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Texminator Arcade Game Adds Competitive Edge to Texting [Arcades]

Meet the Texminator. It's an arcade cabinet that tests your texting speed. It was also inevitable.

Seriously now, my youngest sister has a phone she never uses—save for texting. LOLs and ttyl's have long replaced spoken word, and the clickity clack of her slider phone keyboard easily drowns out the family small talk at the dinner table during holidays.

It's only natural that some entrepreneur would turn this phenomenon into a game and make a little coin off of it. The game features arcade and race the clock modes, as well as a 2-player competitive mode. The joysticks are toy cellphones. Obvi.

And I'm just speculating wildly here, but since Rockstar didn't develop this one I'm pretty certain there's no hidden Hot Coffee sexting level. [[ChipChick](#) via [Ubergizmo](#)]

How To: Back Up Any Smartphone [How To]

You back up your computers, or at least know that you *should*. But what about your smartphones? They carry massive amounts of personal data, and are subjected to life-or-death situations on a daily basis. Here's how to back them up:

You don't have to use a smartphone for more than a few weeks to amass a staggering amount of *stuff* on it, from text messages and phone numbers to personal settings and photo libraries. And as with your laptop or desktop, a significant portion of this stuff is *stuff you want to keep*, whether you know it or not. And cellphone backup isn't just a matter of keeping copies of data that you consciously archive every day, like contacts, photos and notes—it's about keeping copies of information that you didn't even know you wanted. How many times have you needed to dig through an old text message conversation? Referred back to your received call list to recover a number you didn't save? In a lot of ways, your smartphone is more closely tied to your personal identity than your computer is. So, people: back it up. *You'll feel better.*

By platform:

iPhone

If you've got an iPhone, there's a good chance you've already sat through—and been annoyed by—its backup routine. iTunes updates your iPhone's backups at every sync, which makes users' lives a bit easier, and guarantees some kind of safety net by default. But! As with most fully automated systems, iTunes backup is kind of enigmatic. It just sort of... happens, and it's not clear what you're saving, where it's going, and how to keep it truly safe.

What it's doing is performing a full backup *equivalent*. In other words, instead of just mirroring your entire device as a big image file, it's extracting all the useful bits, so it can restore your iPhone *as if* it had undergone a full, mirrored backup. This includes, among other things, bookmarks, app settings and data (including in-app purchases, but not the apps themselves), contacts, call history, Mail accounts, SMSes, videos and photos. In other words, pretty much everything. Backups are performed automatically, and restoring to one is a simple matter of

plugging in your iPhone, alt-clicking on its icon in iTunes, and selecting "Restore from Backup."

Crucially, this is different from selecting "Restore" in the device summary page: doing that will revert your device to a clean, factory-default image, which will delete all your personal data. Which isn't what we're trying to do here! (In fact, it's the opposite!) If you attempt to do this, you will be prompted to perform a backup, which should be a red flag.

iTunes stores its backups as archived files in semi-cryptic directories, so if you want to pull them out of the closed iTunes system for proper backup, i.e. to an external HDD or online storage solution, you can find them here:

On a Mac: ~/Library/Application Support/MobileSync/Backup/

On Windows XP: \Documents and Settings\\Application Data\Apple Computer\MobileSync\Backup\

On Windows Vista: \Users\\AppData\Roaming\Apple Computer\MobileSync\Backup\

To add a backup to iTunes, simply copy it back to its default directory, and it should show up as a restore option, labeled by date, when you're setting up a wiped or recently capital "R" Restored iPhone or iPod Touch.

Android

Google's position Android backup and sync has been translucent, perhaps to a fault: Since it depends so much on web services, it doesn't need to be backed up, right! It's already backed up, in the cloud! We're freakin' Google, y'all! THIS IS THE FUTURE! (Carried to its logical conclusion, this is the Chrome OS ethos. Anyway.) To a certain extent this cloud-focused cheerleading is fine, and can be put to good use. Gmail and Gcal are always safe, and your contacts can be added to your

Google account too—should you designate them to be saved as Google contacts, not just SIM or Phone contacts. To do this:

1. Open your Contacts list
2. Press the Menu button
3. Select Import
4. Tick the "Google Contacts" box

But for anyone who wants to back up more than their Google-service-based info, this doesn't really help. For that, you'll need to go third-party. There are lots of backup apps for Android, but most of them are paid, either immediately or after a free trial. I assume just go with the best free(ish) solutions, all of which you can find by searching for their names in the Android Market.

Backup apps on Android are split into two types: the all-in-one apps that sync your data to a single file, and the piecemeal apps. Unfortunately, the AIO apps tend to be paid; doing this for free takes multiple downloads. Download these three apps: SMS Backup and Restore, Call Logs Backup & Restore, and APN Backup & Restore. Each one backs up its respective data to your microSD card (in /sdcard/*appname*BackupRestore/) for easy restoration on another phone. Using these apps is self-explanatory, since there are only three buttons: Backup, Restore and Delete.

Astro File Manager fills a remaining gap: app backup. It's a free file browser at heart, so the backup option is kind of hidden—once in the app, press the menu button, then click "Tools." Select "Application Manager/Backup," and you'll be able to backup your apps to your SD card. To restore, just install this same app on the device, insert the old SD card, navigate to the same "Application Manager/Backup screen" again, and select the "Backed Up Apps" tab. Astro is also a solid file browser, you can manually move your data—like photos and videos—to a microSD card, where you should probably be storing them by default anyway. [Pic [via](#)]

There! Sprite Mechanic does the same in a slightly simpler way, but I'm hearing reports that it's a bit buggy on certain handsets (the Hero variant and Droid, specifically). Still, it's free, so it may be worth a try.

Lastly, if you've got a rooted phone, Backup for Root Users backs up virtually *everything*, and it's totally free. That catch? You need to have a rooted phone, or else it won't work. Which is either a crying shame, or a great excuse to root your phone.

Palm Pre/Pixi

Where Android's cloud-based not-really-a-backup system doesn't feel remotely complete, the Pre's is actually pretty good: Backup is performed automatically, every day, and linked to your user account. This just covers the basics, though. For example, a list of apps is kept server-side, but the app data itself isn't backed up; browser bookmarks are remembered, but no form data or website passwords. Media isn't backed up at all. Here's the [full list](#). The solution is a bit hackish, but it works fine for *most data*. From [PreCentral](#), a brief guide on backing up using either Microsoft's [Sync Toy](#) for PC, or with slight, obvious modifications, [ChronoSync](#) for Mac:

1. Plug in the Pre and select USB Drive.
2. Download SyncToy and install.
3. Click SyncToy on your desktop to run SyncToy for the first time.
4. Click Create New Folder Pair. For the Left Folder, Browse to the Pre's Drive (maybe E: or F:)
5. For the right folder browse to your documents folder and create a new subdirectory such as PreBackup and select it.
6. Choose to Synchronize and name your folder pair something easy to remember like PreBackup.
7. Click Run.

What you're doing here is essentially backing up the Pre's internal storage, bit for bit. Unfortunately, this doesn't back up settings and some application data, so restoring from this image won't ensure that you don't lose some data; just media, ringtones, etc.

Between this, Palm's backup and the natural backup inherent in being tied to online services like Gmail and Flickr, the only notable things not really backed up properly are specific application data and SMS conversations.

Windows Mobile

Microsoft has always offered some kind of backup out of the box, and as of the release of version 6.5, there are multiple options. The core backup utility, of course, is Windows Mobile Device Center, or as it's known in XP, ActiveSync. Pairing your device with these apps is quite simple, and gives shelter to most of the data you could want to back up, including contacts, calendar appointments and media.

In XP, download and install ActiveSync, and when you plug in your phone, start the ActiveSync app, which you should be prompted to open anyway. Set up a pairing relationship, select the data you want to backup, and you're good to go.

In Vista, you'll need to download Windows Mobile Device Center and do the same; in Windows 7, you should be prompted to install Windows Mobile Device Center as soon as you plug in a WinMo handset.

Now, let's assume you're not using a Windows PC, or you don't want to bother with setting up a sync relationship with a computer. You've got two free options, which together back up even more data than ActiveSync, without an external machine.

My Phone, another Microsoft app, is available for free to any Windows Mobile 6.0, 6.1 or 6.5 user. It's a misleadingly basic-seeming little app, which backs up nearly everything you store on your phone:

[By default]: contacts, calendar appointments, tasks, photos, videos, text messages, songs, browser favorites and documents between your phone and your My Phone web account.

Restoring from MyPhone is just a matter of logging into your Live account from within the app. You get 200MB of free storage, after which you've got to pay. Still: pretty fantastic, especially if you set it up to do scheduled backups.

If you want to back up your phone's data without a PC or a cloud-based service, there's PIM Backup. This utility feels and looks kind of ancient, but it's great at what it does. And what does it do? Everything:

- backup/restore appointments
- backup/restore call logs
- backup/restore contacts
- backup/restore messages (SMS, Mails, ...) NEW !!!
- backup/restore speed dials
- backup/restore tasks
- backup/restore custom files

Best of all, it stores your backup in a single file, which can be restored on any device using the same app. The procedure is dead-easy: Download the PIM CAB file to your device, install it, open it, check the data you want to back up off the list, and go. To restore, you go through the exact same interface, selecting "Restore" from the app's pulldown menu instead of "Back Up." In the spirit of safety, you may want to back up PIM's backup files on some kind of external storage. PIM lets you designate where you'd like to store its backups: select your microSD card if you have one, after which you can transfer it to any media you want. If not, you may want to transfer your backup to a PC or external storage device. (Unfortunately, the easiest way to do this is probably with ActiveSync or Mobile Device Center, since most WinMo phones don't allow you to browse the root storage in Explorer.)

BlackBerry

RIM has made life easy for BlackBerry users, who can back up their entire devices using [BlackBerry Desktop](#).

First, [install the app](#).

Under "Backup," select "Options," where you can specify encryption and data type parameters (encrypt the data for safety if you want, but make sure to select "Back up all device application data.")

Click "Back Up," and select the destination directory for your backup. It's a single file, so it's easy to throw on an external HDD, USB stick or microSD card for safe storage.

That's it! Further instructions, including a detailed restore guide, are [available here](#). [Pic [via](#)]

Symbian

Depending on which brand of handset and Symbian shell you're using, your backup options are going to differ. The [Ovi Suite](#) will do the trick. It's a full, automated backup suite, but it's PC-only and works exclusively with Nokia phones. Using it is as simple as setting up a sync relationship—just install the suite and plug the Nokia phone in via USB, and follow the wizard prompts—and it'll keep contacts, calendar items and media backed up. [Pic [via](#)]

Non-Nokia Symbian users—Samsung folks, listen up—can use a free app called [The Symbian Tool](#). This will actually pull a full *image* copy from your Symbian phone, meaning that you can restore your phone bit-for-bit to the state it was in at the time of backup. There are also less severe options for basic media backup, or selective sync. More details [here](#).

So, that's it! If you have more tips and tools to share, please drop some links in the comments—your feedback is hugely important to our [How To](#) guides, and your collective troubleshooting efforts have SAVED HUNDREDS OF LIVES, possibly. And if you have any topics you'd like to see covered here, please [let me know](#). Happy backups, folks!

Atlona's HDAiR Wireless USB-to-VGA / HDMI Adapter Adds Audio [Adapters]

The capable Atlona HDAiR Wireless USB-to-VGA/HDMI Adapter was missing one key ingredient when it launched earlier this year: Audio. That's been fixed, thanks to this latest refresh.

And a refresh this certainly is, as this is the same product, but with audio output. Specifically, audio output in 3.5mm analog and embedded HDMI. The \$219 piece of kit is also compatible with both Windows Vista and Windows 7. [[Engadget](#)]

Luke Wilson's Droppin' Post Cards on Verizon Wireless [Att Vs Verizon]

When I think escalating mega cellphone carrier ad war, I think actor Luke Wilson. Oh wait, no I don't, and yet here he is, again, striking back on behalf of AT&T against Verizon Wireless.

Now, good on AT&T for fighting back with more ads and not more silly lawsuits and all, but the Verizon holiday ad lineup is pretty strong, and I don't see many Verizon customers losing sleep over Luke Wilson covering a giant coverage map with post cards.

As tipster Eric notes, AT&T selectively does not mention Edge, 3G or voice/data distinctions in this commercial, opting instead for vague blanket statements like "AT&T covers 97% of all Americans, that's over 300 million people."

To the AT&T customers I ask: Are you comforted by Luke Wilson?

HD Radio Now Standard On All Rolls-Royce Automobiles [HD Radio]

When it comes to luxury automobiles and pampering its customers Rolls-Royce isn't stopping at specialized purse holders. Nay, they're extending the perks to include HD radio, now standard on all the vehicles they offer.

The move makes Rolls-Royce one of only two car manufacturers to offer HD radio standard, the other being Volvo. Audi and Mercedes-Benz will follow suit in 2011.

HD radio listeners: Does this excite you to no end or what?
[CrunchGear]

Lego Papercraft Crossover Possible with Clever Muji Hole Puncher [Lego]

The Muji hole punch, with its strategically placed punchers, takes Lego blocks, combines them with paper, and makes a whole mess of adorableness. Import from Japan for literally minutes of fun. [[Muji](#) via [Highs Nobility](#) via [MAKE](#) via [Boing Boing](#)]

Motorola Droid Prototype Floating Around On Ebay? [Droid]

eBay, the auction site that's been no stranger to rare gadgets in the past, could have an interesting new denizen under its roof if this Motorola Droid prototype turns out to be the real deal.

The seller bills the phone as "limited edition," which means this is, purportedly, one of only five such prototypes produced. The anonymity and volatility of the Internet means I trust this guy about as much as I do a baby with a razor blade, but nevertheless there are some other key differences present that indicate this phone is slightly different than the standard Droid.

For instance the keys are silver instead of gold; the bezel is chrome, not black; and the LED lighting on the buttons is "enhanced." The phone is fully operational and awaiting activation. Trust this guy? Bidding starts at \$485. [[eBay](#) via [Engadget](#)]

BlackBerry Bold 9700 Finally Available at AT&T Stores Nationwide [BlackBerry]

After teasing BlackBerry lovers with a limited "premier" customer release earlier in the week, AT&T has let loose with the BlackBerry Bold 9700. It's now available for anyone and everyone who loves all things BlackBerry. T-Mobile users, who've had access to this phone for a while, can yawn at this post at their leisure. [[BGR](#)]

Sewell USB-to-DVI/VGA/HDMI Delivers Resolutions Up to 2,048x1,152 [Adapters]

Old PC, new PC—doesn't matter. This DisplayLink chip-equipped display adapter from Sewell will take any ol' PC and provide support for resolutions up to 2,048 x 1,152, all powered via USB.

So yeah, if you've been chomping at the bit to get HD quality resolutions delivered to your monitor via a USB connection, this may be the adapter for you. Comes in a kind of periwinkle blue hue for \$99. [[Sewell](#) via [Engadget](#)]

Your Move, Captain Sullenberger [Airplanes]

Hudson River water landings? Those are so yesterday, man. Somewhere in the Congo today there's a pilot who, after a slight, um, *miscalculation*, crash landed his plane into a lava field.

Now, we can make light of this incident because all 117 passengers and crew walked away from the crash largely unharmed. The only real casualty was the captain's ego, although I think he's probably the talk of the terminal this morning. I mean come on—lava!

And check out this crazy quote from MSNBC:

The plane was flying from Kinshasa to Goma, and passengers had warned the crew that there were heavy clouds, Radio Okapi said.

Since when do the passengers do in-flight risk assessments for the crew? [[MSNBC](#) via [Geekologie](#)]

Pinball Machines Were Sneakier Than You Think [Retromodo]

There's a great read over at [Cheap Talk](#) about how digital pinball machines changed the industry, back when there still was an industry. They were big tables where you flick a ball around, but they were smarter than you think.

In the olden days of pinball, there wasn't much to adjust. Free game scores were hard wired into the machine and couldn't be changed. But with the introduction of Williams High Speed in 1986, things got more complicated.

The new machines would dynamically adjust the free play score based on an algorithm. It also introduced a method where if you had already scored a free game, it was impossible to win a random free game.

The post goes into much more detail over at [Cheap Talk](#), but ultimately, these algorithms, exploits, and the layouts of the tables themselves got so complicated that new players couldn't figure out how to master them. And, as we all know, pinball faded into the night. If you're at all a fan of pinball, it's an interesting read. Head over to check it out. [[Cheap Talk](#) via [Retro Thing](#)]

Image via [ktpupp](#)

The Rock Explains How NASA Helps Our Rock [Nasa]

Cross promotions sometimes don't make much sense. I've got nothing against Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson for agreeing to pitch NASA to youngsters, but really, there are better ways to capture youth attention.

The Rock just wants to make sure we remember that NASA's responsible for the rubber soles on our shoes, and the (apparently humorous) inclusion of freeze-dried fruit in cereal. But c'mon, NASA. We need fewer celebrity endorsements, more trips to Mars if we want to keep kids convinced the organization has reason to exist. [Techland]

If the Xperia X10 Partners Up, It'll Be With AT&T [XperiaX10]

Anyone hoping to see the Sony Ericsson X10 on T-Mobile, look away now or you'll be sorely disappointed. Phandroid noticed that the American version of the X10 won't support the necessary frequencies to connect to T-Mobile's network.

Yup, even though the specs page lists support for UMTS/HSPA 800/850/900/1700/1900/2100, Sony Ericsson is going to be localizing the radios. From the source:

UMTS HSPA 800/850/1900 only available for phones sold in Americas (except Brazil) and Australia. UMTS HSPA 900/1700 not available for phones sold in Americas. UMTS HSPA 1900/2100 available worldwide.

So that means you'll still be able to find an X10 that works on T-Mobile, just not in this country. You'll still be able to import if you want to use your expensive handset with T-Mo's cheap Even More Plus plans.

This also doesn't mean that the X10 is definitely coming to AT&T. Sony Ericsson wants to have a carrier relationship, but it depends on if one works out. As it stands, if anyone will be subsidizing that huge \$880 cost, it'll be AT&T. [[Phandroid](#) via [Engadget](#)]

Here We Go Again: Camera Equipped iPod Touch This Spring? [Rumor]

Just when you thought you could forget about the elusive bugger, rumors about an iPod Touch with a built-in camera start up again. The latest report points to a Spring 2010 refresh that will finally include a video camera.

The latest rumor reads like it's August all over again, but it does have one particularly disappointing aspect. According to the source, the iPod touch camera will match the not-so-hot quality of the nano's.

Here's to hoping the engineers can somehow stuff the iPhone's camera into an iPod Touch. Sure, there's not much space to work with in the Touch. And Apple releases iPods in fall, not spring, but we can *believe*. [The Examiner via 9 to 5 Mac]

Put Good Looking Game Controllers On Your Tree [Design]

If you really want to put video game controllers on your tree, please hang these up. They're a much better option than dangling your filthy old Saturn controller by its cord. [[Ponoko](#) via [Technabob](#)]

Apple Denying Support to Smokers? [Apple]

The Consumerist is reporting that two Mac users were denied AppleCare coverage because the owners were smokers. Not because the computers were damaged by second hand smoke, but because of OSHA regulations.

According to separate reports, Apple denied coverage for two users in 2008 based on the fact that OSHA lists cigarette smoke as a biohazard. Both techs refused service to the computers not because the smoke damaged them, but because it's considered hazardous to a tech's health to work on a contaminated unit.

Both owners tried to appeal their cases, even going all the way up to Steve Jobs. Unlike [this guy](#), they weren't as lucky.

These are just two isolated incidents though, and in the comments at Consumerist some smokers are reporting having no trouble getting Apple to service their computers. It appears to be on a case-by-case basis, not a hard-set policy. Any smokers out there ever run into trouble getting Apple to repair hardware? [[Consumerist](#) via [Slashdot](#)]

Magic Mouse Drivers for Windows Now Available [Apple]

Magic Mouse owners lusting for multi-finger gestures on a PC can stop wishing. Some good ol' fashioned hackery pulled Windows drivers from the latest Bootcamp update. You can grab them here, report back with results. [Uneasy Silence, *thanks Dan!*]

The World's Largest Earthquake-Safe Building [Architecture]

The new terminal at Istanbul's Sabiha Gökçen Airport is the world's largest earthquake-safe building. You're looking at the over two million square feet of scaffolding that support it, all resting on top of giant geological roller skates.

Instead of being built on top of the soil, the whole structure rests on over 300 isolators. These giant bearings let the building move laterally during an earthquake. After Istanbul got rocked by a magnitude 7.4 monster in 1999, and another major quake predicted to occur within the next 30 years, you can see why engineers decided to make this massive building shake-resistant.

As terrible as a massive earthquake would be, it would be incredible to see a building this huge move from side to side. Maybe we will in a future "World's Strongest Man" event. [[Wired](#)]

Gifts for Retro-holics Who Yearn for the Old Days [Giftguide]

Are you trying to find a gift for one of those crazies who's always going on about the superiority of vinyl, or who dresses like a character on *Mad Men*? Here are some ideas for the retrophile in your life.

BTW, if you hate the gallery format as much as the Grinch hated Christmas, click [here](#).

Leica M7: DSLR *schmee*SLR. Digital photography still can't match the old-school beauty of film, and Leica's M7 35mm camera is one of the best and most gorgeous out there. It's the kind of gift you'd hand down to your grandkids, partly because it'll last forever and partly because it costs enough that you need several lifetimes to get your money's worth. The M7 also has an even-more-decadent Hermes edition which clocks in at \$14,000, but the normal M7 is available now and would send any prosumer DSLR-owner into fits of jealousy. **\$5,500** [[Link](#); [Amazon](#)]

Retro-Gen: Modern videogames are so complicated, so expensive, so...3D. A true retrophile isn't interested in *Modern Warfare 2*, but could be persuaded to play a little *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, *Streets of Rage 2* or *Toejam and Earl 2: Panic on Funkotron*. The Retro-Gen, a little sorta-legal handheld emulator, will play either original Genesis cartridges or ROMs that you've loaded onto an included SD card. Plus, the entire system costs less than some modern DSi or PSP games. **\$38** [[Link](#); [Video Game Central Store](#)]

French Press: Here's one where an irrational fear of the new is totally justified. Your typical fancy, electronic drip coffee-maker spits out watery, bitter brown liquid only technically identifiable as coffee, while the French press (basically a glass jug with a mesh screen plunger) produces rich, delicious coffee, retaining the essential oils that give a true depth of flavor. Not only is it older, simpler, and cheaper, it's flat-out better. **\$20** [[Bodum French Press](#)]

Set of 11 Kenny Loggins Albums on Vinyl: You know what, this is a great gift for anyone, retrophile or not. Even if you don't have a turntable, 11 of these albums would make excellent wall art. Matter of

fact, I might just buy these myself. Go find your own Kenny Loggins vinyl collection! **\$10** [[eBay](#)]

iPod Classic: Multitouch? OLED? Wi-Fi? Widescreen video? What about the good old days, when convergence was a crazy futuristic concept and PMPs were called MP3 players, because, well, that's all they did. The iPod Classic is just about the only traditional hard-drive-based PMP left on the market, and while it's better than ever (thin, long battery life, spacious 160GB hard drive), it's still a relic of the past. I mean, seriously, a click wheel? What is this, 2007? **\$250** [[Link](#); [Apple Store](#)]

Classic Prints From The Onion: The comedy gods over at The Onion have their very own gifts for retro-minded buyers, creating "classic" Onion front pages from times in the publication's fictional history (what, you didn't know it was founded in the mid-18th century as "The Mercantile Onion" by Friedrich Siegfried Zweibel?). The all-time classic is "Holy Shit: Man Walks on Fucking Moon," but "Whites Invent 'Rock and Roll'" and "Mr. T Releases 'Pity List '86'" are both pretty amazing things to hang on your wall, too. Guaranteed to stop passersby and give them the giggles. **\$33 each, framed and matted** [[Onion Store](#)]

Trip to the Computer History Museum: You can be a retrophile and still love tech, and the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, California is the best place in the country to revel in the fascinating history of technological advancement. Right now, they're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the integrated circuit, examining the history of computer chess and visible storage, and remembering Charles Babbage, inventor of the first automatic computing engine. Among those constantly rotating exhibits are jewels like the [Cray 1 supercomputer](#), the [world's first ethernet cable](#) and a [Tandy TRS-80](#). **Free admission** [[Link](#); [CHM Site](#)]

DON'T BUY A Modern Smartphone: Anybody who yearns for the old days is going to find the idea of a powerful, always-connected pocket computer pretty threatening. Today's smartphones are as powerful as the best desktop computers from ten years ago, and are only getting better. An iPhone, Droid or Palm Pre might well explode a retrophile's mind all over his face. But if he's submitted to peer pressure and allowed a thoroughly modern iPhone into his classic-rock life, we do have one

recommendation: The iRetroPhone iPhone app, which simulates an old rotary phone. \$1 [[iTunes](#)]

Don't forget to recommend your own favorite retro-centric gift in comments-include pics and pricing if possible.

All Giz Wants is our annual round-up of favorite gift ideas, including amazing attainable objects and a few far-out fantasies. We'll be popping guides catered to different interests several times per day for the next week, so keep checking back.

3D Scanning, a Webcam's Latest Trick [Cameras]

We've seen cameras do all kinds of crazy things. [DIY 3D photography](#), [augmented reality](#), and now this demo by Qi Pan shows how an ordinary webcam can model objects in 3D.

I'm in no position to discuss the amount of technical wizardry in play here, but I do think the interface is really great. Look at how it overlays scanned textures on the person's hand to create a transparency effect. Neato!

It's definitely a whiz-bang application, but like augmented reality, I'm not sure how much I need it. Someone needs to figure out how to scan and print a sandwich. Now *that* would be something. [[Pro Forma](#) via [Boing Boing](#)]

Robot Polar Bears: Less Dangerous Than Real Bears, For Now [Robots]

Instead of replacing the St. Louis Zoo's deceased polar bears with live ones, zoo officials put robots up in their place. This slightly-better-than-average yard display will surely be remembered as the humble beginning of the robot bear uprising.

The robot polar bears are part of the zoo's holiday exhibit, and it's unclear if they'll be around after the season is over. Let's face it, though. These would have to be some damn good robot bears to convince me to see them over live polar bears.

PETA is encouraging the zoo to keep developing the animatronic animals, but listen PETA, hear me out. Sure, you're trying to keep animals out of captivity. You're also promoting the creation of an advanced, highly mobile robot bear army.

I encourage you to rethink your position. [[Inhabitots](#) via [Inhabitat](#)]

Wired for the Apple Tablet [Apple Tablet]

We still don't know what the fabled Apple Tablet actually looks like, or if it even exists, really, but this concept magazine reader from Condé Nast gives us a glimpse at what to expect from tablet apps.

Turn down your volume before hitting play, loud techno music awaits. Down? OK, good. Now let's look at what we've got here. It's about what you would expect from a tablet magazine reader. The big screen lets you soak in the magazine layout without zooming, and the graphics are big and interactive. In a nutshell, it looks like a hi-res iPhone app.

According to the source, Condé Nast doesn't want to take any chances, and the app is a precautionary measure to make sure they're ready if/when the device comes out. So don't take this to mean that launch is imminent. Take it as a sign that even if the tablet doesn't exist, it should, because a lot of huge publishing companies are more than willing to throw their weight behind it. [Wired]

How Do You Hide From the Internet? [Internet]

Wired writer Evan Ratliff spent 27 days in constant fear of getting caught as a small army of amateur and professional investigators hunted him. He had a bounty on his head and the Internet nipping at his heels.

Vanish, a combination of a manhunt and an experiment, began at 5:38 pm on August 14, 2009 as a bold headline on Wired proclaimed "Author Evan Ratliff Is on the Lam. Locate Him and Win \$5,000." We would discover if someone could disappear in today's world, or whether the electronic trails from ATM, email, and cell phone usage would give him away.

Of course, in Evan's case it wasn't just a few concerned family members or police officers looking. It was any person on the Internet whose curiosity was aroused, either by the sheer challenge or by the bounty. Any and all traceable information would be shared over the next few weeks. Soon Evan's phone records, credit card statements, IP dumps, interviews with friends, and anything that his hunters could dig up would be posted on Twitter, Facebook, and Wired's own site.

The end goal for the hunters was to locate Evan, photograph him after giving the codeword "fluke," and then submitting that photo along with a codeword Evan would provide to Wired. And after 27 long days, someone did just that. Evan was caught.

You can read the entire tale here. As you do, consider whether Evan made any genuine mistakes or whether his capture was simply inevitable. Is there a way to disappear, without giving up travel and technology? How would you do it? [Wired]

Windows 7 Sales Are Great (Just Like Vista Sales in 2007) [Flashback]

March, 2007: Windows Vista's initial sales are great, "more than doubling" those of its predecessor, Windows XP. Flash forward to November, 2009: Windows 7 initial sales are 234% higher than Vista's. Those numbers sound awfully similar...

What does this all mean? To be honest, not all that much—mostly, it means that there are just more computers out there every year. But what's kind of heartening, to me at least, is that it also means the general public is more and more tech-savvy: An OS release is a huge deal for nerds like us, but it's starting to be a big deal for Joe Sixpack as well. Given that Windows 7-packaged hardware sales are actually *lower* than Vista-packaged hardware in this time period, it means that people are installing a new OS on existing computers, something that's no big deal for us but could be intimidating for a tech neophyte. So this is a victory for nerds everywhere. Go us! [[Microsoft](#) via [NYTimes Twitter](#)]

Remainders - Stuff We Didn't Post (and Why) [Remainders]

Apple Patent Describes iPod UI "Pushed" to Other Devices...Philips Announces Very Pretty Pro LCD Line...NYTimes Columnist Proposes Boycott of "Pro-Communist China" Bing...Ooma Adds New Handsets and International Plan...

Apple Patent Describes iPod UI "Pushed" to Other Devices

An Apple patent filed in May 2008 describes a way of pushing whatever UI Apple wants to non-Apple hardware, for consistency's sake. That non-Apple hardware could include car stereos or something like the Chumby One (which has iPod functionality, but with a lookalike UI). It's a nice idea for Apple, but could be tricky given the myriad different hardware that might want to take advantage. What if the hardware has a resistive touchscreen, or a shitty processor? Might it just be better to use a custom interface for iPod integration? Regardless, it's in Remainders because it's not really that unexpected or interesting in its implications. [MacRumors]

Philips Announces Very Pretty Pro LCD Line

Philips' new high-end LCD line looks pretty fantastic, with two important caveats. First, let's drool a little: The two models (40- and 46-inch) have a 5,000,000:1 contrast ratio, 1ms response time, 5 HDMI ports (not sure why you'd need that many, but whatever) and a 200Hz refresh rate, with a nice brushed-aluminum look. Now, the caveats. First, they're UK only, and second, they're prohibitively expensive at about \$3,000 and \$4,100, respectively. Still, drool-worthy. [Engadget]

NYTimes Columnist Proposes Boycott of "Pro-Communist China" Bing

NY Times columnist Nicholas Kristof has proposed a boycott of Microsoft's Bing search engine due to its supposed pro-Chinese-government censorship of search terms like "Dalai Lama" and "Tienanmen" when searched in simplified Chinese characters. In English and other non-Chinese languages, the results you'd expect from "Tienanmen" show up, but in Chinese, apparently it returns sanitized results (no massacre, in that case). Since I'm not really sure how to type simplified Chinese characters on an all-American MacBook Pro keyboard, I haven't tested it myself—but if true, it's a little underhanded on Microsoft's part, although certainly paling in comparison to, you know, the Chinese government. What's odd is that Google's Chinese search also returns censored results, but "to a much lesser extent," so I guess it's okay. Weird stuff. [[TechFlash](#)]

Ooma Adds New Handsets and International Plan

Internet phone company Ooma began shipping its new Telo handset as well as offering a very cheap international calling plan (500 minutes for \$5 per month). Ooma, for those who don't know (I assume this includes everyone) varies from other VoIP services like Vonage by cutting out the monthly fees, instead packing them into a fairly expensive set-top box, at \$250. So this international plan requiring a monthly fee is a big deal for them, but it winds up in Reminders because I honestly had not even heard of Ooma until this morning. Oops. [[Electronista](#)]

My Dream Coffee Cup is Now Reality [USB]

Unlike T.S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock, I can't measure life out in coffee spoons. I tend to lose the darn things. That's exactly why this self-stirring, self-heating, USB-chargeable coffee cup is the stuff my caffeine-deprived daydreams are made of.

Brando calls it the USB Whirl Wind Warmer Cup and it's all too lovely. It keeps your beverage at a comfortable 40°C and stirs everything up at the push of a button. You can recharge the cup's batteries using either an AC outlet or a USB port, so there's no reason to be left without stirring power.

It's \$37, and it may be my coffee cravings talking, but somehow that doesn't seem too bad considering how much all my lost spoons add up to. [Brando via Red Ferret]

Earth's Weather Like You Have Never Seen It Before [Science]

This video shows Earth's weather from August 17 to August 26, 2009. It also shows how beautiful this planet is, and how insignificant we are. It was created at a 7-kilometer resolution with NASA's GEOS-5 atmospheric general circulation model.

The GEOS-5 atmospheric model was developed by NASA Goddard's scientists. It's based on the Earth System Modeling Framework, an open source project "for building climate, numerical weather prediction, data assimilation, and other Earth science software applications."

To really appreciate its beauty, you can watch the 1080p high definition video at NASA. [[NASA](#) via [@NASAGoddard](#)]

OK, Now I'm Nervous About the Large Hadron Collider [Blockquote]

I used to think that nothing would happen with the Large Hadron Collider. I even made fun of the nutters saying it's going to destroy the world. After reading CERN Director for Accelerators's latest statement, I'm not so sure:

The LHC is a far better understood machine than it was a year ago. We've learned from our experience, and engineered the technology that allows us to move on. That's how progress is made.

Wait wait wait. WAIT, Mr. Director for Accelerators Steve Myers Sir. What do you mean that the machine is "far better understood" now? How could they spend a billion brazillion dollars in this thing and don't understand it in the first place? Do we really know what are we up to here? Should I book a ticket to Costa Rica and go watch the end of the world from the beach?

The LHC is now circulating beams for the first time since September 2008, when it suffered a serious malfunction. It has taken them a year to repair it, which will explain the origin of the Universe or kick all our atomic asses out of it.

The LHC is back

Geneva, 20 November 2009. Particle beams are once again circulating in the world's most powerful particle accelerator, CERN*'s Large Hadron Collider (LHC). This news comes after the machine was handed over for operation on Wednesday morning. A clockwise circulating beam was established at ten o'clock this evening. This is an important milestone on the road towards first physics at the LHC, expected in 2010.

"It's great to see beam circulating in the LHC again," said CERN Director General Rolf Heuer. "We've still got some way to go before physics can begin, but with this milestone we're well on the way."

The LHC circulated its first beams on 10 September 2008, but suffered a serious malfunction nine days later. A failure in an electrical connection led to serious damage, and CERN has spent

over a year repairing and consolidating the machine to ensure that such an incident cannot happen again.

"The LHC is a far better understood machine than it was a year ago," said CERN's Director for Accelerators, Steve Myers. "We've learned from our experience, and engineered the technology that allows us to move on. That's how progress is made."

Recommissioning the LHC began in the summer, and successive milestones have regularly been passed since then. The LHC reached its operating temperature of 1.9 Kelvin, or about -271 Celsius, on 8 October. Particles were injected on 23 October, but not circulated. A beam was steered through three octants of the machine on 7 November, and circulating beams have now been re-established. The next important milestone will be low-energy collisions, expected in about a week from now. These will give the experimental collaborations their first collision data, enabling important calibration work to be carried out. This is significant, since up to now, all the data they have recorded comes from cosmic rays. Ramping the beams to high energy will follow in preparation for collisions at 7 TeV (3.5 TeV per beam) next year.

Particle physics is a global endeavour, and CERN has received support from around the world in getting the LHC up and running again.

"It's been a herculean effort to get to where we are today," said Myers. "I'd like to thank all those who have taken part, from CERN and from our partner institutions around the world."

NewEgg Black Friday Deals Leak [Black Friday]

Some of NewEgg's Black Friday offers have surfaced and while we don't know everything yet, a few of the deals we're seeing, such as a 2TB HDD for \$150, are looking pretty good.

According to Logic Buy, these deals are subject to change and there are more offers to come. We'll be keeping an eye out for changes and update as necessary.

Pre-Black Friday (Starts Midnight PST on Monday 11/23)

Canon DC410 DVD Camcorder \$199.99 (list: \$279.99)
Antec 300 PC Case \$49.95 (list \$69.95)
Seagate 2TB External Hard Drive \$149.99 (list: \$179.99)
Monster 16ft High Speed HDMI Cable \$29.99 (list: \$54.99)
Viewsonic 8" Digital Photo Frame \$49.99 (list: \$69.99)
Logitech RX1500 3-Button Laser Mouse \$12.99 (list \$27.99)
Creative GigaWorks T40 Series II Speakers \$69.99 (\$149.99)
Logitech G11 Gaming Keyboard \$43.99 (list \$63.99)
Sparkle GeForce 8400GS PCI-E Low-Profile Video Card \$19.99 (list \$34.99)

Black Friday (starts 11/25 at 3PM PST)

10% Cash Back starts at 3PM PST on all products on NewEgg.com

7" Digital Photo Frame \$29.99
HDMI Cable - 6 FEET \$1.99 after MIR
46" 1080P 120Hz LCD TV \$699.99
430W ATX 12V Power Supply \$16.99

[Logic Buy]

Cop Tasers and Arrests a 10-Year Old Girl For Throwing a Fit [Crime]

Are idiot cops with tasers in some sort of competition with one another? I think the new record for stupidity belongs to Dustin Bradshaw, the Arkansas police officer who zapped and arrested a 10-year old girl for throwing a fit.

Get this: the mother called police because her child was throwing a fit about showering before going to bed. When the officer arrived the girl was kicking and screaming on the floor and the mother suggested that she should be tasered. Instead of saying something like "I don't have time for this crap lady" and calling out child protective services, the officer picked up the girl and carried her into the living room. At that point the girl was reported to be "kicking violently" and one of those kicks struck the officer square in the balls. The officer then proceeded to taser the girl in the back, handcuff her and drag her off to the Western Arkansas Youth Shelter.

If that wasn't bad enough, Officer Bradshaw was suspended for a week without pay, not because he tased the girl, but because he failed to use the camera attachment to record the incident. The girl, on the other hand, will face disorderly conduct charges as a juvenile over the incident. Seriously, what is it going to take before law enforcement decides to rein in police abuse of tasers? Or can cops just go around tasing babies and puppies at will? [[AP](#) via [True Crime Report](#) via [Digg](#) Image via [Flickr](#)]

Perhaps It is Time To Make "The Switch" to an Electric Razor [Mods]

Because the original switch on this model was busted. Of course, the modification looks like it would get in the way of a close, comfortable shave. [[TIFI](#) via [Boing Boing](#)]

Worry Not, *Fight Club* Has Not Turned Into a Horrible Romantic Comedy [Blu-Ray]

If you picked up the new *Fight Club* Blu-ray edition, don't panic when you see the menu screen. Edward Norton HAS NOT been replaced with a Drew Barrymore character that makes out with her alter ego to vent sexual frustration.

Let me explain: the menu screen for *Never Been Kissed* appears momentarily when the disc is loaded, then reverts to the standard *Fight Club* menu. It's actually a brilliantly hilarious gag perpetrated by director David Fincher for the release. Not only are the two movies polar opposites of one another, but *Never Been Kissed* outgrossed *Fight Club* when both movies were released in 1999. To her credit, Drew has a good sense of humor about the whole thing. As a producer on the film, she gave the go-ahead for the prank. [[A.V. Club](#) via [Yahoo Movies](#)]

This Week's Best iPhone Apps [iPhone Apps]

In this week's charmingly tawdry app roundup: Voices, creepily modulated! Annoying trips to Kinkos, averted! Cats, artfully superimposed! Photos, easily shared! iPhone speakers, blown! Call of Duty, iPhone'd! Google Maps, humiliated! Certifiably good games, discounted! And more...

To view as a single page, click [here](#)

Voices: There are a few voice modulation apps on the shelves of the App Store, but none has captured Jesus' heart like Voices:

Retro tape recorder and microphone, cute icons, simple touch interface, and sharing via Twitter, Facebook, and email, so you can spook everyone with that infernal Reverse Voice effect. For \$1, it's impossible to resist.

Zosh: Signing things over email: a thing that is dumb. Zosh: a thing that makes that process much easier.

Zosh is a \$3 app that allows you to sign attached documents on your iPhone. Basically, you forward the emailed document to Zosh from the iPhone's mail app, then you open the Zosh app to sign it (plus you can add a date and stuff).

I especially like this one because it's not just a good way to sign documents on the iPhone, it's a good way to sign documents in general. I mean seriously, who wants to scan their signature, or jitter one out in MS paint? One catch: it only supports PDFs for now, so convert or die.

CatPaint: Negative space, as defined in the eminent McFairlyshire Encyclopedia of Artistic Principles (1904): *An area, perimeter or measurable expanse that lacks cats*. And one of the first thing they teach to you any good art school is to fill it up, with cats. Facts! Enter CatPaint:

Cats can be added to preexisting photos or cat-scarce shots from the iPhone's camera, and either saved to your camera roll or sent via email. Using it takes a while to get used to: Once you've selected a cat from the app's animal palette and set the slider for size, each tap on the photo instantly splashes a new cat at the

point of contact, which can't be edited, save for a temperamental shake-to-delete function.

It is the best thing, this app. A dollar.

Knocking: Live Pic Sharing: Uses server-side galleries to let you view photos in sync with other people, which you can send or flip through by "knocking." Ideal scenario: You're talking to your friend over the phone, you want to show him a gallery of pictures, you tell him to jump onto Knocking, and suddenly you're in control of his viewing experience. It pretty much works like that. Free.

Blower: Real Air: Can you guess what this one does? *Really*, no? Then you're probably a good candidate for spending money on it. For what it's worth—something?—Blower explores the iPhone's absurd novelty potential in a completely new way. From the reviews, a perfect description: "It feels like an ant blowing on you."

Call of Duty: The control scheme isn't perfect, and the price (\$10) is high, but it's tough to argue with a Nazi Zombie shoot 'em up with the Call of Duty name. Protip: switch to the tilt controls, because the overlaid joystick is not good. (They never are!)

Magellan: It's a late entrant into a crowded field, and without extensive testing it's hard to recommend plunking down for Magellan RoadMate's \$80 introductory price. That said, for Magellan devotees, which probably exist somewhere, RoadMate is great news.

FunMail: MMSes are a bit of a conundrum. Like, it's great that you can send pictures and sounds and all, but phones—even the iPhone—aren't exactly the best tools for creating media, so you usually end up sending some pretty basic stuff: pictures of puppies, brief voice recordings, hot nudez, *etc.* FunMail takes whatever you type and converts it into an MMS-able image, generally with some kind of punny adornment. Call someone an ass, and there's a picture of a donkey. Say you want to get coffee, and your recipient gets your message overlaid on a picture of a mug. It's earnestly cheesy and a lot of the images look like clipart, but this isn't always a bad thing. FunMail works over MMS, email or Facebook, and it's free.

Fit or Fugly: Rounding out our cr-appier selections for the week, an app that purports to measure your beauty according to some kind of mathematical equation. It's not a good way to actually tell if someone is attractive, nor is it a particularly well-executed app. It is, however, a good excuse to tell your friends that their faces are asymmetrical, which

evokes surprisingly intense responses. Try it! (The face thing, not necessarily the app.)

Google Earth 2.0: You can create and store your own customized maps in the desktop version of Google Maps, and save them to your account—this is great for keeping running routes, sharing driving directions and the like. You can view them in the new version of Google Earth for the iPhone now, which is useful, and also sort of hilarious, since you can't even access them in the official Google Maps app. Sound silly? *Welcome to the iPhone, y'all!*

Konami Apps: Whoooooole bunch good stuff discounted to \$1 for a few weeks, including: Field Prowlers, Frogger, Metal Gear Solid Touch, Silent Hill: The Escape, Silent Scope, Krazy Kart Racing, DanceDanceRevolution S, DanceDanceRevolution S+ -Power Pros Touch. Decent stuff to take a look at, with a few gems—especially MGS:T.

This list is in no way definitive. If you've spotted a great app that hit the store this week, give us a heads up or, better yet, your firsthand impressions in the comments. And for even more apps: see our previous weekly roundups here, and check out our Favorite iPhone Apps Directory. Have a great weekend, everybody!

Spectacular Meteor Lights Up the Utah Skies [Space]

If you were hanging out outside in Utah on Wednesday night, chances are good that you witnessed a pretty rare astronomic event: a friggin' huge meteor that lit up the entire sky.

Clark Planetarium Director Seth Jarvis said the stony meteorite was probably traveling 80,000 miles an hour when it hit our atmosphere. He said it happened 100 miles up in the air; so despite the brightness, Utah was never in any danger. "These collisions can do damage, but they are extremely rare; and literally once in a century do you observe something that's actually doing damage," he said. Witness Andy Bailey said, "Oh, it lit up the whole sky, like almost brighter than the day. It was bright." Don White was in Wyoming and told KSL Newsradio for a moment he suspected a nuclear strike. "With something that brilliant and that fast, it was like, whoa, did we just get hit or something? It would have been some bigger noise I guess if a nuclear device had gone off," he said.

[[KSL](#) via [Boing Boing](#)]

Gifts for Science Nerds Who Love To Experiment [Gift Guide]

Meteorites, microscopes, or mixing things to go boom. Your science nerd loves it all. Here are a couple of gift ideas for that space explorer, mad scientist, or engineer in your life.

BTW, if you hate the gallery format as much as the Grinch hated Christmas, click [here](#).

Lego: It's not really a secret that Lego building blocks are widely loved. They're perfect for any age, but a particularly fun gift for an engineering or physics nerd who lacks some brightly-colored fun. Whether you go for a Millennium Falcon, a Mindstorms NXT robot set, or a smaller kit, just be sure your beloved recipient has time for construction. If you've got a younger nerd-in-the-making, check out programs like Dean Kamen's FIRST, which encourages learning and development of science, math, and technology through hands-on activities (many of which are Lego-based). **Prices vary widely** [[Lego](#); [Image Source](#)]

BuckyBalls: 216 pellet-shaped rare earth magnets may scream "physics lesson," but in reality they're a jar full of fun. Your science nut can construct all sorts of 3D shapes for hours of mindless—or extremely brain-intensive—entertainment. And should he ever manage to get bored with the balls, he can just use them for one heck of a refrigerator magnet collection. **\$30** [[Link](#); [Busted Tees](#)]

DON'T BUY A Star: I don't know how you could imagine that getting someone a sheet of paper proclaiming that you've named a star after her is a clever idea. It's a scam to begin with and even the most thoughtless gift certificate would be a better idea (and won't leave you stuttering that you thought she "likes space and umm..stuff").

Photo by [jared](#)

I've never seen a stocking that didn't like being filled with a bit of awkward science-themed, cotton-based humor and somehow science nerds in particular have a soft spot for geeky shirts. You can head to [ThinkGeek](#), [Threadless](#), and [Snorg Tees](#) if you're looking for some of the shirts we've mentioned in the past—my personal favorite is still the ingredient shirt. **\$19** [[Snorg Tees](#)]

Chemistry Experiment Kit: This one's more geared to the younger lab rats, but no science nerd should miss out on a proper chemistry set. This

C3000 set is a nice splurge, and even guides you through building a DIY fire extinguisher for when experiments go wrong, but you can certainly go for a smaller kit or even put one together on your own. \$230 [Scientifics]

Casio EX-FC100: Science types want to document the entire world in pictures and video. Thanks to technological advancements, falling prices and *MythBusters*, highspeed slow-mo photography has carved out a nerdy niche in recent years. Casio's EX-FC100 may not be an EX-F1, but it's nice and small and has most of that slow mo covered, plus some nice nature-watcher tricks in still shooting, too. Despite the fact that still picture quality isn't as high as a similarly sized Canon, the FC100's set of unique talents make it a worthwhile toy for active observers of the physical world. \$226 [Review; Amazon]

Giant Plush Microbes: If you're in need of a stocking stuffer for a biology nerd, these plush microbes are a sure thing. They're cute (just look at syphilis!) and add a bit of silliness to many all-too-serious subjects. \$12 [Think Geek]

Processing Time on a Supercomputer: If you've got a mad, crazy, number-crunching, super science nerd on your hands—along with your own pretty thick wallet—then you can go through a company like Exa and get them some quiet time with a supercomputer. Your nerd will be able to run her insane calculations using high-performance computing and save quite a bit of time, so be sure to have some hot chocolate for two ready for a calm evening after. **Prices vary, but they're gonna clean out your pockets** [Exa]

Photo by Argonne National Laboratory

Don't forget to recommend your own favorite gift ideas for science nerds in comments—include pic and pricing if possible.

All Giz Wants is our annual round-up of favorite gift ideas, including amazing attainable objects and a few far-out fantasies. We'll be popping guides catered to different interests several times per day for the next week, so keep checking back.

Windows 8 Expected in 2012 According to Roadmap [Windows 8]

Apparently we won't have to deal with upgrading our Microsoft-driven computers for another three years. According to a tentative roadmap, the next version of the OS, Windows 8, won't be arriving until 2012.

This release date would be consistent with the schedule Microsoft has been maintaining, but I suggest they don't rush it. I still can't let go of some Windows XP installs, much less jump to Windows 8 so quickly. [MSFT Kitchen via Electronista]

PSA: Applebee's Gift Card Are Not Redeemable on iTunes [Advertising]

To whom it may concern: Applebee's gift cards, while appropriately monolithic, are not redeemable at Apple Stores or on iTunes. [*Thanks Nicholas!*]

Adidas Imperial Stormtrooper Sneakers [Star Wars]

Adidas Imperial Stormtrooper sneakers. You know, so you can run faster when random people start chasing you down the street. To beat the crap out of you. Or ask where did you buy them. It can go either way.

There are also Darth Vader shoes and hoodies, all part of next year's Adidas Star Wars Collection. Check out the rest of the images at [[Kicks on Fire](#)—Thanks Ponies]

HP Black Friday Flyer Feels Lacking on Deals [Black Friday]

The folks over at Logic Buy got their hands on the HP Home Store Thanksgiving Event flyer. And while some of the deals are decent, nothing really seems to stand out, aside from the mouthful of a sales event name.

Desktops:

HP Pavilion p6280t Quad-Core \$569.99 (\$405 off)

HP Pavilion Elite e9250t Core i5 \$799.99 (\$405 off)

HP Slimline s5210 \$349.99 (\$155 off)

Laptops

HP G71 17.3" \$499.99 (\$329 off)

HP dm3z \$529.99 (\$170 off)

HP dv6t Quad \$999.99 (\$649 off)

Printers

LaserJet P1006 \$90 (50% off)

Photosmart B8550 \$150 (50% off)

LaserJet CP1518ni \$200 (50% off)

Accessories

HP MediaSmart Server LX195 \$250 (\$150 off)

HP Ink Sale

Logitech G9 Gaming Mouse \$49.99 (50% off)

[Logic Buy]

The Future of Snow Sports Tech [Winter Gear]

Bright ideas and products in skiing and snowboarding, from a Norwegian hotel built into a mountainside to an inflatable pack that can save you from an avalanche

Skiing and snowboarding have always been cutting-edge sports, thanks to renegade personalities and high-tech gear. But this ski season, designers are stepping it up to a whole new level. Here, take a look at some of the finest in snowsports tech-and enter to win some gear of your own.

Want to score your own high-tech snowsports equipment? It's easy: Visit our sister site Skiingmag.com (we share owners, and a love of playing in the snow with the latest gadgets). Every day for the next week, they're giving away free gear, lift tickets and resort packages. All you have to do is answer a trivia question and enter to win.

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Food for the mind