

Gadgets: Tech gift ideas for dads and grads

May 27 2010, By Gregg Ellman



The OtterBox Commuter Series case for BlackBerry.

Father's Day and graduations aren't as big a gift season as the December holidays, but they're still on a shopping list for many.

There is an endless supply of gifts for most any Dad or Grad; here is a sampling of [tech toys](#).

The Commuter Series cases for BlackBerry smart phones from OtterBox are the best out there.

The case has three layers to protect the expensive device; the first is a self-sticking clear protective film for the display.

You then surround the phone in a nice fitting silicone wrap, which then fits into a custom molded polycarbonate shell to hug tight around the silicone wrap.

With all this, you still have access to 100 percent of the functions and ports, eliminating the need to take it out of any of the protective pieces.

Using all the pieces also ensures that the phone is protected, even when stored in a belt carrying case, purse or pocket.

OtterBox offers the Commuter Series cases for the BlackBerry Curve 8900, Storm and Tour series [smart phones](#) for \$34.94.

For the few people out there who do have iPhones, don't feel left out. Otterbox has the Commuter Series and the Commuter TL Series for the [iPhone](#), just for you.

Details: OtterBox.com

A [GPS unit](#) is a great gift for almost any holiday or occasion.

I don't need a GPS unit to play movies and music like many do these days. I just need it to get me where I need to go and the Garmin nuvi 1690 does exactly that.

The affordable unit does all the basics you expect -- getting you to specific location on the fastest route possible.

In addition, users get real-time information delivered wirelessly using a free two-year nuLink! subscription. At the end of the two years you can extend it for \$60 a year or just cancel it.



Garmin nuvi 1690

The real-time information includes [Google](#) Local Search to find points of interest along with traffic and road construction alerts and even gas stations with current fuel prices.

If [social networking](#) is your thing, the nuvi 1690 is the first GPS with Ciao!, a social network application to share your location with friends.

Upholding the Garmin reputation, this unit does a great job in getting you where you want to go, displaying your location map on a clear 3.81-by-2.25-inch display and broadcasting turn-by-turn directions.

Another great feature is the hands-free access for cell phones, using the built in Bluetooth. Simply pair your phone with it and then use the built-in microphone and speaker.

Calls can be dialed using the touch screen keypad.

Details: Garmin.com, \$339.99

The Canon VIXIA HF M31 Dual Flash Memory Camcorder features both internal memory (32GB) and expandable storage with the SD memory card slot along with 5.1-channel surround sound.

Built into the compact camera is a Canon 15x HD video lens along with a 3.89-megapixel Full HD CMOS Image Sensor to produce high definition video.

In addition, the camera produces 3.3 megapixel still images.

Some new features include a smart auto feature to read the visual components of the scene. Once the camera detects this, it chooses the best settings.



The Canon VIXIA HF M31 Dual Flash Memory Camcorder

Users can also use the 2.7-inch touch screen LCD for the Touch & Track feature. This lets users choose any subject for the camera to stay

focused on, no matter where they move to within view.

The camera also has image stabilization along and improved low-light performance from previous models.

Details: usa.canon.com, \$697

A flashlight might seem like a generic gift but the Gorillatorch from Joby takes this to a new level.

This one is a flexible tripod with a mounted 65 lumen flashlight and features magnetic feet on the end of each tripod leg.

The Joby tripods are known for the rubberized and bendable feet to attach it to most anything, which it can be wrapped around.

Now with the light unit having the new magnetic feet, this allows users to light areas that might otherwise be difficult, such as hard-to-reach places while doing automotive or home repairs.

If just a magnetic tripod is needed, you can purchase that without the light.

The magnetic feet are rubberized so they won't scratch any surface.

Three AA batteries (included) power the light, which can be dimmed and is also water resistant.

Details: Joby.com, Gorillatorch \$29.95, Gorillapod Magnetic \$24.95

Everyone needs a wireless mouse these days and Macally has some great

choices in their Pop-Up Mouse series.

The height-adjustable 3-button mouse works on both Mac and Windows systems and comes in both a USB and Bluetooth model

To adjust the height, simply press the pop-up switch on the bottom and the mouse is instantly elevated for those who like that comfort.

The Bluetooth version is powered by two AAA batteries (included), which are loaded in a battery compartment on the bottom of the mouse.

For the USB version, users simply connect the connector to any available computer port. When it's not in use, there's a storage compartment on the bottom of the mouse.

Details: macally.com, \$39.99

The Kensington Wireless Presenter with Green Laser Pointer works up to 65 feet away from the source of the presentation.

Just plug the included USB receiver into your device displaying the work and you can roam around the room and use the Rubber textured grip device to laser point and highlight key items.

The USB receiver works on a 2.4GHz wireless connection then stores inside the presenter.

Details: us.kensington.com

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