Gadgets: Desk keeps your computer, lap cool

March 18 2010, By Gregg Ellman,

Logitech Speaker Lapdesk N700

The Logitech Speaker Lapdesk N700 is a device, which makes any laptop (Mac or Windows) a complete solution.

If you sit in any kind of chair, sofa or even on your bed with a laptop to listen to music, watch videos or just do any type of work, this is a must-have.

With "lapdesk" in the name, it must be that first and foremost, which it is.

It measures 21-by-11-by-3 inches and has a wide padded base. This keeps the laptop comfortable and helps keep the heat from the laptop off of you.

The built-in fan is the desk's main component for control heat generated by laptops. This quietly circulates the air to keep it cool directly under where the laptop is uses.

When the laptop is stationed on the desk, rubber holders help keep it in place even with some movement.

The features I like the best is the speakers built-in on both ends. You connect your laptop for use via USB, which powers both the speakers and the fan.

I found the sound to be excellent for a device like this and the noise from the fan was never an issue.

Volume can be controlled on the laptop or with switches on top of the desk.

There is no software to be installed so this is truly a plug-and-play device.

Details: [logitech](#).com, $79.99

———

The WikiReader from Openmoko really puts everything you need to know in the palm of your hands, at least account to [Wikipedia](#).

Packed into the pocket sized (4-by-4 inches) [touch screen](#) device are more than 3 million searchable Wikipedia articles.

While sitting in the Las Vegas airport recently I put it to test, searching everything within sight including names of airlines and cities, restaurants, newspapers and of course slot machines. It didn't miss on any.

The WikiReader

To use, hit the power button on top and simply touch the screen just as you would with an iPhone. Then start typing in your search. The screen also allows you to scroll up or down; just tap the link you want to open. All of this is powered with the included two AAA batteries.

As for cost, you can get them new for $99. According to a recent press release updates for the WikiReader are provided quarterly and available for free download via their website. An annual subscription plan for two updated microSD cards per year is also available for $29.

Since all the information is stored in the device, there is no need to be in a WiFi area.

Recently the device was updated with the spring 2010 information, which is available free to previous owners.

Details: thewikireader.com

___

Spring has sprung and it's time to start planting outside -- or at least start to think about it.

The easyBloom plant sensor is a handy device to help gardeners select the right plants for the right place and in some cases even save those that need help.

First you must register your device at the easyBloom site. Once that is completed, you are directed with ease to download the software for your computer (Mac or Windows).

Then, take the foot-tall gadget and place it into the ground at any desired location needed some planting. Leave it there for a full day. A sensor will gather information about moisture in the soil and sunlight.

After a day has passed, plug the USB end of the device into your computer (Mac in my case) and your software will instantly be activated to the company's website.

The site gives you choices for recommendations for a specific location, monitoring an existing plant, or water monitoring.

When choosing the recommended, more advice is given on choosing the proper plants by features such as the bloom season, height, soil and other characteristics.

All of this was incredibly easy to do and doesn't take more than a few minutes for the initial setup.

The tests I chose were all vegetable related for my personal garden and seemed to agree with what I've been doing -- mainly due to the gardening advice I get at my area Lowes!

Details: easybloom.com $29.97

(c) 2010, Gregg Ellman.
Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.