieve the optimal distance learning experience even amid the pandemic," said **Michael Ngan, Lenovo Philippines President and General Manager.**

Lenovo worked closely with Microsoft to create education software solutions that power the successful implementation of e-learning by enabling innovation and transformation that is centered on ease of understanding, flexibility, productivity, and collaboration of users.

"Our nation-building agenda for the Philippines, which we call Microsoft Para sa Bayan, aims to create positive impact for 25 million Filipinos over the next three years by accelerating digital transformation, building coalitions for responsible innovation, and closing critical digital skills gaps with increased digital literacy and improve employability. Collaborating with Lenovo, we are able to scale up our efforts and through this particular initiative, provide training and development resources to help educators and students develop future-ready skills. Microsoft and Lenovo have the shared belief that technology has the power to transform education and achieve better learning outcomes," said **Joanna Rodriguez, Public Sector Director, Microsoft Philippines.**

Lenovo and Microsoft collaborated with educators to fully understand from an institutional perspective the challenges of this significant step in the education sector's digital transformation journey. EdVision enriches smarter education by offering not only tangible solutions to the demands of online education, but also knowledge



to effectively deliver learning in the new normal. It involves six solution-based distance learning setups or scenarios that are best utilized with Microsoft's suite of collaboration platforms:

• **Basic laptop-and-webcam setup**

The simplest and most budget-friendly option, in this scenario, the educator teaches from home with a notebook and a webcam while students learn from home using a notebook/PC or tablet. Utilizing reliable unified communications (UC) platforms such as Microsoft Teams among participants is vital in this environment to fully maximize learning.

• **Small, medium, or large room**

Institutions that can provide their teachers with their own room for teaching can benefit well under these setups. With three different room sizes, this scenario involves a maximum of three TVs or monitors, a notebook or tablet, webcam, Teams, and the Lenovo ThinkSmart Hub 500 running the Teams Rooms experience. The Lenovo ThinkSmart Hub 500 comes pre-installed with Microsoft Teams Rooms, an experience that keeps everyone engaged whether they're joining a meeting in-person or from home by creating the ultimate hybrid collaboration experience. Thanks to Teams Rooms, the ThinkSmart Hub 500 is an easy-to-use device scalable for all room sizes and can easily project three displays onto different screens through an integrated touch control. These displays may include the PowerPoint presentation or teacher's screen, the participants in the session, and the speaker.

• **Professional trainer setup**

Designed for teachers, trainers, and even managers, this setup involves a more comprehensive home office where teachers can combine technology with classroom equipment to better recreate the customary ways of learning. By using a notebook, monitor, webcam, and a whiteboard with a dedicated content camera, teachers may more smoothly present ideas live to their students as this set of equipment allows them to teach as they did in physical classrooms. Teams Rooms enables user-friendly collaborative features on the Lenovo ThinkSmart Hub, allowing teachers to efficiently manage their Teams video conferences.



• **Classroom or lecture hall**

Developed for teachers who can teach in a classroom or lecture hall, this setup suggests taking advantage of available school utilities such as whiteboards and pairing it with auto-tracking cameras with deep learning for high precision body tracking so that no matter which way the teacher moves, the camera still captures them in a focused way for the benefit of students joining online. This scenario is best met with a ThinkSmart Hub 500 running Teams Rooms, to enable students to feel like they are learning from an actual classroom setting.

• **Virtual instruction (Green screen setup)**

For teachers who want to increase student engagement, the virtual instruction setup proposes that they create a virtual classroom environment by using live production tools such as a high-resolution camera and production software. Teachers can project themselves as news anchors in a TV studio or whatever and wherever their creativity takes them. This solution includes various tech devices that will allow distance learning facilitators to easily manage the whole production. Live productions such as this may also be published simultaneously in platforms like Facebook and YouTube via Teams as necessary.

• **Moveable video conference kit**

This setup was developed for teachers who need to constantly move from one room to another when facilitating teaching online. To achieve this, tech equipment such as webcam, monitor, and Teams Room control console are ideally mounted on a wheeled stand, while a separate wheeled stand is dedicated to a physical whiteboard or TV to enable mobility and for more comfortable teaching.

"In the past months, people's need for technology to meet basic needs, including education, has grown exponentially. Lenovo brings smarter technology, bundled with services, to the education sector to help it address the challenges ahead. We design with purpose to meet their needs and ensure that teachers are as productive and connected to their students as possible. While the shift to online learning is a thorough process, Lenovo strives to empower the sector with technology and opportunity to eventually equip students with the digital skills they need in preparation for the jobs of the future," said Ngan.



The Garmin Instinct Esports Edition is designed for gamers with its dedicated esports activity tracker

Garmin Philippines announces the Instinct Esports Edition, a rugged GPS smartwatch uniquely designed for esports athletes and enthusiasts to take their gaming performance to the next level. Using Garmin's proven health and fitness tracking technologies, the Instinct Esports Edition uses a dedicated esports activity function to track and analyze heart rate and stress during play, as well as offer long-term trend analysis.

Garmin's new STR3AMUP! PC streaming tool also provides Instinct users the ability to livestream biometric data to audiences for a new streaming experience. And with over three days of battery life in esports mode, users can make the most of their playing time.

"Elite athletes around the world depend on Garmin products to monitor and improve their performance. With the Instinct Esports Edition, esports athletes can tap into that same technology to track and examine how their body responds to intense competition," said Scoppen Lin, director, Garmin Asia. "Players can also use Instinct's data to make adjustments in their daily lives, whether it be altering sleep patterns or activity levels, which can result in increased cognitive and physical performance during play."

The Instinct Esports Edition is purpose-built to military standards (MIL-STD 810), yet its exceedingly lightweight design provides a distraction-free gaming experience. It provides up to 80 hours of battery life in esports mode and up to 14 days in smartwatch mode for less time charging and more time gaming. Instinct's bold black and red colors, high-contrast display, and rugged design bring to life a non-traditional smartwatch. When paired with a compatible smartphone, Instinct also provides smart notifications such as email, texts, and alerts to a user's wrist so they can stay connected both during and outside of gameplay.

Dedicated esports activity profile

Prior to a match, users simply select the esports activity on Instinct. Once activated, Garmin's proven wrist-based heart rate technology analyzes and displays a user's heart rate and stress level in addition to the time of day and a game timer. Similar to other athletic competitions, actively monitoring stress and heart rate in real-time can provide the opportunity to manage physical and mental resources for more effective and focused competition. Once a gaming session has ended, users can sync their activity to the free Garmin Connect app to view, store and analyze their data to see how their body reacts in different gaming situations.

STR3AMUP! livestream biometrics

When using the esports activity, players can utilize Garmin's new STR3AMUP! PC streaming



tool to broadcast heart rate, stress level, and Body Battery live, and embed this data into their video streams or recordings using customizable overlays. Displaying these metrics allows players to interface with their audience and showcase — in real-time — the physical and mental demands of competitive play. STR3AMUP! allows audiences to be further engaged with their favorite player or team.

Body metrics tracking

Designed with an emphasis on elite-tier competition, the Instinct Esports Edition provides a variety of valuable body metric analytics features, so users can analyze and fine-tune how their body reacts to competitive play. These include:

- **Wrist-Based Heart Rate** – Get heart rate data along with alerts if a user's heart rate stays too high or too low while at rest, and gauge how hard their heart is working during specific gaming moments.
- **Advanced Sleep Monitoring** – Users get a full picture of how they sleep with a breakdown of light, deep, and REM sleep stages. This allows users to interpret and make lifestyle modifications for more focused play.
- **Stress Tracking** – Using Garmin's heart rate variability, the Instinct Esports Edition can calculate an individual's stress level score, allowing them to optimize stress management to conserve mental and physical resources.
- **Body Battery Energy Monitor** – Uses heart rate, stress, and sleep data to determine how much energy a user has, letting them know

when to play and when to rest.

- **30+ sports apps and robust activity tracking** – Users can train with preloaded activity profiles outside the gaming world. For athletes who want to monitor performance even further, an optional Heart Rate Monitor chest strap is available for purchase separately.

Partnership with Tier One Entertainment

Garmin Philippines has confirmed a partnership with Tier One Entertainment, the first esports talent agency in Southeast Asia, for an upcoming collaboration with a few esports personalities. They get to prove their grit and fight it out in a game of Valorant while donning the new Instinct Esports Edition watch, tracking, and broadcasting their biometric data for their audiences. This collaboration will take place in the first quarter of the year. It will be streamed live on the Facebook pages of AMPLFY, the personalities, and Garmin Philippines.

"Through this partnership with Garmin, we can show that esports is more than just playing the game; it requires mental and emotional strength, as well as physical readiness," said Brian Dacanay, director of commercial partnerships, Tier One Entertainment. "With the Instinct Esports Edition watch, our talents will get to broadcast their biometrics data for the audiences while they are livestreaming. We look forward to delivering more exciting esports livestreaming experiences for our audiences."

The latest innovation from Garmin, the Instinct Esports Edition is available now for a suggested retail price of PHP16,995 in all Garmin Brand Stores, official Garmin online stores: Lazada, Shopee, Zalora, **Kinetic.com.ph** and Garmin PH Viber Community.



OPPO door-to-door service for convenient repairs

OPPO has launched a Door-to-Door Service to deliver a hassle-free and safer repair service, especially during the pandemic. All OPPO smartphone users in the National Capital Region (NCR) can avail of the free door-to-door delivery repair service to/from SM Manila, SM North, Novaliches, Alabang, Ayala Manila Bay, and Marikina Service Centers.

These days, a reliable smartphone is essential to easily connect with loved ones, binge-watch your favorite series, or play mobile games. A simple tiny crack on your screen or even a battery life slowly declining can affect your smartphone experience and cause inconvenience. When things go wrong with your OPPO phone, you want a repair service that's hassle-free and safe.

"OPPO is always finding ways to cater to the needs of our smartphone users. Our latest Door-to-Door service is part of our commitment to give OPPO users the best after-sales service that we can offer especially during this trying time by bringing safety and convenience to their doorstep," says

OPPO Service Center

DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICE

Bringing free service to your doorstep!*

*SM Manila, SM North, Novaliches, Alabang, Ayala Manila Bay, Marikina



Mr. Aaron Guevarra, assistant after sales director of OPPO Philippines.

For more details, check out OPPO's official website or <https://support.oppo.com/ph/service-center/> to check for the Metro Manila Service Center nearest you. Make sure to call or message the Facebook messenger of the nearest

service center to you. Once confirmed, an OPPO representative will then proceed to collect, repair, and return your gadget, assisting you throughout the whole process.

To know more about the latest updates of OPPO, visit the official website or the official Facebook page at OPPO Philippines.



The new vivo Y31 is a sleek gaming smartphone

Global smartphone brand vivo powers up both fun and productivity with the release of its latest gaming smartphone, the vivo Y31.

The newest addition to the global smartphone brand's Y-series has an exciting list of updates to make this latest release a definite step-up from its predecessor—from the faster processor and longer battery life to flagship-like camera features—making it an unrivaled choice at an affordable price.

Designed for efficiency and versatility, the Y31 runs on the latest Qualcomm Snapdragon 662 octa-core processor, a performance-defining processor that operates on Android 11 for a further enhanced entertainment experience. It also has a significantly longer-lasting run time with a 5000mAh battery, conveniently supported with an 18W fast charger, for uninterrupted use.

Also staying true to its aim of matching its users' taste and dynamism, the vivo Y31 is equipped with a 48-megapixel main camera to allow for clear shots, all day, from morning until night with its advanced night mode feature. It also sports two more rear cameras, particularly a 2-megapixel bokeh camera and another 2-megapixel macro camera. And just the same, the front 8-megapixel camera of the Y31 was also



Y31 8+128GB
Clearer Shot, All-Day Fun
48MP AI Camera | 5000mAh Battery | 18W Fast Charge



created to deliver finer captures in both photo and video mode.

More than the camera quality, it also showcases a stunning display that makes it a desirable entertainment and gaming device. Colors pop in its 6.58-inch full HD screen with the game-changing Halo FullView Display that makes browsing photos and videos easier, supports a better chatting experience, makes texts more visible for hassle-free reading, and provides a more immersive viewing experience with the edge-to-edge display.

The Y31 also boasts an 8GB and 128GB RAM/ROM storage packaged in a sleek 8.36mm slim and light body that's easy to hold.

It is no doubt that the vivo Y31 is the real deal when looking for a smartphone that delivers on power, versatility, quality, and style. And, selling for only PHP 12,999, it's offered at a price point that's most accessible for everyone.

For more details about the vivo Y31, visit www.vivo.com/ph or follow vivo Philippines on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



BLOOMBERG TERMINAL

Words by Jose Alvarez

Information is exchanged at lightning fast speeds. With the Internet, anyone can buy and sell stocks online, and leverage financial data to make business decisions. On top of this, it is estimated that there are about one billion non-cash transactions made per day globally. However, back in the early 1980s, leveraging financial data was a huge issue and not as quick as it is today. 2020 United States presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg created the Bloomberg Terminal—but its beginnings

Michael Bloomberg is worth USD 55 billion today. He became a partner at Salomon

Brothers in 1973 and headed equity trading and systems development. In 1981 he was fired as Phibro Corporation bought the firm. Phibro gave him USD 10 million (about USD 28.66 million today) as a severance package. Bloomberg wisely invested in computerized financial systems that he built when at Salomon Brothers and founded his own company, Innovative Market Systems (IMS). This terminal has a client-server architecture with the server running on a multiprocessor Unix platform. Eventually, the Bloomberg Terminal also gained voice chat features in 1990 and color in 1991. Eventually, the terminal also connected to the Internet, and even was made for mobile devices as well.

Bloomberg correctly guessed that Wall Street would pay for high-quality business information and then released it to market in 1982. The first customer was Merrill Lynch, who purchased a 30 percent stake in his company for USD 30 million, and by

1984 it became available to any Wall Street firm. One of the most unique designs of the Bloomberg Terminal was its keyboard, which was designed for market traders with no computer experience. For instance, the F2-F12 hotkeys were used to look at different markets such as government securities, money markets, commodity markets, and mortgage securities. The numeral pad was replaced with a variety of functions specific to the stock market.

Bloomberg would run for Mayor of New York City in 2001, and returned to the project in 2014. The hardware aspect of the terminal is a series of accessories such as the aforementioned keyboard, a dual-screen display, and a fingerprint scanner supposedly for security reasons. Bloomberg then left the company again in 2019 to run for president of the United States. These terminals are leased for USD 22,500 per year, making it one of the most expensive computer systems to date.

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