

# tech toys

The holiday gift-giving season is around the corner. In our annual roundup of Tech Toys, there's bound to be something for everyone on your list.

By Joan Lynch, Managing Editor, and Maura Butler, Associate Editor



## Glow in the dark

See the power: Flick the switch on the FLT-5001 and the flashlight's three 1W LEDs emit 1800 footcandles of white light. Each LED has a 10-year life and includes its own collimator to deliver a more focused beam. The torch operates for nearly 17 days on three D batteries, measures just over a foot long, weighs 17.2 oz, and costs \$89.95, depending on quantity. **LEDtronics**, [www.ledtronics.com](http://www.ledtronics.com).

## That secure feeling

Biometrics comes to the notebook PC. IBM's ThinkPad T42 includes a fingerprint reader, which is located on the wrist rest below the arrow keys. Just run a finger across a sensor to log on and access applications, Web sites, and databases. The scanning process takes a few seconds. A new version of the Client Security Software allows users to employ fingerprint ID and complex pass phrases interchangeably or in combination. The ThinkPad T42 starts weighs 4.5 lbs, and prices start at \$1699. It's available at the vendor's Web site and from some of its business partners. **IBM**, [www.ibm.com](http://www.ibm.com).

## Precision timing

A line of Casio solar-powered, atomic-timekeeping watches tunes in multiple times during the day to the official time transmitter in Fort Collins, CO. The solar-panel dials feature digital readouts for battery levels/date, atomic-timekeeping signals/seconds, and watch modes. All models include a 1/20-sec chronograph, 100m water resistance, an auto LED light, dual time, five alarms, and a 1/100 of a sec stopwatch. Prices range from \$200 to \$400 for a stainless-steel bracelet with titanium inlays. **Casio**, [www.casio.com](http://www.casio.com).

## The password is...

Logging in bogging you down? The MetaPass M500 Digital Key remembers passwords, automatically and securely admitting users to Web sites, applications, and terminals. The plug-and-play device requires no software. Plug it into a USB port and enter a PIN, and the display shows icons of password-protected systems that you can log into with one click. When you remove the device, the information stays in the key, and the computer retains no trace of it. You can increase your security by choosing longer, harder-to-guess passwords. The \$99.95 device offers military-grade security with 448-bit Blowfish encryption and 16 Mbytes of storage space for file transfers. **MetaPass Inc**, [www.metapass.com](http://www.metapass.com).



# tech toys



## Full-featured MP3 player

For reasonable money and in a package not much bigger than a pack of gum, the SA520 digital-audio player transfers songs from tapes, CDs, and even the radio into MP3 files. The device offers 256 Mbytes of built-in memory, USB 2.0 compatibility, an FM radio with 20 presets, a voice recorder, and an MP3/radio encoder. It runs on a Mac or a PC, and its mass-storage capability lets users store and transfer all kinds of files, including MP3s and WMA files. For \$129.99, buyers get the device, with a five-preset equalizer and upgradable firmware via a USB port, headphones, a pouch with an armband, a USB extension cord, a 3.5- to 3.5-mm stereo-line-in cord, an instruction manual, a quick-start guide, and the one AAA battery they'll need to run it. **Auvi Technologies**, [www.auviworld.com](http://www.auviworld.com).



## Play it here; watch it there

Belkin's PureAV RemoteTV is a wireless-audio and -video sender that lets users play video and music in one room and watch or listen to it in another. The device employs Magis Networks' Air5 technology, which reduces interference and provides 40 Mbps of bandwidth, using the 5-GHz frequency range. The \$499.99 package comprises a transmitter that sends audio and standard-definition video from a source component, such as a set-top box, DVD/CD player, or satellite receiver; a receiver that connects to a TV, LCD, or plasma display in a separate location as far as 350 feet from the source; a remote-control extender that lets users control the source from where they're watching or listening; and two RCA audio video cables. The system supports component-, S-, and composite-video connections as well as NTSC-, PAL-, and SECAM-video formats. **Belkin**, [www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com).



## Charge!

A cell phone can be a lifesaver in an emergency, but only if it has sufficient juice. Never worry again about having a dead phone with the Sidewinder charger. It needs no battery; just crank the handle for two minutes to give a phone six minutes of talk time or 30 minutes of standby. Keep cranking for more power. Take it along wherever traditional power sources are unavailable. It comes with cables for Nokia, Motorola, Ericsson, Audiovox, and Kyocera/Samsung phones and costs \$24.99. **Smarthome**, [www.smarthome.com](http://www.smarthome.com).

# tech toys



## Make room for media

**T**he WMG80 Wireless Media Gateway from ViewSonic has room for 80 Gbytes of digital media. When users combine it with a wireless media adapter, they can view that content from any room in their house. The device is easy to connect and set up and includes two USB ports for external printers and additional storage connectivity. A fast signaling rate means users can almost instantly enjoy their pictures, video, and music. The \$449 package includes the 54-Mbps, 802.11g/b wireless-audio/video streaming media router with 10/100 Ethernet port, a power cord and adapter, and Ethernet cable. **ViewSonic**, [www.viewsonic.com](http://www.viewsonic.com).

## Hollywood at home

**L**SI Logic's Dimension 8602 DVD-recorder-system processor powers GoVideo's VR2940 DVD recorder plus VCR. The device automatically turns home movies into Hollywood-style DVDs—complete with onscreen menus, chapters with picture thumbnails, music videos, and even customized cases—with just the touch of a button. The \$349.99 VR2940 also features AudioPlay, which skips ads, trailers, and menus, to bring viewers to the start of a movie; YourDVD, which lets users store setup preferences; and CleanCopy, which automatically enhances picture and sound quality. **GoVideo**, [www.govideo.com](http://www.govideo.com).

## Multimedia on the move

**F**or road warriors looking to develop impressive presentations or relax with a little entertainment, the Satellite M35X series of notebook PCs from Toshiba offers a rich multimedia experience in convenient packaging. Starting at \$1299, devices offer Intel Centrino Mobile technology, a 5-in-1-bridge media adapter, an IEEE 1394 port, a high-speed wireless LAN, and a 15.4-in. WXGA display. The high-end, \$1699 M35X-S349 further enhances its multimedia capabilities with TruBrite technology and a DVD SuperMulti optical drive. **Toshiba**, [www.toshibadirect.com](http://www.toshibadirect.com).



# tech toys



## Let me entertain you

**T**he Archos Gmini400 is no mere portable music player. In addition to letting users record and listen to 300 hours of music, this 4.2 × 2.4 × 0.7-in. device stores and plays back movies and video on its 2.2-in. color LCD screen. Users can play games and transfer 200,000 photos from digital cameras or data files from PCs and Macs. The 5.64-oz Gmini400 features a 20-Gbyte hard drive and rechargeable lithium-ion batteries and costs \$399.95. **Archos**, [www.archos.com](http://www.archos.com).

## Shred this

**W**ant to make sure that valuable data doesn't fall into unscrupulous hands? Use the DVD/CD Shredder Plus to destroy unneeded DVDs, CDs, floppies, and credit cards. The device cuts the media into small, unreadable strips using carbon-steel blades and a 1/2-hp motor. The device costs \$119 and is available through major retailers, such as Best Buy, CompUSA, and Office Depot, or from the vendor's Web site. **Alera Technologies**, [www.aleratec.com](http://www.aleratec.com).

## Ringleaders

**A** trio of cell phones offers features to please everyone. The \$349.99 Samsung SCH-A790 integrates both CDMA and GSM modems on a single chip, so travelers can dial home whether they're cruising Route 66 or the Autobahn. It also includes a VGA camera with flash, zoom, and self-timer. Motorola's \$249.99 V710 uses Bluetooth technology and incorporates a 1.2M-pixel camera and an MP3 player, which users can listen to with headphones or a 64-instrument polyphonic speaker. The price is right for the VX-7000 from LG. The \$199.99 CDMA phone integrates a VGA camera that swivels to face in or out and has a flash. **Samsung**, [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com); **Motorola**, [www.hellomoto.com](http://www.hellomoto.com); **LG**, [www.lge.com](http://www.lge.com).

## Framed

**S**lated for introduction this month, the Epson L-500V captures three high-resolution frames/sec in continuous-shooting mode. View those or other pictures taken in manual mode on the 2.5-in. LCD and then choose one of 100 frames—be it birthday-, sports-, or holiday-related—for the photo. For the artistically inclined, included software lets users create their own frames or personalize existing ones. The 5M-pixel digital camera includes a 3 × optical zoom and a 4 × digital zoom; it lets users print directly from the camera's memory to a printer with no need for computer intervention. The camera costs approximately \$399. **Epson**, [www.epson.com](http://www.epson.com).

# tech toys



## In the palm of your hand

**F**or portable-storage needs, check out the three new versions the FireLite hard-drive line. Weighing in at about 6 oz each, the devices come in magnesium casings and deliver capacities of 40, 60, 80, and 100 Gbytes. They need no driver installation when you use them with operating systems such as Mac OS X, Mac OS 9, Windows XP, and Windows Me. The drives start at \$169 and are available through retailers and from the vendor's Web site. **SmartDisk**, [www.smartdisk.com](http://www.smartdisk.com).



## Do it yourself

**W**ith the DVDDirect burner, users can transfer videos directly from a camcorder to a DVD. It records on standard 4.7G-byte or double-layer 8.5G-byte discs for 12 hours of video on one disc. When attached to a PC with a USB 2.0 connection, the DVDDirect burner supports 16× maximum DVD burning; copies take about six minutes. The burner is scheduled for shipping this month and will cost approximately \$300. **Sony**, [www.sony.com](http://www.sony.com).



## Car tunes

**T**he Alpine interface adapter for iPod (KCA-420i) uses any of Alpine's 2004 Ai-Net in-dash head units to let users control and enjoy their iPod or iPod mini library from their car stereos. Users can view song information on the display and use the Quick Search interface to find their favorites. Alpine's MediaXpander technology enhances compressed digital media. Users can install the adapter anywhere in the car; one cable connects to the head unit, and another connects to the iPod through the iPod-dock connector. When the car is on, the adapter also charges the iPod battery. The adapter costs \$100; Ai-Net head units sell separately for \$200. **Alpine Electronics of America**, [www.alpine-usa.com](http://www.alpine-usa.com).

## Music and movies to go

**W**atch a movie, listen to music, or share photos with the iRiver IMP 1100 portable entertainment center. Featuring Digital Media DSPs from Texas Instruments, the IMP is the first audio/video CD player. The player

delivers six hours of video on the 2-in., 260,000-color, TFT (thin-film-transistor) LCD screen and about 25 hours of music on one charge of the lithium ion-battery. The suggested retail price is \$279.99. **iRiver**, [www.iriver.com](http://www.iriver.com).

