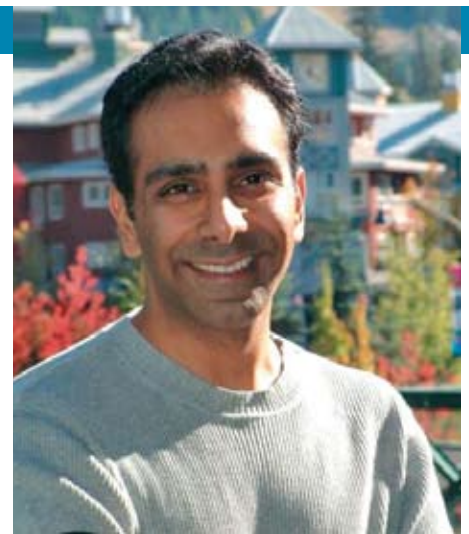


Akash Sablok



Fall Tech

The weather's getting a little cooler, so now's the time to think about updates to your office and even your vehicle.

Safe Ink

One item everyone needs is a secure method of writing and signing cheques. While most people print cheques with a computer, a lot of cheques are still being handwritten.

The Uni-Ball Signo 207 from uni-ball is a gel pen that addresses a huge concern with cheque writing—cheque washing—the practice of carefully “washing” the name and amount on the face of the cheque and replacing it with a new payee and amount, while keeping the original signature intact.

Most pens, including gel pens, place their ink on the surface of the paper.

The Uni-ball®207 embeds its ink into the paper fibres, making it very difficult to wash out.

The ink is acid-free so it will not degrade over time or eat away at the paper—perfect for long-term storage.

The ink is fade-resistant, chemical-resistant, and water-resistant.

You won't have to write a big cheque to stock your office with this pen. They are available for under \$2. And they look stylish!

The Uni-ball®207 Gel comes in black, blue, and red ink and is available in packs of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 8.

www.uniball-na.com

Look Ma, No Pen

What if you don't want to use a pen at all?

Add the Bamboo tablet from Wacom and you'll be one step closer to the paperless office we all dream about.

The Bamboo pen-based tablet allows you to enter text, edit photos, navigate your screen, and a whole lot more, without having to touch your mouse or keyboard.

The \$99 tablet, measuring 200 mm x 186 mm x 10.7 mm, has a reasonably sized drawing area. The unit recognizes the pen from a 3 mm distance—perfect for moving your cursor around on the screen. Four customizable program keys at the top surrounding a “Touch Ring” allow you to use the Bamboo that suits you most—scrolling, zoom, and so on.

The unit will work with Windows XP or Vista and the Mac OSX.

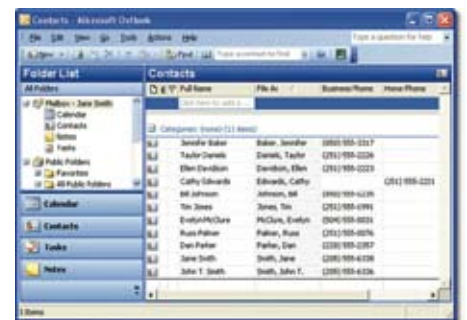


It shines in the Vista environment because that operating system has handwriting-recognition capabilities built-in; the Bamboo can activate Vista's Flip3D mode by clicking on the FN2 key.

A lot of Bamboo users like it for editing their photographs. I believe it would work well at the front counter of an office, for example. It would be perfect for having your courier “sign” a receipt or a client sign for the pickup of documents.

Power and the computer connection are through a standard USB port.

www.wacom.com



Outlook in the Palm of Your Hand

Over 2 months ago, I finally decided to start using the contact manager in Microsoft Office 2007.

I have been using the Palm Desktop software for over 10 years and it has worked well for me. Now, however, there are limitations to the application; the biggest is its inability to sync with the Apple iPhone.

I have over 600 contacts, notes, and calendar entries in the database and neither I nor my staff (I asked them) want to transfer each entry over one-by-one. I discovered a little software from Chapura called PocketCopy, designed to ease the transition from the Palm Desktop to Outlook.

Once you download the program from Chapura's Website for a reasonable \$20, you can install it and use it within minutes. It transferred all my data into Outlook's fields and data within 10 minutes—a lot faster than we could ever do manually.

www.chapura.com

Movies across The World

You've just hired a professional video-production company to make a promotional video of your office. The end result is astounding—great video, images, and music. You have DVD copies to give to your clients.

What if you want to post the video on your Website or email it to your clients? You can convert it to DivX format, the new industry standard for video compression.

What mp3 did for music, DivX has done for video.

DivX Pro allows you to drag-and-drop nearly any video format to create a high-quality, highly compressed DivX video. You can merge and convert multiple videos into a single DivX file with an automatically generated menu. You can even convert HD (high definition) content at up to 1080p resolutions. Six preset encoding modes optimize visual quality and performance.

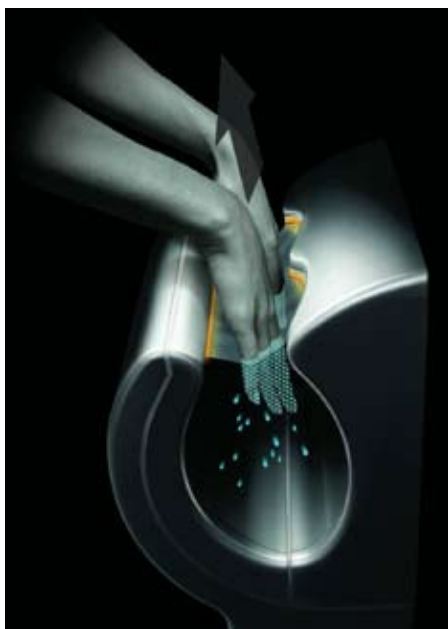
I use this \$20 software to back up my old home movies, fitting 2 hours of VHS or DVD onto a regular CD.

Get your award-winning video out there (*Hello, Oscar!*), easily and quickly.

www.divx.com

Drying Your Hand

We spoil ourselves with a snazzy chair, functional and stylish desks, and top-of-the-line computer systems, but do we ever think to spruce up our washrooms?



The Dyson Airblade is the most high-tech and hygienic hand dryer on the market. If you have used a Dyson vacuum cleaner, you know what I mean.

While typical hand dryers use hot air to dry hands, through evaporation, the Airblade uses high speed air to “wisk” the wetness off your skin. The air rushes over your hands via a 0.3 mm-thin air curtain running at 640 km/h (400 mph), yet it feels like a gentle brushing.

Place your hands in the slot and the machine turns on automatically. Within 12 seconds—about 20 seconds faster than conventional dryers, your hands are dry and clean. And I do mean clean. Why? With other dryers, people usually rub their hands together to speed things up. The rubbing pushes bacteria deeper into skin layers and fingernails.

The Airblade is 98 percent more efficient than paper towels and 80 percent more efficient than other hand dryers. Save the environment and your monthly expense bill. And a side benefit—the air that passes through the unit is filtered, removing 99.9 percent of airborne bacteria.

The unit's only drawback is the initial cost—in the \$1500 range. Over the long term, though, it will pay for itself.

www.dyson.com

Dealing with Not-Dry Roads

Most people don't think about tires until it's too late. A blown or ripped tire is not a fun experience, especially on a highway.

I tested a vehicle with Continental's Conti-Pro all-season radials mounted on the wheels. The tires are standard on many luxury automobiles including Audi, BMW, and Mercedes Benz and they're now original equipment on the Chrysler 300, Ford Fusion, Honda Civic, and Toyota Matrix and Corolla.

The tires are R speed-rated—they can run at a constant speed of over 200 km/h safely. If you know a road in Canada where you can legally drive at 200 km/h, please email me . . .

They have a tenacious grip on dry roads and a strong grip on wet roads. Bring on the occasional snow-covered tarmac, and you'll be just fine—the tire is M+S (mud and snow) certified.



The flexible zigzag grooves down the centre create twin wet-channels, to strip rain from the tread. The handling is great and the ride is quiet and soft. Tread life is about average.

Your tires are your car's only contact with the road. Using improper tires in bad weather is like wearing sandals during a snowstorm. And please be sure your tires are inflated properly.

www.conti-na.com ▲

Akash Sablok practises as a Notary Public in Vancouver with his father **Tarlok Sablok**. Akash writes regular technology and automotive columns for several publications across Canada and appears as a guest technology reviewer on CityTV's *Breakfast Television*, Omni's 10 PM *News*, and *The Jenn & Joe Show* on Talk1410.

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