

## APP OF THE WEEK



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**App:** GifBoom: Animated GIF Camera  
**Category:** Photo & Video  
**Price:** Free  
**Platform:** iOS  
**Works with:** iPhone, and iPod Touch

**Briefly:** Ever wondered how GIFs were made? Well wonder no more, you can now make your own GIFs and share them with friends via an Instagram-like platform. Simply fire up this application allow it to snap 20 consecutive shots or import some from your camera roll, select an effect and frame and viola you are ready to share it with others. Dozens of special effects, static and animated frames, as well as adjusting the speed of your GIF are available. So what are you waiting for?

## TECH TALK

■ **Windows 8 preview set for February 29:** Microsoft on Wednesday revealed plans to unveil a test version of its latest Windows computer operating software later this month. The US technology titan sent out invitations to a "Windows Consumer Preview" event to be held on February 29 at a hotel in Barcelona during a Mobile World Congress gathering in that city. Microsoft promised to release more information closer to the end of the month. -AFP

■ **Amazon new streaming deal with Viacom brings more shows:** Amazon further positioned itself against Netflix on Wednesday, announcing a deal with Viacom to make much of its TV programming available for instant streaming on Amazon Prime. Viacom controls popular cable channels like MTV, Comedy Central, Nickelodeon and VH1, meaning shows such as "Jersey Shore," "Chappelle's Show" and "Dora the Explorer" will bring the total number of videos on Amazon Prime to more than 15,000. -Reuters

■ **Anonymous knocks CIA website offline:** The website of the Central Intelligence Agency was inaccessible on Friday after the hacker group Anonymous claimed to have knocked it offline. "CIA Tango down," a member of Anonymous said on @YourAnon-News, a Twitter feed used by the group. "Tango down" is an expression used by the US Special Forces when they have eliminated an enemy. -AFP

■ **Lenovo initially to focus on China for smart TV sales:** China's Lenovo Group Ltd, the world's No.2 PC maker, plans to sell smart televisions in China and has no immediate plans to ship overseas due to a lack of content, CEO Yang Yuanqing said on Thursday. -Reuters

■ **Audio app Shazam enabled for Grammys:** Grammy nominees Kanye West, Lady Gaga and Adele take note: first you could Shazam the Super Bowl, and now you can Shazam the Grammy Awards. Shazam and the Recording Academy announced Thursday that viewers will be able to use the app during the awards show to free up exclusive behind-the-scenes content and stay apprised of the performance schedule. -Reuters

■ **Glam Media launches social network for food lovers:** There are magazines, television shows and books about food. So why not a social network? That's the thinking behind online lifestyle publisher Glam Media's newest offering. On Thursday, the company launched Foodie.com, a social network devoted entirely to the gastronomic crowd. -Reuters

## Kodak to stop making cameras, digital frames



FILE - In this Aug. 17, 2005 file photo, Steven J. Sasson, then Eastman Kodak Co. project manager, shows his prototype digital camera he built in 1975 next to Kodak's latest digital camera the EasyShare One, at Kodak headquarters in Rochester. (AP)



Two of Eastman Kodak's most successful cameras, a Brownie Special Six-20 (left), circa 1938-1942, which sold for \$4, and the Pocket Instamatic 20 (right), which sold for about \$28 in 1972, are shown Jan. 12, 2012 in this studio illustration in Washington. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Picture it: Except for a few disposable point-and-shoots, Kodak is exiting the camera business.

Eastman Kodak Co. said Thursday that it will stop making digital cameras, pocket video cameras and digital picture frames in a move that marks the end of an era for the beleaguered 132-year-old company.

Founded by George Eastman in 1880, Kodak was known all over the world for iconic cameras such as the Brownie and the Instamatic. For the last few decades, however, the Rochester, New York-based company has struggled. It was battered by Japanese competition in the 1980s, and failed to keep pace with the shift from film to digital technology.

The company sought bankruptcy protection from creditors last month in a case that covers \$6.7 billion in debt. It has a year to devise a restructuring plan. Citigroup Inc. was approved to lend the company \$650 million to continue operating.

Exiting the digital camera business is especially poignant for Kodak. In 1975, using an electronic sensor invented six years earli-

er at Bell Labs, a Kodak engineer named Steven Sasson created the world's first digital camera. It was an eight-pound (3.6 kilogram), toaster-size device that captured low-resolution black-and-white images.

Reached at home Thursday, Sasson told The Associated Press that seeing Kodak exit the business is "a bit sad" but part of a transition facing all companies that use evolving technology.

"The average person probably owns more digital cameras than they realize," he said. "It's just the reality that digital imaging is a part of our lives and you can capture images in a lot of different ways. There's a lot of choices people have, cellphones being one of them."

These days, digital camera sales are suffering as consumers increasingly take photos on smartphones such as the iPhone. Certain smartphone makers such as LG, Nokia, Motorola and Samsung have agreed to pay Kodak to license its digital camera technology, while companies like Apple are fighting its patent claims.

Before Thursday's announcement, Kodak had already been try-

ing to shrink its product line and sell in fewer retail venues, but as sales declines worsened, the company saw no way to make the business profitable. "We made the logical conclusion that there was no clear path to profitability and we have to focus on generating profits at this point," said Kodak spokesman Chris Veronda.

Kodak said getting out the digital camera business by June should help cut losses by about \$100 million a year as it struggles to emerge from bankruptcy.

Kodak sees home photo printers, high-speed commercial inkjet presses, workflow software and packaging as the core of its future business. Since 2005, the company has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into new lines of inkjet printers. Once the digital camera business is phased out, Kodak said its consumer business will focus on printing. It will seek a company to license its EasyShare digital camera brand.

Kodak said it's working with retailers to ensure an orderly transition. The company will continue to honor product warranties and provide technical support for the discontinued products. -AP

## Samsung on the flagship product of 2011, Samsung Series 9

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**KUWAIT:** The growth of the notebook sales in the current market depends highly on the popularity of thin-and-light notebooks, one that Samsung Electronics aims to achieve in the current year. Raj Varma, General Manager of IT Sales Group at Samsung Gulf Electronics sat down with Al Watan Daily in an exclusive interview to discuss their flagship product of 2011, the Samsung Series 9, as well as the consumer needs of the Kuwait market.

## What is your flagship product for 2011?

In the notebook category, the Series 9 is our flagship product for this year as it is Samsung's most advanced and innovative computing offering till date. The Series 9 satisfies consumer needs in terms of both performance and design. Powered by Microsoft Windows 7 and the second generation Intel Core i7 Processor with up to 8GB memory, the Series 9 notebook accelerates performance by dynamically allocating processing power where it's needed most, using Intel's intelligent Turbo Boost technology 2.0, so users can do things smarter and faster while conserving energy. From a design perspective, the Samsung Series 9 notebook is crafted from duralumin, a lightweight material that is twice as strong as aluminum and normally used in advanced aircraft design. The sophisticated beauty of the flowing line on the side of the Series 9 notebook is a key design concept and gives the notebook an aerodynamic and sleek style.

The launch of the Series 9 reaffirms our commitment to providing our customers with the latest technologies while helping to strengthen our market share in the region.

## What is the future scope of notebooks in the region?

According to a recent study by IDC, emerging markets, which include the Middle East, are forecast to record a compound annual growth rate of 21 percent in notebook sales by 2015. This growth is fuelled by the popularity of thin-and-light notebooks. Keeping with this trend, we launched the new Samsung Series 9 notebook with the second-generation Intel Core i7 Processor. The Series 9 satisfies consumer needs in terms of both performance and design.

## What is your highest selling or most popular product in Kuwait and why?

Our newly launched Samsung Series 3 300V is very well accepted by the consumers owing to the strong specifications, design & color variations. While notebooks such as the 300V drive volume sales, our premium notebooks are growing in popularity too as they offer both a comprehensive

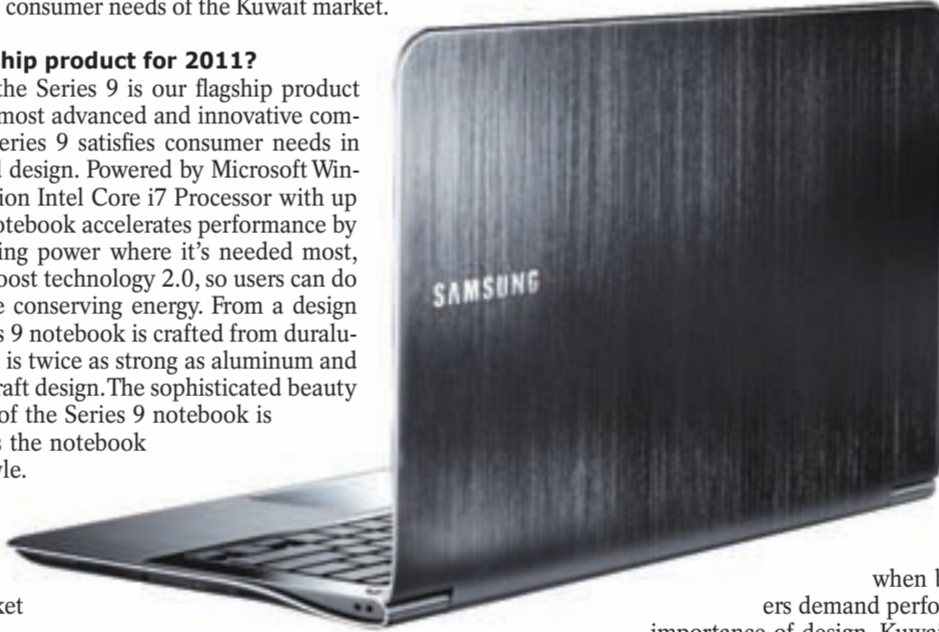
mobile computing experience and an attractive premium packaging design. Kuwait is a unique market due to its diverse consumer needs and we expect notebook sales in the country to continue increasing year-on-year due to an upward trend in desktop replacement.

**As per your experience in the Kuwait market, what are the key specs that users here look for in a notebook? And how Samsung is addressing these demands?**

In terms of its PC demand, the Kuwaiti market is very unique. We cater to a diverse audience that demands maximum portability combined with most advanced technology and long-lasting battery life. Within the notebook category, a survey was done recently looking at the most important factor consumers consider when buying a notebook. Performance, or in other words, Processor, RAM and hard-drive were the most important factors when buying a notebook. Consumers demand performance but also stress on the importance of design. Kuwait is a very important market for Samsung and we are continuously committed to offering the best technologies and applications across all our products to meet these unique consumer requirements. The latest Series 9 satisfies consumer needs in terms of both performance and design.

## What is your primary business goal for Samsung's notebooks for 2012?

At Samsung, our main goal for 2012 is to grow our market share in the notebook segment while offering users the most advanced products. We plan to offer a wider range of products in our upcoming line up which will be targeted at specific user segments. This line up will further boost our presence across every segment and consumers will have a wider choice to suit their needs. Each model will offer three significant features: Design, Mobility and Feature-loaded Specifications. We will introduce a new line-up/model every four months, which will include the upgraded features and of course an upgraded processor.



## After Megaupload closure, BTJunkie shuts down

**PARIS:** BTJunkie, a popular file-sharing indexing site, said Monday it was voluntarily shutting down, less than three weeks after the US closure of Megaupload in a crackdown on piracy of music, films and other materials.

"This is the end of the line my friends," BTJunkie said in a brief message posted on the home page of the site along with the dates of its existence: "2005-2012."

"The decision does not come easy, but we've decided to voluntarily shut down," Britain-based BTJunkie said. "We've been fighting for years for your right to communicate, but it's time to move on."

"It's been an experience of a lifetime, we wish you all the best!" it said. BTJunkie provided a search engine for Bit Torrent files and was one of the top five torrent sites with "dozens of millions of users a month," according to TorrentFreak, a website which covers file-sharing news.

TorrentFreak quoted the unidentified founder of BTJunkie as saying that BTJunkie's decision to close down stemmed partly from recent legal actions against Megaupload and The Pirate Bay, which faces legal action in Europe.

Megaupload was shut down by the US authorities on January 19 and seven people were charged in connection with what the Justice Department and FBI described as "among the largest criminal copyright cases ever brought by the United States." -AFP

## Apple to reveal latest iPad in March: Report

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Apple Inc plans to introduce its latest iPad tablet at an event in the first week in March, the website AllThingsD reported, citing unnamed sources.

The event will be held in San Francisco, likely at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, which is Apple's preferred site for product launches, the website said.

An Apple spokeswoman declined to comment.

Apple has typically introduced the latest versions of its iPad in the first few months of the year. The current iPad 2 was introduced on March 2, 2011. The original iPad was introduced at the end of January 2010.

Apple's iPad dominates the nascent market for tablets even though deep-pocketed rivals are taking aim at the lucrative segment. Amazon.com Inc's Kindle Fire, which sells at half the cost of an iPad, has chipped away at the lower end of the tablet market. -Reuters



A woman holds up an iPad with the iTunes U app after a news conference introducing a digital textbook service in New York Jan. 19, 2012. (Reuters)

## Toymakers gear up for year of the 'AppCessory'

**NEW YORK:** Having found this holiday season that they cannot beat iPad, iPhone and iPod, toymakers have decided to join them, lining up a host of playthings that come to life when hooked up to the devices, gadgets that kids love to play with.

Industry insiders call them "AppCessories," and expect a wide array of these items to be on display at the American Toy Fair, which officially kicks off in New York on Sunday.

The trend comes as companies, scarred by a holiday season when toy sales fell 3 percent in the United States, look beyond traditional toys to woo tech-savvy kids, many of whom have grown up playing on their parents' smartphones or their own gaming consoles.

Hasbro, the maker of G.I. Joe toys and the Monopoly board game plans, to jump on the "AppCessory" bandwagon through its "zAPped" gaming platform.

When you play with Hasbro's "The Game of Life zAPped," you will still move your car

from space to space and select your path to retirement on a game board, but now you spin, get paid, sue other players and make important decisions on your iPad, after downloading a free app. The game will cost about \$25.

But Hasbro is not alone in this arena. Canada's Spin Master is betting big on an array of iPhone/iPod Touch and Android accessories under the "Appfinity" label.

Spin Master hopes its "AppDrive" will appeal to racing enthusiasts by allowing them to use a steering wheel that can hold an iPhone, and play racing games using an app on the iPhone, while "Appfishing" will enhance "virtual fishing" using a rod that can hold an iPhone. Priced at \$20 each, they will hit stores in the fall.

At an event earlier this week, Toys R Us CEO Jerry Storch summed up the trend: "The combination of the physical world and virtual world is so powerful that it's almost unexplainable." While the toy industry is betting big on AppCessories, a few parents are skeptical. -Reuters