



June 2014
50th Edition



Moto 360

Motorola's latest gadget is not a handset. It's a wearable that runs on Android Wear and looks stunning!

WWDC 2014

Read more on iOS8, OSX Yosemite and the new developer tools that give iOS8 more functionality.



Amazon Fire Phone

Can the latest offering from amazon take on the giants



WE'RE BACK!

Hello Readers!

Thanks for staying with us, while we went on a short break for a few months. We've sorted things out and are back with the next edition of the MVDIT TECH BOOK. This also happens to be the 50th Edition of the eZine, which first launched in July 2007.

During the short hiatus, I found a few things about eZines and online reading material in general. I'd like to share some of that with you:

1. Serif Typefaces are a far better reading experience for long texts.
2. People like graphical content more than just a lot of text.
3. People want to read more than just news.

This edition of the eZine takes into account all of that and a little more. As you can see we've changed our font to "Garamond" for long texts, and while you read our eZine, you'll also see a lot of changes that we've made.

This month we also introduced a new blog called "Pixel Posts", its our weekly updates blog where we discuss design, news, quizzes and much more.

Don't forget to visit <http://pixels.thetangible.in> after reading our eZine.

Through the course of next year, I'll be constantly iterating the eZine and I'm sure we won't have such a long break anymore.

Vidit Bhargava
Editor, MVDIT TECH BOOK,
The Tangible

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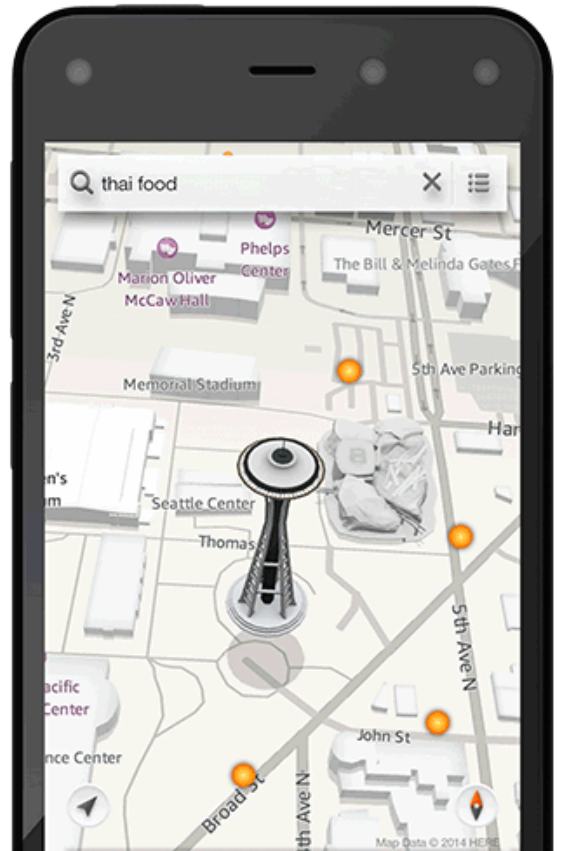
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Continuity with OSX

Vidit Bhargava

This month Apples announced it's latest iOS release, offering a ton of developer improvements and some new features.

While at surface, these developer improvements may seem small, insignificant even. The changes that they'll bring to iOS, are going to be big.

BIG CHANGES ARE COMING TO IOS WITH IOS8 & OSX YOSEMITE BUT YOU WON'T SEE THEM JUST YET!

Notification Center Improvements

Widgets and interactive Notifications

Widgets will help add things like Live Scores, Weather reports, Traffic Updates to the Notification Screen for iOS, making the information way more glance-able.

The ability to respond to Notifications is also great. Specially on the iPad. Its absurd to open up a messaging app when you just wish to send a quick reply!

Touch ID for All Apps

iOS apps require passwords to login to services like Instapaper, Spotify, Facebook. With iOS8 They won't need that and will simply be able to use the iPhone's TouchID to authenticate a user's identity.

One of the least talked about features at WWDC this year, but the Touch ID API is going to big and will shape the future of identity authentication in the world of technology.

PASSWORDS MIGHT WELL BE A THING OF PAST FOR IOS.

App Extensions

Apps aren't restricted anymore.

Apple's new APIs Kits allow third party developers to include extensions in iOS. So for example if you want to pin an image in pinterest you can simply use the pinterest extension available in the sharing menu of the app.

Or if you wish to send an article to your Instapaper account it becomes easy with an Instapaper extensions.

Extensions aren't just restricted to the sharing screen of your iPhone. They are almost everywhere in the OS.

iPhone now supports third party keyboards as well. So you can now install the SwiftKey app and go about using its keyboard anywhere in the operating system.

If there's a photo-editing app with some really cool filters, you can use its photo-editing features in iOS' default photo editing app as well.

Notification center widgets are also a part of the Extensions API

APP EXTENSIONS ARE THE BIGGEST CHANGE TO iOS SINCE THE APP STORE.



Home Kit API

Asking Siri to Lock the Doors

Along side a health kit, Apple also released a Home Kit this year. What Home Kit does is that it provides home automation devices like Locks, Thermostats and Light Bulbs to interact with iOS.



So, in the near future you could be asking Siri to lock your house's doors, or just change the light setting to dim or even to set the temperature to certain value.

Home Automation is going to be a big thing in technology in the near future and with Siri Support iOS just gave the entire market of home automation a upward thrust and established a firm footing in a small, yet fast growing field.

With the new Home Kit APIs all eyes will be on two of the biggest brands in Home automation, Nest and Philips. What they do with Home Kit is going to shape how others take it.

Continuity

iOS + OSX = Delightful Synergy

The basic idea about continuity is simple. If your phone's on your desk, you'd rather work on your email on the iMac rather than your phone, or you'd rather just answer the call on your Mac than having to pick up your phone first and then talk.

Apple's going big with continuity in iOS and has included a lot of things which will help in creating a more synchronised environment for iOS and OSX. But I'd just like to talk about two of them. *First*, is the ability to make phone calls, send messages from your mac & the other is *Handoff*.



With handoff, you can start with a document on your mac and continue it on your iPad or iPhone.

Handoff is way quicker than iCloud and its far more convenient.

Handoff is a convenient way to carry the mails you are working on the iPad to your Mac or vise versa. You can do the same with Documents, Web Pages, Photos and host of other things.

iOS8 adds the ability to make and receive phone calls from your Mac. It also adds the ability to send text messages from iMessages via OSX.

Now this may not seem to be a very big deal at first. But is going to be a huge usability thing in the near future.

Its infinitely more convenient to just answer an urgent call from your mac instead of

having to go about picking up your phone first instead.

While some might call, iOS8 as just a small change and probably insignificant but what Apple's provided its developers with, will have strong impact on how iOS goes ahead for years to come.

A lot of people at this year's WWDC felt that Apple had changed a lot and this is where Tim Cook

wants it to go. But Cook's or not. Apple hasn't changed much, It has always waited long to provide extended functionality in its latest operating systems.

Initially the iPhone didn't have third party apps, nor did have copy/paste functionality but when these features came to iOS. Apple pretty much nailed them. App Extensions, Continuity and Touch ID feel the same to me. Apple's not the first again, but their implementation may well be the best one here.

**HANDOFF ISN'T JUST COOL. ITS
SOME THING SMALL, BUT ONE
THAT YOU JUST CAN'T STAY
WITHOUT.**



OSX YOSEMITE | *First Impressions*

Vidit Bhargava

Today Apple announced the tenth instalment of OS X called Yosemite. Yosemite, apart from a major design overhaul also includes a lot of other improvements. Yosemite also brings new methods for iOS & Mac interactions. While you can read the entire list of features that OSX Yosemite brings to the table at Apple's website, I'll be highlighting a few over here:



Notification Center



Spotlight Search



iCloud Drive



Handoff

Design Overhaul

Yosemite is the biggest design change since OSX's introduction of aqua. Taking design cues from iOS 7, OSX Yosemite focuses more on content than on the toolbars which just fade away.

Last year at WWDC apple came up with this new design language for iOS 7 which at that time was pretty uncut and under polished, gradually through various updates apple's



perfected the design language to be more visually appealing and the result is a much more stable design upgrade for OS X.

Like all previous OSX design changes, the operating system never changes the fundamental interactions, anyone who has previously used any Mac operating system won't find any steep learning curve here. Yosemite is well and truly a Mac design change.

Icons are neatly done, UI changes are quite appealing. Yosemite is the best representation of a modern Mac. The aesthetics have changed but the interactions as solid as ever.

Notification Center Improvements

With OSX 10.10 Notification Center for Mac has now gained a "Today" view. The today view is quite interesting, it allows apps to install widgets in the notification center. So for example you can now view the latest score with the single swipe to the left.

Widgets are otherwise handy too & with third party support the today view is going to look pretty interesting. I'm personally excited to see some of the great stuff from Google now landing over here.

Widgets to notification center open a whole new world of possibilities for OSX as a glance-able operating system.

Spotlight Search

Spotlight Search for OSX Yosemite looks a lot like Alfred at first glance, but is a lot better actually not only does Spotlight get take a center stage like Alfred, it also gives quick previews of the content that you are searching for.

In addition to previous from locally saved files, spotlight also allows for intelligent web based previews, including Wikipedia articles, Movie Listings & App Searches.

While the new spotlight search is a big improvement over all of its previous versions, it would be interesting to see it implement widgets and more interactive previews in the future updates.



iOS + Mac

iOS is integrating with Mac in massive ways with OSX Yosemite. With iOS + Mac Features not only is apple strengthening its ecosystem it's extending iOS' capabilities from an app centric operating system to a more powerful one.

iCloud Drive is a welcome change to iOS' file management, but it'll be interesting to see if iCloud Drive slowly makes itself into finder for iOS of sorts.

iCloud Drive

When Steve Jobs introduced Documents in the Cloud some three years ago, he created a new method of file management which was app centric & not file centric, while this solved a major problem in the messy world of file management it did create other problems. For example, it made inter app communication between files a pain.

Today, Apple has announced iCloud Drive, iCloud Drive basically solves the problems created by a app centric file management interface, while users still don't have to worry about root directories they can easily open compatible files with any app on iOS, & its a simple drag & drop for transferring files previously stored on your Mac to your iOS Device.

AirDrop for Mac & iOS

The previous release of iOS & OSX couldn't make the devices communicate to each other while using AirDrop & this left the users confused. OSX Yosemite fixes this, it makes iOS & OSX AirDrop possible, it's a welcome fix.

Handoff

With Handoff, it becomes easy to start your work on OSX / iOS and complete it on something else. Imagine a scenario where you are about to leave for an urgent meeting and need to make some quick changes to your Pages documents on the go. Handoff allows your iOS device to start working on the file from where you left it on your Mac.

OSX Yosemite is a huge upgrade to the OSX lineup & I definitely can't wait to get my hands on the new operating system. It not only paints the OSX with a fresh coat of paint it also makes significant strides for more integrated approach with iOS. OSX Yosemite will be available for Mac users free of charge this fall.

Amazon Fire Phone

Vidit Bhargava

This week Amazon did what it was rumoured to do for about two years now. They came out with their own Mobile Phone. Its another addition to Amazon's Fire brand which basically is a set of me-too products made by Amazon to promote its ecosystem which includes Amazon's Cloud Storage, Amazon Prime & Its famed store.

ANOTHER ME-TOO FIRE DEVICE FROM AMAZON

Like the Kindle Fire & Fire TV. Amazon's Fire Phone also runs a forked version of Android with its own App catalogue.

The Fire Phone in build quality and feature set is pretty much like any other android mobile phone in today's world. Again, there's little substantially different from its competitors but lives up to the Fire Brand's expectations

to provide the best way to use the Amazon Eco System.

Dynamic Perspective

Picking up the Fire Phone in your hands the first thing you'll notice is a feature called "Dynamic Perspective" which is basically a 3D like feature which lets you explore new things by tilting the phone in your hands.



GIMMICKS ARE GOOD, SOMETIMES

The Phone's lock screen makes great use of the Dynamic Perspective by giving us a set of beautiful wallpapers which Display Time and Date in a very unique and cool manner. The icons on the home screen also make use of the dynamic perspective which is quite gimmicky but really very cool. At least it makes for a great demo.



But the thing where Amazon's new technology works best is the games department. Dynamic Perspective gives a completely different dimension to work with to game developers & the potentials here are worth looking into.

To produce these seemingly amazing results, the Fire Phone uses four cameras placed at the edge of the phone to track your movement. Which makes the phone look a little ugly, and raises questions on the Phone's battery life. Would I sacrifice the battery life of my phone for this feature? Maybe Yes, but Would I want to use a Phone whose front has four cameras which look like screws attached to the ends of the screen? Definitely No! I expected Amazon to make better use of sensors over here

Would I sacrifice the battery life of my phone for Dynamic Perspective? YES.

Build Quality

Fire Phone comes with Gorilla Glass in the front and the back. The Glass design, something often used in mobile phones for a long time now is prone to shatter but with Amazon putting Gorilla Glass in the back does give its phone a lot more strength. The Rubberised sides are a good touch and provide a good grip to the phone.

The Phone's 4.7inch, 720p display isn't too big & sufficiently bright. The 13MP which Amazon claims is great for low light images does look like it gets the job done but one will have to use the Phone to judge whether it's really that good. At any rate, it does have a dedicated camera guy.

Overall, Fire Phone's Hardware is neither pathbreaking nor archaic. Its design is little behind the likes of HTC One M8 or iPhone 5s but it's not cheap looking like the Samsung Galaxy S5. It's fine, but you probably won't look at it twice.

Software

To be honest, Amazon's Fire version of Android has never really impressed me. Large Icons, Dark Skins and a Cover Flow-esque design just never pleased me. Its not particularly bad, but its mighty difficult to navigate. The dark skin also makes it look a bit dated.

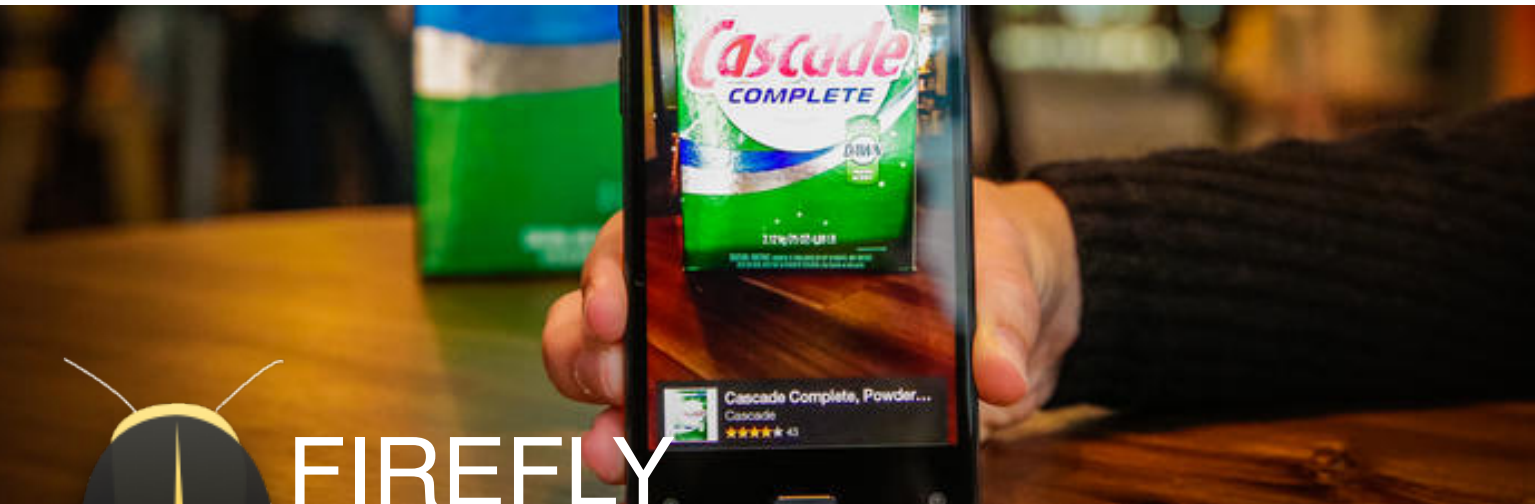
With Fire Phone Amazon just went overboard with the new toy they got. Dynamic Perspective. Every UI Element in the Operating system seems to have been designed to give you this feel that its Three Dimensional. Even the Messaging app. This takes a heavy toll on the general user experience of the phone.

After a while you get tired of seeing too much 3D but you don't really have a choice over here.

The Icons do look good with dynamic perspective or at least some of them make wonderful use of it. These interactive icons bring life to what is usually a slightly boring screen on every other operating system.

PHOTOS DONE THE RIGHT WAY

One area where Amazon does some great work though is Photos. Here Amazon is providing you with a fairly at par Camera which can take some great photos & bundling Unlimited Cloud Storage for Photos with it. Which is pretty great.



Amazon also introduced a feature called Firefly with its smartphone. Firefly is an app that lets you click a picture of any physical object like Nutella, a music CD or a book & then do things like buy it on the Amazon's website.

So, lets say your supply of Nutella is over at your house. All you need to do with it is just click a photo of it & firefly instantly suggests you the option to buy it from Amazon.

Firefly is magical for those who pretty much buy everything from Amazon.



Amazon's Fire Phone is a fairly decent Android phone with good hardware specifications, impressive photo management and is the best phone to buy Amazon stuff.

Exactly whom is this phone meant for? The loyal Amazon users who've invested a lot in Amazon's ecosystem from an Amazon Prime Subscription to its Fire TV.

Talking about competition, Apple's iPhone may well be Fire Phone's biggest competitor and this is where Amazon's pretty much on back foot which has priced its phone at the same \$649, that iPhone 5s is selling at. iPhone's got a much more robust operating system than I expect Amazon's Fire Phone to do the same.



Amazon's version of android. Its got a lot of functionality which is missing from the Fire Phone. Its got "better" apps and is still the OS which gets the first bite of any new app idea from indie developers. The device's hardware is also far more impressive than what amazon's offering. But that's all my opinion. I'm not too sure if all my readers feel the same about iPhone & its operating system.

Frankly, Amazon's Kindle Fire & Fire TV aren't really hot selling iPad & Apple TV/ Roku Killers. They don't sell much but have still managed to make a small market for themselves.

moto 360



Elegant Design

Moto 360 is the first watch that I'd really want to wear on my wrist. Its metal, circular design is well polished. The Display looks brilliant too.

Android Wear

Motorola's new watch runs android wear, the key here is Wear's integration with Google Now & how well it works.

Price & Availability

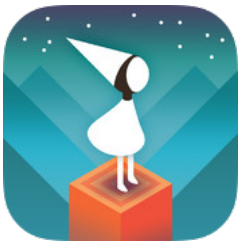
Expect Motorola's latest wearable to cost around \$800, given the build quality of the watch. The Availability is a big question too.

Innovative Mobile Games

June 2014



Threes
by Sirvo



Monument Valley
by Ustwo



Two Dots
by Betaworks One



Hitman Go
by Squire Enix



VVVVVV
by Terry Cavanagh



iPad Creation Apps

June 2014



Storehouse
Easily create & publish visual
stories



Adobe Sketch

Sketching app,
complete with
Ruler & pencils



Codea

Code on your
iPad.



Garageband

Make Music,
play virtual
instruments



Keynote

Create
presentations
on the fly

LookUp

LookUp is an iPhone app created by Vidity Bhargava & Mudit Bhargava the co-editors of this eZine.

The most popular dictionary apps on the iPhone are frankly speaking, quite terrible. More concerned about branding, advertising. These apps just do the job & often fail to provide a little extra to their users. Here's a look at what they look like today:



LookUp, however is an elegant dictionary app with focus on a beautiful and elegant user interface and an ad free, clutter free experience. So that looking for the meaning of a word isn't a painful anymore.

But why do we need a dictionary app, when there's the good old "define" option on iPhone? It is easy to lookup a definition when you are reading on your iPhone but we don't just read on our gadgets. Everyday we come across new words in newspapers and books. To search for the meaning of those new words, a dictionary is always a convenient way.

LookUp goes beyond definitions. It provides you more about the word including its synonyms, etymology and where relevant, an extract from wikipedia too.

Doing different is easy. But doing something that's actually better is far more difficult!

Two year's into development, LookUp's UI has gone through dozens of iterations and improvements. It took us a long time but we finally fixed on the simple swipe cards interface for our app. Its easy to use. The information is quickly glance-able and the app doesn't need any on-boarding!



LookUp is a very light dictionary app. Compared to our competition which takes about 100MB of your phone's storage, LookUp just takes up about 7MB at the maximum.

It is available on the App Store for just \$2.99.

LookUp featured in the **best new apps** section of the App Store, and is currently featured in the Reference Section!

Praise For LookUp:

“LookUp is a beautiful app. A definite reading companion.”

User Review

“LookUp could very well become your main iPhone dictionary.”

Daniel Celeste - App Advice

“It doesn't feel like any other dictionary app on the App Store”

Mikhail Madnani - Beautiful Pixels



Pixel Quiz

June 2014

Vidit Bhargava

Q1. The font is popular for appearing at a lot of places. Its in the logo for Rolls Royce, Gmail used it once in its logo , the name iPhone on the back of the iPhone is printed in this font & one of its variants is also the official font of Tata Group of industries. Name the font.

Q2. Among the various works of UK based firm are the first class cabin for the British Airways, and a feature phone designed for Huawei. One of its co-founders is closely associated with the world of technology. Name the firm.

Q3. This company founded in 1992 received funding from DARPA & is famously known for making something known as the “BigDog” for the US Military. Which famous AI firm am I talking about?

Q4. Which famous hardware did Robert Dennard Invent at IBM?

Q5. Name the Germany based company known for making the Goal Line Technology which was licensed by FIFA for this year’s world cup?

Q6. Unlimited Limited and Unincorporated Inc were proposed names for which company initially?

Q7. Chaitanya Kanojia is the founder and CEO of which famous, troubled startup?

Q8. Name the Q&A social network recently started by twitter co-founder Biz Stone?

Q9. Oscar Barnack is known as the father of 35mm Photography but he’s also the founder of X a German Optics Company. What is X?

Q10. Now acquired by Compaq, zip2 is a web software company providing business directories and maps to media companies. It was co-founded by two brothers. Name both of them.