



5 Gadgets to Love

Products designed to overcome life's little problems.



The Parrot DIA digital photo frame allows you to upload photos via bluetooth—perfect for iPhone users.

January 26, 2011 | by [Lisa Montgomery](#)

The annual [Consumer Electronics Show](#) is the biggest playground of cool gadgets on the planet. It's where companies from across the globe choose to unveil their latest techno-gear. Of course, there was plenty of 3D this and that. Web tablets were everywhere. Connectivity between TVs and the Internet; kitchen appliances and the iPad ... and everything else electronic was demonstrated and discussed at booth upon booth. These technologies hold great promise for the future, so they deserved the fanfare. However, there were plenty of smaller, less expensive, personal items, too. Here are a few of my favorite finds. They might not be super high tech or game changing, but they could definitely solve some of the little issues I have in my own home.

Ever since my cell phone service provider upgraded to 3G (just a few weeks ago), I haven't been able to make or take calls from inside my home. The bars just aren't there. It's extremely frustrating—not to mention cold—to have to stand inside my unheated sunroom to chat with my friends and family.

The solution: **zBoost** from [Wi-Fi Ex](#). According to speed tests, the product can increase data speeds by as much as 180 percent. The YX545 model covers a 3,000-square foot home; \$399.



I've been battling high blood pressure for about 13 years. Per doctor's orders, I measure my BP every day (well, almost every day). I use a portable cuff with an attached reader. Takes 10 seconds to do—no biggie. I'm also supposed to keep a running tally of my readings. You'd think this would be easy too, but for some reason (I'll blame the kids), the pencil and notepad I keep by my reader disappear mysteriously into thin air.

The solution: [iHealth Blood Pressure Monitoring System](http://www.ihealth99.com) (<http://www.ihealth99.com>). Comprised of a hardware dock, blood pressure arm cuff, and the iHealth app, the system lets you record your readings onto your iPhone, iPod touch or iPad; \$99.95, the app is free.



I received as a gift a couple of Christmases ago a digital photo frame. I really liked it at first, but after a month or so I was ready to pack it up. It did nothing but collect dust and test my patience. Loading pictures into the frame was a huge pain.

The solution: **DIA** from [Parrot](#). You can upload your photos onto the frame by just swiping your finger across your iPhone. Plus, the 10.4-inch frame is gorgeous; \$500, available in February.

Last year at one of my daughter's swim meets I decided to finally put my camera to use and record one of her races. It was neck and neck the whole way; she ended up winning by fractions of a second. I ended up getting a great shot of the floor, the ceiling—basically everything but her—because with all the excitement I couldn't keep my eyes behind the camera.

Solution: **Looxcie** wearable video camera with [LooxcieLive](#). Clipped around your ear, you can record video without having to grapple with a camera, plus, with the addition of LooxcieLive, you can stream the video via Wi-Fi to your friends and family as the action unfolds. Around \$200.



My home office is my shrine. I don't like people wandering in it; much less using my computer. But, as it's the only PC with a built-in camera, my Facebook-addicted daughter can't help but sneak in to video chat with her friends—way too often. I don't mind the chatting part; just can stand people tinkering with my computer.

Solution: **umi** telepresence system from [Cisco](#). Connected to your TV and home network, the system lets you videoconference from the comfort of your living room—no

PC necessary. The use of an HD camera (paired with and HDTV) ensures that the images are crisp and clear. Around \$600.



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