TOGGLE

WEEKEND LIVING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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The Midnight Club story | PAGE 4

DO NOT SCAN THIS

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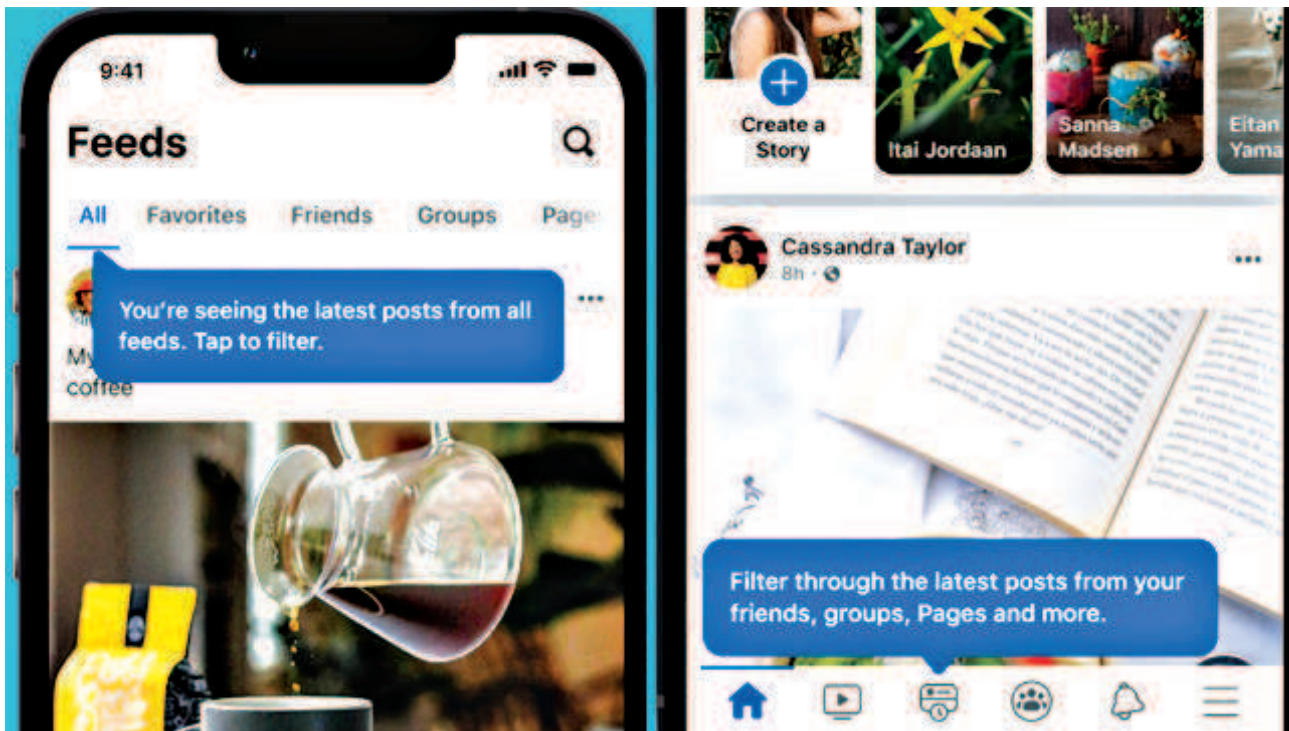
Facebook launches Feeds tab to curate friends' posts

Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook's parent company Meta, recently announced a brand new feature for Facebook called the Feeds tab, which will help users find and organise posts from friends in chronological order.

According to the official announcement by Meta, the Feeds tab will specifically curate posts from friends, groups and pages in a separate chronological order from the Home tab – the new name of the default tab when Facebook loads.

The Feeds tab will also have a Favourites list, with which the user can filter content from their friends, pages and groups. While the Home tab will continue to recommend content based on Facebook's algorithm, the Feeds tab will not contain 'Suggested for You' posts auto-generated by Facebook.

Facebook Reels and Stories will continue to be in the Home tab. Ads will be included in both Home and Feeds tabs.

Meta claims that the Home tab will be designed as a discovery engine to find new content and posts made by content creators pushed through recommendations.

The Feeds tab, on the other hand, will provide the user with an easier way to access content from the friends and communities the user has already connected with on the social media platform.

Intel to increase CPU prices soon

American chip-making giant Intel recently announced that it will increase prices on a majority of its microprocessors and peripheral chip products later this year.

According to a report by Nikkei Asia, the largest US chipmaker plans to increase prices on flagship components, including CPUs (Central Processing Units) for computers and servers. It also plans to raise prices on a range of other products, including chips for WiFi and other connectivity devices.

Although the prices have not been finalised yet, some chips could see a price hike of up to 20%.

Intel's move comes at a time when global inflation is at its peak, with the prices of most tech products being on the rise.

Turing coming to Bangladesh to increase remote jobs opportunities

Turing, an AI-powered international platform that connects developers with full-time remote jobs in the US, is coming to Bangladesh to revolutionise career prospects for the country's developer talent to bridge the gap between talent and opportunity for South Asian software engineers.

Turing is based in Palo Alto, California. It is a deep jobs platform using its Intelligent Talent Cloud to manage a worldwide pool of developers, connecting them to remote software jobs in the US with established and entrepreneurial companies.

Currently, Turing has over 1.5 million

developers on their platform from 150 countries, thousands of whom have already been recruited by more than 300 top US firms, including Johnson & Johnson, Dell, Disney, Coinbase, Plume, and VillageMD for full-time remote jobs.

Turing recently launched a free career-centric community that is open to all.

Green technology for a cleaner future

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

Over the years, several organisations have adopted green initiatives to tackle the grave global concern of climate change. To mark Grameenphone's journey of 25 years, telecom expert Abu Saeed Khan has conducted a research survey called 'Partner in Digitalization 1997 - 2022', discussing various aspects of the telco's impact.

In the first part of this five-article series, we will take a look at how Grameenphoney is making environmental contributions to Bangladesh, including introducing renewable power generation and solar-powered electricity systems.

Renewable power sources
Grameenphone's dedication toward a greener environment is most apparent in their environmental-friendly headquarters, GPHouse. Inaugurated in November 2010, GPHouse is a self-sustaining office space that produces its own electricity, recycles its water supply and utilises intelligent lighting to conserve power.

Grameenphone also enforces an effective use of non-renewable resources by converting their older solar generators to hybrid grid-solar network systems, thus making power generation more efficient. The report by Abu Saeed Khan states that last year, the company converted 36 solar generator plants to modernised hybrid sites, which will reportedly save 197,100 litres of fuel and reduce 263 tons of annual carbon dioxide emission.

The company has also opted to use lithium-ion batteries over lead-acid batteries, reducing carbon emissions by 600 tons - converting 2,500 sites this way in 2021. During load shedding, these sites run on backup electricity provided by powerful batteries instead of relying on fuel-run electricity generators. The switch to a lithium-ion-based battery solution will reportedly cut down carbon emissions by 291 tons. Grameenphone plans to reduce carbon emissions as a whole by 50% by 2030, as per the report.

Utilisation of solar energy
Due to the shortage of reliable electricity access in remote rural areas, charging mobile phones can be a daunting task with a regular USB/cable charger setup. To combat this issue, Grameenphone introduced solar-powered charging kits that utilise renewable solar energy to conduct menial daily tasks such as charging a phone - especially useful in locations where electricity is in sparse availability.

Because of this application of solar energy, it became easier for rural communities to come together and share their access to these solar-powered charging kits - thus bridging a telecommunication gap that had previously existed in rural areas.

Sustainability and conservation
Since last year, Grameenphone has increased collaboration with stakeholders in addressing nationwide environmental issues such as waste management, water conservation and natural disasters.

Observing Green Week 2022 from May 16 to 19, Grameenphone launched a 'Green Pledge' campaign in which the company addressed the consequences of climate change and how recycling and reducing waste can lead to an eco-friendly lifestyle.

Grameenphone also plans to retain 100% wastewater recycling every year - reducing water footprint and increasing access to clean and safe water in remote communities. The company's signature environmental regulation - the Reduce, Reuses and Recycle policy - addresses concerns regarding both general waste and e-waste.

The company has helped recycle over 91 tons of electronic waste, including discarded gadgets, electronic devices and antennas, by the end of last year. Their recycling campaigns are conducted both home and abroad, following the ISO 14000, OSHAS 18000 and R2 accordance standards. Last year, the company recycled over 80,000 lead-acid batteries, further adding to their overall green cause.

Grameenphone's contribution towards building a greener future makes them stand out as an exemplarily eco-friendly company. By shifting to renewable power generation and recycling waste materials, Grameenphone is paving the path for better utilisation of green technology in the tech and telecommunication sector of Bangladesh.

[The viewpoints and findings in this article are based on Abu Saeed Khan's compiled report 'Partner in Digitalization 1997 - 2022'.]

Building a career as a social media influencer: Niche and audience

MORIUM KULSUM

It is almost impossible to scroll through our newsfeed without seeing influencers promoting viral content or advertising their favourite brands. Influencers, in simple terms, are trusted figures within a niche community who retain a loyal following. By virtue of their popularity, expertise and credibility, influencers can often affect their followers' purchasing decisions. Becoming an influencer can be a dream come true for many. This two-article series will outline the steps one might need to turn social media enthusiasm into a long-term career. Stay tuned next week for the next installment of this career guide.

Select your niche
Fashion, food, travel, tech, entertainment, business, lifestyle — are some options to consider when choosing your niche as an influencer. Research extensively and share content on your chosen domain as a content creator striving to build influence. Rasheduzzaman Rakib, creator of the popular entertainment YouTube channel RnaR, believes that selecting an appropriate niche depends on personal preference. He recommends, "Aspiring influencers must identify their field of expertise and interest — what they can do better than everyone else and what they are genuinely interested in doing."

Understand your audience
Once you have selected your niche, you need to figure out who your target audience is and what kind of content they may want. Most social media platforms have built-in analytics sections that can give you helpful insights into your current audience's gender, geographic location, occupation, online behaviour, etc. You can also learn about their demands and preferences by running polls and analysing the comments section. Habiba Akter Shurovy, a prominent fashion influencer and entrepreneur, states, "If content creators are looking to build long-term careers as influencers, they must understand their audience, foster meaningful relationships with them, tap into their needs and deliver content based on that."

Choose your social media platforms
As an influencer, you need to have a dominant online presence. But that does not mean that you have to stay active on all social media platforms. You should consider the platforms that are best suited for your content and where your target audience is concentrated. Pick two or three platforms to start building your audience. However, keep in mind that you need different strategies for different channels. Renowned entertainer Nusrat Upoma, also known as Bengali Boin, advises new content creators to focus on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok - arguably the most popular social media platforms in the country right now. "Aspiring influencers should leverage video content, both live streaming and short-form, in order to grab the attention of viewers and reach a larger audience within a short period of time," she shares.

Share content on a consistent basis
Emphasis on putting out useful, relevant, and unique content that resonates with your viewers. You also need to create a schedule for yourself that allows you to regularly share content in order to retain your current audience base. Regarding this, Rakib adds, "Influencers have to stay aware of whatever is happening in their surroundings and create relatable content revolving around trending news." He thinks that such a content strategy can help the content reach people who do not currently follow you.

MIDNIGHT CLUB

The story of the fastest street racers the world has ever seen

ITMAM BASHAR

When people hear about street racers they tend to visualise a group of people driving recklessly and performing burnouts - akin to scenes from the Fast and Furious movies. What they don't picture is a well-to-do, respectable, wealthy businessman as a part of an elite and highly selective club - with a strict code of ethics and just one goal: "to build and race the fastest car's the world has ever seen".

The Bayshore route of Japan is a stretch of coastal highway that connects Tokyo to Yokohama. While it may not look like much, it is the spiritual home of Japanese street racing. To the locals, it's known as "The Wangan". Wangan is loved by street racers due to its long straight sections and relative emptiness at night, where for decades it was used by the racers to push their cars to the limit. As the streets got busier and more heavily policed, racing in Wangan died down but for years to come, stories will be told about one particular group of racers - Midnight Club.

In 1987, during Japan's golden era of tuning, the secret society of highly skilled drivers was founded. A large number of different street racing gangs existed in Japan at the time, but there were a few key things that set the Midnight Club apart. For starters, they were highly selective. To become a member you have to be an exceptionally talented driver with a suitably fast car. Plus, you have to be an apprentice for a year and attend every single meeting during that time.

That wasn't as easy as it sounds because the club members were wanted criminals,

with the meeting locations being shared via coded messages in the classified ads section of local newspapers. Surprisingly only 10% of applicants were ever accepted to the club and numbers rarely exceeded 30 members. They were also highly protective of their club's name, many aspiring young racers fraudulently decorated their cars with the iconic midnight decal but often woke up to find their car vandalised and the sticker removed.

In the Midnight Club, races were not about acceleration or cornering ability like the Kanjozoku. Instead, they were about one simple thing: top speed. A club member once quoted, "Drifting is for the weak. We only do maximum velocity". The races are won only by reaching the finishing line first or getting so far ahead of your opponents that they can no longer see your taillights.

Simply to be considered for membership, the car had to sit on 260km/h comfortably. But in races, the cars regularly exceeded 300km/h and even 330km/h. Keep in mind that this took place in the

world has ever seen. The most legendary member's car was the Ishida Specials 930 Porsche 911 Turbo which is fondly known as 'The Widowmaker' or 'The Blackbird'. The owner has been rumoured to spend the modern equivalent of over US $2 million modifying the car, improving every measurable aspect of the performance and increasing its power up to 700Bhp. That is more than a brand new 911 GT2 Rs, in an RWD car built in the 1980s.

The most unique thing about the club was not the cars or the skilled drivers but the code of ethics they maintained. Unlike most street racers who typically drove recklessly and dangerously, the Midnight Club's priority was the safety of other road users. It may be a strange thing to say considering they go over 300km/h on public highways, but dangerous driving was not allowed. If racers lacked the skill to remain fully in control of the car at high speed or if just once they displayed dangerous driving or careless behaviour, they were kicked out of the club.

1980s. That's why so few members of the Midnight Club were ever arrested, owing to Japanese police cars of the period being limited by law to 170km/h.

It's obvious that the cars weren't like average street racer cars, and weren't required to just have an enormous top speed. In races, they had to maintain that top speed for up to 15 minutes, indicating that they also had to be reliable and well-built. This resulted in members being wealthy business owners spending millions of dollars building some of the fastest and the most incredible cars the

In 1999, disaster struck one night. A race broke out between the Midnight Club and the rival Bosozoku biker gang where the race travelled into a high-traffic area, resulting in an enormous crash where two Bosozoku bikers were killed and six innocent civilians were hospitalised. The Midnight Club had failed in their pledge to never bring harm to civilians and overnight the club was disbanded for good. Street racing should not be condoned but Midnight Club did it differently and with style, making their mark in street racing history.

QR codes are essential, but some may hurt you

JINAT JAHAN KHAN

With more dependency on the internet, the cases of online scams are always on the rise. Among different innovative ways to scam people, tricking users through QR codes is a very common scenario. Since the early 2000s, QR codes have been in use, and these are still alive and well. Smartphone cameras can even scan them directly. The continued usefulness of QR codes is due in large part to changes to different marketing channels and new applications for their usage. Popular among modern tech users, QR codes have become essential in transferring large amounts of data by providing an easy and quick way to promote website URLs. However, it pays to be careful when using QR codes.

dangers that are associated with using QR codes.

How can some QR codes be dangerous?
QR codes are inherently not risky. However, these codes may contain phishing or malicious URLs or bugs that involve security threats making these codes dangerous. While it is usually safe to use QR codes, there are certain ways your information could be confiscated by a malicious third party. Here are some ways in which QR codes can cause you notable harm.

Phishing scams through QR codes
QR codes are often used in phishing attacks known as QPhishing. In this method, a cyber criminal replaces a legitimate code with a QR code

steal your confidential information and send them to criminals. Sometimes these malware attacks can be ransomware attacks where cyber criminals hold your data and information hostage for a ransom.

Bugs in QR codes
If there is a bug in a QR code, the bug gets triggered whenever a user points their camera at that code. Hackers may use this bug to exploit the cameras or sensors of users' smartphones and other devices, redirecting them to various malicious and inappropriate websites. These bugs can also manipulate the genuine URLs within QR codes.

Financial theft
Since QR codes are a popular and efficient way to carry out different transactions

Despite the potential of personal and financial damage, there isn't a reason to be scared of QR codes as long as you're careful. Below are some recommendations on being safe while using QR codes.
Use QR codes only from trustworthy sources
To remain careful, it is best to scan QR codes only from reliable sources. It is highly recommended not to scan any random QR codes that are too exposed or can be found in any usual public place. To ensure that a source is trustworthy, check the website URL and security, such as looking for its SSL certificate.

An SSL certificate refers to a digital certificate that helps authenticate a website's identity. Here, SSL or Security Sockets Layer is a security protocol. It keeps internet connections secure, ensuring that criminals are prevented from reading and modifying information. If there is a padlock icon next to the URL in the web address, it means that SSL protects the website and it is safe to visit it. Only after being fully confirmed about security measures and trustworthiness, a person should share information or carry out any transaction.
*Update the device's security on a regular basis*
Installing and updating your smartphone or any device's security software patches provide security to all your information and data. Moreover, installing some anti-malware software such as Emsisoft Emergency Kit review, Bitdefender Antivirus Free Edition, AVG AntiVirus Free and Avira Free Security Suite may provide an extra layer of security to your devices from malicious activities and can notify you instantly in case any suspicious activity is found.
Use QR scanners to maintain security
Always use QR scanners that display URLs before opening them instantly. Most third-party scanners have a feature in which they directly display the website after scanning the code. It may seem more convenient and efficient, but it can be dangerous in case it contains some malicious factor. Therefore, it is best to use a built-in QR scanner that generally comes with a smartphone camera. It shows the site link before opening it directly. Thus, the user has the option to close the link before it gets opened if something seems dubious.
Be cautious at all times
When you are about to scan a QR code, check if there is any suspicious frame text, or if the displayed logo or the website URL after scanning seems to be different or tampered with. Pay close attention to detail. If anything seems wrong, it is recommended not to use it and find any different mode to share information and transactions.
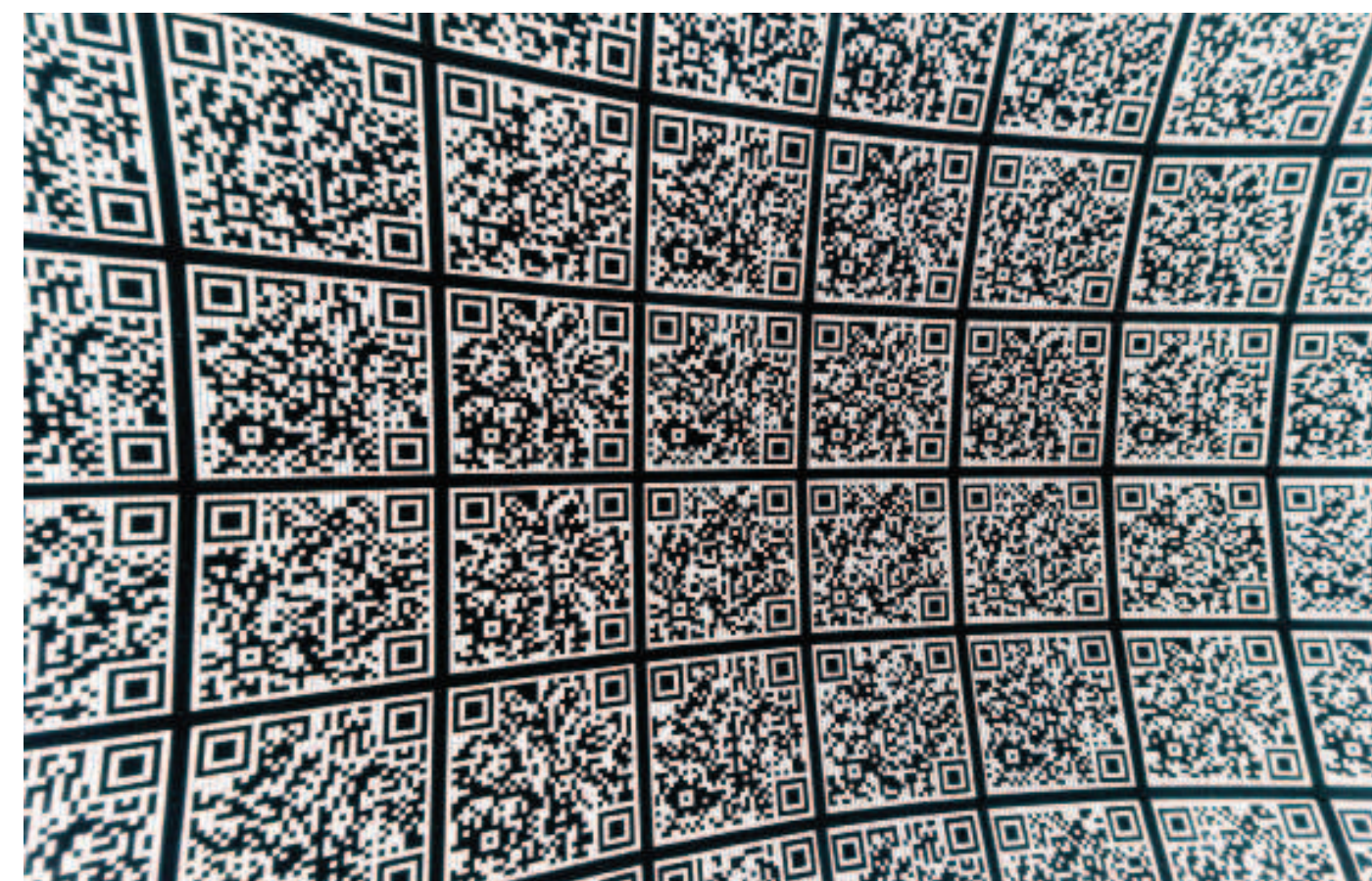
What are QR codes?
QR codes or 'Quick Response' codes are capable of storing a lot of information and data. They are essentially barcodes that are frequently used to track information about goods and services in a supply chain and in marketing and advertising campaigns.

Interestingly, it does not matter how much information a QR code contains. Once scanned, it will allow the user to access all of its data instantly. Hence, it justifies its name 'Quick Response'. Even if these codes are efficient and easy to use, we should not overlook the risks and

embedded with a phishing website URL, which does not look suspicious at all. Scammers can use catchy lines such as "Scan to win a surprise gift" to exploit your curiosity and steal your information, especially in public places. Such codes can even be deployed in an email to breach your data.
Triggering malware attacks
Cybercriminals may present QR codes embedded with malicious URLs so that whoever scans the code gets infected by the malware. It can harm the users by opening backdoors for more malware attacks or infections, or it can silently

and pay bills instantly. Unfortunately, fraudsters can take advantage of such codes to steal money from people.
The use of QR codes has increased exponentially after the Covid-19 pandemic, to promote contactless communication and information exchange. Now, these are largely used at shops and restaurants to pay bills, show menu cards or discount offers. However, scammers may replace these legitimate codes, especially in public places, with wrong account details to scam unsuspecting passersby.

How to be safe while using QR codes

HANDS-ON REVIEW

Infinix Note 12 G96 – The Budget Speedster

TANZID SAMAD CHOUDHURY

Infinix came up with its latest addition in the Bangladesh market last month with the Note 12 G96. The Hong Kong-based smartphone brand has been doing reasonably well in the local market recently, and the newly released Note 12 G96 is a testament to that.

After having the Note 12 G96 smartphone in our possession for a few weeks, here's what we have to say about the device:

DESIGN

The Note 12 G96 has a glossy back design with a frosted matte finish. The review set which we received was Snowfall White in colour. The phone feels light on the hand and is easy to carry around. However, it can be difficult to use the phone with one hand, given its wide surface area. The back panel has a patterned texture and shows a yellowish reflection in broad daylight. The side-mounted fingerprint scanner happens to be on the same button as the power button and is generally smooth and easy to use. Aesthetically, the phone is easily able to stand out in the crowd with its elegant design.

DISPLAY

The display is probably the best feature of this device. Infinix Note 12 G96 comes with a large 6.7-inch Full HD+ AMOLED display. It is great for watching videos, playing graphic-intensive games
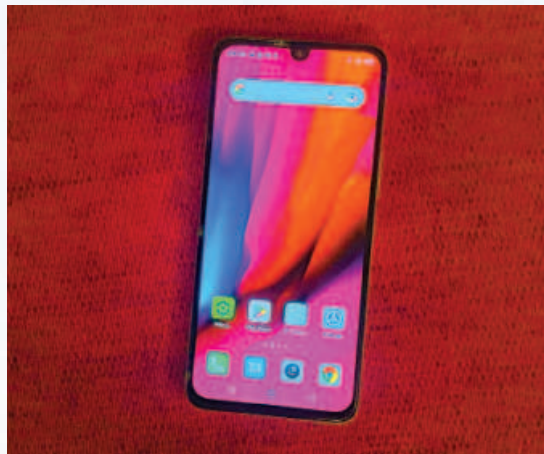
and surfing the internet. The 1080 x 2400px resolution helps produce quality images with bright and vibrant colours. The touch response of the display is quite fast as well. However, not having a high refresh rate is a bit of a letdown for the otherwise impressive display.

CAMERA
The Note 12 G96 comes with a triple camera setup. The 50 MP primary camera is accompanied by a 2MP depth sensor and AI QVGA sensor. The main camera is capable of taking crisp images in broad daylight. However, some pictures feel oversaturated after processing and display exaggerated colours. The front camera has 16MP with the iconic Dual Flash Light, which is noteworthy. However, snaps taken in low light seem a bit hazy, despite switching off the default beautification option. The videography seemed rather average, especially while shooting

videos on the go. The ultrawide sensor was missing from the device, something that's quite common in smartphones nowadays.

BATTERY
The device has a large 5000mAh battery and is accompanied by a 33W charger in the box. It usually charges from 10% to 100% within one and a half hours and has enough juice to last you throughout the day. Upon testing it first-hand, the device lasted more than a day and a half with moderate usage.

HARDWARE
The Infinix Note 12 comes with a MediaTek Helio G96 processor with a 64-bit octa-core chipset, consisting of two Arm Cortex-A76 and six Arm Cortex-A55 processor cores. The device has 8GB of memory and has the option of extending it up to 13GB to ensure smooth scrolling on the device. With Android 12 out of the box and the native XOS 10.6

UI, the phone has a comfortable interface for users to find their desired apps easily, despite some pre-installed apps occupying the screen.

PERFORMANCE
Infinix did a fairly good job in ensuring that the Note 12 G96 delivers fast performance for regular users. Multitasking on the device seems effortless, which is good news for anyone looking to get their hands on this smartphone. The budget speedster also does well in terms of gaming at high settings, with fast-paced titles like Asphalt 9: Legends running seamlessly without any notable issues.

All in all, the Note 12 G96 by Infinix is a decent phone with a large AMOLED display and eye-catching aesthetics that will add some sophistication to your lifestyle. At its price point, Infinix Note 12 G96 is a balanced phone which is worth considering under the 20k range.

PHOTOS: **TANZID SAMAD CHOUDHURY**

All you need to know about browser cookies

AHMAD TOUSIF JAMI

ILLUSTRATION: **ZARIF FAIAZ**

As internet users, we often see a pop-up banner asking for consent to use cookies in everyday internet browsing. However, in most instances, we cannot make an informed decision because we do not know what a cookie is, its function, classification, safety protocols, etc. Below are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about browser cookies.

WHAT IS A COOKIE?
Simply put, cookies are small text files that store small pieces of data used to identify your computer network. For example, when you visit a website, cookies are sent back and forth between your web browser and that website's server. The browser on your device stores these cookies. The server may create data in a cookie as soon as you connect to it. An anonymous identifier (ID) specific to you and your device is used to identify this data. Your computer and the network server exchange cookies. When they do, the server scans the ID and knows exactly what data to provide you.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF COOKIES?
There are different types of cookies, each with unique functionalities. A website uses the type of cookie that suits its website type and needs the most. Cookies may be classified as session cookies or persistent cookies based on expiry. Session cookies expire when you log off the internet or close your browser, although some may be retained temporarily. On the contrary, after you exit the browser, persistent cookies continue to exist on your device until they expire or are deleted.

Depending on who sets them, cookies can also be categorised as first-party or third-party cookies. Cookies from the first party are owned by the website that set them; e.g. they often provide authentication or memory for user preferences. Cookies from websites or organisations other than the website's owner are known as third-party cookies. Depending on their intended use, these cookies can also be classified as strictly necessary, essential or non-necessary.

WHAT ARE COOKIES USED FOR?
Websites generally use cookies to improve the user experience. For example, without cookies, you would have to log back in each time you left a website or, if you accidentally closed the browser, rebuild your shopping cart. Therefore, cookies are a crucial component of using the internet.

On the other hand, advertisers may utilise cookies for invasive marketing activities. For example, they can keep tabs on your purchases and shopping locations. This enables marketers to learn more about individuals and target them with advertising relevant to their interests. In addition, because the advertiser utilises the cookie ID to follow the users, you may notice that the same ad keeps showing up when you navigate from website to website. Since these businesses already know much about the consumers without asking them, this might be detrimental to your right to privacy.

ARE COOKIES SAFE?
In general, cookies don't have any viruses or malware that might endanger your computer. They also don't have any executable code that can be run, and they can't get any other private information on the customer's device. Most of the time, cookies don't include any personally identifiable data, but web servers might misuse them to monitor users. Because of this, cookies have become questionable over time.

A cookie stores your information in an anonymous user ID. Moreover, because your device may be monitored through cookies, you might be at risk of a password compromise or privacy breach on unsafe websites. Because not all cookies are created equal, and because not everyone has the same intention, some websites are unsafe than others. Reliable and known websites of reputed organisations or news portals, in most cases, tend to be safer because they are well-regulated in most instances.

SHOULD I ALLOW COOKIES?
Most of the time, cookies make browsing the web better, but they should always be used responsibly. For instance, allowing cookies may provide you with a more seamless or personalised experience. However, it may come at the cost of your peace in terms of privacy or intrusive advertisements while browsing. As such, it is up to you to decide if you want to allow cookies on certain websites.

Keep in mind that you are not bound to accept cookies and are, in most cases, offered the option to not accept them. Some websites may prevent access if you refuse to accept their cookies. In such specific circumstances, you may choose to give up particular types of information only. Moreover, there are cookie-protective open source browsers such as Mozilla that you may consider. Generally, it is usually safer to delete any unwanted, unnecessary cookies after a certain period of time. Doing so will allow you a better browsing experience.