We’ve made it half way through our Autumn semester! Well done to everyone who persevered through assessments and exams - the week break will be well-deserved!

A note to all: The Physics Society will be holding an EGM in the first week back, in order to make some necessary constitutional changes, as well as discussing more general points of order. We need as many people there as possible, so make sure you keep 11:30-12:30 Thursday 15 May free. If you have anything you’d like us to put into the EGM schedule - feel free to email me: uowphysicssociety@gmail.com

This month, we also received the very exciting news from Harvard that gravitational waves have finally been seen! If you missed the press release, you can find it here: http://www.cfa.harvard.edu/news/2014-05

I’m not sure if it was the scotch or the bottle of vodka but on Australia Day I got drunk and jumped off a two storey building into a pool.
Cost:
PS4 Console w/ 1x DS4 Controller - RRP $549.99
Additional DS4 Controllers - RRP $99.95
PS4 Camera - RRP $89.95
PS4 Vertical Stand - RRP $27.95

The PlayStation 4 (stylised as PS4) is the newest entry in the Sony’s Video Game console line, and it sure is an amazing improvement on the PlayStation 3, in nearly all fields of hardware and software.

What Sony did Right...
Firstly, the console looks amazing. With an angled design the console looks sleek when standing either vertical or horizontal. The console is extremely small for a release day console and is easily portable in a backpack or tote bag.

The PS4 comes with a tiny 500GB HDD, and with most Disk Based games approaching 50GB Installed, that space will vanish fast. The positive of this is that Sony have allowed the HDD to be User Serviceable, and by sliding off the polished portion of the case and removing one screw, the owner of the PS4 can replace the HDD (without voiding warranties) with any 2.5” SATA drive with a capacity over 160GB and no thicker than 9.5mm. AND YES THIS INCLUDES SSD DRIVES. Note that 7200RPM HDD’s and SSHD drives are usable, but not officially supported yet and could void your warranty.

The User Interface is a delight to use. In contrast to the horribly implemented XrossMediaBar used in the PS3, the PS4 UI is intuitive and has a workflow that just didn’t exist in XMB. There is no customisation options for the UI yet but Sony plans to implement this as a feature of future firmware updates.

The PS4 UI:

As for the power of the console, it will easily run currently released games such as Call of Duty: Ghosts and Assassin’s Creed IV: Black Flag in 1080p at 60fps. At the time of writing, I have played Call of Duty: Ghosts (Infinity Ward/Activision), Lego Marvel Super Heroes (TellTale Games/Warner Brothers Games), Contrast (Compulsion Games), Resogun (Housemarque) and Outlast (Red Barrels). Unfortunately PlayStation’s Premium service Playstation Plus (PS+) is now mandatory for PS4 users to play most Multiplayer/Online games, and at $70/12Months isn’t exactly cheap. The positive to this however, is that as a part of the service, a free game will be available to download each month at no extra cost. The games that have been provided so far are an excellent selection and have all so far been worth the price of subscription so far. This month (April 2014) Sony is offering Mercenary Kings as part of its PS+ subscription.

The controller really is the greatest improvement of the console (other than the increased computational power) over the PS3. The DualShock 3 controller included with the PS3 was small, rigid and awkwardly shaped. Personally it would cramp my hands after an hour or so of play. The triggers were convex and caused fingers to slip off in the heat of play, and the analog sticks were extremely touchy. The DualShock 4 (DS4) fixed everything, from the feel and weight of the controller in your hands to the accuracy and rigid feedback of the analog controls. The share button is mostly unused but allows quick access to inbuilt capture/streaming capabilities while in game. In terms of comfort and usability, I would rate this controller on par with the Xbox 360 Wireless Control Pad.
TRIVIA
Trials and Tribulations

Week 1 - Team: The Soviet Reunion
Week 1 trivia sets us off with an almost-success, in which we came 2nd by only one point!
Fact of the week: Speleology is the study of caves and cave systems.

Week 2 - Team: 12 Years a Slav
Again, tied 2nd by one point.. So close, and yet so far...
Fact of the week: Philophobia is the fear of being loved.

Week 3 - Team: Don’t Ukraine on my Parade
Tied third - so close to placing!

Week 4 - Team: Ptrivia Pterodactyls
For the first time in months - PhysSoc trivia team placed in the bottom end of ranks :(.

Week 5 - Team: ???

Week 6 - Team: Tacos or Burritos?
Por que no los dos?
Turns out it wasn’t Mexican themed trivia after all. Oops!

Week 7 - Team: Solve For X-Men
0 points in the famous faces round ;/

Keen to join in? Come along to Unibar at 5:30 on Wednesdays for trivia!

What Sony did Wrong...
When will tech manufacturers learn that polished plastic shows dust extremely easily? It appears the answer is never. The picture to the right illustrates 2 days dust build up on the console. The polished surface shows dust all too easily and requires constant cleaning if you’re a stickler for aesthetics. Although the console can theoretically stand vertically on its own, it is rather unstable and requires an expensive piece of plastic ($27.95) to stand it upright correctly. They also appear to be selling like hot-cakes, so good luck finding one in your local EB Games (they have taken them down from their website as they are out of stock nationally). Unlike the PS3, external memory expansion is not yet implemented, so good luck downloading that captured footage of Outlast you spent 45 minutes collecting. Currently, screenshots and videos can only be uploaded to Twitter or Facebook or streamed directly to UStream or Twitch. A future update will rectify this but it really should have been a Release Day feature, as the USB 3.0 ports on the console are going to dire waste. Media Streaming has also not yet been implemented, so if you want to watch movies from your PC over your network, stick to a PS3. Some more engine intensive games such as Battlefield 4 still don’t run in 1080p on the PS4. If you are a stickler for resolution, stick to a cheap gaming PC with a GTX750Ti and an Intel Core i5. In essence, the PS4 is currently only specced around a Mid-Range Gaming PC, and just like the PS3 this will show a few years into the console’s life. Unlike the PS3 however, the AMD processor is extremely well known and utilised already, so the hardware doesn’t have as much future potential as the PS3 did with its complex Cell APU.

Finally, back onto the controller. For all they did right with the controller, there are a few things annoying with it. Firstly, the Touch Pad is rather difficult to access while using the rest of the controller normally. In games such as the included PS4 Camera utility The Playroom, the touchpad is well implemented, but when used alongside the remaining controls such as in Call of Duty: Ghosts as a score indicator, it is difficult and clunky to use. The LED bar used to replace PS Move controllers is largely unused (except in The Playroom) and drains the internal batteries quite quickly. The batteries will last between 3.5-4 hours from a full charge.

Summary
The PlayStation 4 is an extremely decent console, is easy to use and navigate, while playing games smoothly in High Definition. Although some of the promised feature set is not yet implemented, it will be in future firmware updates provided by Sony. I would mostly recommend buying this console if you are looking for a cheap non-PC gaming solution or want to play future Sony Exclusive titles.