

Sony launches new soundbar, wireless earbuds

SONY PHILIPPINES has launched its latest wireless earphones and soundbar in the country.

Sony's WF-1000XM5 truly wireless earbuds and HT-S2000 3.1ch Dolby Atmos Soundbar are now available in the Philippines, the brand said in separate statements last week.

The WF-1000XM5 is available for pre-order for P16,999 through select Sony Authorized Dealers nationwide and in its Lazada and Shopee stores until Aug. 24. All pre-orders come with a free wireless charger.

It is the latest edition of its 1000x series earphones and offers noise cancellation and better call quality, Sony said.

"The WF-1000XM5 features cutting-edge technology to deliver premium sound quality and the best noise-canceling performance on the market. Real-time audio processors and high-performance mics power the specially designed driver unit Dynamic Driver X, for wide frequency reproduction, deep bass, and clear vocals. They are designed

to immerse you in a sound so good, it feels like you're in the studio with your favorite artists," it added.

The WF-1000XM5 has three microphones on each earbud for better low-frequency cancellation performance. Its new Dynamic Driver X also improves the ability to reproduce lower frequencies, while its noise isolation earbud tips, made of polyurethane foam material, help reduce noise in the

high frequency range. "By combining Sony's newly developed HD Noise Canceling Processor QN2e and Integrated Processor V2, the WF-1000XM5 incorporates precision 24-bit audio processing and high-performance analogue amplification. The result is low distortion and crystal-clear audio reproduction. Additionally, the earbuds feature 360 Reality Audio, which creates an immersive audio experience that transports you into the center of the music," Sony added.

The WF-1000XM5 earbuds also have head tracking technology and feature an AI-based noise reduction algorithm based on Deep Neural Network processing and bone conduction sensors.

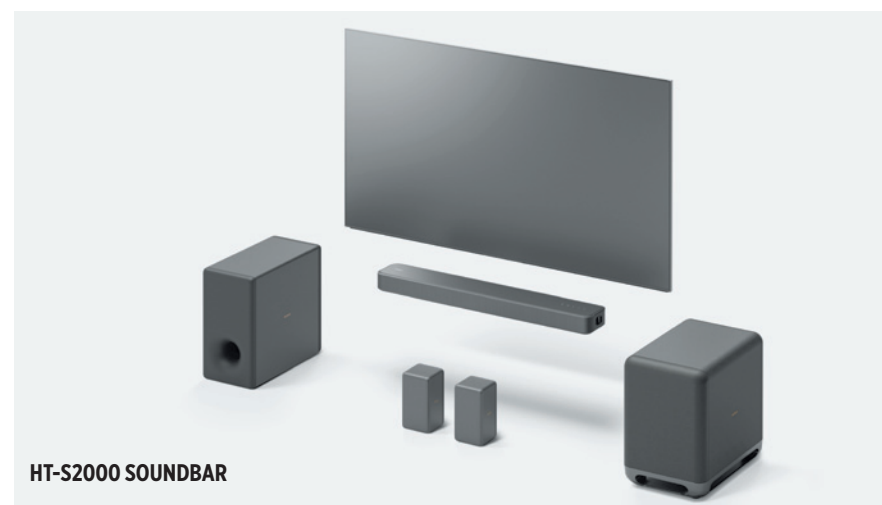
For improved comfort, the earbuds are modeled after the human ear and are approximately 25% smaller and approximately 20% lighter than their predecessor (WF-1000XM4). The earbuds also come in four different sizes for the perfect fit.

The WF-1000XM5 has eight hours of battery life and is compatible with wireless charging. The earbuds are also water-resistant with an IPX4 rating.

SOUNDBAR

Meanwhile, the HT-S2000 soundbar is now available now available at all Sony Authorized Dealers nationwide for a recommended price of P27,999.

"This 3.1ch Dolby Atmos/DTS:X soundbar delivers cinematic surround sound by Vertical Surround Engine and S-Force PRO Front Surround. Thanks to



HT-S2000 SOUNDBAR

a newly developed mixer, this soundbar delivers a three-dimensional surround experience even when playing stereo content. The center speaker ensures clear dialogue, while the built-in dual subwoofer delivers deep bass. This soundbar will also be the first compatible device for the new Sony Home Entertainment Connect app," Sony said.

"With Vertical Surround Engine and S-Force PRO Front Surround, the HT-

S2000 creates cinematic surround sound that lets consumers enjoy the thrill of Dolby Atmos and DTS:X. With Sony's virtual surround technology, the soundbar can position sound in vertical space. S-Force PRO virtually reproduces the surround sound field, with audio coming from both sides. With this, entertainment lovers can enjoy rich, cinematic surround sound without cluttering their living space," it added. — **BVR**

Blockchain-based customs clearance platform to be deployed in the country

MY E.G. Services Berhad (MYEG) and its Philippine-incorporated companies signed agreements with the Bureau of Customs (BoC) and Cargo Data Exchange Center, Inc. (CDEC) to deploy a blockchain-based customs clearance platform to be used for trade flows between the Philippines and China, the company said.

The digital solution called Ztrade is a Web3 + artificial intelligence (AI) link between China and its trading partners that runs on MYEG's innovative Zetrix layer-1 blockchain platform, it said in a statement on Tuesday.

The Philippines will be the second country after Malaysia to use the Ztrade platform.

Under the agreements, MYEG will deploy the Ztrade platform, including ground installation, training, and assistance with customization requirements. Meanwhile, CDEC, a service provider of trade and logistics solutions for the BoC, will support the integration of

Ztrade to its platform to ensure a seamless experience for users.

"The new platform is expected to play a pivotal role in bolstering the trade relationship between the Philippines and China, which has grown exponentially at an average annual rate of 50.04 billion from 2017 to 2021. China stands as the largest import and export trade partner of the Philippines," MYEG said.

"Leveraging on Web3 technologies of blockchain smart contracts and AI, the Ztrade service, can overcome the prevailing limitations of conventional technology architecture in providing a reliable and automated method of securely and effectively digitalizing trade clearance processing, whilst removing the cumbersome retro-verification currently practiced, thus making it hassle-free, seamless, faster and simpler overall," it added.

BoC Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubiosaid the platform will "enable the verification of

certificates of origin for exports to China and vice versa, using express clearance and tariff exemptions under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement."

The use of the platform will be free for the Philippine government and is expected to help facilitate greater trade between the two countries, Mr. Rubio added.

"At CDEC, we are proud to be the partner of MYEG in launching the Zetrix platform which will increase the global trade competitiveness of the Philippines and improve ease of doing business for our traders and logistics service providers," CDEC President Jason Gaw Cheng said.

MYEG has previously provided e-government services to the Philippines, including to the National Bureau of Investigation, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and Bureau of Internal Revenue, among others. — **MHLA**

Cloud service company assisted 17 different government hacking groups — US researchers

AN OBSCURE cloud service company has been providing state-sponsored hackers with internet services to spy on and extort their victims, a cybersecurity firm said in a report published on Tuesday.

Researchers at Texas-based Halcyon said a company called Cloudzy had been leasing server space and reselling it to no fewer than 17 different state-sponsored hacking groups from China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, India, Pakistan, and Vietnam.

Cloudzy CEO Hannan Nozari disputed Halcyon's assessment, saying that his firm couldn't be held responsible for its clients, of which he estimated only 2% were malicious.

In an exchange over LinkedIn, Nozari told Reuters: "If you are a knife factory, are you responsible if someone misuses the knife? Trust me I hate those criminals and we do everything we can to get rid of them."

Digital defenders say the case is an example of how hackers and ransomware gangs use small firms operating at the fringes of cyberspace to enable big hacks.

Halcyon estimated that roughly half of Cloudzy's business was

malicious, including renting services to two ransomware groups.

"It's a rogues' gallery on that through one provider," said Halcyon executive Ryan Golden ahead of the report's publication.

Halcyon arrived at its conclusion by mapping out Cloudzy's digital footprint, in part by renting servers directly from the firm and by tying it to known hacking operations.

The cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike, which wasn't involved in the research, said that it hadn't seen state-sponsored hackers using Cloudzy. But it had seen other cybercriminal activity connected to it.

Cloudzy's geographic base of operations is unclear.

Halcyon researchers analyzed Cloudzy's employees' social media, including LinkedIn and Facebook postings, and found the firm is "almost certainly" a front for another internet hosting company called abrNOC, which Nozari runs from Tehran.

Nozari, who says he lives outside Iran but would not be more specific, told Reuters the companies are separate, although he

acknowledged that abrNOC em-

ployees helped with Cloudzy's operations. He didn't provide details.

Cloudzy is registered under its previous name, RouterHosting, in Cyprus and the US state of Wyoming, according to corporate records reviewed by Reuters and confirmed by Nozari. He said the company needed US domicile to be able to register internet protocol addresses in America.

It's not clear whether Nozari's registered agent — CloudPeak Law, a Wyoming law firm based in the small city of Sheridan — was aware of the allegations against its client.

A woman who answered at CloudPeak Law's office confirmed that her firm was RouterHosting's agent but said that, due to client confidentiality, "that is the extent of what anyone in our firm is going to be able to tell you." The firm didn't respond to a follow-up e-mail.

Cloudzy's business model is typical of several small virtual private server providers that rent internet hosting services in exchange for cryptocurrency, no questions-asked, said Adam Meyers, an executive with CrowdStrike. — **Reuters**

Globe sees 60% decline in cable theft

GLOBE TELECOM, Inc. saw a 60.2% decline in cable theft to 746 incidents in the first five months of the year from 1,876 in the same period last year.

"This is due to the reduction in existing copper cable lines as part of Globe's transition to fiber, and the bundling of cables that makes it more difficult to cut. Copper is the type of cable often stolen and sold to junk shops at around P470 per kilo," Globe said in a press release on Wednesday.

With the number of deliberate cable cuts, the mobile network operator said that 1,600 customers experienced connectivity issues.

"While the reported cases may have decreased, we believe one incident is one too many," said Raymond Policarpio, vice-president of Globe At Home broadband business.

"Cable theft causes unnecessary inconvenience for our customers," he said, adding that it is Globe's customers who ultimately suffer.

To address cable theft, the operator said it had partnered with law enforcement agencies and local government units while allocating P14 million to reimburse subscribers affected by outages.

In August 2022, the company allied with "Oplan Kontra Putol" together with other cable and telecom providers to raise public awareness about illegal cable cutting.

It also has a campaign against cable theft through Bantay Kable Program with the Philippine National Police and local government units.

Globe is planning to continuously expand its fiber deployment and migrate from fixed wireless and legacy technology.

Last year, the company installed 1.4 million fiber-to-the-home lines, which it said guarantees access to high-speed and reliable internet while simultaneously mitigating the impact of cable theft.

"Aside from reducing its copper cable footprint, Globe is introducing fiber cable labeling to deter thieves. It is also undertaking vertical clearance correction and tree-trimming initiatives to limit easy access to aerial cables," it said.

"As we continue to work closely with law enforcers and local government units to stop these thieves, we urge our customers to be vigilant and immediately report cable theft incidents via Globe Security hotlines and bantaykable@globe.com.ph," said Mr. Policarpio. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Alibaba: Businesses set for cloud migration

ALIBABA Group's digital technology and intelligence unit said 85% of local businesses are planning a full-scale cloud migration in two years.

Allen Guo, country manager for the Philippines of Alibaba Cloud Intelligence, made the forecast in a survey entitled "The Next-Generation Cloud Strategy in Asia" that also said more than 91% of local businesses are looking at increasing cloud-related investments starting this year.

Mr. Guo said the survey collected data from cloud-strategy decision-makers in small to large businesses that are using cloud services.

Global market research firm Nielsen was commissioned for the survey, which generated responses

from 1,000 organizations. The respondents were from industries such as financial services, gaming, internet and technology, retail, manufacturing, media and telecommunications, and the public sector.

According to the survey, 78% of local businesses' interest in cloud computing is driven by the rapid growth of the data center market, while 79% were due to the government's digitalization plan.

The survey also showed that businesses consider security as the top priority in selecting their cloud vendors followed by availability and expertise.

Mr. Guo said the priority was also the same for other Asian countries such as Indonesia and Thailand.

However, local businesses surveyed said that insufficient training for employees is among the top barriers to cloud adoption.

"To help address this challenge, Alibaba Cloud has partnered with local IT-focused educational institutions — such as Asia Pacific College — to train and strengthen the cloud computing competencies of teachers and students as part of its efforts to support local digital talent empowerment in the Philippines," the company said. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

FULL STORY



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