

BACK TO THE STARTING LINE

If you've been rocking a OnePlus smartphone, chances are that you've been spooked by the chatter around its AMOLED displays getting a nasty greenline. Well, OnePlus is address the issue head-on and putting the green line chatter to bed for good!

We asked Robin Liu (CEO of OnePlus India) why so many customers are convinced that the green line issue is due to a software update. To that, Robin and Ramagopala Reddy P (Vice President at OnePlus India and former Director of the company's Hyderabad R&D Center) explained that the issue with the green line on AMOLED display is caused by multiple factors, most notoriously heat and not software alone.

According to OnePlus, when the phone goes into a software update, the heat generated is higher than its normal running state, and that causes the display to malfunction. They also pointed out that even environmental factors like heat and humidity from India's diverse landscape can cause the display to degrade faster than usual.

HOTLINE BLING

The solution to this problem is what OnePlus calls the Green Line Worry-Free Solution. It brings three things – a new testing method to ensure heat and humidity don't interfere, a new layer that protects the display from heat and humidity and a lifetime warranty against the greenline issue on all OnePlus devices.

A new testing method dubbed the 'Double 85' test has been introduced into the quality control process. During this testing process, the OnePlus 13 smartphone will be put into a chamber where the temperature is set to 85°C and humidity is set to 85 percent. It's like sitting inside a sauna after running on the streets of Mumbai for three hours. The phone is subjected to heat and humidity simultaneously to ensure heat and moisture are never going to bother the OnePlus 13.

A new PVX Enhanced Edge Bonding Layer material in all OnePlus AMOLED displays aids the structural integrity of the OnePlus 13 in these hot moments. This material is known for resistance to weathering and chemicals and will act as a barrier to slow moisture and oxygen penetration over time. The last step in ensuring that the OnePlus 13 smartphones don't have that annoying green line issue (unless you're watching a nature documentary on Netflix) is a life-time warranty against the green line issue.

They're even extending their life-time warranty against the green line issue to all their smartphone models. Does this mean you'll get a free screen replacement if it happens? We're not sure yet. The details of this warranty program are still a bit of a mystery.



ONEPLUS PROJECT STARLIGHT

There's a lot happening in after-sales too. OnePlus has promised an investment of ₹2,000 crores annually for the next three years. Where's that money going? In better customer service. OnePlus has been busy boosting its service centres in India this year – they've increased the overall number, with a focus on exclusive, company-owned centres.

Made to game

Very few headsets sound as good as the Audeze Maxwell, and I am not talking about just gaming here. Audeze has improved this to a level where gaming and music sound equally impressive.

₹29,999 / headphonezone.in

■ It has a 90mm planar magnetic driver which delivers fantastic audio and a very clean presentation. It's slightly boosted in the mids so the dialogues in video games have clarity and authority. The Maxwell sounds textured and bodied across the frequency range.

■ In *Dragon Age: The Veilguard*, the first interaction with a dragon was filled with thumping bass and meaty lower mids. The detail and dynamic range of the thud and croaking during the dragon's entrance convinced me that these headphones sound class apart and probably deliver the richest and most textured sound quality in any gaming headphone.

■ *Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie* by William Elliott Whitmore from the Red Dead Redemption 1 album sounds jaw-dropping. The resolution and range on the Maxwell can rival even more expensive hi-fi headphones. The Maxwell have a smidge of warmth in William's raspy voice which immediately makes them sound more appealing than my Apple AirPods Max which I carry around for music.

■ This is the best-sounding gaming headset. The quality is so good it could rival high-end headphones. The battery life is insane and the build quality feels super premium.

Talk AI to me
It has a detachable hypercardioid boom microphone which is really good. It has two noise suppression modes to reduce background noise and plosives using AI.



Tech specs

Driver size 90mm Planar Magnetic
Frequency Response 10Hz – 50kHz
Battery life 80 hrs **Weight** 490g



■ Versions for immersion

There's Xbox and PlayStation versions, and both can be used with PC, mobile and the Switch using the 2.4Ghz dongle or the Bluetooth 5.3. The Xbox supports Dolby Atmos and PlayStation supports Tempest 3D Audio.



■ Left controls

The Maxwell's buttons are all on the left earcup, and their layout is a bit weird. It might take some time to get used to, but it's not a huge problem. There are also well-tuned presets but you can also make your own.

STUFF SAYS The best gaming headphones we've ever tested! ★★★★★

How is the quality and comfort?
khumailthakur



This is as tough and premium as it gets with aluminium yokes, spring steel headband and leatherette suspension straps. There's no creaking or unpleasant sound from the construction, and the overall feel is very premium. The suspension band has three levels of adjustment, which might feel a bit restrictive for longer heads. The memory foam earpads are plush and provide decent passive noise isolation.

A bright future

So many options out there can be overwhelming, but don't worry, the Asus ROG Swift is a top contender for the best OLED gaming monitor.

₹1,24,999 / asus.com/in

■ This 27-inch (26.5-inch precise) has a WOLED panel with 2560x1440p resolution and 240Hz refresh rate. It supports HDR10 thanks to its 450nits max brightness and 1,000nits peak brightness (in 3% of the display) for HDR content.

■ Games like *God of War Ragnarok* and *Ghost of Tsushima* look gorgeous. Everything on this monitor looks pitch-perfect from glimmering waters to dark caves. The 135% sRGB colourspace is so well calibrated out of the box that you don't need to tinker with the monitor's colour settings. Skin tones in movies and games pop with life.

■ It has a thick heatsink that lets Asus push the brightness higher than the competition. However, the Asus doesn't have the same control over blacks as the Alienware AW2723DF. The monitor favours a slightly saturated look, so darker scenes have more contrast hence, the blacks are slightly crushed in the process. You can bring the details out from the settings on SDR mode, but you can't adjust the setting for it in HDR.

■ This is a seriously awesome OLED gaming monitor. The display is amazing, the colours are spot-on, and the HDR performance is impressive.



Computer gaming is the way
You'll only get up to 120Hz on HDMI. DisplayPort is the way to go for the full 240Hz refresh rate, so it's more geared towards PC gaming.

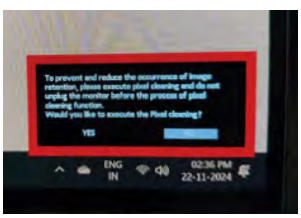
Tech specs

Panel Size 26.5inch **Panel Type** WOLED **Resolution** 2560x1440 **HDR Support** HDR10 **Refresh Rate** 240Hz **I/O Ports** 1x DisplayPort 1.4, 2x HDMI (v2.0), Earphone jack, 2x USB 3.2 Gen 1 Type-A



■ Premium package

It has cables and accessories neatly put in a pouch, and the included stand has height adjustment, pivot, tilt and swivel adjustments along with a screw on top for a camera or ring light. Asus nailed the unboxing for this.



■ Cleaning on time

The Pixel Cleaning kicks in at regular intervals to make sure the OLED burn-in problem is well avoided, however, it prompts a bit too much and might get distracting during an intense multiplayer game.

STUFF SAYS A bright display with punchy colours, one of the best OLEDs! ★★★★☆

If it's so good then by 4 stars?
khumailthakur



You get support for G-Sync, VRR and AMD FreeSync Premium here but this monitor doesn't have HDMI 2.1, which is a bummer at this price. Now, if you're thinking about using the Asus Swift for office work, there's a catch. The RWBG sub-pixel layout can cause some annoying fringing around text and high-contrast backgrounds. This is mainly a Windows issue, but it's still something to keep in mind.

A mini upgrade...

This is the smallest upgrade to Apple's smallest tablet. It's not a complete game-changer but it's got some cool new stuff compared to the old one.

Demonic power
Diablo Immortal runs at 60FPS. The rear gets a bit warm but that's about it. There are no performance penalties for gaming on this over a few hours.



₹49,900 / apple.com/in

The iPad Mini 2024 looks exactly like it's predecssor, with the same sleek and simple aluminium body. If you put them side by side, you wouldn't be able to tell them apart. It's still super thin and light, making it easy to hold and carry around. Perfect for snuggling up in bed or on the couch after a long day.

The 8.3-inch Liquid Retina display is bright, colourful, and has great viewing angles. The design hasn't changed since the 2021 model, but the USB Type-C port now supports 10 Gbps data transfer speeds. This is a major improvement for anyone who uses the iPad Mini to transfer footage from their cameras or external drives.

Under the hood, it's powered by the A17 Pro Bionic chip, the same chip found in the iPhone 15 Pro and iPhone 15 Pro Max. It's a speedy processor that can handle even the most demanding tasks with ease. Multitasking is a breeze, and games run well. Apple hasn't mentioned improved thermals here and we're guessing they haven't changed it either.

The 2024 version is better equipped for running games and other editing apps that require a more powerful GPU and extra RAM. Adobe Lightroom and Adobe Fresco work effortlessly. It's shocking how much power is still there in a year-old A17 Pro chip.



Sketch pad

The Apple Pencil Pro support brings hover, squeeze, and barrel roll. It's not going to be a sketching machine like the Apple iPad Air with M2 but for artists who want a notebook-sized scribbling pad, this is good!



Not so smart

Apple's Intelligence is here but partially. It's still very difficult to get Siri to cough up the right answer and India will get Apple Intelligence next year. So if you're jumping in for Apple Intelligence, then temper your expectations.

Tech specs

Processor A17 Pro chip **Camera** 12MP (rear), 12MP (front camera) **Storage** 128GB, 256GB, 512GB **Display** 8.3inch, Liquid Retina display **Supports** Apple Pencil Pro, Apple Pencil (USB-C)

STUFF SAYS A mini update to the smallest most lovable tablet from Apple ★★★★☆

How's the battery life?
khumailthakur



You can expect a battery to run for three days with light gaming, reading and a few episodes on Netflix. Realistically, the screen on time will vary with how much you push the performance. Lightroom, video editing and graphics-intensive gaming might drain faster but if you use it to read, watch movies and play card games then expect more than a day's worth of use. Charging speed is slow with the included 20W charger.



PC / rockstargames.com/reddeadredemption

Red Dead Redemption

With this PC port, we think everyone who loves Red Dead Redemption 2 should play RDR 1 and chronologically, RDR 1 is the sequel!

If you're looking for a remaster that Sony PlayStation games keep pushing out every quarter then this is not that and if you're looking for an overhaul like Capcom's Resident Evil series, then this is not that either.

Red Dead Redemption on PC is just a port with PC-specific enhancements including support for native 4K resolution at up to 144hz along with monitor support for both Ultrawide (21:9) and Super Ultrawide (32:9), HDR10, and full keyboard and mouse functionality. There's also support for NVIDIA DLSS 3.7 and AMD FSR 3.0 upscaling technologies along with NVIDIA DLSS Frame Generation.

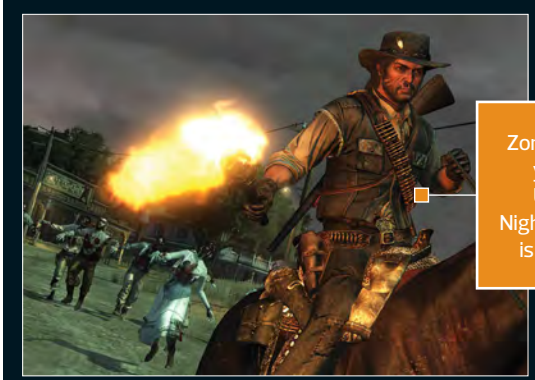
Even after 14 years, this game manages to pull me in with its witty dialogues and interesting characters. Good writing in any form of media is eternal and RDR's characters and dialogues stand the test of time. You play as John Marston who is tasked by the federal agents to hunt down his former gang members (from RDR 2). John's family is held hostage so he has little say in the matter.

As simple as it sounds, in typical Rockstar flavour, there's a long list of unpredictable characters ranging from lunatic grave robbers to snake oil selling scammers and drunk arms dealers that add depth and enjoyable action to the story. In short, there's no shortage of fun here.

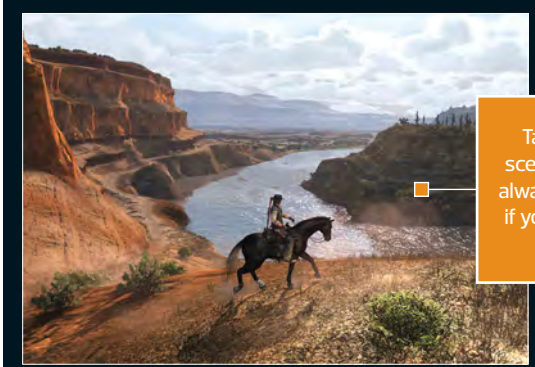
Don't expect the same level of nuance and detail from the game world like Red Dead Redemption 2. For folks coming from RDR2, this game might feel a bit faster with less stuff to do and take care of. For instance, your horse and your hair don't require regular visits to the bath or the barber. Guns don't require the same care as your five-year-old and the overall open-world bloat is reduced considerably.

Some people might be irked by paying full price for a decade-old game but it's still better than half the new open-world games that came out this year. And if at all you're feeling the pinch, plonk it on your wishlist and wait for a discount.

Khumail Thakur



Zombies? Ah, yes, the Undead Nightmare DLC is here too!



Taking the scenic route is always fun only if your pistol is loaded.

STUFF SAYS Stable port of a 2010 banger and a must-play for newcomers ★★★★★