

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME ENVIRONMENT WITH WINDOWS APPS

By Charles Nahas

KUWAIT: Most people know that Windows 10 helps them to be more productive at work, but did you know it can also help you to be more productive at home too? Whether you simply want to manage your family's schedule better, capture special memories or you're planning to do some redecorating, here's how Windows apps can help:

Keep tracks

Outlook.com makes it easy to share your Microsoft Calendar with the people you care about. All they need is a Microsoft account, and then it's as simple as sharing permissions with them and controlling which parts of the calendar they can view and access. You can also share an online view-only link with people, who can then access it via Microsoft Outlook, iCal and Google Calendar. If you're a parent, this is the ideal way to keep track of your chil-

dren's school commitments and play dates, and make sure you never miss a recital or leave them stranded at school.

Share notes

Using your Microsoft account login gives you access to powerful cloud-based storage. OneDrive powers document sharing in Office 365, which allows multiple users to access, edit, comment and change a single document from any device. OneNote is a "catch-all" app for information, ideas and inspiration in any form, and makes accessing this information quick and effortless no matter where you are. These features are the perfect sharing repository for your family, keeping everything safely in one place. Whether you're grocery shopping and want to access the shopping list that your family has added to; you find an article for your daughter's research project you want to save for her, with the relevant parts marked; or your whole family want to have their say on your latest inspiration for

a home makeover, OneDrive and OneNote make collaborating and sharing easier.

Capture memories

No matter if you live with family, friends or even alone, your home is the place where memories are created. Capture those special moments easily with the 20 megapixel camera on your Microsoft Lumia phone. It's one of the most powerful smartphone cameras and its features like Carl Zeiss optics and triple LED flash ensure your photos are of a high quality. Best of all, it's easy to create albums with just a few clicks and share these on your OneDrive account for safe keeping. And, when you're not snapping photos of your children or your friends, you might come across the inspiration for your next table setting or lounge remodel. Snap a few shots to remind yourself to get the creative juices flowing.

Get creative

Talking about creative juices, there are

several apps available to help you create your own little haven. For inspiration, why not try out Houzz? The Houzz app is a digital repository of home-related ideas, tips and inspiration, with over eight million pictures of home decor and remodeling ideas. Then, if you're feeling really creative, try out the drawing and painting app, Fresh Paint. It's been hailed for its ability to accurately mimic watercolor, oil, pencil, pen and pastel, so you could try your hand at creating your very own art for your home. And what would a haven be without the right lighting? Ambieye is an app that connects with Philips Hue light bulbs and allows you to control their color, intensity and brightness.

Optimize your home life

With an ever-greater part of our lives becoming digital, it makes sense that we capitalize on digital technology to make our home life more organized, our homes more comfortable and see our productivity at home increase.



Charles Nahas



TAIPEI: A video game enthusiast experiences a virtual reality headset at the Taipei Game Show 2016 in Taipei, Taiwan. Oculus founder Palmer Luckey and other pioneers of modern virtual reality technology from such companies as Google and Sony gathered for a summit yesterday, about the immersive medium in Hollywood. — AP

GOOGLE COMPUTERS 'CAN QUALIFY' AS DRIVERS: US SAFETY REGULATORS

A BOOST TO SELF-DRIVING CARS

WASHINGTON: US vehicle safety regulators have said the artificial intelligence system piloting a self-driving Google car could be considered the driver under federal law, a major step toward ultimately winning approval for autonomous vehicles on the roads. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration told Google, a unit of Alphabet Inc, of its decision in a previously unreported Feb 4 letter to the company posted on the agency's website this week.

Google's self-driving car unit on Nov 12 submitted a proposed design for a self-driving car that has "no need for a human driver," the letter to Google from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Chief Counsel Paul Hemmersbaugh said. "NHTSA will interpret 'driver' in the context of Google's described motor vehicle design as referring to the (self-driving system), and not to any of the vehicle occupants," NHTSA's letter said.

"We agree with Google its (self-driving car) will not have a 'driver' in the traditional sense that vehicles have had drivers during the last more than one hundred years." Major automakers and technology companies such as Google are racing to develop and sell vehicles that can drive themselves at least part of the time. All participants in the autonomous driving race complain that state and federal safety rules are imped-

ing testing and eventual deployment of such vehicles. California has proposed draft rules requiring steering wheels and a licensed driver in all self-driving cars.

Karl Brauer, senior analyst for the Kelley Blue Book automotive research firm, said there were still significant legal questions surrounding autonomous vehicles. But if "NHTSA is prepared to name artificial intelligence as a viable alternative to human-controlled vehicles, it could substantially streamline the process of putting autonomous vehicles on the road," he said. If the car's computer is the driver for legal purposes, then it clears the way for Google or automakers to design vehicle systems that communicate directly with the vehicle's artificial pilot.

In its response to Google, the federal agency offered its most comprehensive map yet of the legal obstacles to putting fully autonomous vehicles on the road. It noted existing regulations requiring some auto safety equipment can not be waived immediately, including requirements for braking systems activated by foot control. "The next question is whether and how Google could certify that the (self-driving system) meets a standard developed and designed to apply to a vehicle with a human driver," NHTSA said. Google is "still evaluating" NHTSA's lengthy response, a company spokesperson said on Tuesday. Google executives

have said they would likely partner with established automakers to build self-driving cars.

Undermining safety

Google told NHTSA that the real danger is having auto safety features that could tempt humans to try to take control. Google "expresses concern that providing human occupants of the vehicle with mechanisms to control things like steering, acceleration, braking... could be detrimental to safety because the human occupants could attempt to override the (self-driving system's) decisions," the NHTSA letter stated. NHTSA's Hemmersbaugh said federal regulations requiring equipment like steering wheels and brake pedals would have to be formally rewritten before Google could offer cars without those features.

For example, current federal rules require alerts on dashboards if tire pressure runs low. NHTSA said a test would need to be created that shows the vehicle computer is informed of the problem. NHTSA raised the question of whether humans in the vehicles should also be made aware. In January, NHTSA said it may waive some vehicle safety rules to allow more driverless cars to operate on US roads as part of a broader effort to speed up development of self-driving vehicles. — Reuters

CANON WINS PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD AT THE CIRCULARS 2016

DUBAI: Canon, world leader in imaging solutions, announced that the company has won the prestigious People's Choice Award for its toner cartridge recycling program at The Circulars 2016. The Circulars is an annual awards program and initiative of the Young Global Leaders of the World Economic Forum in collaboration with Accenture. It aims to recognize individuals and organizations from commerce and civil society across the globe that have made a notable contribution to driving circular economy principles - where growth does not depend on the use of scarce natural resources.

The awards ceremony took place in Davos, Switzerland. Canon was presented with the accolade, voted for by the public, to recognize Canon as an organization that shows circular economy leadership through its innovative closed loop recycling system for cartridges. "We are delighted that our recycling program has been acknowledged in these respected awards and that Canon's circular approach is delivering great value and innovation," commented David Bateson, Senior Vice President of Legal, IP and Sustainability, Canon Europe.

"In 1990, Canon became the first com-

pany to launch a global recycling program for toner cartridges and we now operate this program in 24 countries worldwide. This program is just one part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability initiatives. We are honored to be selected by the public to receive this People's Choice Award and also grateful to our customers for supporting the program through their own commitment to recycling."

In 2015, Canon celebrated the 25th anniversary of its laser toner cartridge recycling program, designed to minimize the use of resources whilst enabling customers to achieve their high quality printing requirements. The program, which is free for customers, has recycled more than 344,000 tons of cartridges globally, saving over 502,000 tons of CO2, since it launched. Last year, Canon also launched a new recycling plant in Japan that has helped improve sorting capability and enabled 50% greater processing capacity. Customers can find out how to recycle their cartridges with Canon by visiting Canon's recycling website. For outstanding results, Canon recommends use of genuine cartridges. More information about Canon's recycling program can be found on the 25th anniversary recycling website.



David Bateson, Senior Vice President of Legal, IP and Sustainability Canon Europe accepting The Circulars award trophy presented by Andy Wales Corporate Affairs Director, SAB Miller.

HOW TO FIND THE BEST FITNESS APP

MIAMI: There's no reason to set foot in a gym thanks to hundreds of new fitness apps and online workouts, but choosing one can be overwhelming. We asked sports medicine doctors for help finding the one that's best for you.

Personalize it

Look for programs that offer personalized screenings and gather details on your past injuries, health conditions and fitness goals. "There's a lot of cookie-cutter apps out there and people that just want to get your monthly subscriptions, and they're really not concerned about helping you reach your goals or, more importantly, if any of these movements are going to injure you," said David Alexander, who's trained LeBron James and Dwyane Wade and owns DBC Fitness in Miami.

"It's beneficial if you can find an app out there or an online program where you're having conversations via email, phone, or face time with the trainer that can help make sure you're doing the exercises correctly." Some apps offer daily or weekly check-ins with trainers and a few offer real time feedback. While those are more costly, you can also pop into a live class in your area to get some pointers so if you're a new yogi starting at home with an online subscription, it's important to take a class a couple times a month to have someone check your form.

Have fun

It doesn't matter whether all the supermodels are doing barre classes if the thought of it totally bores you. Find something you love because you're much more likely to stick with it. "It's pretty well known that the novelty of these things wears off within several months," said Dr. Daniel Vigil, a UCLA Health doctor who has served as the USA team physician for several international competitions, including the World Cup. It doesn't have to be super high intensity and it doesn't have to be the 'it' workout. Movement is movement. "Find the device that truly is the most appealing to you, something that looks good to your eye and makes you have that visceral response, that's what going to make you use it and keep you curi-

ous and keep it entertaining."

Don't be afraid to modify

High intensity interval training can offer mega results, but if you're just starting out and have never done sumo squats with a kettlebell, make sure to tailor the program to your needs. That means if an exercise comes onscreen that irritates an old knee injury, take a rest, modify it or replace it with a move that works for you. "That's where I can get a little worried about some of the apps is that folks might be compromising form just to get some of the moves done ... don't stretch to pain," said Dr. Jeff Mayer, who specializes in sports medicine and has worked with the Baltimore Ravens. "When you're compromising form and you're compromising the integrity of the exercise you open yourself up for an increased chance for injury and we see that all the time." Don't be afraid to do fewer repetitions at first and work your way up. Five reps with proper form are far more effective than 10 done incorrectly.

Give it a rest

While your Instagram feed may be full of #fitspo (that's fitness inspiration), it's important to pick an app that includes rest days to avoid injury and physical and mental burnout. "You want to find something that gives you three workout days and one recovery day, whether it's a yoga day, a stretch day, a Pilates day. Find something that's not high intensity every day while you're building your foundation," said Alexander.

Mix it up

You've heard it before, but if it's worth repeating. Cross training is key not just to avoid injury but to keep your muscles from plateauing. It's all about muscle confusion so if you're a die-hard yogi or barre lover, find an app to help you add in some higher intensity interval training. "It may be a combo of these apps would be best ... it goes back to what's your main goal? Is it to get better cardiovascular fitness, is it to get more flexible, is it to get stronger," said Mayer. — AP

NIKON, PHOTOGRAPHY MAESTRO BRINGS 'SEEING CREATIVELY' TOUR TO KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Nikon, the world leader in digital imaging, is proud to present 'Seeing Creatively', a regional photography tour that is set to inspire and excite photography enthusiasts across multiple cities in the Middle East and Africa region. The sessions will be conducted February 21, 2016 at Yarmouk Cultural Centre by the world-renowned, multi-awarded commercial photographer, Bryan F Peterson (www.bryanfpeterson.com), author of 8 best-selling photography books published in 11 languages.

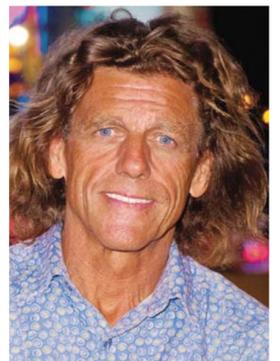
The tour will provide both aspiring and professional photographers an opportunity to enhance their skills and learn new techniques. The sessions will be conducted across countries including Kuwait, Oman, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. Bryan

Peterson expressed his excitement about the workshop: "I am eager to meet the aspiring photographers in Kuwait and assist them in reaching their photography potential through the platform Nikon School has provided. The workshops, open to everyone, will familiarize aspiring photographers to the different aspects of photography and demonstrate to how a simple shot can be turned into a creative image."

Takashi Yoshida, the Managing Director for Nikon Middle East, stated "Through ongoing Nikon School initiatives, like 'Seeing Creatively', Nikon aims to spread support to ambitious photographers in the region as well as across the globe. The ultimate goal for Nikon School sessions is to revive photographers' passions through

inspirational talks and seminars that provide platforms for the local community to meet with professionals such as Bryan Peterson, where they can discuss ideas that will pave their way to creating high-quality, creative content."

Yoshida added, "There is a lot of potential in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa regions, and together with our Nikon ambassadors, we hope to nurture and grow the pool of photographers through ongoing Nikon School workshops." To find out more on how to register and be a part of the exciting workshop, follow Nikon on Facebook on www.facebook.com/nikonmea. The workshops will be taking place in Muscat, Jeddah, Doha, Cape town, and more.



Bryan Peterson