



Only 179 Shopping Days Left

Makin' a List

Edited by BILL ALPERT and KATHERINE CHENG

OUTSIDE, IT WAS A NEW YORK SUMMER EVENING. Inside it was Christmas -- or, rather, a preview of Christmas. The event was PepCom's annual Digital Experience, a press-only affair where 40-odd high-tech outfits reportedly paid \$10,000 a table to showcase gadgets they plan to release later this year.

Here are some wares that might make my list.

One really neat item is the zBoost-One from Wi-Ex. Just place this small unit by the window and plug it in. Thereafter, all cellphones in the house, no matter who the carrier, get an extra one or two bars of signal strength, enough to prevent most dropped calls.

Lenovo was showing off its new "featherweight" ThinkPad T400. At four pounds, it's more of a middleweight, though it is an impressive 0.83 inches thin. The keyboard lives up to Lenovo's typically high standards with an added bonus for workaholics who eat at their desk: It's now tightened up so crumbs and drinks are less likely to clog up the system

I'm not into listening to music on my BlackBerry, but my daughter is -- on her iPhone. She'll love Altec Lansing and Plantronics' Back Beat 903, a lightweight, wireless, dual-ear-stereo Bluetooth headset. You can listen to music and, at the touch of a button, take or make cell calls, too.

One disappointment: While I saw lots of gadgets that improve on existing ideas, I didn't see any product that was a full-fledged breakthrough. Let's hope the very best is yet to come -- when the weather outside is a little more frightful.

-- Jay Palmer

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MONDAY, JUNE 29, 2009

PREVIEW

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