Comcast stock performance

All sufficiently advanced technology cannot be distinguished from magic, british author and futurist Sir Arthur Clarke once said. If that's the case, there's plenty of magic in today's wired world, from smartphones that can tell jokes to machines that can tell you why they don't work. As these technologies become necessities, tech stocks may prove surprisingly magical too. It's a great sector to invest in, said Bernie Williams, chief investment officer in the U.S. Money Management Department. It has something for everyone. Whether you're looking for steady dividends from an established giant like Apple or Microsoft or want to place a bet on a fast-growing startup, opportunities abound. Here are eight stocks worth a look. (The shares are listed by market value.) Headquarters: Cupertino, Calif.Price: $94.25Market capitalization: $568.3 billion 52-week range: $55.55-$95.05Annual sales: $176.0 billionExced earnings growth: 11.1% in fiscal year ending in September 2014; 8.9% in the year ending in September 2015 The death of Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO and creative genius, put investors on edge in October 2011. When Apple's profits fell last year, Wall Street thought the worst expectations had been confirmed, and Apple stock (symbol AAPL) went into a tailspin. But with new iPhone models out and more coming, revenue and earnings are rising again. Apple executives are notoriously tight about product launches, but Job's successor as CEO, Tim Cook, has suggested that new products - including perhaps an iWatch - are in the offing. Meanwhile, Apple has increased its dividend and bought back billions of dollars worth of its shares. On June 30, Apple conducted a seven-for-one share split, the first split since February 2005. Splits have no impact on the value of investors' holdings or on measures of a share's value. But companies generally share their shares when their executives are optimistic about the future. Apple shares are selling for 14 times expected earnings and yielding 2.0%. Headquarters: Redmond, Wash.Price: $41.11Market capitalization: $339.6 billion 52-week range: $30.84-$41.66Annual sales: $83.3 billionExced earnings growth: 6.5% in fiscal year ending in June 2015; 9.8% in the year ending in June 2016Change has been good for Microsoft (MSFT) shareholders. The stock has climbed 15% since February 4, when the company announced that Microsoft veteran Satya Nadella would replace longtime CEO Steve Ballmer. Nadella, who previously ran the firm's cloud and business group, has promised that under his leadership, Microsoft will revive the innovative spirit that put the company on the map. UBS Securities analyst Brent Thill is particularly encouraged by the fact that Nadella has been refreshingly non-committal about continuing to spend money on costly operations that have not gained significant market share - an issue that has weighed on Microsoft's about about Decades. By cutting costs, Thill says, Microsoft will be able to significantly increase profits. The shares sell for 15 times expected earnings and have an above average dividend yield of 2.7%. Headquarters: Redwood City, Calif.Share price: $42.66Market capitalization: $190.3 billion 52-week range: $29.86-$42.88Annsal: $37.9 billionArened earnings growth: 9.7% in fiscal year ending in May 2015; 8.3% in the year ending in May 2016Wall Street had treated software giant Oracle (ORCL) as if it were a little too long in the tooth. True, cloud-based competitors have gained steam on the 37-year-old specialist in database management programs, and Oracle's growth was tepid. However, it is far too early to write off Oracle, says Landecker, co-head of the FPA Crescent fund. Given the nature of Oracle's business model, customers stick to the company; about 90% re-up every year. Now that Oracle is making its own inroads into the cloud, profits should increase, analysts say. Meanwhile, Oracle sits on $34 billion in cash, which it has used to buy back shares. And although the stock has gained 29% over the past year, it is not particularly yd, selling for 14 times estimated earnings. Headquarters: Eindhoven, NetherlandsPrice: $64.40Market capitalization: $16.2 billion 52-week range: $29.03-$64.69Annual sales: $5.0 billionExced earnings growth: 33.7% in December 2014; 14.1% in December 2015You may not be aware of it, but you are just as likely to use products made by NXP Semiconductors (NXPI) as you will be using Microsoft's Office or Apple's iPhone. That's because NXP makes a wide variety of components that go into everything from smartphones and smart credit cards to cars and eco-friendly light bulbs. The company says major trends that require better safety and energy efficiency in an increasingly connected world are driving its profits. USAA's Williams notes that NXP makes the chips for smart credit cards, which should see rapid growth in the wake of credit card data breaches at Target and other companies. NXP also sells chips that go into mobile phones, allowing consumers to buy products by simply waving a phone at the checkout. For a company expected to generate 30% earnings growth this year, NXP shares look unusually cheap at 14 times expected earnings. Headquartered: Pleasanton, Calif.Price: $79.83Market capitalization: $14.6 billion-week range: $59.87-$116.47Annual sales: $468.9 million Estimated earnings growth: Not meaningful (company loses money)The case for Workday (WDAY) is based on a promising future, not on current profits, for which there are none. Workday is a consulting firm that helps companies manage their human resources and finance departments. But unlike most human resources software companies that sell expensive systems across the business that need to be updated periodically, Workday's software is sold as needed and updated continuously cloud cloud that delivers it. It makes the software more affordable and user-friendly. The income of the working day has increased at a tremendous pace; analysts see them soar 60% in the fiscal year ending in January 2015 and 46% the following year. The company's first profit is not expected until sometime in 2017. That makes the stock more speculative than most on this list. That said, the stock is a better bet today than it was in February, when it sold at $115. The fall was simply due to a shift in the market mood, said Steve Ashley, an analyst at Robert W. Baird & Co. He thinks the stock will hit $95 within a year. Headquarters: Santa Clara, Calif.Price: $55.97Market capitalization: $8.0 billion 52-week range: $35.90-$71.80Annual sales: $477.8 million Estimated earnings growth: Not meaningful (company loses money)What Workday does for human resources management, ServiceNow (NOW) makes for the information technology department. Baird & Co. analyst Ashley believes the company's software is changing. It is able to consolidate fragmented and redundant systems and provide better tracking of performance and prioritization of work. Even better, it can do all that at a lower price than traditional IT software. As with Workday, ServiceNow delivers astonishing revenue gains - analysts estimate 54% growth this year - and the company is expected to deliver its first quarterly profit in the July-September period. Profits have yet to materialise, but analysts believe ServiceNow will break into the black next year. After that, profits are expected to grow rapidly. But the stock sells at an expensive 107 times estimated 2016 earnings, so if you buy the stock, be prepared for a wild ride. As with Workday's shares, servicenow shares took a hit in March, when investors got skittish about high valuations for growth stocks. But Ashley believes ServiceNow will get to $65 within a year. Headquarters: San FranciscoPrice: $43.85Market capitalization: $5.1 billion 52-week range: $39.35-$106.15Annual sale: $302.6 million Estimated earnings growth: Not meaningful (company loses money)Named after a sport that involves digging through caves, Splunk (SPLK) dives into the vast and often spooky performance data produced by corporate machines. By capturing the incessant clamor of machine error messages and electronically sorting through and identifying those that are meaningful, Splunk's software effectively gets corporate machines to tell their owners when something is broken. It has drastically reduced the time it takes to find and fix system errors, says Derrick Wood, an analyst at Susquehanna Financial Group. And it has made Splunk one of the hottest properties on Wall Street. The company is now using its technological knowledge to find out when hackers try to attack its customers' computer networks. Splunk has fantastic technology to help customers solve real problems, morningstar analyst Norman Young said. Like many of the other hot Splunk is not yet profitable, but analysts expect the company to produce black ink in the quarter ending in October 2014. Splunk shares have fallen 57 percent since late February. Although Young believes the stock is worth $54, he suggests investors are waiting for the shares to fall into the $30 figure before jumping. Headquarters: Westford, Mass.Price: $41.33Market capitalization: $1.7 billion-week range: $22.71-$41.86Annual sales: $396.6 million Estimated earnings growth: 16.0% in the fiscal year ending in March 2015; 15.4% in the year ending in March 2016At 23 times estimated earnings, netscout (NTCT) is slightly more expensive than tech behemoths, but not nearly as costly as upstarts. NetScout provides software and services that enable a customer to detect technical issues by seeing how traffic develops through the computer network. For years, NetScout's primary service alerted corporate technology administrators to errors and errors with servers, switches, and software. Last year, NetScout introduced a product that helps businesses improve network performance— not just detect problems. The company also began using the data analysis recently to find cybercriminals trying to scale corporate firewalls. Matt Robison, an analyst at Wunderlich Securities, believes this winning combination of products and services will help boost a steady double-digit percentage of earnings growth. NetScout's shares took a mild hit during the growth-stock selloff in March and early April, but they now trade at record highs. Heights.