M

BEST
of
2014

"If you do something and it turns out pretty good, then you should go do something else wonderful, not dwell on it for too long. Just figure out what's next."
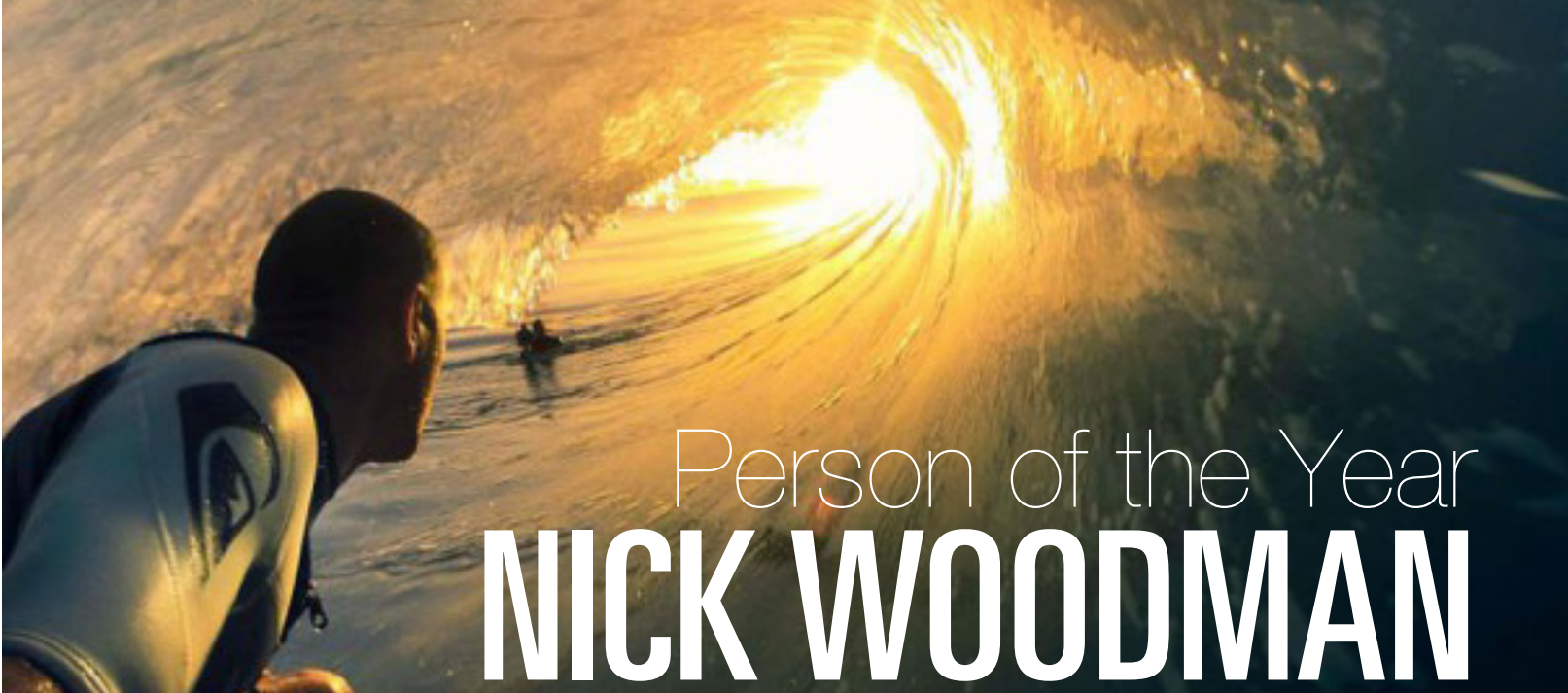
- Steve Jobs

PEOPLE

SOFTWARE

HARDWARE

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

Person of the Year
NICK WOODMAN

At a time where the world is moviing towards mobile camera photography, It comes as a surprise that GoPro's standalone professional video cameras helped it file the most successful tech IPO in the last 20 years. This year, the 12 year old startup, went more social with its videos.

They started their own little platform to share some amazing videos shot by the Go-Pro camera. They really are brilliant! Watch

what happens when a Lion grabs a GoPro in his mouth, or when a dirt biker travels through some of the most dangerous paths in the Himalyas, or simply the breathtaking

shots of an active volcano. Also GoPro introduced a 4K recorder this year. Another reason to rejoice for Pro videographers.

GoPro's success can be largely attributed to one man, Nick Woodman. The founder and CEO of GoPro. The idea of GoPro came to Woodman when he was surfing in Australia. where he saw that Amateur photographers like woodman himself had a tough time finding quality professional equipment at affordable rates. The original cameras were just point-and-shoot 35mm film cameras.

Of the 11 Million devices that GoPro's sold so far, about 2.8 million were sold in 2014. That combined with a fairly successful media upstart, makes every reason for Nick Woodman to be in the limelight this year and his vision of affordable Pro cameras is something to be highly reverred. It's only a beginning of something big and the CEO has lots of work to do but It's the strongest beginning we've seen so far. Woodman is undoubtedly the Person of the Year.

CEO Perfect.
SATYA NADELLA

Nadella had big shoes to fit into, when he took over as the CEO of Microsoft Inc. Microsoft was failing bitterly. A failed attempt at redesigning the Windows experienced, an ailing Windows Phone brand and a not so cross platform enviroment had put Microsoft at the backfoot in the past few years. This year was meant to be the year, when Microsoft's ship got a new captain. Someone who could help Microsoft out of their perils.

Upon becoming the CEO this year, Nadella hasn't turned the fortunes for Microsoft yet. But he's sent out ripples of change. If Steve Ballmer was aggressive, Nadella's rational. He's put forward a clear message that Microsoft's going to concentrate on its biggest strength. Its Enterprise services.

Which bring's us to the next big change that Satya Nadella has brought to the table. Microsoft's enterprise ready applications are now available on iOS and Android. Which is big shift from the platform conservative Microsoft, which was letting its office marketshare dwindle away because of its reluctance to support iOS and Android.

Another interesting thing about Satya Nadella is the fact that he's very clear as to what Microsoft's Strengths are and where its arch rivals Apple and Google are strong. He just seems to be the guy who'd *never* be

seen in a funny youtube video, predicting that a product would flunk severely. Numerous interviews later, Satya Nadella's made it very clear. He's aware that his competition is excelling in ways Microsoft will have a tough time keeping up but at the same time, Microsoft too holds some of the major strings in the world of technology. It's Cloud and Enterprise offerings being perfect examples.

Also, Nadella isn't shy of learning. As a new CEO, he's taken advice from a whole lot of people from Marc Anderson to Tim Cook. He isn't shy of learning, even if it is from his rivals. This makes Nadella extremely Likeable.
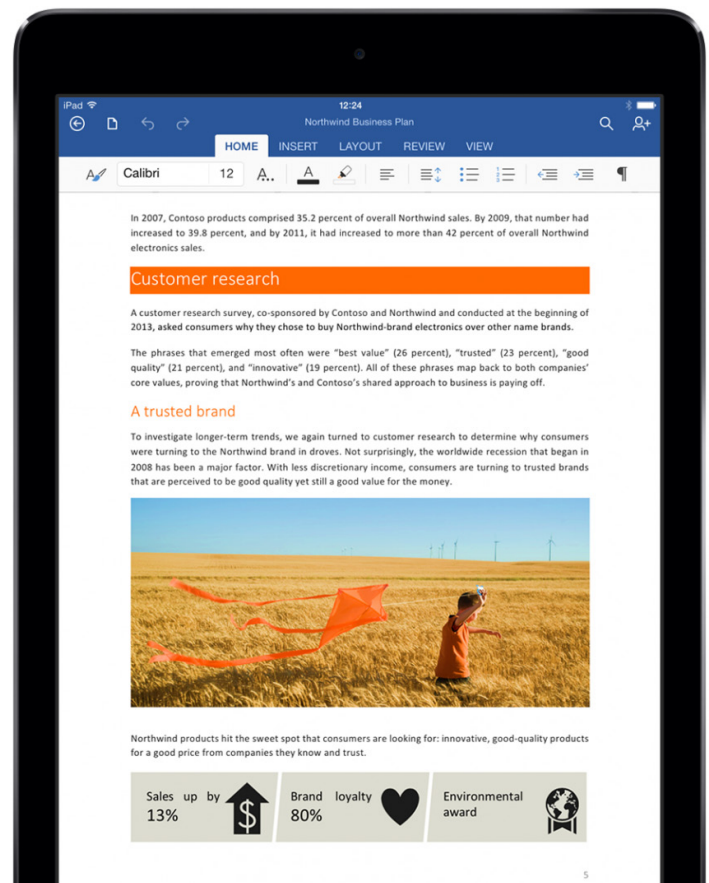
The Good CEO
TIM COOK

At the beginning of 2014, there was this negative air surrounding Apple Inc. A diping stock, the fabled new category entrant being far from a release and the general negative atmosphere around the quite CEO who just wasn't as vibrant as Steve Jobs. But things changed through the course of 2014.

The highly successful WWDC 2014 was the start of things, where the company made a departure from the boxed-app culture to embrace newer concepts like Continuity and Extensibility. That's when Cook's Apple started to take shape. At the special event held in September, Cook looked a different person all together. Both the events just had a different energy to them. Believe it or not, from operating behind the curtains, Tim Cook has successfully turned the public sentiment back to positive and The confidence with which Apple executives (especially, Tim Cook) conducted the Keynotes this year has helped a lot.

Then there was the much hyped new product category. The Apple Watch surprised just about everyone. This was Apple's big shift from being Apple the phone maker to Apple the Luxury Accessory brand. It's not

> Tim Cook's Performance over the year has been nothing short of brilliant. He also kept the promise of new product categories.

a mechanical, but the finesse with Apple Watch is designed, could put a lot of Swiss watch makers to shame. Cook's careful hires from the world of Luxury Apparels are to be lauded here. Putting Angela Ahrendts as the chief of Apple Retail puts Apple's Retail Store into a much better position for selling a luxury gadget ($5000 for a Yellow Gold Apple Watch Edition, is going to be a task), the hires from Tag Heuer and Yves Saint Laurent are in my opinion a great strategy to enter a completely new market. Apple's move to this new category is something to ponder upon, just about a decade ago, technology had only begun to be accessible to everyone, it was frightening for the old and young, the learning curve was steep. And here we are in 2014, discussing about a computer which people are eager to wear, and these aren't just the nerds, these include a large number of tech 'muggles'.

Tim Cook's contribution to the world in terms of more laws for inclusivity and his successful attempts at improving the sentiment around Apple's future, taking full ownership of the Apple ship make him one of the most influential tech persons of the year.

Controversially Your's
TRAVIS KALANICK

What's the toughest job in the world of technology at the moment? It is being the CEO of the world's largest startup, Uber. It's no surprise that the man's even wanted in a few countries. Uber's is the fastest expansion i've seen in technology. City after city, Uber's ride is just unstoppable. The social network for cabs, has disrupted the taxi business all over the world.

Uber's founder and CEO, Kalanick has a lot of role to play here. He's been instrumental in the company's success. The unorthodox ways of managing Uber in every city that it expands have allowed Kalanick to delegate the work all over the globe and yet keep the experience more or less the same every where.

Despite its share of controversies, Uber's grown on to become a $40 billion startup!

But here's the thing, Uber's same experience every where also means that Uber's got similar problems around the world. It's biggest threat is security, Uber's facing a tough time there. There've been in numerous cases complaining of foul play. And that's why being the CEO of Uber's a tough job. Uber is a startup, so ridden with controversies that its got an extremely poor press response.

Here's why Kalanick's doing a good job as the CEO. Despite, Uber's controversial ride this year, Uber's explosive growth hasn't taken any hit, In fact, Uber's second greatest market this year was India where it had only begun operations, last year in November. Currently running in over 200 cities, Uber's valued at about $40 billion, and the company just started around 2009.

UBER FACES PROTESTS IN LONDON

STOREHOUSE

Storehouse is a visual story telling platform for the Post PC era. Completely relying on iPad and iPhone for the content creation,

Paradise Found
The island of Kaua'i

Storehouse is a visual story telling platform. It allows its users to have create a simple webpage with options to add videos, photos and text. What's striking about Storehouse is that users get to spend a lot more time telling a story, instead of tinkering with the webpage design. Further remarkable is Storehouse's story curation. This is something that ensures that you always get a good story to read. It's a social media plat-form of sorts, without the woes of an endless stream of follower/following crap or unwant-ed advertisements.

Storehouse has expanded quickly over the year, while still maintaining quality.

Storehouse begun as an iPad app. It even won the coveted Apple Design Award this year. Later this year, they even introduced the iPhone app, which was again a brilliant experience. Storehouse is a modern day internet startup and comes without the bag-gage of a desktop website.

Best of 2014
MOBILE APPS

Over the year, we've seen extremely powerful mobile apps. It's been a big year for automation, podcast and photography applications. Moreover, there's a constant realisation of the fact that the touch-screen's a powerful tool, not just meant for fancy little tricks, with the right UI it opens up a world of possibilities, some times even better than how a traditional PC does them. Moreover, Material Design on Android and extensibility and continuity on iOS, have opened up more options for App Developers and Designers to make truly incredible apps. So, Here are the best mobile applications of this year.

WORKFLOW

Developer: DeskConnect
Automation has always been a powerful tool but has always been restricted to tech nerds. However, tools like IFTTT always tend to put this in some lime light. The latest addition to this list is a strong contender to eventually make it mainstream. It's the ideal app. It's super easy and accessible to the non-nerds and the

nerds get to make some powerful workflows. Workflow even features a gallery of great workflows which include Creating a GIF, Saving to PDF or Cross sharing a photo across all social network. It's these completely relatable tasks that make Workflow an app for everyone. Automation apps are generally akin to swiss knifes and Workflow is no different but for the first time, we have an app telling us definitively as to what we can do with it!
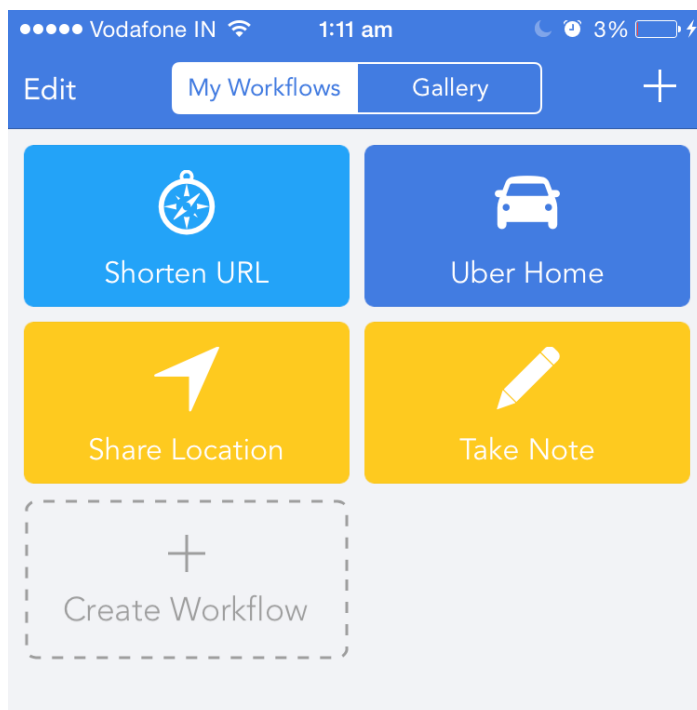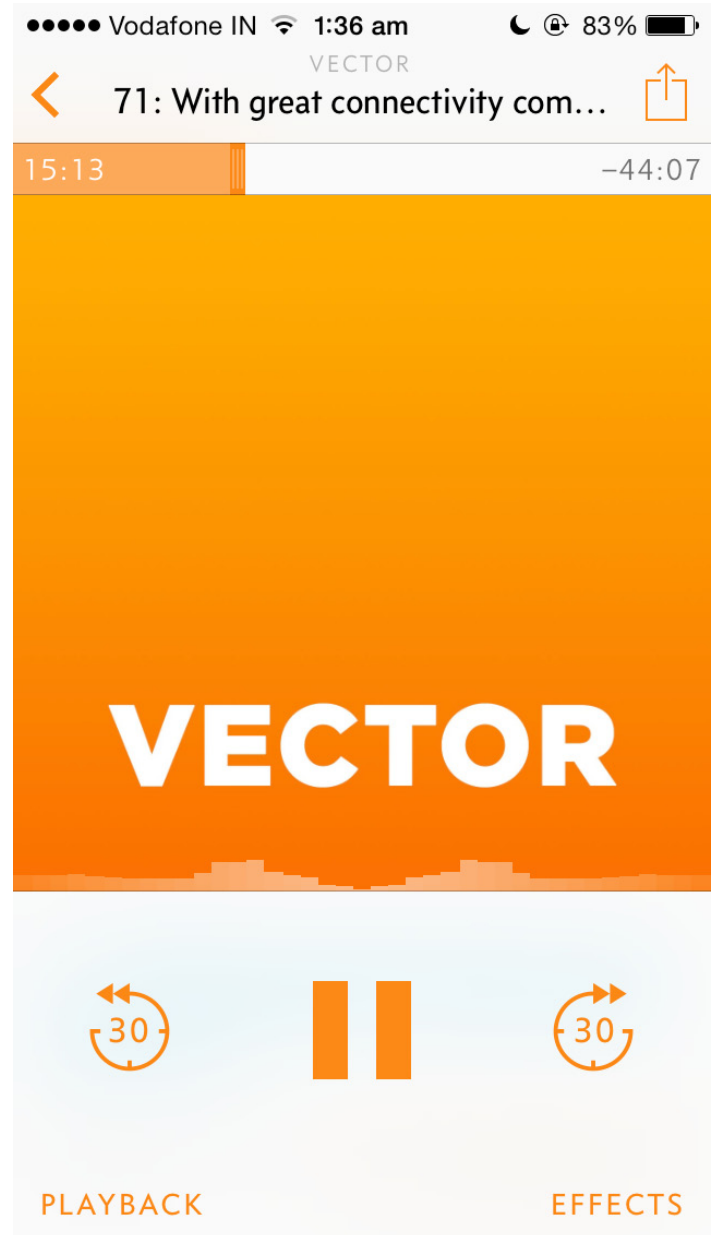

Overcast

Developer: Marco Arment

Good Podcast apps are hard to find, there are just so many of them and all of them have a different take on podcasts. But is their take better? Overcast by Marco Arment is an highly opinionated take on Podcasts by the popular developer. And it is indeed better than the others in many ways. The social recommendations are great, they're effective if you're following podcasters. Then the voice boost and speed effects are very ef-

fective.Overcast does this incredible job of removing the long pauses, it does save a lot of time. Overcast is a well designed, alternative to the default iOS app for Podcasts and a must have for regular podcasters.


Overcast brings a host of features to the table, The Voice Boost and Smart Speed work flawlessly and make it stand out amongst others!

Endless: Simple world discovery

Developer: Studio March

I'm always up for a random wikipedia article, imparting some valuable knowledge. That's part of the reason I enjoy Quizzing. Endless, an app by Amit Jain and his team at Studio March is an iOS app that serves just that, and with Great design. It's a surprise that Endless hasn't been covered by many tech blogs. Endless is something that I've been using ever since I got the app and it is indeed a powerhouse of information and for $0.99, the price isn't steep either.
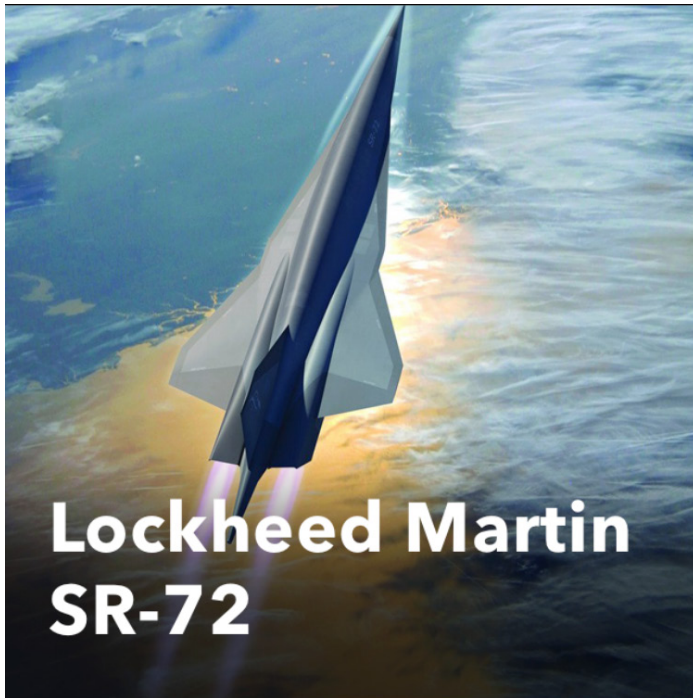
Lockheed Martin SR-72 is the new spy plane capable of Mach 6 cruise speeds, making it the first hypersonic aircraft to enter service should it be produced.

While the SR-72 will undoubted-

Hyperlapse

Developer: Instagram

Not only does Hyperlapse shoot amazing time-lapse videos, its a great video stabiliser as well. Hyperlapse by Instagram is a great app. It shoots time lapse videos better than the default camera app and the video stabiliser (a sort of hidden feature) is an extremely handy tool for those who don't have an iPhone 6. Also, Hyperlapse is brilliantly designed. It's easy to use and has some neat tricks, up its sleeve. It is often seen that start-ups fail to come up with a better Product 2.0 after a hugely successful first product. (Look no further than Instagram's current owners, Facebook), this doesn't seem to be the case with Instagram. It's their second product and they've nailed this one too!

Yahoo News Digest

Developer: Yahoo

Somewhat Inspired by Nick Alanso's Summly which Yahoo bought last year, (Alanso also happens to be in charge of the iOS app) the Yahoo News Digest is an innovative app, that delivers you news every morning and evening. This is the perfect news app for someone concerned about the global news. The content it delivers is handpicked and concise. The stories also contain snippets from Wikipedia, Map informations and curated tweets on the subject. Yahoo News Digest also one an Apple Design Award this year for its great UI animations and brilliant page design. News Digest is the first app I use every morning, it's similar to reading your morning newspaper, only it's much more tech savvy.

Best of 2014
iPAD APPS

iPad until last year was regarded as an content consumption device, meant only for minor content creation, nothing serious. An year later things have changed drastically. In fact, this year I was hard pressed to find a consumption app for the best of the year list. 2014 was all about content creation for the iPad. Adobe came up with a slew of apps for creating videos, illustrations and other creative content and frankly all of them were great in some aspect or another. Then there was Pythonista, a controversial yet powerful python interpreter for the iPad.

The iPad itself got a massive spec bump this year, arguably Apple's best mobile device for 2014,

the Air 2 featured a dedicated 8 core GPU and about tri-core SoC in A8X, something which upcoming games and graphic applications would love to use.

Pixelmator
Developer: Pixelmator Team

Pixelmator is perhaps the most powerful image editing tool I've seen on an iPad. The retouching here are extremely powerful. You can even open PSDs, with layers! Its the complete Pixelmator as is available on OS X but with an iPad UI and it has Handoff compatibility so, users can switch from working on Mac to iPad without any delay.

Editorial

Developer: Omz-Software (Ole Zorn)

Does the iPad have a markdown editing app? Yes, it does! Its from the guy who built Pythonista. Editorial is a phenomenal markdown editor and Workflow automation tool. Again, it's automation and probably not for everyone, but its serves a very direct purpose here. Editorial was released first in 2013 but relevant updates in 2014 put it back into the limelight. If you have an iPad, and you are into markdown or even web writing, There's just no way you can miss this app.

Storehouse

Developer: Storehouse

Storehouse's simple story publishing application makes it an uncanny creation tool on the iPad. Moreover, Storehouse, as a Social network for storytelling is brilliant. It's got great stories to showcase and they're best viewed on an iPad! Storehouse is brilliantly designed, the UI animations, the fluid interface and an ad free experience make Storehouse a premium, powerful tool that's just flawless.

> Storehouse's simple story publishing application makes it an uncanny creation tool on the iPad.

We rented a Jeep to drive out to some of the secret beaches on the west side of the island.
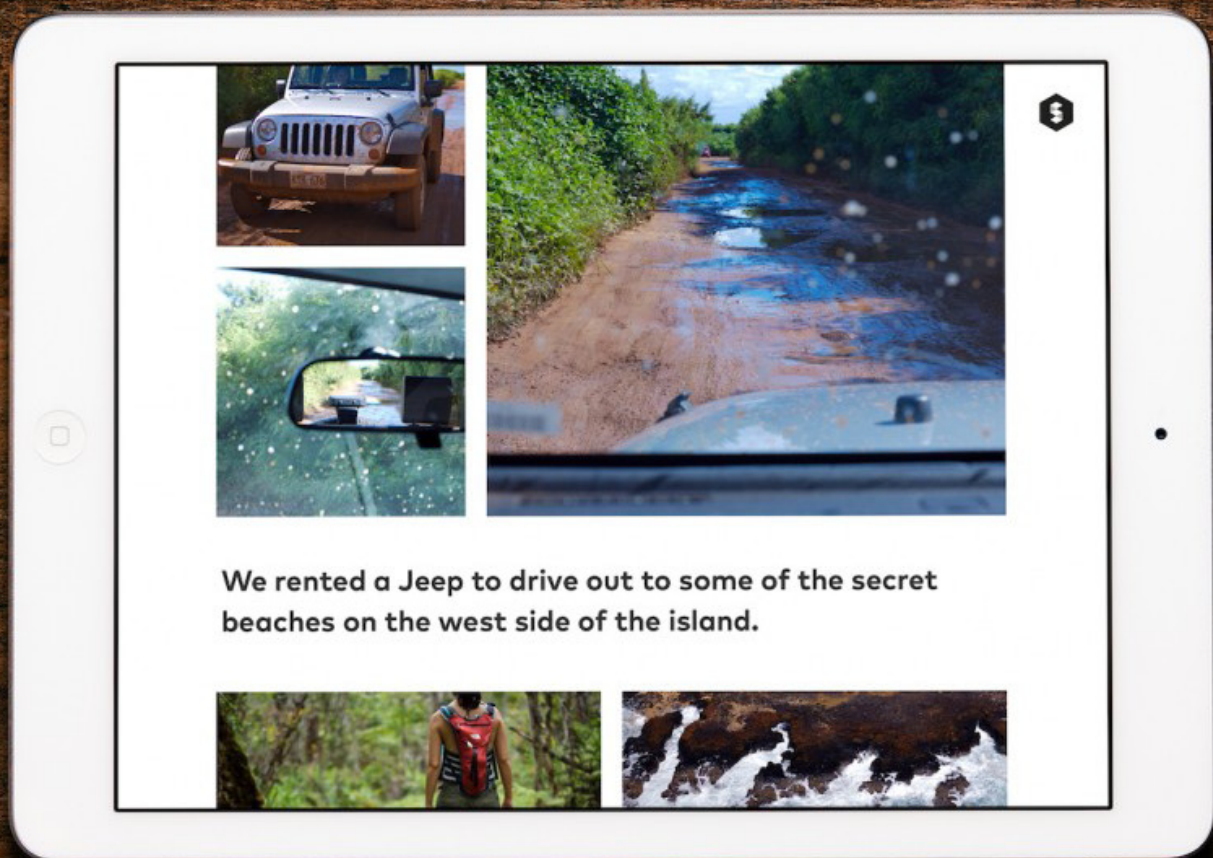
Incredible Numbers
by Professor Ian Stewart
Developer: Touch Press

Coming from the creators of Molecules, and Xe Elements. Incredible Numbers aims to do to mathematics what touch press did to Chemistry about four years ago. It is the kind of education app that makes you cherish owning an iPad, brilliantly designed, completely interactive and educating. The app even has an Enigma Machine built in, i'll pay anything to have that! Incredible Numbers is a must have education app for just about anyone. Don't love maths? You'll change your mind after using the app.

Adobe Ilustrator Line
Developer: Adobe

Adobe came up with a slew of creation apps for its Creative Cloud suite this year. But the one that stuck with me most was the Illustrator Line app. It makes making perspective, isometric or simple line drawings easy to make. It's a deceptively simple tool to use. Again, Illustrator Line is one app, that amateurs can tinker easily and those who are into professional perspective drawings and sorts, its a gold mine. You can draw panoramic views of cities with effortless ease, if you get a hang of this app. Highly recommended for anyone looking for a simple and powerful graphics tool.

MOBILE GAMES

Monument Valley
Developer: Ustwo

Monument Valley is an addictive piece of art. Its got a story, the graphics are mind bending, and the gameplay is flawless. There's little you can complain about Monument Valley. Except for the fact that it contains just about 20 levels only. You just can't get enough of it. Its challenging but not in a way that is frustrating (something that Flappy Bird and its Clones have succeeded in).

Threes
Developer: Sirvo

Threes wins in so many ways that it's clones don't. It's the number matching game with a personality. First and foremost, threes has an extremely sturdy gameplay, it's extremely hard to find loopholes here, something that makes the game even more fun and challenging. Then, there's the awesome soundtrack, even the numbers are like characters, they have voices, expressions and they subtlety with which they convey their message is applaudable. Believe it or not, Threes is best played with all the sounds on! It's hard to not like the little monsters that have numbers printed on them.

Sailor's Dream
Developer: Simogo

Games with great stories are hard to come by but Simogo seems to have a knack for telling great stories in the form of games. Their last game, Device 6 was a gem. This one's nothing less either. Brilliant story, Beautiful Graphics and the elegant serif font! Sailor's Dream has all the makings of a classic. It's the kind of game that I'll play all through a Sunday morning. Also the kind of game that deserves to be paid upfront, $4.99 on Sailor's Dream is worth it.

Leo's Fortune
Developer: 1337 & Senri

You are to hunt down the cunning thief that stole your gold. Sounds familiar? Sure does. Leo's Fortune is the traditional take on the platform adventure game genre. But with amazing graphics and a fresh gameplay that'll make you love the central character here. Something that's common about this year's best games is the fact that they have brilliant soundtracks. Leo's Fortunes isn't behind. Leo's Fortune is worth a buy. Trust me, you won't be disappointed.

Crossy Road
Developer: Hipster Whale

From great Screenplay games to something more mainstream, Crossy Road is a simple and addictive road. You just have to make the chicken cross the road! It's freemium and its done in a good way. There are beautiful characters that you can choose from and its fun to play with them. The bottomline here is, Its an addictive game that isn't frustrating. It's the kind of blockbuster movie which is actually enjoyable. So why did the chicken cross the road?

Best of 2014
DESKTOP APPS

CINEMAGRAPH PRO

Developer: Flixing Photos Inc.

Cinema graph Pro is the closest you can get to Harry Potter style moving images. Cinema graph Pro lets you create Flixels, which are essentially moving images, somewhere between a video and an image. They are much more interesting than still images but are extremely light weight in comparison to a video.

Users can edit RAW videos to be rendered as flixels, by selecting positions of a video to be trimmed and then further masked out to

> Cinemagraphs are somewhere between a photo and video. Not as large as a video but more interesting than the videos.

select only a specific part of the video to be moving whereas everything else remains as a still frame. The results are some extremely amazing and light weight cinema graphs, which feel as though they came straight out of the Harry Potter series.

Cinemagraph Pro is not only based on an innovative idea but an extremely easy app to use. For it's out of the box approach to images and a sturdy application, Cinemagraph Pro is our desktop app of the year.

SKETCH 3

Developer: Bohemian Coding

The Apple design resources for the watch kit include a bunch of PSD files, the files are accompanied by something different too. They are sketch templates. This is something to be proud of. Sketch 3, the UI design tool by Bohemian Coding has become extremely successful in a very short time.

With it's easy to use bezier curves, great guide lines, and more importantly the UI templates that make UI making an easy process, Sketch is fast becoming the startup standard for UI design.

Sketch is also great had handling vector images. The bezier curves in the software are some of the best vector graphics tools that I've seen. You can even do page layout design here.After using Sketch 3 for about a week, It was hard to switch back to photoshop, for UI design. It is something that you don't want to miss as a UI or graphic designer.

Sketch 3's rapid expansion and low cost has made a it a favorite amongst startups.

But Can it take over photoshop as the primary UI Design applications?

Best of 2014
PODCASTS

SERIAL

WINNER
Serial Podcast

Narrated by Sarah Koenig. The Serial Podcast is a real life murder mystery told as a periodical in audio format. Serial's basically an advertisement for podcasts. Its a representation of how a podcast's periodical format can be used for powerful story telling. Serial is innovative and gripping. The story is itself very engaging. Koenig's narration is flawless. The soundtrack's pretty good too. It's the best from Podcasts, I've seen this year.

RUNNERS UP

VECTOR

Vector Cast

How does technology impact human lives? That's the question Rene Ritchie, Dave Wiskus, Georgia Dow and Guy English tackle every week in Vector's Season 2. Starting as a weekly show where Ritchie would interview an expert in a particular field of technology every week, Vector's season 1 was a bit off target. But in Season 2, Vector features a much better set of hosts and is a much more enjoyable podcasting experience. It's one of the best tech podcasts that you can listen too.

Discussions
SMARTWATCHES

Vidit Bhargava

Smartwatches have been an interesting venture for about 3 years now. More recently, just about everyone has come up with a Watch or Fitness Bands. We've seen Bulky Camera Phones strapped to the wrist or just nondescript bands tracking your steps all the time. None of them however, have succeeded in creating a buzz outside the tech nerd tribe. But Despite their small market, the fitness bands and Smartwatches have shown some interesting ideas.

Fitness bands like the one Fitbit makes and the Nike Fuel-band (now discontinued) do have some great ideas for a smart-watch. Basically, the fitness bands are just simple trackers with a small LED display, giving out time. This helps them provide a good battery life and at the same time devote resources to better health tracking sensors, for a more accurate data which is pushed on the phone.
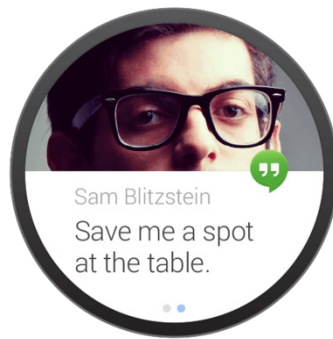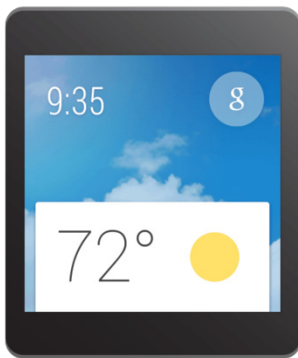
This is an interesting idea, given how well it has been implemented in Fitbit Flex and Withings Activité, which is essentially a Swiss Watch with fitness trackers below it.

The Pebble Watch on the other hand looks more like a smart watch. Or rather Pebble's is the one that defined the current state of smart watches. It's got a black and white display and has a bunch of applications which the user can use from his wrist. But the interesting thing here's the notification system. Pebble gets the notifications straight from your phone, which is great, given that Notifications are best glanced at, reaching out for your phone every time you get a notification is cumbersome. That compiled with a decent battery life and the ability to select watch faces, makes Pebble Steel a good smart watch. Yet, the run of the mill watch design and a low res. display, keep the watch away from a large audience.

Another, entrant to the field of Smart Watches is Android Wear. Basically, Android Wear is the extension of an Android phone, which delivers you Google Now style glance-able information on your wrist. The operating system is quite simple and aesthetically pleasing, but here's the thing about Android Wear. It's meant for rectangular displays but the hardware makers like LG and Motorola seem to be interested in circular ones! Which makes for a rather terrible experience for a watch. Also the hardware that's shipping with Android Wear isn't really effective at battery life.

Carving a niche in Tech Community doesn't help. The tech community is no doubt excited about the smart watch, there are just lots of possbilities for providing glance-able information and minor interactions, and developers and nerds realise that. But for it to make into the lives of 'muggles', the watch needs to be more than just a utility. It needs to look as good as the watch already on your wrist, it needs to feel un-intimidating for them and not something that's coming straight out of a sci-fi movie. Sadly, the current smartwatches focus on the utility rather than considering it as something you'll want

to wear on your wrist. Jessie Char, formerly of Pacific Helm had this to say about smartwatches "I'll wear a smart watch when it doesn't look like a hideous band tied to your wrist".

But Apart from Poor Aesthetics, there's another thing holding back smart watches. Its the battery life. No matter what your smart watch is, its battery still dies away after sometime. And believe it or not, some of these gadgets aren't even designed to intimate the user about recharging your watch. Some of the early users of these smartwatches tell that they stopped using them after a week of recharging everyday. The reason? Its just another gadget to recharge every night, and it's not providing any indispensable value to their day to day schedule for them to care about it.

So, the situation does look pretty bleak for the smartwatches. Every new smartwatch that's come to the market this year, has focused on two things. First, Providing Health & Fitness data to the phone & Second, going for a hardware design which feels like a knock-off of some successful watch in the market. But this could also be a way to play safe, before the big player, Apple comes to

the party, which it is, starting early next year.

Are the upcoming watches any good? Withings Activité does look good for once. The watch is basically a swiss made wrist watch with fitness tracking sensors embedded in it. Now, there are a lot of advantages to this approach. First, the watch is focussed. It concentrates on doing one function really well, and that is provide health data and it keeps the rest of the part of a watch completely untouched, not only making a long lasting watch, that you can use for years but also providing some of the smart things to the user. Withings' watch is also well built. The Swiss made watch is built with finesse. The curved glass, the symmetric bulge on the top and bottom and a design that fits the wrist, makes it worth a look. But, here's what Withings is missing. The watch is missing out on some of the other handy features of a smart watch, like being able to glance at notifications or being able to do simple app tasks from the wrist. It's a smart watch, but has very little to offer on the plate.

And now, coming to the big contender. Apple Watch. In making for about 3 years now, the first thing you notice about Apple Watch is the fact that how beautiful it looks. It's instantly something that you want to wear on your wrist. Here's the thing about the Apple Watch. It's a Watch first. As a Watch the Apple Watch is pitting itself against the likes of Tag Heuer and Hublot. The carefully constructed hardware, the deep horological study that's gone into it, and the watch straps (especially, the milanese loop) give the Swiss watch makers something to think about. Here's a watch from Cupertino & before it takes on its rivals, LG and Motorola, its taking a head shot at Swiss Watches. Could they spawn a third category of Wrist Wearables? Mechanicals, Automatics & the Tech-Wearables? They could, if they get the Software and Battery Life Right too, they've already got the Hardware right.

Apple Watch also brings something known as the Taptic Feedback on to the table. Which

is going to be big improvement over the current solution for delivering notifications. Currently, when something like a Pebble Steel gets a notification, it vibrates on your wrist, using the conventional mechanisms. Apple's Taptic feedback is more of a gentle tap on the wrist, than a vibration. Unobtrusivity is a key element of a good smartwatch. Apple's Taptic Feedback could do wonders here.

As for the software, I like the customisable Watch Faces and the new messaging app which allows you to draw and send short messages to other Watch users. Another exciting feature here is called "Glances" which basically presents quick access to things like the Weather widget or the Apple TV Remote. It's going to be very useful and I guess a lot of people will end up using Glances more than the Watch Apps.

As for the apps, the Watch looks to be in

search for the killer app. The App that'll make Watch something indispensable. It could have something to do with Home Automation or even Fitness for that matter, but That's a Question whose answer will only be visible in a few month's time. And that's something that'll make the battery life (whatever, it provides) justifiable. If I'm using the watch for something everyday, I may as well charge it but if it doesn't have anything new to provide. It might end up catching dust in my drawer.

The buzz that the Smartwatches generated last year, is starting to settle down now. The Smartwatches face hard questions on their usability and still have a long road to cover for consumers, who aren't just tech nerds. 2015 might be the year when we see smartwatches capture everyone's attention, or it can go downhill pretty badly.

Best Product: 2014
iMAC WITH RETINA 5K DISPLAY

You really don't want to be looking at an iMac with Retina 5K Display, longer than a few seconds. The display on this product is so beautiful, it makes any display you own, instantly deplorable. Apple's playing the inventor here. The 5K display has an unprecedentedly large resolution, making for a beautiful display. The iMac with Retina 5K Display breaks all the barriers of technology, even inventing new hardware in the process. The Gorgeous Display, combined with great internals and a powerful OS, makes the iMac with Retina Display the best computing experience in recent times.

A major advantage of the 5K display is for video editors, who can edit 4K video in full resolution on their iMac and still have space left for frames and effects. For Photographers, its a great tool to see the full the detail of their images. Animators and Graphic Designers will also find that the 5K display is incredibly helpful to them.

MOBILE PHONES

iPhone 6
Space Grey | 64GB

The iPhone 6 is the best overall phone you can buy in the market at the moment. There's effectively no learning curve to use it. iOS 8 itself has a wide variety of Apps and Games and a lot of them are exclusive to iOS, Moreover the UX on an iPhone app is far better than its Android / Windows Phone counter parts. Then there are the upgraded hardware that the iPhone 6 provides which make the phone extremely powerful.

A word for camera here, iPhone 6 has an immensely powerful camera lens making it equivalent to point and shoot cameras, and then there are the updates that photos have got with iOS8 which include manual exposure and RAW image edits possible. The iPhone 6 is one step closer to being a full fledged professional camera inside a phone.

In my opinion , The iPhone 6 is the ideal iPhone, it's neither too large (iPhone 6 Plus) and nor too small (iPhone 4s). Also, the black screen plate of the space grey colour ensures that the content is the front and centre of the screen, and that the hardware fades away.

Moto X

If you are looking for more customisability or for some are hooked to open source operating systems only or are looking something cheaper than the entry level iPhone, you might as well look at an Android phone. Last year, when choosing the best Android phone on the market, Google gave a tough competition with its Nexus 5 to the brilliant previous generation Moto X but this year's there's just one phone through and through that wins title of the best Android phone, the Moto X 2014 Edition.

Its the same customisable Moto X from last year, but with better internals, larger display and better speakers and an improved de-sign. The new Moto X does feel a lot more premium than the old one. The new metal grips are a great addition. And then there's the whole thing about Lollipop's redesign. Motorola's implementation of the software is relatively free from bloatware and external skins, something which neither Samsung nor HTC have done away with yet.

Moto X's 5.2" screen is just big enough to not look disproportionately large, giving it an edge over the company's collaborative phone with Google, the Nexus 6. If you are looking for an Android phone under $500, Moto X is just the right choice for you, Look nowhere else.

Emerging Technology 2014
QUADCOPTERS

Quadcopters have been around for ages, but this year Quadcopters gained a lot more mainstream importance. In fact, people are even gifting them as Christmas gifts these days. But Quadcopters have a long road to cover, they may be highly evolved but still aren't out of their shells as far as the consumer space is concerned.

A quadcopter is basically a rotorcraft. It's flight is generated by the four rotors fixed to it. Unlike most helicopters, a quadcopter uses two sets of identical fixed pitched propellers; two clockwise & the other two anti-clockwise.

Earlier this year we saw Amazon announce Prime Air. A first of its kind, Air Delivery service which uses a quadcopter to carry your package. It was followed by a Mumbai Cafe using a quadcopter for delivering Pizzas. Having said that, Unmanned Package Delivery by Drones is in early stages. It still not something ready for the consumer, and a lot of things need to be taken into consideration here.

Another use of the Quadcopters is for aerial surveillance. 2014 saw the Delhi Police use the popular Parrot A.R. Drone for aerial surveillance, on certain locations. That's some success for the Quadcopters, if they are able to make a difference in the city's crime rate, nothing better! But these are commercial uses, if there's one possibility that excites me as a consumer, it is that of using Quadcopters for aerial photography. Beautiful Aerial shots have some exciting possibilities.

Discussions
AUTOMATION
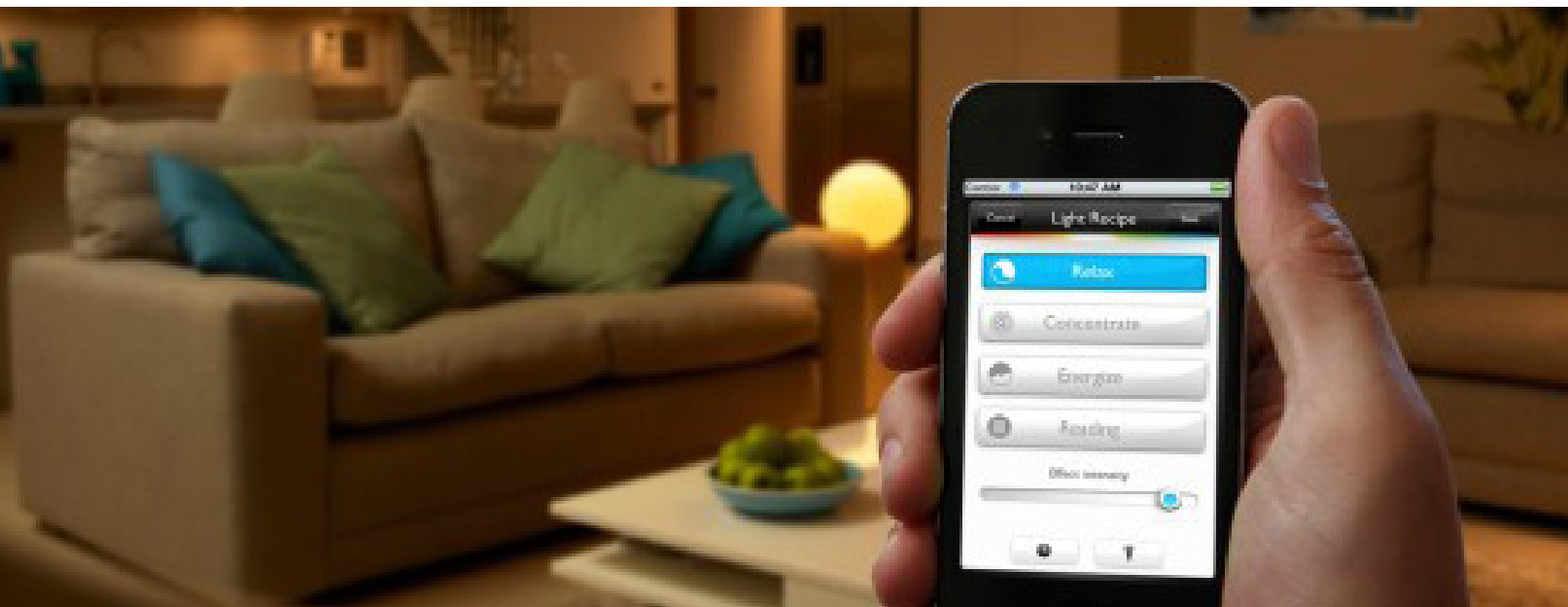
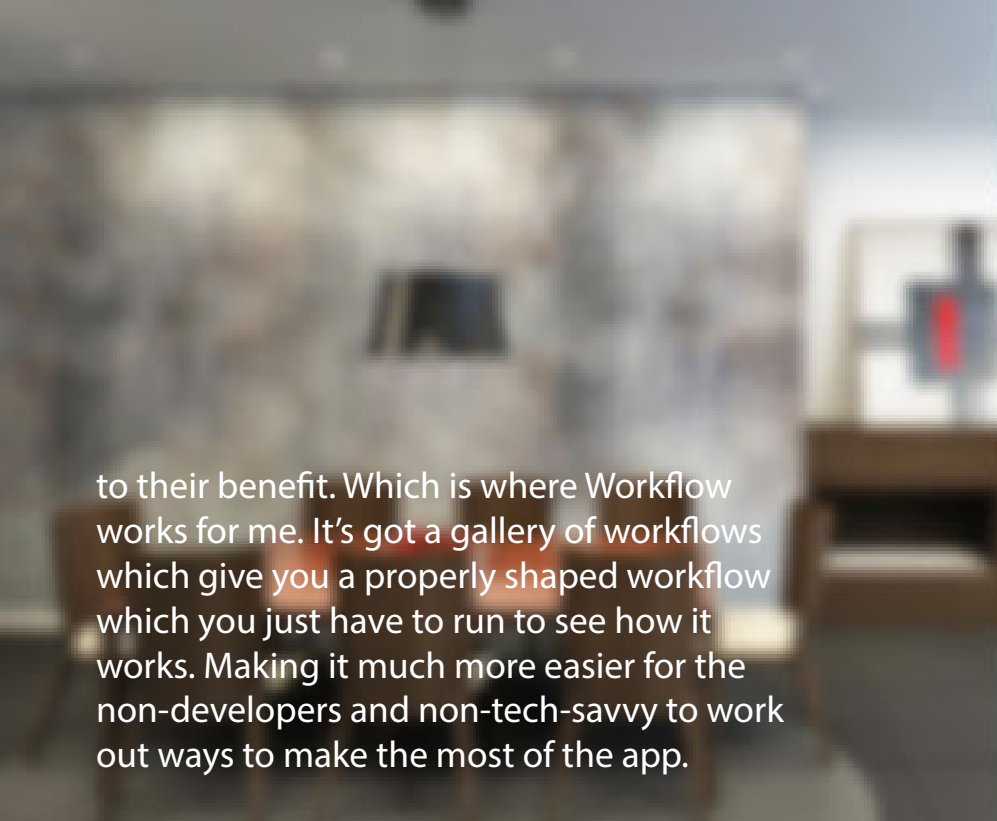

Vidit Bhargava

The field of software and hardware automation is extremely similar to that of Smartwatches. Both of them have shown great potential over the last year, and the year before but neither have been very successful at capturing a larger audience.

When we think of Automation Apps, the names IFTTT, Launch Center Pro and Workflow instantly come to our minds. All these apps have shown terrific potential to automate our lives and have definitely had a positive impact when used. But are they really easy to figure out? Do we really know what we can do with them? The truth is, none of them provide any substantial use cases to a user not well versed with Programming or other tricks. IFTTT and Workflow are rela-

tively easy to use, but then IFTTT always feels like is being used to half of its potential. No matter what you do with its recipes. These apps are so unconsciously intimidating to a normal user, that it doesn't come of as a surprise that very few people use them. Having said that, there's no doubt that these are some of the most powerful apps on the mobile application platform.

Every Automation App I download, has a problem, there's a lot it can do but there's little that's discernible, and there are even fewer ways of figuring out how to make the most out of the app. Most apps come with the label of "you can do the world with it", rather than "here's what you can do with it" which is a problem here, because most people need a kickstart to start using these apps

to their benefit. Which is where Workflow works for me. It's got a gallery of workflows which give you a properly shaped workflow which you just have to run to see how it works. Making it much more easier for the non-developers and non-tech-savvy to work out ways to make the most of the app.

Or perhaps, Apps could focus on a single field of automation. And provide a set of use cases themselves. Focus on one use case. Show how wonderful that is. One could really create a killer app out of anyone automation use case, if he wanted it. Let's say there's an app that only focuses on location based automation. Why shouldn't the app show the world what one can do with automation, instead of giving a set of difficult tools to everyone.

Moreover, these automation apps provide great Home Automation options, with the use of Bluetooth LE and iBeacons. Having said that, configuring them can be a bit of a task for everyone. Hardware Automation on the other hand feels a bit more at home. When Home Automation works, it works like a charm. The lights that turn on as you enter the room, the A/C that sets the temperature when it senses you reaching home or the Lock which needs your phone's authentication to unlock. It all works like a charm, but

only when you figure out how to make them work. And the key to that lies in extremely powerful phone software, with a steep lear ning curve.

This is where Siri & Homekit could help. Apple's HomeKit plans to put different devices on one network and providing a consistent experience. So if you have a home kit lock installed in your house, you could just ask Siri to lock the doors for you. It's an interesting prospect but there's little we have seen of it, in the three months that have passed after iOS8 coming out.

Another interesting key to automation is iBeacons. The iBeacons have great potential, making the process of geofencing extremely effective. iBeacons are small Bluetooth LE devices which can be placed anywhere, these look a little like coins. So you could place one anywhere. Inside your car, in a parking lot or even dangle them on your keys, (if you fre-

quently loose them). So your phone buzzes with a Notification when you enter their geofence. Museums and Historic Heritage Sites use them to intimate users of historical facts which they would other wise have to lean on installed placards to read. The use of iBeacons to deliver relevant notifications is by far the best i've seen of automated technology. Only, it has a downside, A big one. Shops use the iBeacons' geofencing to spam advertisements to users who enter the stores. Which is one of the most annoying ways to spam anyone, delivering a terrible UX.

So, as it stands, Automation has a lot of raw potential. There's a lot you can do with Automation. The apps turn your phone into something completely different. Come to think of it, you get the power to alter your surroundings by your presence, even without the need to press a button. But until it becomes more inclusive of the people not well versed in technology, the potential is largely untapped.

Will 2015, Improve the state of Automation in general? I have hopes from HomeKit and Workflow but nothing other than that looks targeted to the consumers in general. Another thing that could affect the performance of Automation in a positive way is the success of smartwatches. Much of Home Automation just seems to be better suited for the wrists.

Another thing that could affect the performance of Automation in a positive way is the success of smartwatches.
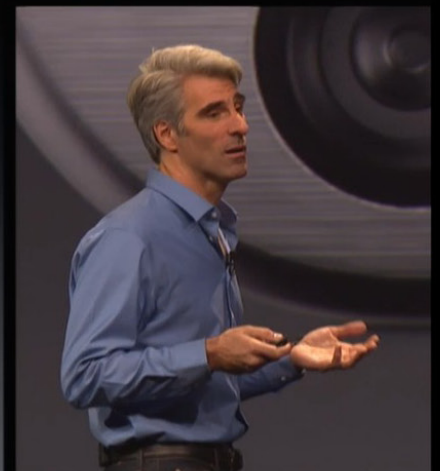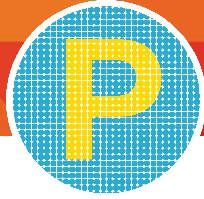
Pixel Quiz December

Vidit Bhargava

Q1. In 1987, Thomas Knoll, a student at the University of Michigan began writing a program on his Macintosh Plus to display grayscale images on a monochrome display. This program, called Display, caught the attention of his brother John Knoll, who recommended Thomas turn it into a fully-fledged image editing program. The program was renamed as ImagePro. How do we know it today?

Q2. The sticks were made of polished hazel or willow wood, and transactions were recorded by notches carved into the square with a knife. Name of which Software Company is derived from the name of the stick?

Q3. An invention by the English computer scientist named James Plaskett in the mid 1990's is used today by a popular sport to track audio and video could otherwise be lost. What was the invention?

Q4. This term was first used by New York World newspaper in 1929 to refer to large custom-built tabulators IBM made for Columbia University?

Q5. The film's Adina's deck, Odd Girl Out and Shredderman Rules create awareness about which internet phenomenon?

Q6. Who is the credited with the creation of the first mousepad?

Q7. X acquired Precept Software in 1998 and now owns the trademark of IPTV. What is X?

Q8. Which Japanese company began selling and distributing dutch company Oce's printing products in India and owns 90% in it?

Q9. Which popular website was created by Jonah Peretti, with Ben Smith as Editor in chief?

Q10. The "standard" SMS tone on Nokia mobiles is Morse Code for "M" (Message) and the "Special" tone is actually Morse Code for "SMS". The "Ascending" SMS tone on Nokia mobiles is Morse code for what?

Answers to the Pixel Quiz August 2014
1. WebCam   2. Alienware   3. Pixo OS   4. John Draper   5. Activision
6. Dave   7. Comic sans   8. First SMS   9. IRC   10. Duolingo