

BY ROBERT MORITZ

The Gadget Guide

Tools For High-Tech Living



Sites You'll Like

•readingrockets.org

Here's a terrific Web site for parents, teachers and tutors. It's chock-full of practical tools and tips designed to help kids with their reading.

•nczooeletrack.org

This North Carolina Zoological Park program is dedicated to saving the dwindling African elephants of Cameroon.

Summer Photo Fun

The search for the perfect digital point 'n' shoot camera continues! The latest contender is the Nikon Coolpix 2500 (www.nikoncoolpix.com; \$379). Its features include:

- Innovative swiveling 3x zoom lens that makes awkward self-portraits a snap.
- Preprogrammed "Scene Modes" that automatically adjust



Easy and fun to use, Coolpix captures it all.

focus, exposure and contrast settings for an optimal "Close-Up," "Indoor Party," "Fireworks Show" and nine other photo-friendly scenarios.

- Up to 2.0 megapixels for high-quality images. Its neat "Small Picture" button creates reduced-size copies for e-mailing.
- "One-Touch

Upload" button that sends pics straight to your PC or Mac.

- Neckstrap and rechargeable lithium-ion battery.

Instant Rescue At Your Fingertips

Flat tire, medical crisis, household intruder or fire—in an emergency situation, nothing is more valuable than time and information. The Magnavox MobilePAL+GPS (www.remotemdx.com; \$199) can buy you a little of both in a clinch. At the push of the big red "Call" button, the AAA battery-powered handheld wirelessly connects to a Personal Assistance Link operator who greets you by name. Thanks to the MobilePAL's Global Positioning System transmitter, the operator can then relay your exact location to the nearest emergency service agency (tow, ambulance, police or fire) for help. A \$9.95 monthly subscription covers all calls for this nationwide service.



Whether at the beach, in the mountains or at home, you never have to be alone with MobilePAL.

Have a question about computers, software or the Web? Visit www.parade.com and send e-mail to Robert Moritz.

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We cannot give personal replies but may address your query in a future column. "The Gadget Guide" acquaints readers with new products, but PARADE is unable to guarantee them. Prices may vary.

Showtime For The Family



Put your life on the big screen with X10's wireless Showtime photo transmitter set.

Choosing to use a digital still or video camera should not mean that images of your favorite family road trip or your stupid hamster tricks are held hostage in your PC. Showtime, from X10 Wireless Technology (www.x10.com; \$149), is the most elegant solution yet for liberating digital pictures and movies from the clutches of your computer's puny 15-inch monitor. With no awkward wires to attach or disks to swap, Showtime transmits most popular media formats—jpeg, gif, avi, mpg, etc.—to your living-room TV, so the entire family can marvel at your record big-mouth bass catch in all its big-screen glory. Included in the package are the 2.4 GHz USB wireless transmitter/receiver set and the nifty Showtime software for editing and organizing your files. But the coolest feature, in my opinion, is the bundled X10 remote that finally makes it possible to wirelessly zoom in, print and e-mail your favorite family vacation bloopers from the comfort of your couch.

Enjoy Great Sound Without Getting All Tangled Up

For too long, stereo speakers required a network of unsightly wires. Sony, fortunately, has addressed the problem with its SRS-RF90RK (www.sony.com; \$180), the first truly wireless audio speaker system. Courtesy of a built-in rechargeable battery, the 12-inch tubular speaker can easily be moved from room to room to suit your particular entertainment needs. The base transmitter hooks up to a home stereo, Walkman or



even a PC for enjoying your U2/Limp Bizkit/Cher mixes at a range of up to 150 feet.

Put your speaker wherever you want with the new Sony SRS-RF90RK (shown with transmitter).