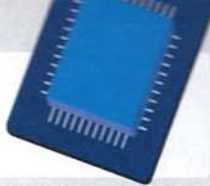


## System check



Weird and wonderful goings-on in the wider world of computing

### METAL DETECTED

PC lovers covetous of the sleek aluminium body of Apple's MacBook Pro can sate their lust for metal machines with Asus' latest Eee PCs. The aluminium-clad 1016 and 1018 are petite 10.1" netbook affairs. The 1018P has already launched in the US, so we can confirm that it runs on an Intel N450 1.66GHz Atom processor, has 1GB DDR2 RAM, a 250GB SATA hard drive, three USB ports, and that all-important black or plain brushed aluminium finish. Battery life is said to be up to 10 hours, and you can expect to pay about \$430 for the privilege of owning the machine. The unreleased 1016 looks set to be more powerful, with rumours suggesting it has 2GB RAM and a 320GB hard drive. The pair also have a little brother, the 1015, which lacks the aluminium casing but appears to offer the same specs as the 1018.

[www.asus.com](http://www.asus.com)

### ITUNES LIBRARY UNSHACKLED

Here's a great piece of news for iDevice lovers: Apple have finally lifted the restrictions on allowing apps to access the iTunes library in version 4 of their mobile operating system. Applications can now access the music in your iPhone, iPod Touch or (later this year) iPad directly, which opens up the devices' potential as DJ tools. While DJing software has previously been available from the App Store, it required app-specific workarounds for users to import music - hardly ideal.

New apps have already appeared to take advantage of the change, though so far they've been quite simple, such as Flare Scratch, which allows users to virtually 'scratch' their iTunes tracks over a beat. While this basic app isn't going to give the likes of Native Instruments Traktor anything to worry about just yet, the potential for future touchscreen DJ applications is huge, and we presume the developers of the more serious current iPhone ones will quickly update theirs to take advantage.

[www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)

### WINDOWS 8 SLATED FOR RELEASE?

Windows 7 might have launched less than a year ago, but Microsoft are already hard at work on the follow-up, it would seem. Slides allegedly leaked by a software engineer at Hewlett Packard depict the tablet version of Windows 8 running on a 9" slate device, and it's rumoured that we can expect big improvements to the on-screen keyboard, faster boot times, 3D support, and the launch of a Microsoft app store to rival Apple's. All these niceties are eclipsed by the most exciting Windows 8 rumour, though: Kinect support. Previously known as Project Natal, Kinect is Microsoft's Xbox 360 camera and mic-based control system. If, as rumoured by several blog sites, Windows 8 supports the device, it could potentially detect your presence in the room and log you on to your PC before you've even sat down at the keyboard.

[www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)



Metal maniacs will lose their heads over these slick new Asus netbooks

# Get with the programmers

The CEO of Slate Digital shares his professional opinions on the industry and the future with **cm**



## Slate Digital Steven Slate

**cm** Your background is in music production/engineering/songwriting. Why are you developing music software?

**SS** "I was never dissatisfied with audio software, but I quickly realised there were some things missing. The reason I started to develop my own software was to fill in these gaps. Most of the ideas come from a desire to improve my own workflow."

**cm** Who else works at Slate Digital?

**SS** "We're a very tight team. We have a compound in the hills of Los Angeles, where we also have two recording studios, and it's a fun environment in which to work. The company consists of myself and my partner Fabrice Gabriel, who is also the genius behind the coding of our plug-ins. He literally dreams of DSP code in his sleep! He's also a brilliant musician and has great ears. Alex and Serge are code

guys who were responsible for producing the amazing algorithms behind our Trigger drum replacer. The GUI designers are Yannick and Dennis. The office also consists of our administrators Jesse and Deborah, our customer support administrator Alex, our shipping and receiving manager Andrew, and then we have Steve in IT, which is a busy position given the amount of digital delivery that we do."

**cm** What is your role in the software development process?

**SS** "First, I get the idea. This usually comes right in the middle of a session when the plug-in concept is needed most, but sometimes the ideas pop up randomly - I came up with the idea for the Virtual Console Collection during

jury duty! I had snuck in a gear magazine to read during the breaks and was amazed that another analogue 'summing buss' had come to the market. I figured that it made more sense to finally do it digitally.

"Once the idea is there, Fabrice and I work to form the structure of what the plug-in will do and how it will do it. Once Fabrice has a good portion of the code completed, he makes me a test plug-in, and then I'll tweak the parameters in my room while listening to reference material. Once my changes are done, Fabrice will update the code according to the changes. This type of back and forth can happen dozens of times. And we do a ton of listening tests. I can't imagine another company that does more listening tests than we do!"

**cm** Do you think there's more innovation in music technology than there is in music itself these days? Does it matter?

**SS** "There's innovation in both, but recently, the technology drives the art. There's a lot of diversity and innovation in music today, but some of the most innovative stuff never gets heard because the music business is a shambles. I think the record industry needs to catch up with the technology. Its getting there, but it has a way to go."

**cm** What's next for Slate Digital?

**SS** "We've got a lot of exciting new products coming out over the next year. One that's in public development is our FG-Q mastering equaliser. It has a lot of unique features and also replicates the sound of one of the most famous mastering EQs in the industry. It'll also have a large hardware controller for pro use. It's gonna be cool!"

"The record industry needs to catch up to the technology"