

My tech Simon Ratcliffe

Basement Jaxx's **Simon Ratcliffe**, 45, on jamming to a four-track tape deck and inventing the jetpack

What was your first experience with technology and music?

I'd wanted a Fostex X-26 four-track tape recorder for ages. It was about the size of today's laptops but you could layer up loads of tracks by mixing them together. Getting one was the first time I made my own music. I had my drum machine, a guitar, a keyboard and a Boss Digital Delay foot pedal – it was designed for guitars but I used it to sample old vinyl. I shuffled around the floor operating this thing with my hand. It was labour intensive but amazing. While other people were at parties, I was in my bedroom doing that.

What was the first gadget you had as a kid?

A BBC computer in 1983. I even taught myself the programming language Basic. I could write and copy games, which I then sold at school. I photocopied the covers so they looked genuine. I got pretty



Music maker: Fostex four-track tape recorder

good at it and keep wondering how rich I might be today if I'd carried on with it.

What can we expect from the new album, *Junto*? Something bright and fun. We got rid of our old dark and leaky studio and now we've got a new one overlooking the London skyline. I think we created something with more light and sun in it because of our

new outlook. It's music you can play in a club or at a barbecue.

What kit can't you live without on tour? I mostly read books, to be honest, but I took an iPad on our last tour and watched the entire *Breaking Bad* back catalogue.

Have you thought about investing in an e-reader? My friend is always telling me to get one but I love actual books too

much. There's something nice about the creases and the cover art but I guess that comes from my love of vinyl. I don't buy anywhere near as many records as I used to but vinyl still has a place in today's world. If anything, CDs will completely disappear and vinyl will soldier on because there's something romantic about it.

Have you ever bought a gadget you've hated?

I bought a subwoofer for my car recently and I really regret it. It was a complete impulse purchase as I stopped outside a random place and this guy fitted it for me there and then. It hasn't improved the sound quality at all – it just sounds like there's a giant depressed bee sitting in my boot.

If you could invent anything, what would it be?

I've discussed the subject of jetpacks with friends many times – I'm really surprised we're not flying around with them right now, to be honest. I'd invent a solar-powered one so it would be sustainable but I'd also make it affordable so we can all live in a *Blade Runner*-esque dystopian society. I know they exist but the technology is too expensive right now. I'm sure James Dyson will beat me to it. **Leon Poultney**
New album Junto is out Monday. Basement Jaxx tour Britain from November 29. basementjaxx.com



Basic: A 1980s BBC Model B computer

APP HAPPY



OOLOO (iOS/Android, free)

Gawd bless the internet and search engines that find us answers to everything. Problem is, sometimes you have to trawl through reams of message board entries just to find a glimmer of an answer. OOLOO is a search service staffed by human beings, where you speak your question and someone at the other end does the rest. Answers can be based on your location if you need local results and you get to rate answers 'good', 'bad' or 'meh'.



Neybers (iOS, free)

Apps for interior design look great on the iPad and no more so than with Neybers, which allows you to place real things from designers in virtual rooms. Think of it as a bit like Pinterest with a realistic background for messing about with different furniture, floors, ceilings, windows, wall textures and more. There's also plenty of social interaction available. After all, when it comes to interior design, everybody needs good Neybers.



BT Wi-fi (iOS/Android/Windows Phone/Blackberry, free for BT Broadband customers)

Finding a wi-fi hotspot with your mobile has turned into an infuriating game of endless registrations and sign-in screens – often ending in frustration as you fail to get online. BT has 5.2million of these hotspots and so it has created a dedicated app that aims to simplify the process of locating and logging on to its network. The BT Wi-fi app connects customers automatically whenever they're within range. Hotspots are free and unlimited for BT Broadband customers but you'll also find them in plenty of shops, pubs and hotels listed at bt.com/freewifi.
James Day

Ask Carphone

Q: I just got a new smartphone. How do I go about transferring everything over from my old smartphone?

A: Before transferring data it's always best to make sure you have everything backed-up on a computer or cloud service. Transferring from the same operating system is usually pretty straightforward and your handset will do most of the work for you, it's generally switching between operating systems that can be more challenging. If you are transferring data between an Android phone and another operating system, use your Google Account



to transfer contacts, settings, emails, apps and calendars. Sony, Samsung and Windows phones all have free services available that will help you to transfer data between operating systems and find matching apps on the new service. You can also transfer data between handsets and operating systems using a PC and data cable: simply upload everything to your computer, plug in your new handset and then copy the files across.

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You've got mail... retro-style

Tom Hanks reveals his love of typewriters with a quirky new app, says *Leon Poultney*

HE's invaded Normandy, formed an unbreakable bond with a volleyball and chased Leonardo DiCaprio around the globe. But now Hollywood superstar Tom Hanks has entered the competitive world of apps with a free download indulging his love of, erm, typewriters.

That's right, the Oscar-winning actor, writer and director has harboured a fetish for the 'shook shook' sound produced by the typewriter ever since he first bought one in the late 1970s. Since then, he's acquired many more, admitting he's obsessed with the way 'each one stamps into paper a permanent trail of imagination through keys, hammers, cloth and dye'.

The Hanx Writer, available from the App store, turns the iPad into a portable typewriter with added sound effects and the retro nostalgia of a vintage machine. Once the app is downloaded, a typewritten letter from Hanks greets the user and encourages those with the creative bug to explore the different typewriters available and 'get writing'.

The Hanx Prime Select is the only typewriter that is free of charge, but documents can be typed, spell-checked, saved and emailed in PDF format (with retro formatting) with



Every typewriter stamps into paper a permanent trail of imagination through keys, hammers, cloth and dye

just a few finger swipes. Users can then make in-app purchases to pay for bundles of different typewriters, ribbon colours, background themes and sound effects.

Hitcents, the developers responsible for bringing the Hanx Writer to life, revealed the actor delivered three machines from his personal collection to their office for inspiration and accuracy. A spokesman adds: 'On a new employee's first day, he was welcomed to Hitcents with a desk fully stocked with one of Tom's typewriters, a sheet of paper and a pencil.'

The novelty of tapping away at a vintage keyboard does wear off but underneath the retro chic is a pretty decent word processor that gives far more expensive apps a run for their money.

Above all else, it allows users to get in touch with their inner Hunter S Thompson during the morning slog to the office. We're not sure fellow commuters will appreciate the constant tapping noises though.

Clack-clack-zing: Hanks plans to make a splash in the world of apps with his Hanx Writer



More celebrity apps

Kim Kardashian: Hollywood

Just what you'd expect from Mrs Kanye West – an app allowing you to create a celebrity alter-ego and rise to fame and fortune. Beware the in-app purchases though – they can be as expensive as Kardashian's taste in shoes.

Taylor Swift Greetings Cards

'The people in your life are AMAZING. Let them know, well... now,' says the description of the pop starlet's cards app. We're not



sure a Swift e-card makes up for forgetting an anniversary though.

Snoopify

Snoop Dogg allows you to customise your photos with G-Funk-inspired stickers and cartoons. There's even a £69.99 'Golden Jay' sticker. Don't ask us what it does.

Shatoetry

The official William Shatner app allows users to compose statements, poetry



Virtually Tom Daley

The Speedo-wearing heart-throb keeps you up to date with all his latest news via a rather creepy 'Headcast' where a virtual Tom Daley jabbars away on your smartphone.



and messages and then hear them read aloud by the Captain Kirk himself. Bonkers, but utterly compelling.

A-list tech fetishes

Lady Gaga – Polaroid Grey Label GL10

Gaga became creative director at Polaroid in 2010 and has released a number of products, including this wireless (and inkless) portable printer. 'Your images will no longer die a death on your cell phone or digital camera,' she says.

Jackie Chan – Canon 550D camera

An embossed Jackie Chan camera is available in China for those who want to shoot like the kung-fu star.



Justin Timberlake – Myspace

Fresh from his role as Napster founder Sean Parker in *The Social Network*, Timberlake invested heavily in an ailing Myspace, although the jury is out on whether his attempts to revive it have been successful.

Will.i.am – IAMAUTO

The Black Eyed Peas rapper attempted to create jobs in a poor suburb of Los Angeles with his own car company, IAMAUTO. Sadly the venture failed, but The Voice presenter remains a keen petrolhead and has designed a limited edition Lexus NX.