

tech toys

*Who says
engineers
can't
have fun?*

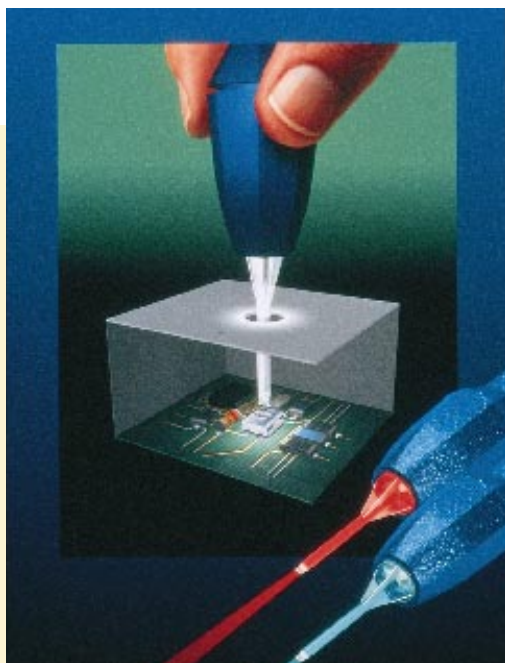
*By Joan Lynch,
Managing Editor*

Just in time for the holidays: We're expanding our usual one-page Tech Toy section to give you plenty of ideas for holiday shopping. Each of these products uses technology in innovative ways—you're sure to find something for everyone on your list. And maybe for yourself, too.



Home improvement

You don't need to drill holes in your walls or run new wires to link your home PCs. With HomeFree, you can connect computers that are as far as 150 ft apart. Set up a LAN to share files, Internet access, and peripherals such as printers, modems, and CD-ROM drives. When you're through with the serious home-office stuff, don't forget about multiple-player games. All you need to operate this wireless networking product is a Windows machine with at least a 486; one free ISA or PCI slot per desktop PC (or PC card slot for notebooks); a CD-ROM drive; and 10 Mbytes of free hard drive. The \$199.95 Desktop Pac includes one ISA card and one PCI card (one for each of the two desktop computers you wish to interconnect); the \$229.95 Combo Pac features one ISA card and one PC card to connect a desktop and notebook computer. **Diamond Multimedia**, San Jose, CA. 1-408-325-7000, www.diamondm.com. *Circle No. 405*

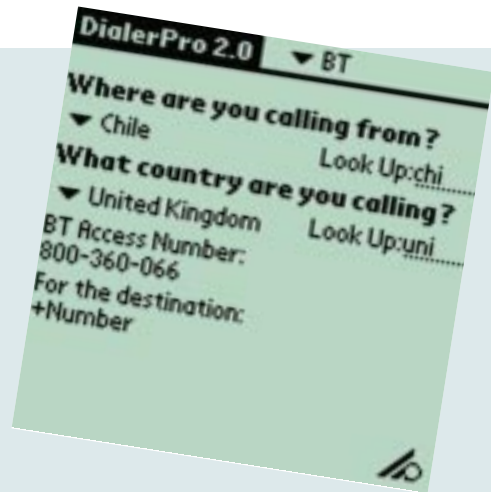


Bright light

This flashlight/microscrewdriver combo makes it easy to see and access tiny electronic components. The TrimBeam adjustment tool contains a high-intensity xenon bulb—just twist the head to turn the light on and off. It also comes with two sizes of tool tips and two vision-aid lenses in red and blue-green for light-sensitive applications. The TrimBeam costs \$11.74 (12). Bourns Inc, Riverside, CA. 1-909-781-5142, www.bourns.com. *Circle No. 406*

Phone aid

DialerPro 2.0 takes the hassle out of placing international phone calls when you're traveling. The software installs on PalmPilots, Palm III's, and WorkPad PC Companions, giving you the proper dialing sequences through direct dial, AT&T, MCI, Sprint, Telegroup, Voicenet, and British Telecom. Just enter the long-distance service you want to use or choose direct dial. Next, select which country you're calling from, followed by which country you are calling to, and DialerPro displays the access number for your long-distance service, followed by the dialing string you need to enter if you want to place an international call. The software costs \$14.95. Aramis Communications, Northbrook, IL. 1-847-831-3851, www.aramis-inc.com. *Circle No. 407*



Drive in the fast lane

The Kenwood Multibeam 40×Plus CD-ROM drive, the first peripheral to use Zen Research's TrueX technology, delivers 40× speed across the entire disk, sustaining a data-transfer rate of 6 Mbytes/sec. The drive uses multiple beams to simultaneously read multiple tracks. To run this speed demon you need, at a minimum, a PC/AT or compatible Pentium machine, a standard EIDE/ATAPI interface, and Windows 95. The vendor recommends at least a 200-MHz Pentium with MMX, 32 Mbytes of RAM, a PCI-bus-master controller, a PCI-bus-master EIDE driver for Windows 95/NT, and Windows 95 OSR2. You can pick it up for \$129. **Kenwood Technologies**, Cupertino, CA. 1-408-863-6800, www.kenwoodtech.com. *Circle No. 408*



The light fantastic

Go ahead. Drop it. Kick it. Throw it across the room. Then plug in this light bulb and it will still work. The DécorLED houses a cluster of 18 LEDs in a polycarbonate, UV protective bulb that withstands harsh outdoor conditions. They're cool (they produce almost no heat), they're pretty (they're available in various colors), and they replace standard 15 or 20W incandescents with 22-mm Edison screw bases. You can get samples for \$18.98 to \$62.40 (100), depending on your choice of color. **LEDtronics**, Torrance, CA. 1-310-534-1050, www.ledtronics.com. *Circle No. 409*



Gigaphone

The GigaRange family of cordless phones uses digital spread-spectrum technology to distance itself, so to speak, from other cordless phones. A 2.4-GHz signal transmits from the base to the handset, and the handset uses a 900-MHz signal back to the base, resulting in true duplex sound with virtually no echo and greatly enhanced distance performance compared with ordinary cordless and 900-MHz phones. The phones start at approximately \$200; with bells and whistles, you can spend about \$350. **Panasonic Consumer Electronics**, Secaucus, NJ. 1-800-211-7262, www.panasonic.com. *Circle No. 410*





Multitalented mouse

You can use the Scroll Mouse to scroll documents in multiple directions. The two-button device features a miniature touchpad embedded between the two buttons. You activate the Scroll Pad by tapping it, and it operates as a third mouse button if you choose that option in the Windows Control Panel. When the mouse detects smooth finger movement, it scrolls up, down, left, or right in all capable Windows 95, 98, NT, Office 97, and Internet applications. It weighs 100g. It will be available three weeks from now for \$34.95. **Fujitsu Takamisawa America Inc**, Sunnyvale, CA. 1-800-380-0059, www.fujitsu.takamisawa.com. *Circle No. 411*



Sounds big

Bring along a pair of EXR/100 laptop speakers for your next multimedia presentation. These amplified speakers allow 7.5W/channel for maximum output. Get your audience's attention by pressing the Expander button, which changes the standard stereo sound to 3-D sound. Better yet, blow them away with the Bass Boost. A combination volume/power knob on the front side of the speakers allows convenient on/off and level adjustment. An included ac adapter supplies the power to the EXR/100 speakers, independent of your computer's power supply. A portable battery pack helps when you can't find an outlet. The speakers cost \$99.99. **Koss Corp**, Milwaukee, WI. www.koss.com. *Circle No. 412*



Yikes! An eMouse

The eMouse is a mouse and input device in one. Use it to sign your name to transmitted e-mail or faxes. Or input a schematic diagram or drawings into documents. All you have to do is position the cursor where you want your signature, press the middle button on the eMouse, and sign your name or make a drawing with any pen on the touchpad of the eMouse. Hit the left button, and voilà—your name appears. The device works with Windows 95, 98, and NT and costs \$30.99. **Onvaco**, Union City, CA. www.eemouse.com. *Circle No. 413*



Picture perfect

This tiny color TV is so small and lightweight, you can take it anywhere. It weighs in at a mere 6.8 oz and features a 2½-in. screen with a 61,380-pixel count. The EV-510 runs on four double As for three hours or from an optional ac adapter. The TV costs \$179.95. **Casio**, Dover, NJ. 1-973-361-5400, www.casio.com. *Circle No. 414*



Help on the way

You won't know it's there until you need it. First Aid 98 software runs continuously in the background on your PC, and, when it senses a crash, it automatically fixes the problem. It repairs problems in more than 10,000 Windows programs; warns of a hard-disk failure; restores corrupted applications and damaged files; repairs Web connections; and retrieves downloads of the latest bug fixes. And "Undo" returns your computer to a previous configuration. The software protects against viruses. What more could you ask for? The deluxe package \$59.95. **CyberMedia Inc**, Santa Monica, CA. 1-310-664-5000, www.cybermedia.com. *Circle No. 415*

Roll your own prints

Turn your home or office into a photo lab with the P-300 personal photo printer. This 300-dpi dye-sublimation unit prints on a 4×5½-in. page at 1½ minutes per page in true 24-bit color. Photos can originate from digital cameras, computers, or scanners. If you're shooting with an Olympus D-220L or D-320L digital camera, the printer can create an index print of 30 images on one sheet; print 16 miniature photo labels of the same image for business cards or photo IDs; and produce instant prints of photos stored in the camera. The printer costs \$399. **Olympus America**, Melville, NY. 1-516-844-5000, www.olympus.com. *Circle No. 416*

Who's calling?

The PC Caller ID Plug decodes caller-ID data sent over a phone line and delivers the name, number, date, and time to your computer. Just plug the 2.25×3-in. device into a spare PC serial port. If you want to integrate caller ID into other applications, the vendor supplies the Visual Basic source code for Windows-based programs and the C code for DOS. The part costs \$34.95 plus \$5 for shipping and handling. **ITU Technologies**, Cincinnati, OH. 1-513-661-7523, www.itutech.com. *Circle No. 417*

True portability

The PN 60i weighs just 1½ lbs—and that includes the battery. This 1031.8532-in. wireless printer gives you 360 dpi and outputs two pages per minute. You can print on plain paper, envelopes, labels, transparencies, and letterhead. A 110/220V-ac, 50/60-Hz adapter/charger is standard; you can also get an optional rechargeable NiCd battery and car adapter. The PN 60i costs \$399. **Citizen America Corp**, El Segundo, CA. 1-310-643-9825. www.citizen-america.com. *Circle No. 418*