

Tech Toys for the Holidays

It's that time of year again ... the time when you treat yourself (or others) to new high-tech gadgets. Here are a few of my favorite things I acquired this year that might make great holiday gifts.

Enhance Audio, Home Theater, and Video Game Experiences

I've owned the **Sennheiser HD6XX Open Back Professional headphones** for several years, and they still offer the best audio value today. They might require more power to use, so they're not ideal for direct connection to a cell phone or battery-powered music player. Instead, connect them to a quality headphone amplifier, and you'll experience truly astonishing sound quality. Price: \$250.



If you're aiming to power high-quality headphones like the ones mentioned above using your cell phone or computer, and you want exceptional audio quality and power, the **TempoTec Sonata BHD Pro USB dongle DAC** is an excellent choice. It offers impressive performance for its price. Give it a try, and your ears will be grateful. Price: \$70.

Hoping to enhance your home theater experience? Modern receivers can now support up to nine speakers! To avoid the hassle of mounting additional speakers in the ceiling and hiding wires, consider using **Emotiva Airmotiv A2+ height speakers** placed on top of your existing front speakers. These speakers reflect sound off the ceiling, creating the illusion of height for on-screen elements like planes, trains, and automobiles. Price: \$299.



Reliving old video games is a blast, but modern TVs may lack the right connections. The **ABLEWE RCA to HDMI AV to HDMI Converter** provides a simple fix, allowing classic devices to connect to modern HDMI ports. It's a joy to see young people react to the vintage graphics. Price: \$12.

Safeguard Perishables from Power Outages

With power outages becoming more frequent, safeguarding perishables is crucial. If you're like me, you likely have a refrigerator and freezer stocked with food. In the event of an extended power failure, the potential loss could be significant. The **Inkbird Smart Thermometer** monitors temperature and sends alerts to iPhones or Android phones through a free app. This gives you the time needed to possibly keep food safe in emergencies. Price: \$16.



BY MICHAEL J. EICHACKER

Our top holiday shopping gift ideas this year focus on office, relaxation, trending technology, and gifts for those closest to you.



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When it comes to power outages, the **Bluetti AC200P portable power station**



is a game-changer. With a whopping 2000Wh of LiFePO4 battery power, it can keep my refrigerator running for over 12 hours on a full charge. No more reliance on gasoline-powered generators or dealing with lengthy power cords. Plus, it's versatile enough to be a valuable companion for camping, providing ample off-grid power for all electronic devices. Price: \$1,200.

Monitor Energy Use

The **Emporia Smart Home Energy Monitor** can monitor up to 16 electrical circuits in your home, aiding in the identification and elimination of power vampires. Power vampires are devices in homes that needlessly consume electricity, ultimately costing a significant amount of money over time. However, a word of



caution: If you're not comfortable working in your breaker box, it's advisable to have an electrician or a friend skilled in electrical work install this monitor for you. Price: \$165.

If you're keen on hunting down those power vampires with a more straightforward approach, the **SURAIIEC Watt Meter** allows you to monitor a single device and track its usage over time. You can even input your electricity cost per kilowatt hour, and it will handle the calculations for you. The best part? There's no need to hire an electrician to install the watt meter. Price: \$14.



WiFi 6 has arrived, offering speeds approaching that of wired connections. Say goodbye to wires – woohoo! The device I opted for is the **Synology WRX560 router**. It seamlessly replaces an existing wireless router, and you can incorporate more of them to establish a mesh network in your home, all without the hassle of running any wires. As an added bonus, it's capable of connecting

to two internet providers for ultimate redundancy. Price: \$220.

More Fun for Pets and People

A pet drinking fountain can be a wise investment. The **Catit Flower Fountain**, holding up to 3 liters, is easy to maintain and encourages more water intake. It even includes a filter for improved taste and quality. From my own experience, my pets drink twice as much from it compared to a regular bowl. Your pets will appreciate it, and your veterinarian might need to find other sources of income. Price: \$17.



I had to feature a 3D printer, given my avid interest in the hobby. The **FLSUN**



v400 3D printer is a powerhouse, boasting five times the speed of its predecessors and exceptional print quality. With a substantial 12x16 inch build volume, it can handle sizable prints in one pass. Plus, it's the quietest printer I own and

handles various materials like PETG (polyethylene terephthalate glycol) and nylon with ease. Price: \$659.

Conclusion

These toys are available at Best Buy, Home Depot, Walmart, or Amazon delivered by Orange Santa (my nickname for the FedEx person who brings presents ... daily.) **WL**

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