

# tech toys

*Pick a toy—any toy—for holiday gift giving.*

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## Keep 'em in the dark

**W**hen you need light to work but don't want to disturb your neighbor on a plane or disrupt a dimly lit presentation, Iogear's USB Flex Light can brighten up your computer keyboard or documents with four or eight power-efficient LED lights. The \$19.99 plug-and-play device, which is mounted on a 1.5-ft gooseneck flexible cable that you can easily bend to position the light, attaches to a PC or Mac USB port, eliminating the need for a battery. Users can select high or low brightness; the device precisely illuminates only the area that needs to be lit. Because the device uses LEDs, it does not produce the heat of standard lights. **Iogear**, [www.iogear.com](http://www.iogear.com).



## Add an extra "D"

**T**ake your photographs one step beyond with the Photo3-D 303 kit, which comes with everything needed to take and share 3-D photos. The attachment mounts to any digital (or 35-mm or SLR) camera using the tripod screw hole on the bottom of the camera; it captures a left- and right-eye image (the stereo pair). The supplied software mixes the images and applies red and blue filters; you can then print the pictures or view them on screen with the 3-D glasses or paper viewers that come with the \$129 kit. **Mission3-D**, [www.mission3-d.com](http://www.mission3-d.com).



## Picture this

**T**he Kodak EasyShare DX6340 camera, powered by a Texas Instruments DSP, weighs a scant 9.5 ounces and measures 4.3×1.5×2.5 in., so it's easy to take it wherever you go. The 3.1M-pixel camera contains a 4× optical-zoom glass lens with multizone and center-spot autofocus options, and it stores JPEG still photos and QVGA-resolution Quicktime video clips to either its 16 Mbytes of internal storage or its removable Multimedia and Secure Digital flash cards. The \$279.95 camera includes an LCD for image preview, slideshow, and other functions, along with NTSC and PAL video outputs. It tethers to computers over USB, or you can remove the flash cards and directly plug it into a computer for file transfers. **Kodak**, [www.kodak.com](http://www.kodak.com).

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## Not just for NASCAR

**T**hink your car has what it takes to take on Indy? Passport G-Timer vehicle-performance computers offer an affordable, fun, and easy way for racing enthusiasts to measure vehicle performance. With just the push of a button, the timers measure vehicle-acceleration time and speed, including quarter-mile and 0-to-60-mph times; calculate horsepower; and report continuous G-force readings, including braking and cornering measurements. The G-Timers can also tell drivers who modify their vehicles how those modifications affect performance and horsepower. Installation for each of the two G-Timer models is almost as easy as operation: You just plug the device cord into your lighter socket, attach the display to your windshield, and it's ready to go. The \$149.95 GT1 provides a basic feature set and an LCD; the \$249.95 model adds the ability to save as many as 10 timed runs for downloading to a PC, laptop, or PDA for further analysis, as well as a vacuum-fluorescent text/graphic display. **Escort Inc.**, [www.escortradar.com](http://www.escortradar.com).



## Affordable scanning

**E**pson's Perfection 3200 Photo flatbed scanner comes with a built-in transparency adapter for use with negatives and slides and, as the name implies, scans at a maximum optical (that is, noninterpolated) resolution of 3200 pixels per in. It retails for less than \$400 and offers both USB 2.0 and FireWire interface options. The newly introduced Epson Perfection 3170 breaks through the \$200 price barrier and also specs 3200-pixels-per-in. optical resolution, but with a slightly narrow transparency adapter (which still works fine with 6×7-cm medium format negatives and slides) and only a USB 2.0 interface (no FireWire). **Epson**, [www.epson.com](http://www.epson.com).



## Home movies get glam

**S**onic's MyDVD 5 DVD-creation software can turn your video and sound files into Hollywood-worthy DVDs and VideoCDs that you can play back on a set-top DVD player, VideoCD player, or PC. The \$49.99 kit offers CD and DVD burning; automatic DVD-movie-style menu generation for CDs and DVDs; photo-slide-show creation with enhancements and audio; and OpenDVD technology, which lets you re-edit projects you previously burned. A large, interactive WYSIWYG display and drag-and-drop features add to the kit's ease of use. MyDVD 5 outputs in DVD+R, DVD+RW, DVD-R, DVD-RW, CD-R/RW, DVD-RAM, and hard-disk formats. Minimum system requirements include Windows XP, an 800-MHz Pentium 3, and a DVD or CD recorder. **Sonic Solutions**, [www.sonic.com](http://www.sonic.com).



## No more excuses

**I**f boredom is your excuse for neglecting to exercise, the iNetTV machines might get you moving. This series of upright and semirecumbent bicycles and elliptical trainers are cable-ready, so you can watch your favorite TV show while you work out. They also feature video hookups that allow you to attach a VCR, DVD, or video-game box. Or, attach your computer and get voice-activated Web surfing. And, oh yeah: The 12.1-in flat-screen LCD also displays your workout data. From \$2999. **Vision Fitness**, [www.visionfitness.com](http://www.visionfitness.com).

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## Optical nirvana?

If you've been waiting for DVD-player manufacturers to come up with a low-cost "hybrid" player that robustly supports both the DVD-Audio and SACD formats, look no further than the Pioneer DV-563A. For less than \$200, you get a lot of player. The DV-563A includes high-quality progressive-scan circuitry that adeptly handles DVD-Video discs, DVD-Audio discs, and SACDs, and the lack of lengthy track-to-track switching delays makes listening to discs such as the SACD version of Pink Floyd's "Dark Side of the Moon" much more enjoyable. The DV-563A includes support for both bass management and speaker-distance volume adjustment, and it even preserves the 24-bit, 96-kHz sound quality of high-resolution DVD-Video discs, instead of down-sampling the S/PDIF outputs to Red Book audio CD quality as most DVD players do. **Pioneer**, [www.pioneerelectronics.com](http://www.pioneerelectronics.com).



## Weather thou goest

The Kestrel 4000's manufacturer calls it the Swiss Army Knife of weather gadgets—an apt analogy when you realize just how much this device can monitor. The handheld pocket weather meter measures barometric pressure, altitude, density altitude, temperature, humidity, wind speed, wind chill, dewpoint, wet bulb temperature, and heat stress. A humidity sensor yields  $\pm 3\%$  accuracy, and a backlit display eases reading during the day or at night. The Kestrel 4000 also functions as a tracking device that logs environmental data for trips, outings, or flights, which lets vacationers, hikers, aviators, firefighters, campers, and sailors watch and predict weather trends. The Kestrel 4000 retails for \$329; the Kestrel interface and upload software costs \$79. **Nielsen-Kellerman**, [www.nkhome.com](http://www.nkhome.com).



## Watch your phone

No need to rush home to watch late-breaking news or to tune into a hot music video. Turn on your cell phone instead. MobiTV and Sprint offer real-time news, sports, and music TV channels to PCS Vision subscribers. Developed and operated by Idetic Inc, the service is available as a J2ME-download to select PCS Vision Phones. Your \$9.99-per-month service buys access to MSNBC, CNBC, Discovery Channel, The Learning Channel, Independent Music Network, CNET, Discovery Kids, and more. **MobiTV**, [www.mobitv.com](http://www.mobitv.com).

## What's in a name?

At 5.0×3.7×2.3 in. and 1.1 lbs (without battery or lens), the oddly named \*ist D is the smallest and lightest DSLR (digital single-lens-reflex) camera on the market. It takes stunning pictures stored on CompactFlash Type I and II cards in RAW, TIFF, and JPEG formats. The onboard RAM buffer enables you to burst-shoot five pictures at a 2.7-fps rate. The camera contains an 11-zone autofocus system, and its 16-segment metering system supports a diverse suite of exposure modes. The built-in flash finds use in low-light settings and doubles as temporary illumination for autofocus assist. You can optionally power the camera with four AA batteries. It costs approximately \$1700. **Pentax**, [www.pentax.com](http://www.pentax.com).



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## Music to your fingertips

**T**he MusicPad Pro eliminates the musician's most annoying task: flipping sheet-music pages. Scan and import your music library in the tablet or import digital music files directly, then access scores on a 12.1-in. backlit TFT LCD display. You can annotate in color with on-screen highlighters and zoom in and out; with the look-ahead feature, you can see the next page without interrupting what you're playing. The device weighs a little less than 5 lbs and costs \$999. **FreeHand Systems**, [www.freehandsystems.com](http://www.freehandsystems.com).



## All-in-one

**G**ood news for Treo 600 fans: The device is currently available with plans from Sprint and Cingular Wireless; vendor Handspring plans to soon announce service from AT&T Wireless and T-Mobile. The device combines a phone, a VGA-quality digital camera, a backlit QWERTY keyboard, and a Palm OS organizer with messaging, e-mail, and Web-browsing functions. Powered by a 144-MHz ARM 9 processor, the Treo includes 32 Mbytes of memory and a Secure Digital/Multimedia card slot with I/O functionality for adding content and memory for video and MP3, as well as third-party-developed Bluetooth and WiFi cards (sold separately). The touchscreen offers quick access to frequently used applications, and a lithium-ion battery provides up to four hours of continuous talk time and 10 days of standby time. The Treo 600 comes with a stylus, USB HotSync cable, ac charger, headset, and a CD-ROM that includes Palm OS desktop software, synchronization software for Windows and Macintosh, free games, and an option to get free MP3 software with registration. A Sprint plan starts at \$449 after a \$150 service credit; a Cingular plan starts as low as \$499 with service activation. **Handspring**, [www.handspring.com](http://www.handspring.com); **Sprint**, [www.sprint.com](http://www.sprint.com); **Cingular Wireless**, [www.cingular.com](http://www.cingular.com).



## Never too rich or too thin

**T**he Scribbler SC2000 Series of laptop/tablet PCs offers high power and a long battery life in a sleek package that you can adapt to tablet or laptop configurations. A 1.2-GHz Intel Centrino handles the processing power, and vendor ElectroVaya's 70-Whr, thin lithium-ion SuperPolymer battery provides five to nine hours of runtime. The portable, 0.75-in.-thick, 3.1-lb device includes a biometric fingerprint-recognition security feature, a 40-Gbyte hard drive, as much as 768 Mbytes of RAM, FireWire, built-in WiFi, a 12.1-in. screen, and a detachable keyboard. It comes bundled with more than \$300 worth of software, including Corel Grafigo, Adobe Acrobat reader 5.1, MacAfee virus scan 7.0, speech recognition, and a trial version of Franklin Covey's tablet planner. The Scribbler is available in two versions for \$2299 and \$2599. **Electrovaya**, [www.electrovaya.com](http://www.electrovaya.com).

## For SOHO or home

**I**n a matter of minutes, you and 15 of your closest relatives or business associates can begin sharing an Internet connection, printers, scanners, files, and games—all for \$89. The Dell TrueMobile 2300 wireless broadband router for Windows XP and Windows 2000 supports 802.11g at speeds to 54 Mbps. Lots of security features, including a parental-control utility, round out the highlights. **Dell**, [www.dell.com](http://www.dell.com).



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## To go, please

In the true spirit of convergence, the FlashTrax handles multiple chores. First, the 40- and 80-Gbyte FlashTrax handheld portable media devices store and display as many as 20,000 JPEG images on a 3.5-in. LCD or on a TV. They can handle some RAW, GIF, and BMP files as well. You can have a slide show or zoom in and out and pan. The devices also act as portable MP3 players, storing 7000 compressed audio files. They support video playback of MJPEG.AVI files, and finally, can be used as external hard drives to back up or transfer documents, and even display PowerPoint presentations. The 40-Gbyte model costs \$549; the 80-Gbyte device costs \$699. **SmartDisk Corp**, [www.smartdisk.com](http://www.smartdisk.com).

## Speed demon

Announced in the nick of time to make this Tech Toy section is the GC82, the first PC Edge card to be available in North America. According to Sony Ericsson and AT&T Wireless, it provides the fastest wireless speeds possible. Mobile professionals, especially, will be thrilled with the dual-band (850/1900-MHz) modem's speed: 100 to 130 kbps and burst to 200 kpbs. Just plug it into the PCMCIA slot of your laptop, and you're off. The card is manufactured by Sony Ericsson and is available through AT&T Wireless stores. **Sony Ericsson**, [www.sonyericsson.com](http://www.sonyericsson.com).

## Have your cake and TiVo, too

What football fanatic wouldn't want this? A 120-Gbyte hard drive in the SIR-S4120R—a DirecTV DVR with TiVo recorder—makes it possible for fans to catch their favorite teams while letting the rest of their families record what they're interested in. The device stores as much as 100 hours of programming and features Dolby Digital 2.0 stereo or Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound; it also lets you pause live TV for 30 minutes and provides rewind, instant replay, and slow-motion playback. With access to 255 DirecTV channels, 31 premium channels, professional and college sports subscriptions, and a 14-day advance program guide, no one will miss a thing. You can get a \$30 rebate until December 28; the DVR costs \$499; a monthly subscription fee costs \$4.99 but is free to Total Choice Premier package subscribers. **Samsung Electronics USA**, [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com).

## Suck it up

Remember when it was politically incorrect to give a vacuum cleaner as a gift? That was BR—Before Roomba. The dirt-sucking robot has received a ton of accolades, and you'll probably want a Roomba just to figure out how it works. Before taking it apart, though, give Roomba a shot at what it does so well. Press the button for a small (10×12-ft), medium, or large (15×20-ft) room and watch this self-propelled robot vacuum up dirt and pet hair on tile, carpet, hardwood floors, or linoleum. Artificial intelligence enables the device to learn the layout of your room, and sensors make sure it doesn't fall down a flight of stairs. At a mere 3.6 in. tall, Roomba can clean under beds, dressers, and chairs for 60 to 90 minutes on one charge. Roomba costs \$199.99 to \$249.99 and includes a rechargeable NiMH battery and charger. **iRobot**, [www.roombavac.com](http://www.roombavac.com).

