



## Jazz-clarinet carrots and parkour in Gaza: 12 things I learned at TED2016

by David Rowan



TED2016 attendees watch a live stream of the conference from a nearby ball pool  
Credit **GLENN CHAPMAN/AFP/Getty Images**

The talks from this year's TED conference in Vancouver are starting to be uploaded to [ted.com](http://ted.com) - so you can dive into the content that drew 1,400 people over five days to hear 70-plus speakers with job titles such as "sonic astrophysicist", "asteroid hunter" and "space archaeologist".

You'll find a few things that won't surprise you - Al Gore on climate change, founders of companies such as Uber and Airbnb making thinly disguised corporate PR pitches, and the inevitable self-proclaimed Hollywood "titan" whose encomium to loving her "three amazing daughters" was silenced only by her Autocue failing (fortunately Shonda Rhimes was rescued in the edit suite).

And, amid a blitz of virtual- and augmented-reality demos from innovators such as Meta and The Void, Microsoft's Alex Kipman gave a scripted stage demo so utterly removed from the likely consumer experience that we've decided to omit the product's name. So there.

As ever, TED shines when it showcases authentic stories of people doing amazing things - and takes us into the worlds of obsessives bursting to share their passions. Watch Raffaello D'Andrea of ETH with his amazing drones. And when their talks are uploaded, make sure to catch astronomer Tabetha Boyajian, palaeontologist Kenneth Lacovara, psychologist Brial Little, New Yorker copy editor Mary Norris, *Wait But Why's* Tim Urban, writer Lidia Yuknavitch, criminal prosecutor Adam Foss, neuroscientist Moran Cerf, and a whole bunch more. Not forgetting the TED Fellows, who are consistently the most engaging participants at the show.



A nature-themed networking space outside the main conference theatre at TED2016 in Vancouver, Canada  
Credit **GLENN CHAPMAN/AFP/Getty Images**

In the meantime, at least until future TED talks are given only by AIs, here are a dozen random take-aways from this WIRED reporter's notebook:

- A nature-themed networking space outside the main conference theatre at TED2016 in Vancouver, Canada
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- Credit GLENN CHAPMAN/AFP/Getty Images
- When you tell a lie, facial blood flow decreases in your cheeks and increases in your nose. Those signals can be read by cameras. (As stated on stage by Kang Lee)
- From the 1970s to today, the percentage of the world's population living on less than a dollar a day has fallen by 80 per cent. (Arthur Brooks)
- Brasília, designed for the car, has five times the pedestrian accident rate of the average US city. (Tom Hulme)
- Men in the eastern half of Long Island are more than twice as likely to want to be spanked as men in the western half of Long Island. At least, according to a word analysis conducted on the basis of joining 21 dating sites. (R Luke DuBois)
- Times Square is the most Instagrammed place on Earth: every five seconds people take a selfie there. (R Luke DuBois)
- We spend one-twelfth of our lives dreaming. Oh, and you can (kind of) record people's dreams using EEG and fMRI. (Moran Cerf)
- There are 2.3 million people in US jails and prisons, and 7m more on probation or parole. It costs \$109,000 in some US states to lock up a teenager for a year, and there's a 60 per cent chance they'll return to prison. (Adam Foss)
- Parkour is popular in Gaza. (Ameera Harouda)
- Carrots can be made into surprisingly jazz-worthy clarinets. (Linsey Pollak)
- How many times people in a psychology study have said they have sex a month: 3.0 (introverted men); 5.5 (extroverted men); 3.1 (introverted women); 7.5 (extroverted women). And introverts prefer contextually complex sentences, and are more likely to flush the toilet "during as well as after". (Brian Little)
- There are 24 universities in China teaching all in English. (John McWhorter)
- Elon Musk uses four times as much present-tense language compared with future tense than the average communicator. Apparently the world's top visionaries "communicate 20 per cent more clearly with fewer syllables and words". (Noah Zandan)