



Pimp out your presents

Learn how to use your gadget gifts Marc Saltzman

You received a hot high-tech gift over the holidays and couldn't be more excited. Now what?

You know how to use your new digital camera, iPod and BlackBerry, but probably aren't using them to their full potential. Some tips:

iPod

- You can transfer music from a PC to your iPod, but what about the other way around? Because of the obvious piracy concerns, Apple prevents you from copying music from your

iPod to a PC. But if you need to do this for legitimate reasons – such as backing up your music files on a laptop, third-party programs get around this restriction. Some free programs exist to tackle this job, such as ephPod (www.ephpod.com), but my favourite is CopyPod (www.copypod.net; free to try; \$20 U.S. to buy). Mac users can try the free XPod at www.ipodhacks.com.

- Did you know you can also use your iPod to store files or transport them between PCs? It's faster than burning a CD and you can fit a lot more data on your iPod than on a USB memory stick. To reserve some hard-drive space on your iPod for computer files, open iTunes and right-click the iPod tab. Select Options. Click the Music tab and then choose Enable Disk Use. You can now transfer files using Windows Explorer (on a Mac you can use Finder);

simply drag and drop the desired files from your hard drive to the iPod's hard drive.

BlackBerry

- To add someone to your speed-dial list, hold down a letter, such as H (for Home), and you'll be prompted with "Assign a Speed Dial to the H



Word for word

// We have a Ferrari, they have a Ferrari ... but ours will leave first. //

Bill Gates on competitor warfare

key?" Choose Yes, and see your address book to assign the number. In the future, simply hold down the H key for a second and it will call home.

- Hold the ALT key down while rolling the trackwheel with your thumb to scroll horizontally in an email. If you need to delete multiple words or emails in one fell swoop, hold the NUM key while you roll the trackwheel to highlight what you need, and then tap the DEL key.

- When typing an email, simply press the SPACE key instead of the "@" and "." keys (as in "john@smith.com"). Your BlackBerry will know you want these symbols.

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

The addictive connection



Bill Varie/Corbis

DESPITE THE SPAM, SOME CAN'T TURN OFF.

minutes daily is equivalent to walking more than three kilometers per hour over that time, a study says. Researchers at Penn State have developed a computer system that **automatically recognizes and describes images** in words. The United States is the top country in the world for **distributing spam e-mails**, a new report suggests. One in five cellphone users younger than 25 confesses to **dumping someone by text message**, a survey says. Seven per cent of cellphone users **blame their phone** for failed relationships. The overuse of cellphones **might cause sterility** in men, recent study shows. The Web now has **100 million sites**. Researchers have demonstrated the first working invisibility cloak.

Dina Cindric

Digital cameras

- Taking photos of active kids and pets can be tough because the shutter button doesn't usually respond in time. To compensate, press the shutter button halfway down to tell your digicam you're about to snap the shot. You might see some information on your viewfinder to confirm it's ready, such as an

auto-focus border. When you've lined up the subject, press the button all the way down and you'll see that it takes the photo much faster. When taking photos of kids, you'll get a better shot when you kneel down to be at their level.

- Red eye is a drag. This happens quite a bit with light-eyed people and pets.

When you use a flash, the light reflects off the back of their retinas, causing their irises to look devilishly red in photos. Some cameras feature anti-red eye solutions, and software packages are pretty good about fixing it. But the best bet is to take photos in natural light to avoid this common problem altogether. And know your flash's distance. People often try to take pictures of a large room, such as a wedding dance floor, only to be disappointed at the dark image. Many pictures are taken beyond the maximum flash range – 10 to 15 feet for most point-and-shoot cameras.

Marc Saltzman is a Toronto-based technology journalist.



o c t o b e r

06

Madonna adopts the hottest celebrity accessory: a 13-month-old African baby named David Banda.

09

Nicole Richie and **Paris Hilton** reconcile after two years of catfighting.



Frederick M. Brown/Getty Images

09

Isaiah Washington attacks costar Patrick Dempsey on the set of *Grey's Anatomy*.

10

Google buys video-sharing website YouTube for \$1.6 billion U.S.



Rusty Russell/Getty Images

20

Keith Urban checks into rehab four months after his wedding to Nicole Kidman.

26

Rush Limbaugh accuses Michael J. Fox of not taking his medication in a TV endorsement supporting embryonic stem-cell research.



Win McNamee/Getty Images

30

Reese Witherspoon and **Ryan Phillippe** call it quits after seven years of marriage and two children.



Frazer Harrison/Getty Images

31

Veteran game show host **Bob Barker** announces retirement after 50 years on TV.

Most Overexposed Celebrity: Paris Hilton (forbes.com); **Worst Dressed Woman:** Serena Williams (bossip.com); **Best Baseball Team:** St. Louis Cardinals; **Youngest Woman To Win Man Booker Prize:** 35-year-old Kiran Desai; **Worst Game Name Ever:** Irritating Stick (gamerevolution.com)