

The Wonderful World of Spark

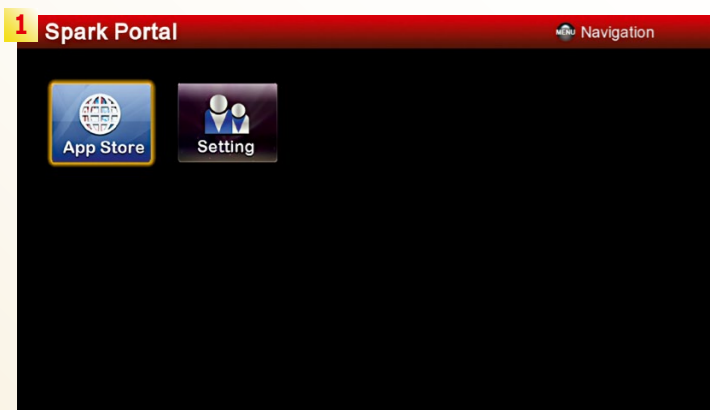
Part 3: Spark Apps

- *Direct access to additional media services*
- *Own Wikipedia App*
- *Integrated Twitter service*
- *Interesting highlight: direct access to delivery services*
- *Complete Internet access via a browser*



Apps That Expand the Functionality of Spark Equipped Receivers

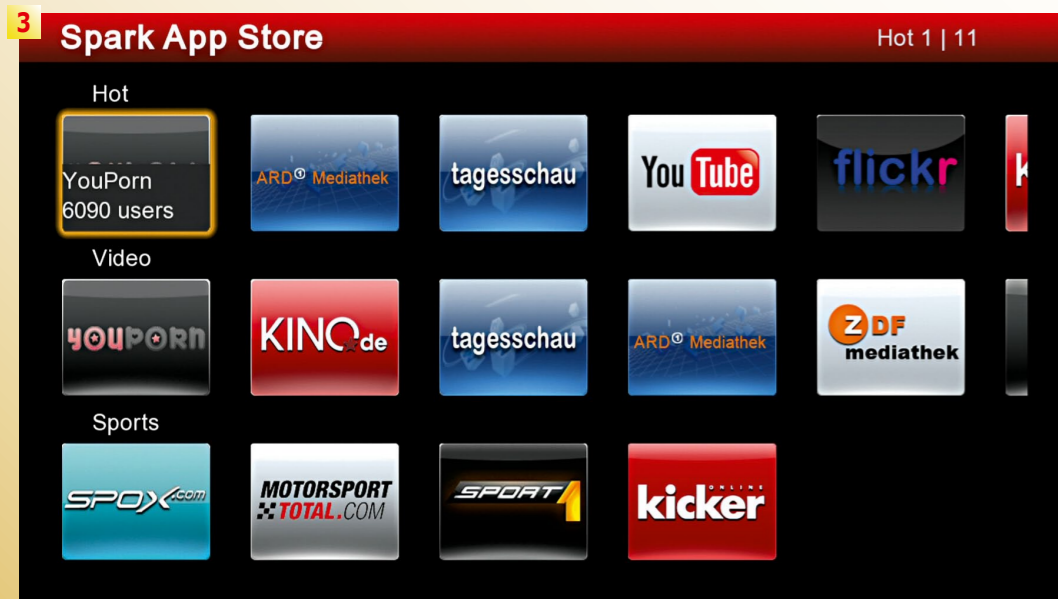
Thomas Haring



The idea of including an App interface in a digital receiver so that external programmers can expand the software of their receivers isn't exactly new. Some manufacturers have been including just such a concept in their boxes for years already but a weak spot was always the downloading of these little programs. Most of the time they were scattered over dozens of websites and even if a manufacturer went to the trouble of creating a collection of them on their own website, these Apps still had to first be downloaded to a PC and then transferred to the receiver. And this is



1. The Spark Portal in its delivery state
2. Spark App Store settings
3. The Spark App Store is divided into multiple categories



exactly where Fulan stepped in and created a solution to this problem with their Spark software - the Spark App Store.

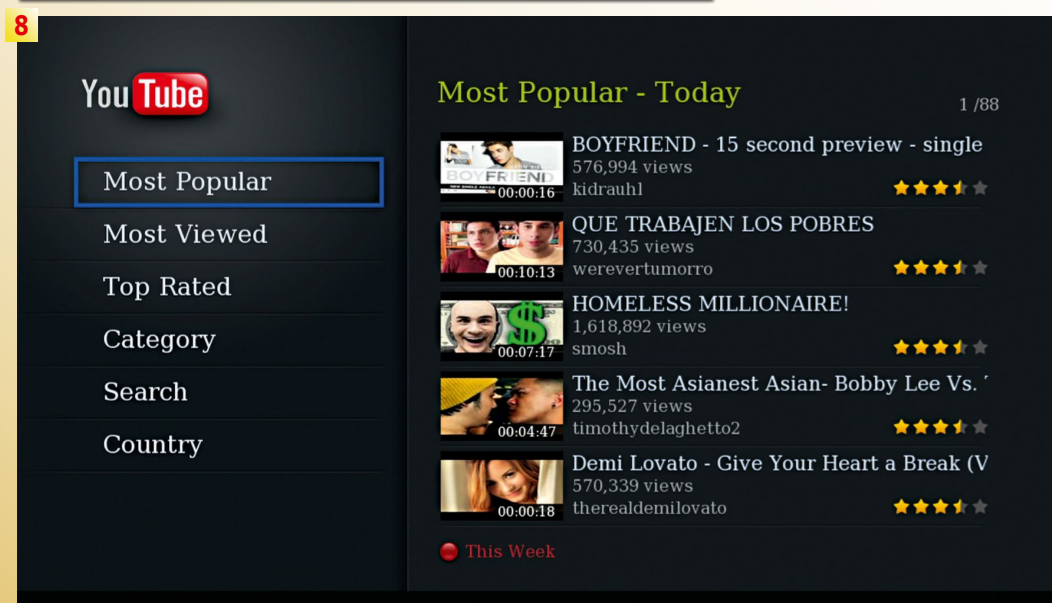
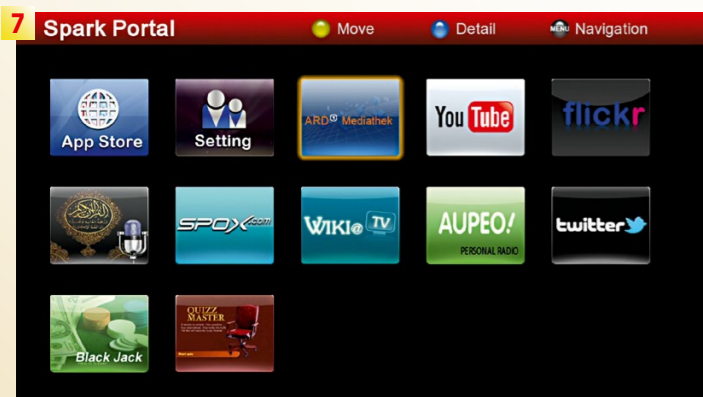
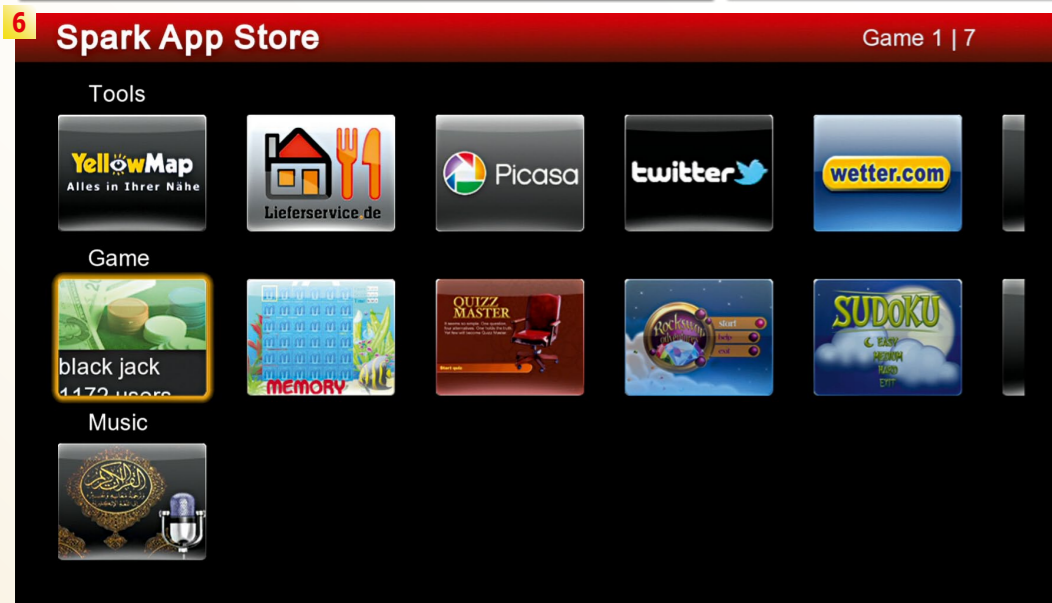
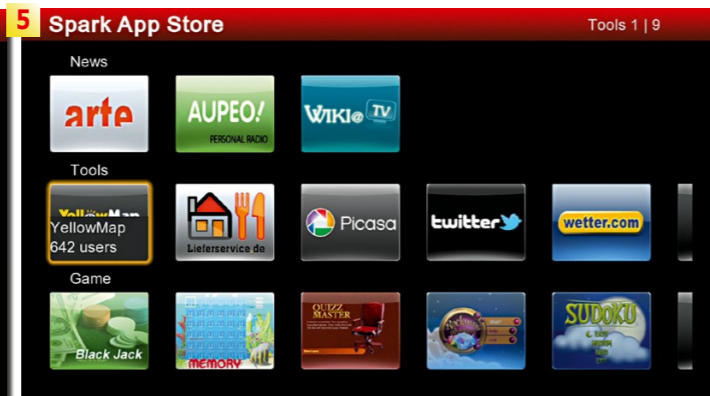
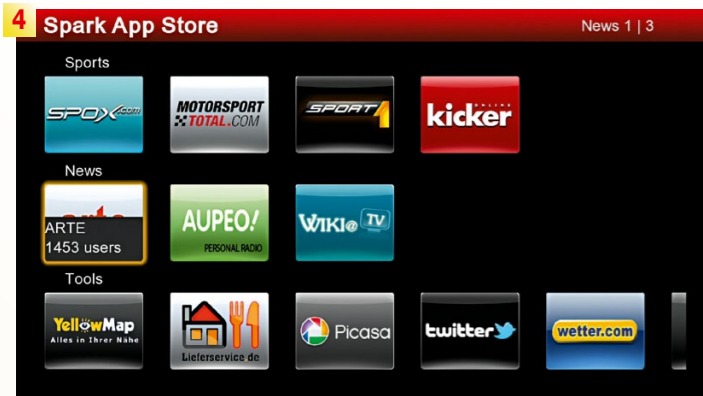
By clicking just one button on the remote control, the owner of a receiver outfitted with Fulan's Spark software can open the Spark Portal. Once inside the portal, all of the downloaded and installed apps are displayed as well as a button to access the Spark App Store plus a dedicated menu for various basic settings. This allows the user to filter the displayed Apps to specific languages (currently English, German, Hungarian, Polish, Arabic and Dutch) and also block out adult-oriented Apps.

The Spark App Store itself is divided into the categories Hot, Video, Sports, News, Tools, Game and Music. This makes it much easier to find the particular Apps you're looking for. You can also just take a look at the Hot category to see what the most popular downloads are from other users.

As soon as you select an App with the buttons on the remote control, a counter appears identifying the number of times that App has already been downloaded. We also liked that the Spark App Store can not only be organized vertically by category but can also be scrolled horizontally. In this way Fulan is able to offer the greatest number of Apps while at the same time presenting them in the best possible overview. Coming up we will be introducing the most interesting Apps to you.

For German speaking TV viewers you'll find the Mediateks of the two large German TV channels ARD and ZDF as well as Apps for the most viewed content such as the German news broadcast Tagesschau. You'll also find other European broadcasters such as the joint German/French channel ARTE with their own Apps.

For international TV view-



Since the Spark software works with HDTV receivers, the YouTube App can display video clips in resolutions up to 1080p. That makes YouTube a lot of fun!

The photo site Flickr also has an App in the Spark App Store and thereby provides access to your own pictures, your friend's pictures or all of the freely available content on the Web. The photos can be shown in full-screen mode or in a slide show. We especially liked how fast the pictures were displayed and how easy it was to use the App.

ers there's, of course, the YouTube App. We especially liked this; it comes with a variety of rich features such as the sorting of displayed videos by "Favorite", "Most Viewed" and "Top Rated" as well as restrictions based on category or country. There's also a search function that helps you find exactly the video clip you want.

And all you sports fans out there don't have to worry either; numerous sports-related Apps are also available in the Spark App Store. For example, there are Apps

4. In addition to news services, Apps such as Twitter and Picasa are also available

5. Exciting games pass the time during commercial breaks

6. The selection in the Spark App Store is already quite extensive

7. Our receiver's Spark Portal after we filled it with Apps

8. The YouTube App lets you display videos from different categories

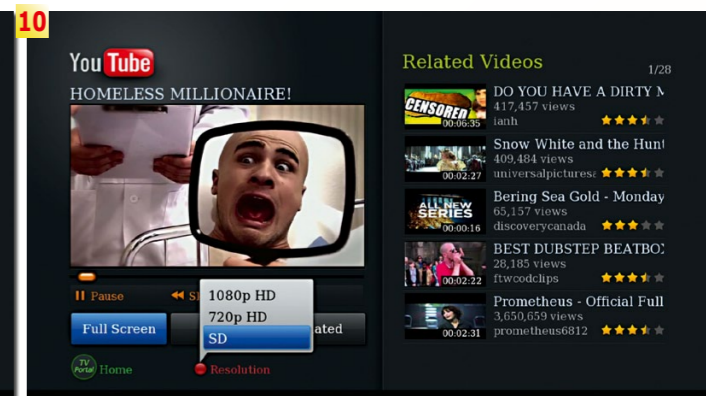
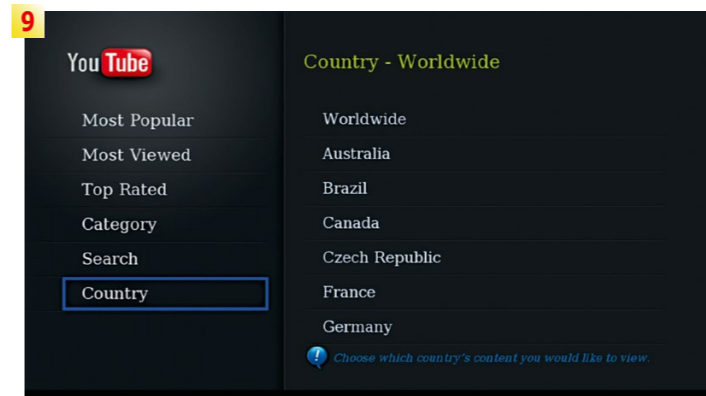
9. A country search fine tunes the YouTube search results

10. The YouTube App supports resolutions up to 1080p resulting in extremely sharp video clips

11. The Flickr photo service also has its own App and its simple operation shines

12. Flickr lets you comb through millions of pictures and find what you want with ease

13. Apps with extensive info and video clips from the world of sports can also be found in the Spark App Store



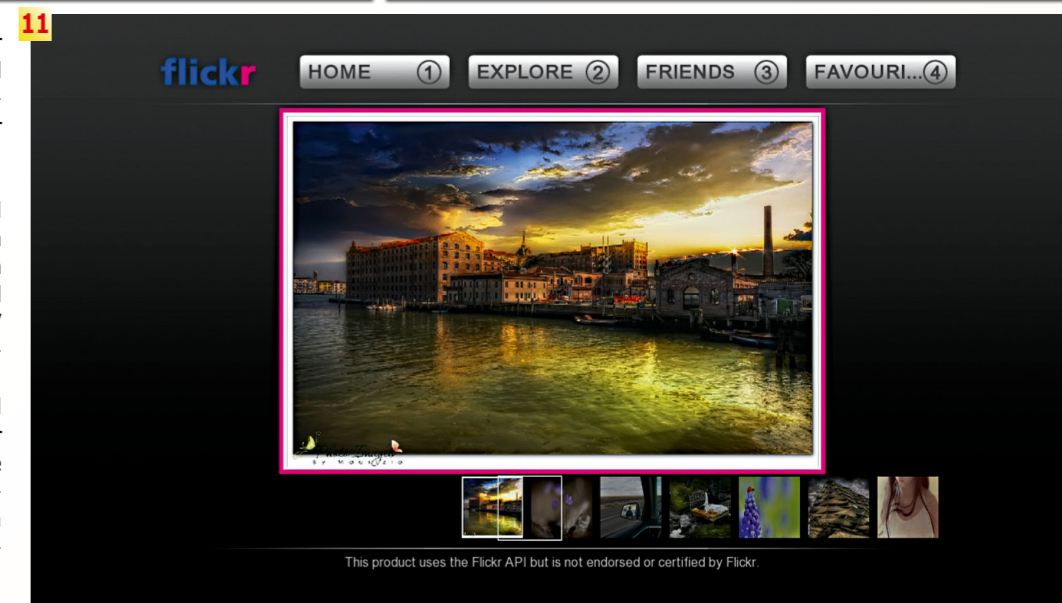
related to soccer and motor sports or the video portal spox.com that provides information and video clips for nearly every type of sport.

A unique highlight would have to be the Wikipedia App. If you come across an unfamiliar word or technical term during an exciting TV documentary, you can quickly have a look in Wikipedia. With the Spark software and the Wikipedia App, the user has complete access to the entire free Internet encyclopedia database with just a few commands from the remote control.

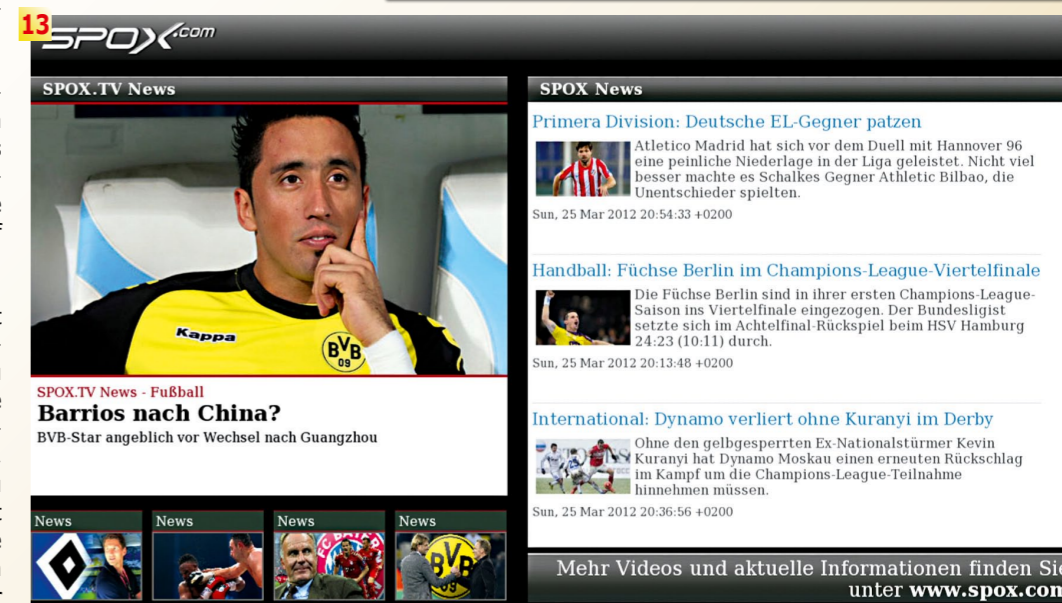
We were also pleased to see that the Spark software's OSD keyboard supported multiple languages and their language-specific character sets whether it's, for example, German umlauts or special Norwegian or Dutch characters. There's even a Cyrillic, Greek or Arabic keyboard available. In this way (nearly) every user can use the Apps regardless what language he/she speaks; it lets you use Apps like Wikipedia to the fullest extent.

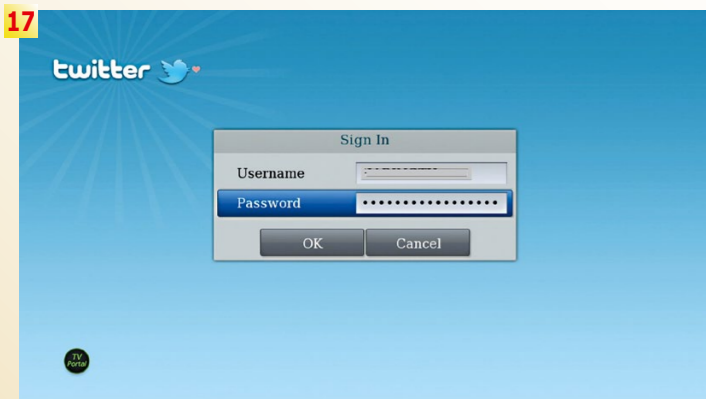
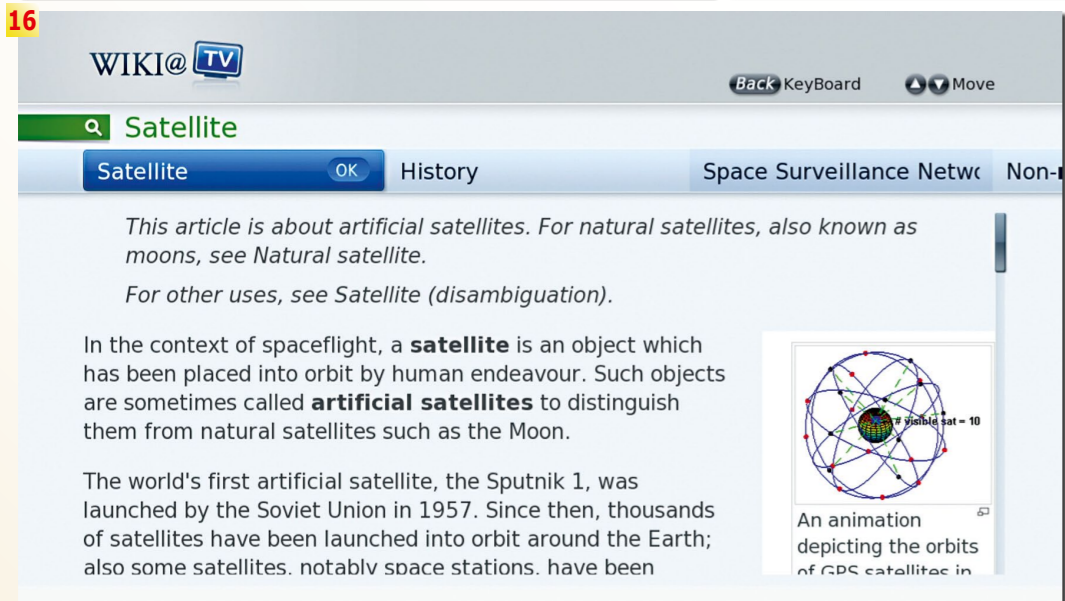
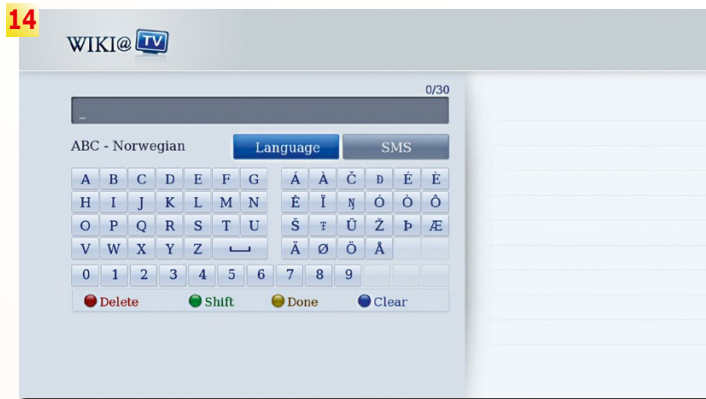
The display of search results inside the Wikipedia App is very practical; as you're typing in search criteria, possible results are shown on the right side of the screen.

There are many of us out there that use social networks these days. If you happen to be sitting on the couch and discover an interesting movie to watch, wouldn't it be great if you could tell your friends about this discovery? Thanks to the Twitter App, it's no problem at all. After entering in your



user name and password, the entire world of Twitter is at your fingertip. The timeline of the user is displayed in an organized fashion and it takes just a few clicks on the remote control to answer any Tweets and also to check out the profile of any person. You can even search for specific people or search using keywords; it makes using this service a breeze.





often quite difficult. Or did you already know how many muscles a cat has in each ear?

Other noteworthy Apps we found included Weather or Picasa (Google's own photo service) and let's not forget to mention this App: You-Porn. More than likely you can figure out for yourself what this App is all about.

Last but not least we want to introduce an App to you that we really didn't expect to find in this forum: namely Delivery Service. Yes, you read that correctly.

With this App you can order anything from a classic pizza to oriental food up to and including Gyros. That's right, you can order anything to eat directly from your receiver and in less than 30 minutes the delivery guy will knock on your door at home.

There's only one limitation: this Spark App is only linked to Lieferservice.de and take-away.com and so can only be used in a few European countries. The graphical presentation and above all the choices available in this App are excellent.

After entering in your postal code you're instantly presented with a list of all orderable products as well as

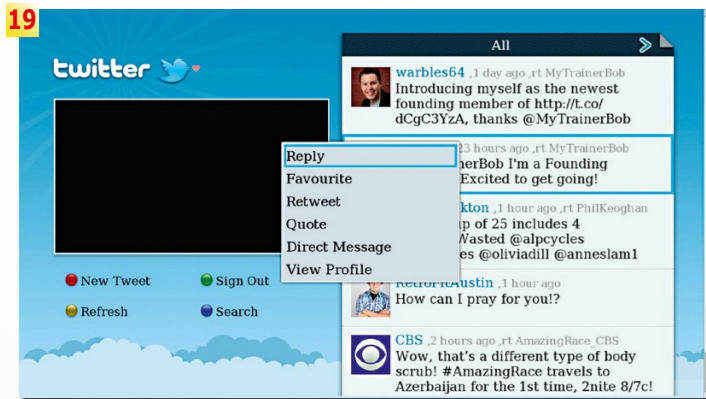
14. The Spark App platform's OSD keyboard supports the special characters from many different countries

15. The Wikipedia App begins showing results in a side bar during a search

16. The results of a Wikipedia search are easily readable within the App

17. Twitter Login

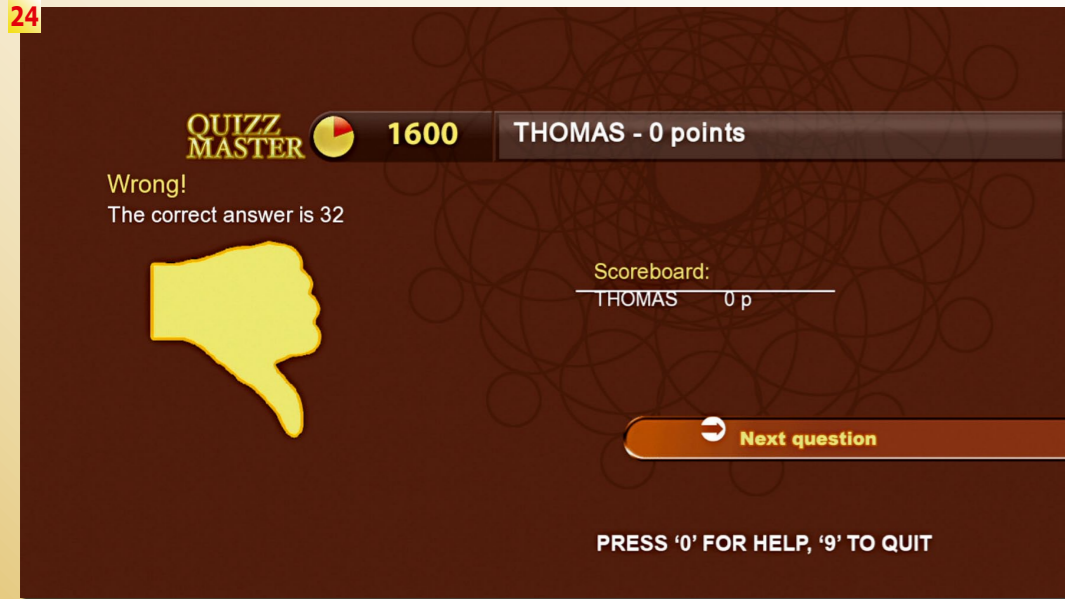
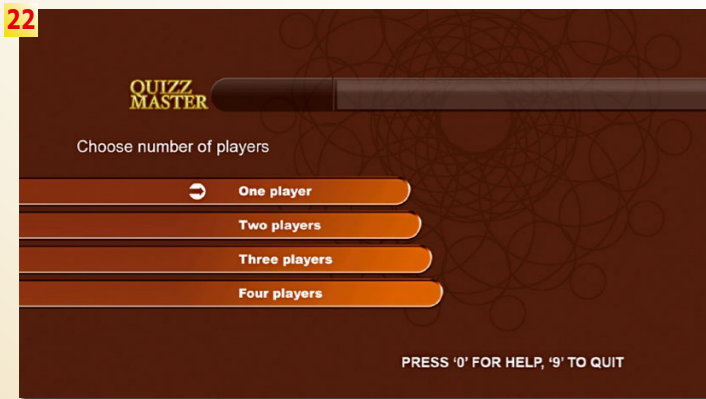
18. Twitter Timeline



the providers. If you're ordering a pizza you can even add your own individual toppings.

This is especially practical when you're like us here in the test center and like to eat a salami pizza with chili and onion toppings; it's a combination that you don't typically find on every menu.

To round it all off, the functional capability of the Spark Portal is further enhanced by the integrated Opera browser that provides complete access to the World Wide Web. A dedicated menu bar



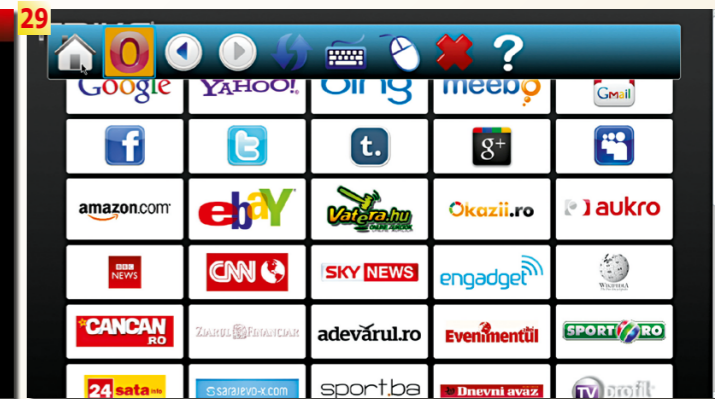
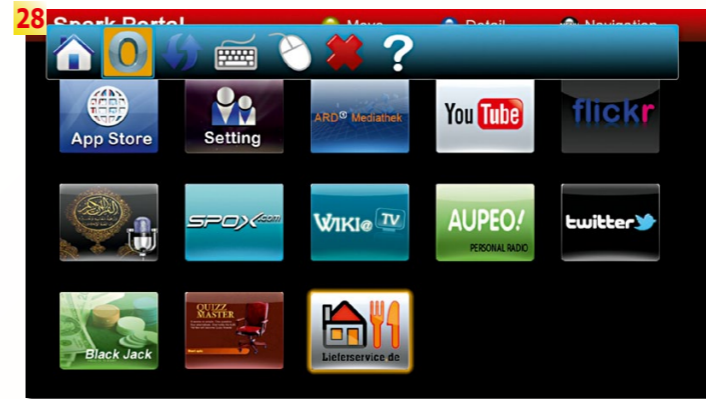
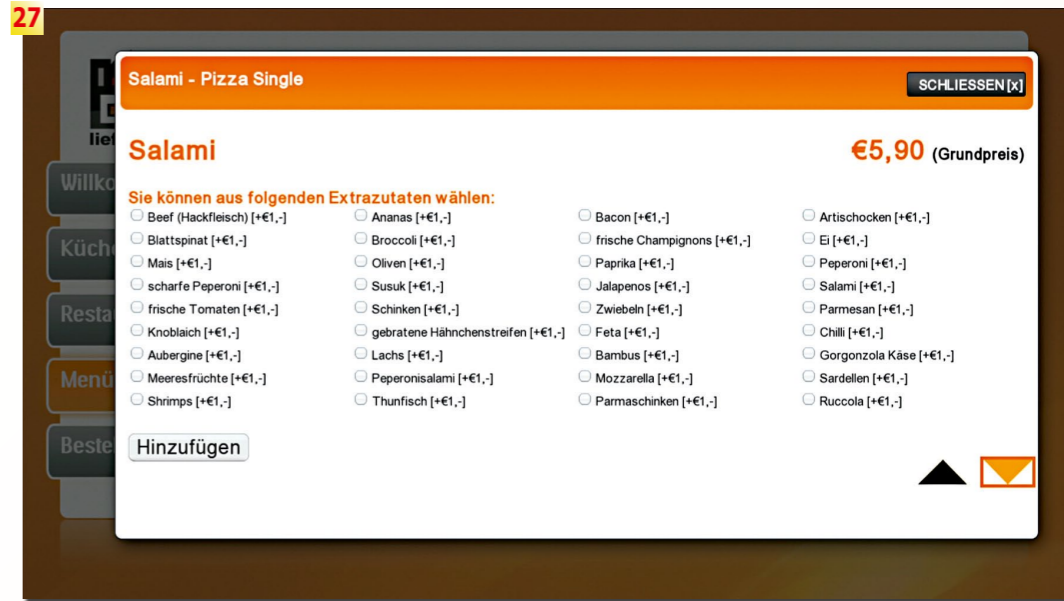
- 19. A new Tweet can be started or the profile of a user can be viewed with just one push of a button on the remote control
- 20. Black Jack is an enjoyable pastime during a commercial break
- 21. The Black Jack App is pleasing to the eye graphically and also easy to use
- 22. The Quizzmaster App can be played with up to four people
- 23. The Quizzmaster App questions are funny and occasionally difficult
- 24. This turned out to be nothing...
- 25. The Delivery Service App provides you with all kinds of food and snacks



at the top edge of the screen (that can actually be called up in any App) makes it possible to navigate within the Spark Portal and also lets you turn the OSD keyboard on or off as well as activate/deactivate the mouse pointer.

We enjoyed taking a closer look at the Spark Portal and the Spark App Store.

Thanks to efficient hardware and the clean programming of the Apps, they are all fun to use and lift the already outstanding Spark software to a higher level.



- 26. You can order a pizza from the standard menu...
- 27.or you can custom order a pizza with your favorite toppings
- 28. The practical navigation bar at the top of the screen lets you start the Opera browser and also lets you turn the OSD keyboard and mouse pointer displays on or off
- 29. The Opera browser comes with a start page with links to many well-known and popular web sites
- 30. The Microsoft search engine Bing as seen through the integrated Opera browser

