



WHAT TO GET FOR CHRISTMAS & WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2005

Well before you can blink, the holiday season has come around again. It is always amazing to me how quickly time flies between Cup Week and Christmas. Well along with this time of the year is the conundrum about what presents to get all your family and friends. Hopefully I will put a few ideas your way and also give you a window into what will be coming your way and maybe the next big thing in 2005.

Speeding and Red Light fines are mildly annoying to say the least and regardless of who is in power wont be going anywhere in the foreseeable future. It is of course illegal to have radar detectors in your car but we now have the Road Angel. Basically this device detects speed and red light cameras as well as tricky traffic conditions, traffic lights and common blackspots. As it uses satellite in a similar fashion to a GPS Navigation system, it is a legal device. It is also easy to install in your car.

It seems everything in the technology and gadget world is becoming either USB compatible or MP3 ready. Well now Oakley has released Thump, which are basically MP3 sunglasses. Thump will come in 128MB and 256MB versions, have a battery life of six hours, support for both MP3 and Windows Media files, and sport volume and track controls on the eyestem. They seem ideal for the modern cyclist, runner or roller-blader.

This Hotel router will continue the wireless revolution we are already going through. It is about the size of a pack of playing cards and allows full wireless access within an area like a hotel room. This means that you are not restricted to where a phone or data point is in the room and you can lay back on your hotel bed or even sit on the toilet and have full Internet and email access. This can also be utilised in a conference or classroom situation allowing all computers in the room network and Internet access. It will be a great addition to the modern, globetrotting corporate professional.

Finally if these new gadgets don't tickle your fancy or seem appropriate for your group of family and friends, then you always have boring old LCD flat screens, Plasma TVs, Digital Cameras/Video Cameras, Wireless Internet Radio, Computer Games or even just a humble new computer.

2005 & BEYOND

Voice Over IP will really hit the market in a big way in 2005. This is the method of communication where your voice travels over phone lines and cables like data does over the Internet. This of course will mean very cheap local, national and international call rates. In fact a lot of businesses that have multiple locations are already able to setup networks where by any inter-office calling will be free.

Now we have just had the Federal election and people often bemoan the fact that having to vote takes a large chunk out of their precious weekend. However experts believe we will see electronic voting in Australia via your PC and the Internet within the next 5 years. The two major issues regarding e-voting are security and secrecy, but given institutions like the banks have overcome online security, this should not be too much of a hindrance. Currently no-one has the right to know whom you vote for and this would have to be maintained in an online system. This would make voting simpler, the costs of holding elections smaller and the results more quickly available. Incidentally IBM was born because of the need to automate voting in the US census of 1904.

Product of the Month

Giant SPAM Inspector – This software product, which is winning rave reviews from around the world including Download.com, may finally be the SPAM solution many are looking for. It basically identifies and separates the hazardous and annoying spam from your legitimate email. Based on personal and global learning networks, Spam Inspector™ adapts itself to your email automatically, filtering out all of the junk mail with close to 100% accuracy. Therefore no real configuration is required. Better yet it integrates with most major email clients including Outlook, Outlook Express, Eudora and even Hotmail. For our Toorak Metro readers, if you visit www.ctsbayside.com.au and go to the Toorak Metro News section on the Media page you can find out more about this product and download a **free 15-day trial**.

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