

[GEAR]

CUTTING EDGE

GET THE LATEST

HP PAVILION DESKTOP

No, desktops have not died. They have, however, changed dramatically from the drab grey



box of yore, as demonstrated by the HP Pavilion a6040.

THE GOOD: Far more power and capacity than a notebook; figures include 320GB hard drive and an Intel Core 2 Duo E4300 processor. A gigabyte of memory is standard, as is 256 nVidia graphics. Remote control a nice touch.

THE BAD: In a mobility-obsessed world, it stays at the office.

THE BOTTOM LINE: For security and massive capacity, the a6040 is a good choice from a proven manufacturer.

PRICE: R8 000 (without monitor), leading retailers.



CANYON VOIP PACK 2

VoIP is all the rage, but what about video? Add some colour to your communications with the Canyon VoIP Pack. It includes a headset and webcam so your business associates or distant relatives can match your earnest tone with a similar expression. If you want them to see you, of course.

THE GOOD: Inexpensive, simple set up, works well.

THE BAD: More wires! But Bluetooth would drive up the price.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Good value from a basic solution.

PRICE: R299, selected retailers.

VITAL STATS

PLAYERS: Henk Kleynhans (29) and Allister Kreft (25)	Venture Partners, Venture Capital, Lingham Capital.	affordable public internet access.
BUSINESS DESCRIPTION: Wireless billing service provider for individual or corporate hotspot locations	STAFF IN YEAR 1: 2	CURRENTLY ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR: Strategic partners to broaden the reach into other areas of the country, especially Johannesburg, Stellenbosch, Pretoria.
SECTOR: Telecoms	STAFF TODAY: 7	CONTACT: +27 21 448 8843
ESTABLISHED: 2005	BUSINESS 'X' FACTOR: Skyrove developed a system which enables entrepreneurs to make money from their internet connection while providing	www.skyrove.com
BUSINESS FUNDING: Texas based Sky-Wi Inc, Cape		

about things was to charge people upfront on a pre-paid basis for the amount of data they were going to use," he says.

So Kleynhans and Kreft set their minds to creating a solution that would enable them to implement the idea. Their first hurdle was funding – they needed capital to develop the prototype so, true to his techie nature, Kleynhans set up a simple website and a blog with one posting. "I explained that I had this idea about sharing Wi-Fi with your neighbours and getting money back for it, and said that I was looking for engineers, investors and the like," says Kleynhans. Remarkably, one of the people who read the blog posting was Donald Levy in Texas, founder and then CEO of Ski-Wi. After some discussions, Kleynhans and Kreft had their hands on \$20 000 and the Skyrove prototype was on its way.

Skyrove has two groups of customers: the first are business people such as coffee shop and hotel owners, who want to sell wireless internet access to customers, and the second are the end-users themselves. The way the system works is simple, as Kleynhans explains: "The businessperson - who has any type of broadband from ADSL to iBurst or 3G - purchases the Skyrove router at cost price (R595), turning their business into a Skyrove hotspot. Their customers purchase pre-paid Skyrove credits online which relate to a data amount and then access the Internet via their laptop at any Skyrove hotspot they choose. The end-user is charged about 80c per megabyte used in a particular hotspot – Skyrove retains 30% of the payment and passes 70% on to the business owner." He adds that while most Skyrove users access Skyrove credits online, they can also do so by purchasing vouchers at

Skyrove hotspots.

Although the business has grown rapidly, Kleynhans says the biggest challenge has been marketing and branding on a tight budget. As he points out: "The lesson I learned is that you can have a fantastic product but it's not going to sell itself." To overcome the challenge, the Skyrove team has been creative about using inexpensive online media, especially blogs, to get the word out there. However, Kleynhans still finds that while many people in the IT industry know about Skyrove, there are still plenty of potential end-users who don't.

Which is where an undisclosed seven-digit venture capital investment from Lingham Capital, secured this year, will make a big difference. "This will allow us to expand extensively in South Africa and develop the brand significantly," says Kleynhans. In the long-term, Skyrove plans to go global but, as he adds, "We want to establish a strong footprint in South Africa first."

If the interest already generated among those in the know is anything to go by, it's a plan that could see implementation in the not-too-distant future. In the meantime, Kleynhans reflects on their success to date. "I think the thing with starting a business is to scratch your own itch," he concludes. "If you understand the needs of your customers from a personal point of view, you have a better chance of creating a product that will provide them with a solution that will meet those needs, and that's what we've done. We've created something that we find value in using." □

5% of SA's cellphone owners insure their cellphones.