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## Site of the week

**analytics.shownearby.com**  
**BUYING** or renting real estate just got easier with ShowNearby's recently launched Analytics tool.  
 Type in the location and select nearby amenities you're interested in — such as supermarkets, restaurants and schools — before hitting the Search button to have all the information displayed neatly on a map.  
 Or, you can leave the categories field empty to jump to a statistical report comprising details like accessibility, weather information and residential demographics.

Singles in search of the perfect pad may be interested in the ratio of married to single male/female residents in the area.  
 Families living with seniors might find the breakdown on spoken languages useful. Other information includes household income, age, employment and education profiles. The demographics provided are based on the decennial Singapore Census of Population conducted in 2000.  
 The Singapore Department of Statistics has begun preparing a 2010 update in March. When you're ready to find your dream home, click on the Property report tab for a shortlist of apartments for sale or rent. **SIM CHENG KAI**

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**DIGITISE ME**

**Local businesses like Tangerine Associate can convert ancient formats like VHS, VHSC, Video8, Hi8, Digital8 and MiniDV tapes into DVDs for \$25 per hour of footage.**

# Geeky ways to make mummy's day

May Chua  
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IT'S two days to Mother's Day, and you're still empty-handed. It's not too late, we say. Here's how to get mum a nice, sweet gift while helping her come round (if she hasn't already) to the joys of modern technology.

**1 Create an online scrapbook**  
 E-cards are passe. Create a personalised digital scrapbook instead. Scrapblog ([www.scrapblog.com](http://www.scrapblog.com)) is a good place to start. There are free kits to choose from and you don't have to download or install anything — just put together the scrapbook using the fuss-free web application. The app can pull photos from Facebook, MySpace, Picasa and Photobucket besides uploading new ones from your computer. When you're done, you can share the URL with mum or buy US\$5 (\$6.72) worth of credits to save and print out a copy of your masterpiece.  
 If you prefer working on a hard copy, Shabby Princess ([www.shabbyprincess.com](http://www.shabbyprincess.com)) has some pretty, high-resolution digital scrapbooking kits for you to download and print for free.

**2 Convert video tapes or audio cassettes**  
 Have a look in the cabinet or storeroom, and you might find your parents' wedding video, or footage chronicling the important events of your family lying around — on video or audio tapes.  
 Local businesses like Tangerine Associate can convert ancient formats like VHS, VHSC, Video8, Hi8, Digital8 and MiniDV tapes into DVDs for \$25 per hour of footage. Audio cassettes of your mother's beloved songs can be turned into CDs as well, for \$15. You can get the finished product for one tape within two days.

**PERIPHERAL REVIEW: LOGITECH WIRELESS DESKTOP MK710**

## Lasts three years — on one set of batteries

I'VE never been a fan of battery-powered wireless devices and usually opt for wired versions of the same device (I'm looking at you, Xbox 360 controller), if only because I wouldn't have to bother with the hassle of changing batteries.  
 But the Logitech Wireless Desktop MK710 (\$169) got me curious. This package comprises the MK700 keyboard and the Marathon M705 laser mouse.



**3 Cook a nostalgic dish**  
 Mum's donned the apron for decades, so this Mother's Day, return the favour by feeding her some home-cooked food prepared by someone other than herself (for once).  
 Instead of rifling through old cookbooks, you can take advantage of online resources like Nostalgic Recipes from

Nice ([nicerecipes.wordpress.com](http://nicerecipes.wordpress.com)), a collection of recipe notes made over a span of 50 years by the blogger's grandmother. Yumtrade ([www.yumtrade.com/recipe.asp?type=cuisine](http://www.yumtrade.com/recipe.asp?type=cuisine)) has a good variety as well, offering recipes for Chinese, Malay and Indian food.  
 Hand Me Down ([www.handmedown.sg/category/recipes](http://www.handmedown.sg/category/recipes)) is a local site worth

checking out, as it contains videos of the recipe contributors in action.  
 The recipe list is limited, but you can find old favourites like Hakka Yam Abacus.

**4 Give her favourite old photos a new lease of life**  
 There are plenty of step-by-step online tutorials that teach you how to retouch and jazz up those old photos with tools like Photoshop. You can even "repair" torn or faded photos.  
 Try the guides at Show and Tell-Graphics ([www.showandtelligraphics.com](http://www.showandtelligraphics.com)). There are some video tutorials at Metacafe ([www.metacafe.com](http://www.metacafe.com)) as well — just type "restore old photos".  
 After you have worked your magic, drop by the print shop and present it to mummy in a beautiful frame.

**5 Tetris**  
 Mums are fun-loving at heart, too, (nagging's not a full-time job, believe it or not), but "they don't make games the way they used to". Solution? Introduce her to a retro game.  
 You can download the original version of Tetris here: <http://lvadim.oversigma.com/Tetris.htm>. Mum can relive the experience and play the game just like in the old days!

Or, if there's more than one Nintendo DS at home, you could get her Tetris DS and engage in some mother-child bonding through its multiplayer feature.  
 Because at the end of the day, what Mum loves most is your companionship.

**SMARTPHONE REVIEW: MOTOROLA MILESTONE**

## Manly bear hands needed

**It's tough, it's sturdy but less well-endowed users need not apply**

THE phone that heralded Motorola's comeback in the United States has arrived. The Motorola Milestone is essentially the GSM version of the CDMA-centric Droid smartphone. The Milestone feels tough and sturdy, and that sets it apart from the creaky, plastic cases of cheaper smartphones.  
 It's pretty heavy at 165g but it keeps its thickness in check at 13.7mm even with a slide-out Qwerty keyboard. The keyboard does not feature any spring-loaded action, which makes it feel stiff, even though it can slide smoothly.  
 It felt a tad wide — even with my, ahem, manly bear hands, I had to stretch my thumbs to type. I used the capable onscreen keyboard most of the time and kept thinking about how much lighter and thinner it could be without the keyboard.  
 Another issue was that I kept activating the four touch-sensitive buttons (with haptic feedback) below the display accidentally.  
 Elsewhere, you get a standard micro USB port, a 3.5mm audio jack and a microSDHC (8GB card bundled).



The 3.7-inch touchscreen display is spacious, vibrant and sharp. I like showing it off in its dock (sold separately at \$88) when it switches to landscape mode and turns the phone into a slick digital clock with easy access to your media library.  
 The 3.5G Milestone comes with WiFi, Bluetooth and A-GPS. It sports Android 2.1 — which means you can use the pinch-and-zoom finger gesture while web surfing, in Google Maps and on the images you've taken. Expect the usual host of Google services to be integrated with the device.  
 Motorola has included its Motonav app for turn-by-turn navigation (Motorola's car mount for the Milestone retails at \$88) as the feature is currently unavailable in Google Maps here. But, it will only work for 60 days — you'll need pay €44.99 (\$80.32) to continue using it. It's pricey and it doesn't have a great interface or snappy performance.  
 I like the Moto Phone Portal. A simple driver installation lets you access your phone's data (when you connect via USB or WiFi) using a web browser to tweak your contacts, text messages, playback media or transfer photos. To ease media syncing, Motorola has developed Motorola Media Link. Unfortunately, it's only available on Windows.  
 Mac users can rely on the free and excellent doubleTwist ([www.doubletwist.com](http://www.doubletwist.com)) instead.  
 I was expecting the Milestone's 550MHz processor to lag behind the newer smartphones that sport 1GHz chips but a comparison revealed only a very slight lag. But I found battery life a tad wanting. With regular web surfing, email checking and media playback, the phone could not last a day.  
 The Milestone is exclusively available from StarHub at \$888 (without contract).  
**HEDIRMAN SUPIAN**



On the right, between the Alt and Ctrl keys is a Fn button, which you can use in conjunction with F1 to F12 and other keys to activate shortcuts, ranging from launching a browser or Word document, to less common functions like

zooming in and out or shutting down the computer.  
 Some of these features are not available until you install Logitech's SetPoint configuration software — which is disappointing because not every computer user has administrative privileges — but once you do, you can also map these shortcut keys to other functions. It would have been nice if SetPoint allows you to customise what could be displayed on the LCD screen as well.  
 The M705 mouse is just as utilitarian and optimised for comfort as the keyboard is, but looks less traditional as it's curved to fit ergonomically in your right

hand — lefties, you have been warned.  
 Your thumb naturally rests on a cushioned rubber grip, which doubles as an additional button — provided that SetPoint is installed. Once you have, squeeze the rubber grip tightly to activate a programme switcher that's reminiscent of Mac OS X — or you could programme another function.  
 The other important feature of the mouse is its scroll wheel. By default, it is set to hyper-fast scrolling mode.  
 The wheel spins smoothly, and I find this mode a fun, comfortable and quiet way to read long documents. Unfortunately, it can be imprecise at times, and I find myself switching — there's a button below the scroll wheel for this — back to the regular click-to-click scrolling mode.

Both the mouse and keyboard are tied to the included Logitech Unifying receiver; a USB dongle the size of a fingernail. Depending on the USB slot, you might need to use the included extension cable to plug it in.  
 If, like me, you want to use the same keyboard and mouse for multiple computers, the Xbox 360, and the PlayStation 3, you just need to pull out the dongle and plug it into another machine.  
 The Wireless Desktop MK710 may not have features like recordable macros or an iPod Dock, and its shortcut key customisations may be basic, but it manages to nail down the one feature that matters most — comfort. And it lasts longer on one set of batteries than my alarm clock.  
**SIM CHENG KAI**