

# High-tech holiday gift ideas for \$50 and \$100

November 18 2009, By Victor Godinez and Jim Rossman

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Picking a Christmas gift for the nerd in your life is never easy. In the holiday stampede, it's all too easy to end up with an outdated gadget or obsolete program. And mistakes can be costly.

U.S. shoppers plan to spend an average of \$222 each on consumer electronics this holiday season, up 8 percent from last year, according to the [Consumer Electronics](#) Association. Four of the 10 most requested items on adults' holiday gift wish lists are electronic items such as computers and video games, the organization found.

So the pressure's on, but you don't need to sweat it. Technology writers Victor Godinez and Jim Rossman will highlight tech gifts in three price ranges. These include items they've tested and cool toys they've lusted after from afar. Last week, they looked at gift ideas for more than \$100. This week, they're looking at items between \$50 and \$100.

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## HERCULES DUALPIX HD720P HIGH-DEFINITION [WEB CAMERA](#)

What is it?

Everything else in life is going HD, so why not Web cameras, too? Hercules' new HD camera is designed to easily clip to your laptop, making conference calls or cross-country bedtime stories more vivid than ever.

Who's it for?

Not just business travelers. Bloggers and artists who want to get decent video out of an inexpensive package for online distribution also will enjoy the Dualpix. And it's \$20 less than a similar HD Web camera that Microsoft recently released.

Availability:

The \$59 Hercules Dualpix HD720p Web camera is available at Amazon.com and Dell.com.

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## 4 GIGABYTES OF RAM

What is it?

This isn't a single product, but a general category. RAM (or [random access memory](#)) is the short-term memory used to store programs that are open and running on your computer. Generally speaking, the more RAM you have, the faster your machine will run and the more programs you can open. Adding RAM is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to upgrade an aging computer.

Who's it for?

Got a family member or friend complaining that their PC is starting to feel sluggish? First thing you should do is run anti-virus software to make sure a hacker isn't siphoning off your horsepower. If the machine is clean but still droopy, go to Crucial.com to run a free program to check what type of RAM is already in the computer so you'll know what kind to buy. If the computer has less than two gigabytes of RAM, hop over to a site like Newegg.com and order up new memory chips (and

don't forget that laptops use different RAM chips than desktops). You generally want to install RAM chips in pairs. So if you're ordering 4 gigs of RAM, you'll usually end up with two 2-gig sticks.

Availability:

RAM is sold in any electronics or computer store, and you should be able to buy 4 gigs for about \$80.

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## APPLE IPOD SHUFFLE

What is it?

The world's smallest music player is barely the size of a thumb drive. Apple recently updated the Shuffle to 4 gigabytes of capacity and has introduced it in five colors.

Who's it for?

It's perfect for kids. It's pretty indestructible and inexpensive. It's also popular with the workout crowd. It weighs less than half an ounce and has a convenient clip to keep it on your body.

Availability:

The shuffle costs \$59 (2gb) or \$79 (4gb) and is available at Apple stores or other retailers such as Best Buy, Fry's or Wal-Mart.

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## APPLE MAGIC MOUSE

What is it?

Apple's newest Bluetooth mouse is sleeker than the Mighty Mouse it replaces. The Magic Mouse features a smooth, buttonless surface that recognizes both left and right clicks and is Apple's first mouse to use multitouch gestures.

Who's it for?

This is for the Mac user on your Christmas list.

Availability:

The \$69 Magic Mouse is available at Apple stores.

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Citation: High-tech holiday gift ideas for \$50 and \$100 (2009, November 18) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-11-high-tech-holiday-gift-ideas.html>

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