

# Gadgets



## DJI Spark: Selfie stick on steroids

If I were feeling cynical, I'd call the recently released DJI Spark a decadent, over-specced selfie stick. But, even as a self-confessed drone sceptic, I was slightly won over by its charms, and some very cool, fun and easy-to-use technology.

The Spark is properly portable and really does fit into the palm of your hand, although you would probably want to transport it in the slightly bulkier protective case. There are no fiddly bits to assemble, or lose – you just angle the propellers correctly and launch it from your hand.

**This is when the pretty cool bit happens. The drone hovers in front of you and waits for instructions.** Using hand gestures, you can move it about, get it to take a photo, and then have it return to your hand. There's no trick to it – the gestures worked first time for me.

There are some nifty pre-sets in the smartphone app that automate manoeuvres to create different types of videos: for instance, flying backwards and rising to give a sense of perspective. The biggest difference between the Spark and the Mavic Pro (which is more than double the price) is that the former only stabilises the images using a Gimbal for two axes, relying on digital stabilisation for the third axis.

The Spark can also, slightly creepily, depending on your point of view, track a moving target, say a runner, hiker or mountain biker, for action shots. Photo resolution is 12 megapixels and video up to 1 080p high definition.

There are some gotchas, for instance, the 16-minute flight time is only in ideal circumstances with no wind, and the drone speed drops depending on the mode.

The idea is that this is a drone you have readily to hand to snap group, action and nature pics in the moment. DJI gets this right, and gives you something more than a smartphone with wings, within a pretty reasonable price, given the tech included.

This is an ideal buy if you are obsessive enough about your social or action shots to remember to charge, and then take along another gadget when you are out and about. Plus, remember to read up on the rules and regulations of flying drones in South Africa.

Available in a range of colours from WeFix for R8 699.

By Vanessa Clark



## Explainer:

### Snapchat for non-millennials

**Q: So, Snapchat. A \$28 billion prank to make anyone older than 25 feel stupid, or a real thing?**

**A:** A bit of both, but mainly it's a thing. Snapchat is a mobile-first and image-led social media platform, where linked friends create and share content in the moment. The content disappears within seconds or hours.

**Q: Wait, what? The content disappears?**

**A:** Yep. Think of it as the total opposite side of the spectrum to taking photos using manual settings and then processing the images in a dark room. The content is digital, automated, instant and messy. And short-lived. It's the pinnacle of post-modern ennui, and millennials are okay with that.

**Q: But is it hard to use?**

**A:** Yes, it is. The user experience design is not great and it's definitely not as simple as something like WhatsApp. It turns out that millennials do, in fact, read the manual and find out how things work.

**Q: Why should I care?**

**A:** According to World Wide Worx, Snapchat is the second fastest growing social media platform in South Africa, after Instagram. It is also typically on the cutting edge of innovation. You'll notice that its features, such as stories, get incorporated by Facebook-owned Instagram and WhatsApp a few months down the line. And it's where millennials are for up to 30 minutes a day. For now. Unless brands come along and mess it up for everyone.

**Q: So I can't use Snapchat for marketing?**

**A:** You can, but box clever. A challenge is that there are no formal analytics built into the platform. But, for instance, the on-demand geofilter feature is a great way for brands to add value to users.

**Top tip:**  
ask a millennial for  
help with this one.

