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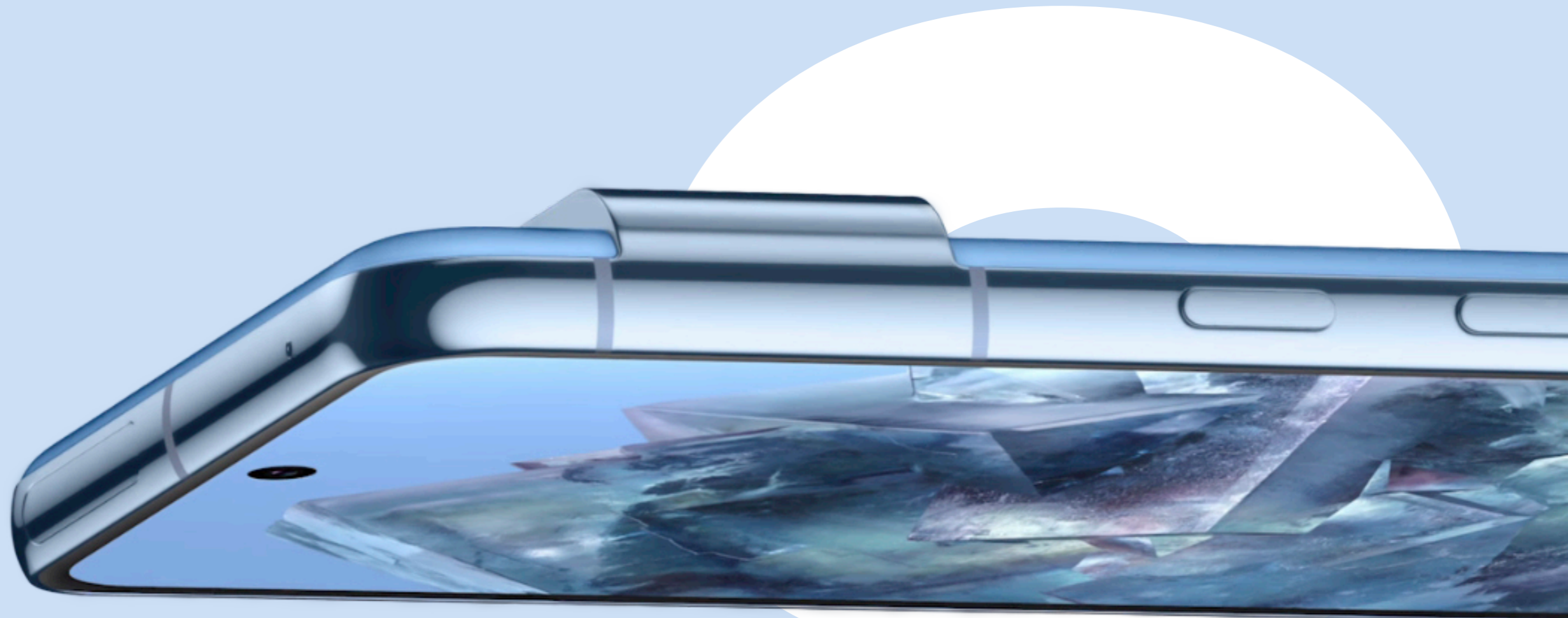
We've had Apple, Samsung, Microsoft all hold their major product events this year and this week was Google's turn to announce what they have coming up to bolster their already pretty healthy lineup.

They focused on the core products in the relatively short one hour presentation. Two Google Pixel 8 phones, the new Google Pixel Watch 2 and the Google Pixel Buds Pro. These new devices join the Pixel 6a, Pixel 7, Pixel 7 Pro and Pixel 7a as well as the Pixel Fold which remain on sale alongside their

range of smart home devices and their Google Pixel Tablet.

Also, Google recently released parts to iFixit so users can self repair the folding phone (although the prices are pretty astronomical). The inner screen kit costs US\$899.99/£904.99. A large amount in comparison for kits for their other Pixel phones where repair prices are actually quite reasonable. Right to repair at least looks like its going in the right direction!

Right, lets get on and discuss what these new devices bring in terms of features.



Both the new Google Pixel 8 and Pixel 8 Pro feature a new contoured edge design. The Pixel 8 is actually smaller than the previous model coming in with a 6.2-inch Actua display with a resolution of 1080x2400 and a variable refresh rate (60-120Hz). Google state this is 42% brighter than the Pixel 7s. The Pixel 8 comes in three new satin metal finishes with polished glass backs: Obsidian, Hazel and Rose.

The Pixel 8 Pro comes with a 6.7-inch Super Actua display which Google state is their brightest yet. The displays resolution is 1344x2992 with a variable refresh rate (1-120Hz). The Pro features a slightly different design to the standard 8 with a matte glass back and polished aluminium frame. The

Pixel 8 Pro comes in three finishes: Obsidian, Bay and Porcelain. The Pixel 8 Pro also features a temperature sensor on the back which can be used on objects to scan their temperature. Use to check a hot pan, or if a babies milk is up to the right temp. Google are even trying to get FDA approval so they can use the temperature app to send readings to Fitbit.

Both Pixel 8s have had their 50MP main cameras upgraded and they are both 21% more light sensitive than the previous models. This improves Pixel's low-light photography substantially and Google have stated that users will also notice an improvement in the phones autofocus in low light. And for the first time outside of the Pro line, the Pixel 8 gets Macro Focus. The Pixel 8 Pro

features an upgraded 48MP ultra-wide camera which is 105% more sensitive to light and can focus 30% closer for an improved Macro Focus mode with improved background blur. The Pro's 48MP telephoto camera is 56% more light sensitive. This should lead to far cleaner video in low light whilst using this camera, which Google state will be the case even at 10x zoom. Dual Exposure comes to the main cameras on both Pixel 8 and Pixel 8 Pro taking two images simultaneously; one optimised for low-light and another for high dynamic range. These are combined providing video that is less grainy and sharper with vivid colours. Working with photographers across the globe for the last three years, Google have tried to make sure that Real Tone captures accurate skin tones, especially



darker ones, in both photo and video. The camera's flash has also been augmented with Night Sight technology so darker skin looks even more natural when using the phone's flash. The Pixel 8 Pro gets 'Pro' controls offering control over white balance, exposure and shadows. Users will even be able to manually control focus, ISO and shutter speed. 50MP pictures can be taken throughout the camera systems zoom range even as pro controls are fine-tuned or HDR+ is enabled.

The new Pixel phones are powered by Google's new Tensor G3 chip. The new chip features a nine-core CPU and a ten-core GPU. The CPU gains one more core over the previous generation. The GPU is based on ARM's latest design with support for hardware-accelerated ray-tracing and with Samsung MFC (Multi-

Format Codec) will be able to decode and encode 8K video up to 30fps in HEVC or h.264 formats. Google Pixel 8 will have 8GB LPDDR5 whilst the Pixel 8 Pro comes with 12GB LPDDR5. Tensor G3 is joined by the Titan M2 security chip with both Fingerprint Unlock and Face Unlock available on both phones. Google's Face Unlock will now allow users to use compatible banking apps and payment apps like Google Wallet. Google is promising to offer for the first time 'seven years of software support' with regular OS upgrades, security updates and 'Feature Drops'.

The new Pixel phones can be pre-ordered now starting at £699.00/AU\$1,199.00 for the Pixel 8 and £999.00/AU\$1,699.00 for the Pixel 8 Pro and launch on the 12th October.

PRO

Google also announced the new Pixel Watch 2 which they say has seen improvements on both the inside and outside.

The housing is made from 100% recycled aluminium making it 10% lighter than the previous watch. The crown is also larger for easier access and use. Inside there is a new quad-core CPU and this is further enhanced with a low-power co-processor to give the Pixel Watch 2 over 24 hours of battery life with its always-on display. Charging is faster on the new watch as well with 50% charge possible in just 30 minutes of charging.

Google have added three new sensors: an all-new heart sensor with more LEDs which they state is 40% more accurate than before. The Fitbit Body Response feature comes to

Pixel Watch 2 by way of the new continuous electrodermal activity sensor (cEDA). This sensor can detect signs of stress by using a machine learning algorithm that monitors heart rate, heart rate variability and skin temperature. The final sensor is a new skin temperature sensor. Fitbit features from the previous model are joined by new Heart Rate Zone Coaching and Pace Training features.

New safety features have been added like Medical ID, Emergency Sharing and Safety Check. Safety Check lets friends or family members know what you are up to. Once an activity is chosen, the user can set a timer and select up to 15 emergency contacts who will receive a text message that you have started a Safety Check. If you cannot check in once the timer runs

down, they will receive another text message letting them know your exact location on Google Maps.

Unlike Samsung's Galaxy Watch 6 which debuted with Wear OS 4, Google are stating that Pixel Watch 2 is the only smartwatch that has access to all of wear OS 4's feature as well as new apps like Gmail and Calendar which will allow users to accept or decline an event, or get to their inbox straight from their wrist. Other apps have been improved as well like YouTube Music or Google Maps.

Finally, Google will be adding new accessories to the store with a whole new range of watch bands. Pixel Watch 2 can be pre-ordered now starting at £349.00/AU\$549.00 or £399.00/AU\$649.00 for the LTE model. It also launches on the 12th October.





MINOR UPDATE

The final product announced were the new Google Pixel Buds Pro which feature a few upgrades over last year's models.

They now support Bluetooth Super Wideband on the Pixel 8 phones, doubling the bandwidth for voices. This results in voices that sound fuller, clearer and altogether more natural than before. This wider bandwidth also allows for Clear Calling reducing the background noise of the caller on the other end of the call.

AI now detects when someone is talking to you, so users don't need to take out the earbuds.

Instead, it will enable Transparency Mode and pause any music that might be playing. After the conversation ends, it will resume whatever the user was listening to. Audio transmission when gaming has also been improved providing less latency when using either Pixel 8 or Pixel 8 Pro.

Finally, the Pixel Buds Pro app will make suggestions for how to protect a users hearing by highlighting listening habits and making suggestions on when to lower it.

Pixel Buds Pro are available to pre-order now at £199.00/ AU\$299.00

IN AN INSTANT

Instant photography has remained popular in recent years, and both Leica and Polaroid released or announced new cameras this last month.

Leica's new model features a 4.9MP CMOS sensor and a 28mm equivalent f/2 Leica Summar lens. Quite a wide aperture for such a camera. Unlike the previous Sofort, released in 2016 which was purely analogue, the Sofort 2 is a hybrid camera featuring an microSD card slot, a 3.0-inch screen and wireless connectivity with the Leica FOTOS app. With the FOTOS app users can send any photos stored directly to the Sofort 2 for printing. Handy for existing users of M, Q or SL cameras

with the internal battery of the camera supposedly good for 100 prints making it a great portable printer. Like the original Sofort, the Sofort 2 can still print instantly, but users can decide to just store the pictures on the microSD like a traditional point and shoot digital camera. The camera features a range of creative options with ten film styles and ten lens effects that can be mixed and matched for 100 unique looks. Film packs can be purchased in packs of ten and are quite reasonably priced given the costs from the competition.

The Sofort 2 launches soon in three colours: black, white and red and will cost £349.00/ AU\$649.00. Film will packs cost £10.00/AU\$20.00.





Polaroid's latest (and greatest) instant camera came out just over a month ago but I have had trouble fitting it in over the last few months which have been pretty busy with announcements.

The Polaroid I-2 is pretty expensive for an instant camera today coming in at £599.99/ AU\$1,099.95, but it does come with the best lens Polaroid has ever made. A 3-element 98mm f/8 lens with continuous autofocus which can focus down to just 0.4m. The camera has six modes. Manual which gives complete control over aperture and shutter speed, Multi-exposure for creating shots with up to four exposures, Timer mode, Auto mode,

Aperture Priority (and its 7 f-stops) and Shutter Priority with its 30 different speeds. All controllable from the camera's nifty looking display and manual aperture controls on the lens. The viewfinder also allows the user to monitor and control their distance to subject, aperture, shutter speed and exposure level so they can keep composing.

The I-2 is compatible with Polaroids I-Type, 600 and SX-70 film packs and the battery is good for shooting and printing 15 packs. That's 150 shots! There's a built-in flash but also a 2.5mm external flash sync port as well as a USB-C port for charging. There is also a tripod mount and built-in 49mm lens thread for filters.



It seems there is no stopping DJI. We only spoke about the new Air 3 a few months back and they are back, releasing a new Mini drone that comes under the 249g weight limit which means it can be used in more places and without the need for training, or exams in most countries.

The DJI Mini 4 Pro features a number of improvements over the previous model. Omnidirectional obstacle sensing improves on Mini 3 Pro Tri-directional sensing with four wide-angle cameras and a pair of downward vision sensors so it can see obstacles from all angles. There's a new sensor with dual native ISO Fusion with an enhanced noise reduction algorithm which will

produce better quality imagery with more dynamic range. Video footage can now be shot in 10-bit D-Log M for professional colour grading in post-production.

Battery life can now be extended to 45 minutes with Intelligent Battery Plus, that's five minutes more than the previous model! Transmission range has been improved to 20km for 1080p/60 video to the controllers. A substantial improvement over the 12km over the previous model.

The new DJI Mini 4 Pro is available to buy now starting at £689.00/AU\$1,119.00.



I was just wrapping up this month's newsletter when Sony dropped the announcement that two updated PS5 consoles were on their way.

Don't expect a major update however. These are just the typical revisions that we see throughout the lifetime of a console generation. Sony have likely managed to improve production but unfortunately, these new slimmer models do not bring a drop in price.

The console sees its volume reduced by 30% with a weight saving of 25% (18% on the digital model). Storage capacity has been increased to 1TB, up from the 825Gb on the original model (so room for one AAA title these days), and Sony are

introducing an external UHD Blu-ray drive that can be added to the PS5, but it looks to only be compatible with the new PS5 as it connects via a removable panel on the PS5 Digital Editions underside.

This time round the new Slim models come with a horizontal stand but Sony will be releasing a new Vertical Stand which will retail for £30/AU\$49.95. A shame since the original model was able to include a stand that did both orientations.

They release in the US in November but I expect they will be here for Christmas. The standard model retails for £479.99/AU\$799.99 and the Digital Edition costs £389.99/AU\$679.95.