

Tech buys for Christmas

by Jason Schoolmeester and Kris Norrington

Still haven't found that perfect gift? Well Christmas is just around the corner and there is no time to delay. Here are our suggestions - and you don't have to be a geek to want any of these items (well maybe some).

Portable media player

Jason's pick: Apple's iPods. This Christmas is all about video. If you have the money, then the new iPod touch is the hands down winner. Not only does it have a cool new interface using your touch (hence the name), it is also web-enabled with a generous sized screen. If the budget won't stretch to the iPod touch, then the new iPod nano is the go. The nano is video in your pocket. You can watch video clips, TV shows and even movies.

iPod	Memory	Price
iTouch	8GB (1750 songs) or 16GB (3500 songs)	\$419 or \$549
nano	4GB (1000 songs) or 8GB (2000 songs)	\$199 or \$279

Kris' pick: iRiver's Clix II 8GB (second generation). They call it the iPod killer (or at least I do). With a very sleek design and an amazing ultra sharp 2.2 inch screen, the Clix II is perfect for video playback, on the very small screen. The features it has that the iPod doesn't include: radio, voice recorder and best sound quality of any MP3 player on the market. The 8GB version is only available over the Internet for around \$300, while the 4GB version can be purchased in Australia for less.

Personal Computers

Jason's pick: Acer Aspire L3600 - Priced from \$1,299, depending on options, the L3 has enough grunt to handle your home entertainment needs, but is one-tenth the size of regular desktops: 250 x



200 x 60 mm (w x d x h). The L3 is stylish enough to be located next to your TV. When talking about size, I still can't stop thinking about the Mac mini. I don't have a lot of experience with Macs but every time I see a Mac mini I just want to buy one - it is so little: 160mm x 160mm x 50mm (w x d x h). Priced from \$849, depending on options.

Kris' pick: It has to be a laptop. Why get a desktop when you can have all of the same features for a similar price and in a portable device. Dell laptops are good, particularly when their batteries are not exploding into flames. Their laptops can be purchased directly from their website and they are delivered for free. Their basic laptop starts at \$699. My bang for your buck pick would have to be the slim, sexy and powerful Dell XPS M1330 which is selling for \$1,899.

Digital Camera

Jason's pick: Sony Cybershot DSCT200 - \$699 This little camera is only about 20mm thick, and features an LCD screen covering the entire rear surface. But where are the buttons? The T200 has a touch screen user interface. Other important specifications include 8.1 megapixel imaging with 5x optical zoom. The DSCT200 fits an amazing combination of high-tech features into super-slim dimensions. Mum and Dad, if you read this, this would be a good item. Dad could buy duty-free.

Kris' pick: Canon Digital IXUS 860 IS - \$599. It doesn't have the most megapixels but at eight megapixels it is no slouch, allowing you to print photos up to A3 size. It has 3.8 x optical zoom and a three inch LCD screen for playback. It uses SD memory cards which can now slot directly into most laptops, PC's, printers, and

TV's. It's 58.8 x 92.6 x 25.9 mm dimensions are perfect for hiding in your pocket and whipping out at opportunistic times during your work Christmas party.

Gaming Console

Jason's pick: I haven't bought a gaming console since the original Playstation, but I have given some serious thought to the Xbox 360. Not only a gaming console but a media centre and Internet enabled for worldwide game play. From \$399.95, depending on options.

Kris' pick: Having owned a Sega Master System II, Sega Mega Drive, PS1 and PS2, the obvious choice for me is the Sony Playstation 3. An HDMI output allows you to connect your PS3 to your HDTV with one cable while giving you the absolute best sound and picture quality possible. The controls are wireless and rechargeable, while the console accesses

the Internet via inbuilt Wifi, to again save on cables. This console comes with an inbuilt Blu-ray player for playback of the next generation of home movies. A Blu-ray player on its own costs about \$1000. It has a 60GB or 40GB hard drive allowing you to store music, photos, videos and games. The price has dropped heaps since I purchased mine. You can now pick up a 40GB version for \$699.95.

Just because it is cool

Jason's pick: Sony's Reader Digital Book PRS-505 is on my absolutely must-have list (still can't seem to buy it in Australia, but there are a few on ebay). What is so great? It uses e-ink, "Electronic Paper". The Sony Reader's six inch display is almost paper-like and can be read in bright sunshine with a near 180 degree viewing angle. The Sony Reader's

dimensions are 175 x 122 x 8mm (w x d x h) and weighs just 252 grams. You can load your own documents on its generous 20Mb hard drive. This little device is going to revolutionise the way you read.

Kris' pick: Nokia N95i 8GB – RRP \$1,199.00. It replaces your iPod with an 8GB media player, it replaces your digital camera as it has a 5 megapixel camera inbuilt. It works as a computer with Wifi for surfing the net and it also has an in built GPS receiver and mapping software. Best part is that this new model (not to be confused with the old N95) now works on Telstra's Next G network and is recommended for rural and remote customers. I want Santa to bring me one of these.



2008 Directory of Not for Profit Organisations

By Pro Bono Australia

More than 600 of Australia's top charities will see their major fundraising efforts go into top gear over the next 12 months with the release of Pro Bono Australia's 2008 Directory of Not for Profit organisations.

A copy of the Directory is included free of charge in this edition of *Balance*.

Now in its 18th Edition, the Directory is Australia's premier publication for charities and is available both in hard copy and online at www.probonoaustralia.com.au

Charities can choose to list or advertise within the publication, with costs kept to a minimum so charities of all sizes can be involved.

The hard copy Directory is Australia's most widely distrib-

uted 'guide to giving.'

It is distributed free of charge to 56,000 Australian solicitors, accountants, financial planners, Top 1000 Companies, wills and bequest specialists, key media contacts, philanthropic trusts and foundations and many other major decision-makers and advisors to the community sector.

All charities listed in the hard copy also appear online with further information such as their 'Mission Statement' and 'Projects in Progress', along with links through to their website. You can visit www.probonoaustralia.com.au to find out more details on the charities listed.

Founder and Managing Director of Pro Bono Australia, Karen Mahlab, says "the directory is a great resource for solicitors and

their clients to use if they want to give to a particular cause but are unsure of which charities work in that area."

The Directory is divided into 'categories of concern' which enables people to connect with the causes they feel most passionate about.

In addition to using the Directory when planning wills and bequests, it is also a valuable tool for individuals and companies to use when planning workplace giving programs, corporate community partnerships and volunteer programs.

If you would like to find out more about Pro Bono Australia or require further copies of the directory, please call us on 03 8080 5650.