

Gadgets You Can Buy As Gifts This Year

Choosing a gadget can be a complicated task. There are a huge number of gadget retailers, both online and off, and they offer a numbing array of items. If you're looking to buy someone a gadget, a lot of your decision will depend on how much money you plan on spending. There are gadgets for every budget, and for every season.

Here's a few gadgets that may be of interest:

Smartphones: Smartphones are just that, phones with a whole lot of additional smart features. SmartPhones are a new generation of handheld devices which allow you to make cellular and data calls with ease. More powerful than some PDAs, SmartPhones threaten the entire PDA business. The Palm Treo is a notable brand.

UMPCs - Ultra Mobile Personal Computers, also known as the Origami Form factor are geared for the market between PDAs and Laptops. Smaller than laptops, they boast of longer lasting battery life and more software. In fact, one of the main selling points of UMPCs is the fact they run Windows Tablet OS and are compatible with Office. Microsoft and Intel championed the UMPC form factor initially to be offered in the \$500-\$1000 price range. The reality is, the units will be closer to \$1200. Samsung is the first OEM to market with its innovative Q1 UMPC. They plan on offering it for sale in the US and most of the world in May 2006.

Robots - Domesticated robots like the Roomba are quite a sensation. People are definitely interested in the potential time saving qualities of robots. Robots that mow the lawn and clean the house are now a reality. In the future, more tasks will be assigned to robotic helpers.

Cameras and Camcorders - Sony Handycam has a very hot offering right now with its MiniDV Digital Video Recorders. The units have excellent picture quality and shoot straight to mini-DVDs, which should play anywhere. For the price, the HandyCam MiniDV has a rich feature set, which allows for flicker-free filming. You can't beat a camcorder for capturing precious moments.

Tablet PCs and PDAs - Although feeling pressure from the UMPCs and SmartPhones, PDAs and Tablet PCs are still a popular item.

Blackberry and Palms are still extremely popular PDAs, and Blackberry has over 2 million people using its' commercial email service. Tablet PCs carry a hefty price-tag, but have excellent features like hand-writing recognition. In fact, use of the stylus is natural, and anyone with an artistic bent would seemingly love this device.

Any of the above items would make an excellent gift for a gadget enthusiast. The main thing to do is consider the person's lifestyle before making a purchase. Since almost all gadgets carry relatively high price tags, it's worth finding out for sure what the person wants, or you run the risk of making an expensive mistake. Check all gadgets for the presence of extras, such as service plans, that aren't included in the purchase price.

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