

Four tech gifts for dads, grads

June 11 2010, By Jim Rossman



Graduations are coming up, and Father's Day is right around the corner. Almost everyone is looking for a gift for somebody.

Here are four [gadgets](#) I've been trying out.

BEDOL SUPER SLEUTH CAMERA PEN:

Did you ever wonder how TV news crews get that undercover video? They spend thousands of dollars on hidden video equipment.

Now you can get the same results from the Bedol Super Sleuth Camera Pen (\$159, bedolwhatsnext.com).

The pen features a camera that can record two hours of video at 640x480 resolution with sound and 2-megapixel still photos. The camera even has motion detection so you aren't filming unless something moves.

The pen unscrews to reveal a USB plug to attach it to any Mac or PC for easy uploading. It has 4 gigabytes of memory and, when connected to a computer, shows up like any other thumb drive.

The Camera Pen actually writes well, but with one button and one small light to tell you what it's doing, it can be a challenge to operate.

When you get the hang of it, the Camera Pen works well.

IDAPT I3 DESKTOP CHARGER

I have plenty of gadgets I need to charge regularly, and I'm always looking for the most elegant solution to keeping all those power bricks and wires out of sight.

The Idapt I3 is a cool desktop charger with three charging slots that accept interchangeable tips and can connect to almost any gadget you can imagine.



The Idapt I3

The Idapt I3 (\$49.95, idaptweb.com) ships with six tips, including

iPod/[iPhone](#), mini USB and micro USB. The tips can be inserted into any of the three slots so you can position the gadgets to charge all your devices at one time.

Idapt sells chargers with two or four charging slots in black, white, silver or pink (although the tips are black).

The Idapt I3 worked well, and it's one of the handiest charging solutions I've ever seen. This would be a great gift for anyone with more than one device to charge.

NOVOTHINK SURGE IPHONE BATTERY:

If you've got an iPhone, chances are you've thought about providing extra power for the times when you're away from a charging source and almost out of juice.

There are also times when you're totally without power, as I was this winter for two days during a snowstorm.

Or perhaps you're going camping for a week and still need to keep in touch.

The Novothink Surge is an external battery/case for the iPhone that features a 1320mAh battery to more than double your iPhone's usable battery life. Like other batteries in this category, the Surge can be charged with a USB port.

Unlike any other iPhone battery/case, the Surge's back features a solar panel to charge the internal battery from the sun or any strong light source.

There is no on/off switch for the battery. So when the iPhone is

connected, it's charging.

Novothink says two hours of direct sunlight provides 30 minutes of talk time on 3G or 60 minutes on Edge. A handy LED status indicator shows the strength of the stored charge and also lights up to show that the Surge is being charged by the sun.

The Surge's solar panel makes it an easy choice. Why buy a battery case that only charges via USB when you can add solar charging, too?

The Surge (\$79.95, novothink.com) is available in black or white, with other colors coming soon. A model is also available for the iPod Touch.

ELGATO EYETV HYBRID:

Many who have thought about cutting their cable or satellite TV have wondered about losing their DVR.

The EyeTV Hybrid (\$149.95, elgato.com) is a small TV tuner for your Mac or Windows PC. Attach the thumb drive-size EyeTV Hybrid to any [USB](#) port and then connect an antenna or use the supplied dongle to attach a set-top box and you can record video to your computer.

HD signals can be recorded from an antenna or from unscrambled cable TV. Standard-definition video can be captured from analog sources such as a VCR, camcorder or set-top box via composite or S-Video.



The EyeTV Hybrid

The Hybrid ships with EyeTV 3 software for the Mac that basically turns the device into a full-fledged DVR with two weeks of guide listings and the ability to watch, pause and rewind live TV with the included remote control.

Only one tuner is inside the Hybrid, so only one show can be recorded at a time.

Windows users get a driver so the Hybrid can work with Windows Media Center.

The Hybrid is a great way to get video onto your computer or even your iPhone or iPad. It's also the perfect tool for converting all those VHS tapes to digital so you can edit and burn DVDs of all those home movies.

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