

# Tech review: Last-minute gifts for techies

December 21 2012, by Jim Rossman

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It seems every company in the world is rolling out new or improved gadgets for the holiday shopping season. Here are some of the better items we've tested.

## MOTOROLA TALKABOUT MT350:

-What is it? Two-way radios that are rated for up to 35 miles. Don't expect to get that range in the city, as the packaging says that distance is from a mountaintop to a valley (line of sight).

They're weatherproof (for dust or rain, but not a dunking) and send and receive 22 channels, each with 121 privacy codes, for 2,662 combinations. And they can keep you aware of [bad weather](#) by tuning to your local [National Weather Service](#) channel. There's also an LED flashlight built in.

They run off 2 AA batteries. With NiMH rechargeable batteries, they'll run for 10 hours.

-Who's it for? Anyone who would like to keep tabs on their family members on the road, at the state fair or around the neighborhood.

-What does it cost? \$89.99 per pair

-Where can you get it? REI, Bass Pro, Amazon.com

## FATCAT POWERBAR 4200:

-What is it? An external [lithium polymer battery](#) to charge your portable devices. The 4200 mAh battery has enough juice to fully charge the average smartphone twice with some power left over.

It comes charged, which can be convenient if you're in a hurry. The PowerBar retains 80 percent of its power for a year. The PowerBar comes with tips for all popular cellphones, or you can use your device's USB charging cable. The battery is about the size of a deck of cards and weighs just four ounces.

It takes four to seven hours to charge a phone or tablet. The PowerBar doesn't have enough juice to charge an [iPad](#) quickly, but it will charge one slowly.

-Who's it for? Anyone who has a phone or tablet to charge.

-What does it cost? \$79.95 or less

-Where can you get it? [FatCatGear.com](#), [Amazon.com](#)

#### PELICAN 9420 LED WORKLIGHT:

-What is it? The king-daddy of all flashlights. The [Pelican](#) 9420 LED Worklight is a 1,000-lumen light that provides up to four hours of light from its built-in 7.2V lithium-ion battery.

The 9420 comes with a little tripod and a neck that extends up to 5 feet, so the light will stand by itself and stay pointed where you aim it. The battery pack is removable for charging. You can buy extra batteries to keep the light shining all day.

-What does it cost? \$299.95

-Where can you get it? PelicanProGear.com, Grainger industrial supply stores

### AQ SMARTSPEAKER PORTABLE WITH AIRPLAY:

-What is it? An Airplay speaker. Airplay is Apple's wireless music transmission technology to beam music from your computer's iTunes or iOS device to the speaker. This speaker also works with Google's Android phones with the AQ Play app in the Google Play store.

It plays with Windows 7 and the Nokia Lumia as well. It also works away from your home network with an iOS device by setting up its own network.

The AQ SmartSpeaker is a vertical unit that works alone or in pairs for a stereo experience. It has a built-in rechargeable battery that can keep the music playing for up to 10 hours.

-Who's it for? Music lovers and people who want to distribute music wirelessly around the house.

-What does it cost? \$179

-Where can you get it? Aqaudio.com, Amazon.com

### CONTOUR ROAM 2:

-What is it? A wearable HD video camera to record the exciting moments in your life.

The Roam 2 is completely waterproof, so it's ready for your next trip to the slopes, out on a personal watercraft or even diving. Mounts are available for helmets, handlebars and even goggles.

The camera rotates 270 degrees for level shooting at any mount location and has a built-in laser to help with leveling and alignment.

The Roam 2's battery is good for up to 3.5 hours of shooting, and it stores video on a micro SD card. A 4-gigabyte card is included.

The cam records 720p video at 60 frames per second.

-Who's it for? The daredevil on your Christmas list who wants to record video of their adventures.

-What does it cost? \$199.99

-Where can you get it? REI, Dick's, Best Buy, Amazon.com

#### **CUBEDGE:**

-What is it? A Bluetooth speaker with an internal battery that plays up to 10 hours so you can pair it with your phone, tablet or computer and enjoy your tunes wherever you like.

The speaker has good sound and connects easily.

The EDGE.sound also has a microphone so you can take phone calls when your phone is paired and playing music.

About the size of a water bottle, the speaker is rubberized on the edges, with an aluminum enclosure. Large buttons are molded into the top for easy access.

-What's it cost? Available in black or white for \$149

-Where can you get it? Cubedge.com

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