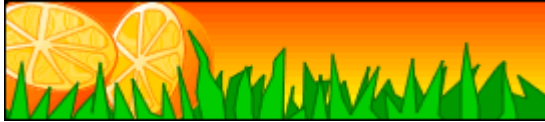


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Features

THE SALES STARTS HERE: TECHNOLOGY: GADGET LOVERS GUIDE TO THE SALES

Dec 27 2004

Everyone owns a gadget of some description. Now's your chance to get some top technology at some seasonally low bargain prices

By Steven Lawson

FROM cameras to hi-tech Tag Heuer watches, iPods and DVD players - guys love technology.

Follow our guide and you can track down the kind of bargain that will ensure the sales mean something to the guys AND the girls.

SAFE TECHS... If you're in the market for hi-tech gifts do your research before you hit the shops.

No one wants to be left with last year's low-powered, low-cost, low-use gadget when the Next Big Thing is just weeks away and not much dearer.

The flip-side to this is not to be an early adopter. This is geek-speak for someone prepared to pay megabucks for the Next Big Thing that hasn't been fully tested, that doesn't do what it says on the tin and that will be upgraded within weeks.

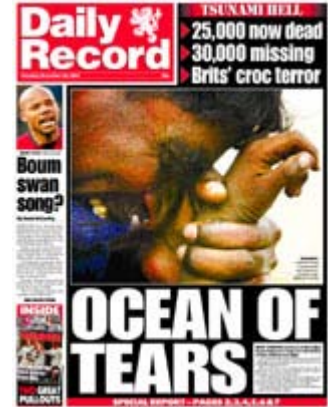
The simple rule of thumb with hi-tech gifts is: buy established quality. If that bargain seems too good to be true, it's probably because it is.

No one is giving away iPods and no one is making an MP3 player that does what an iPod does for a fraction of the price.

Instead, look for gifts from manufacturers with a pedigree: a Canon camera; a Nokia mobile phone; a Seiko watch; a Pure digital radio; a Nintendo Game Boy ... and you'll be surprised, these things needn't cost a fortune.

Which brings us nicely to ...

THE INFORMATION SUPERBUY-WAY...



Features

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- ▶ VITAL: THE HOGMANAY SURVIVAL GUIDE
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- ▶ VITAL: IN THE DOC... WE PUT THREE DOCTORS TO THE TEST
- ▶ VITAL: ASK THE DOC





A recent survey by directline.com found that the buying habits of Britons have changed dramatically in the last five years. Of 2000 web users interviewed, a whopping 94 per cent had bought something online. This compares with just 37 per cent five years ago.

And if online is the place to go for bargains, a good starting point is a price comparison website.

Try www.kelkoo.co.uk or www.pricerunner.co.uk - both scan dozens of online stores for the goods you specify and return with a list, usually in ascending order of cost and with direct links to the websites. I searched Kelkoo for an iPod Mini and had more than 8000 hits, and prices ranging from £166.85 at www.eurosimm.com to £199.95 at www.expansys.co.uk

ACCESSORIESAPPLE iPod leather case From £45 at www.expansys.co.uk Looking for something to protect your Precious? A smart leather case from [expansys](http://www.expansys.co.uk) will do the trick.

The leather chairman cases are the bees' knees and this site is a great place to go for all things mobile, techy and pocket-size - from the latest phones and PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants) to just about every accessory under the sun.

RETRO MOBILES

FROM £15 at www.retrofone.co.uk The British obsession with nostalgia continues. Satisfy your craving for all things 80s and 90s with an old-style mobile from Retrofone. The UK firm have gathered up our old 8210s and Z7s and are selling them back to us at prices from around £15 for a Nokia 2110, rising to about £125 for a Nokia 6310i.

MUSIC

BLACK iPod U2 £269.99, inc VAT, from www.dabs.com The iPod U2 Special Edition really stands out: It has a prominent red Apple Click Wheel and, on the flip side, the autographs of each U2 band member.

It comes with an exclusive U2 poster and, of course, the signature white iPod earbuds.

As an extra special treat, it includes an iTunes Music Store coupon you can use to save £40 off your purchase of The Complete U2. This digital boxed set brings together an amazing 446 U2 tracks. After purchasing and downloading The Complete U2, you'll still have enough room for as many as 4600 other songs on the 20GB hard drive.

GAMING

SEGA MegaDrive 6-in-1 handset £24.95 from www.firebox.com Back in the early 90s, if you'd told a gaming geek that one day it would be possible to shoehorn Sonic The Hedgehog, Golden Axe, Kid Chameleon, Flicky, Altered Beast and Dr Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine into a self-contained joystick that simply plugged into your telly, they would've laughed at you.

Not now they won't.

In today's world of ever-changing technology, it's a great retro gaming gift for all kids and big kids at heart. So don't expect dad to let the young ones have a look-in.

DVDSHINCO SDP-1731a personal player £150-£400 from www.firebox.com The trouble with personal DVD players is they are normally extremely expensive to buy.

Not so the Shinco, which comes with top-notch sound and picture quality and either a five, seven or nine-inch screen.

The player not only spins DVDs, it will also play CDs, including any you might have that are loaded with MP3s or JPEG image files.

The larger screen versions also come with flash extras such as DiVx

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