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What's New

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StepCharger pumps up battery power

Tampa, Fla.-based AladdinPower (www.aladdinpower.com) has unveiled a foot-pedal device that lets users refuel the batteries in their portable PCs when they aren't near an electrical power source.

The StepCharger--which measures 13.8x5.8x3.9 cm (5.46x2.3x1.56 in.) and weighs 300 g (10.51 oz.)--can generate up to 6 Watts (at DC18V), according to AladdinPower. A user steps on the

device and pumps up and down with their heel to charge the battery in their portable PC.

AladdinPower says the device can also be used to charge satellite phones, cellular phones, CBs, walkie talkies, digital cameras, video cameras, radios, or other devices with a rechargeable battery.

The StepCharger has a list price of US\$169.95 and can be purchased directly from AladdinPower. At press time, the company did not have a release date for the device.

AladdinPower does have another recharger that is already on the market. It is a lighter, handheld device that, when pumped repeatedly, recharges batteries in smaller electronic devices, such as cellular phones, CB radios, rescue lights, rechargeable CD players, radios, and tape players. The handheld recharger has a list price of US\$69.95.

--TCP Staff

A napping module for sleepy Visor users

Feeling sleepy? Jetlog's 24x7 PowerNapping Springboard module (<http://www.jetlog24x7.com>) allows Handspring Visor users to properly time their power naps, according to Jetlog.

The module has a touch-sensor designed to monitor the user's transitions into critical sleep stages. When the person touching the sensor starts to dive into deep sleep or dreaming, the sensor detects a drop in muscle tension and initiates a wake-up call. The module provides options for discrete wake-up calls via included headsets and personal wake-up call recordings over the Visor microphone.

The included PowerNap software controls the module and displays total nap times as well as vital information

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such as optional timer and alarm settings on the main screen.

Jetlog says the device follows proven napping strategies created by NASA for astronauts and pilots in flight, timing power naps to prevent deep sleep and dreaming, avoiding negative post nap effects such as grogginess, disorientation, headaches, and subsequent sleep loss that could otherwise compromise regular sleep.

The module is available for US\$99.95 from www.palmgear.com.

--TCP Staff



Microsoft unveils wireless desktop

Microsoft Corp. (www.microsoft.com) has introduced a wireless keyboard-mouse combination to its line of desktop peripherals.

The five-button Wireless Wheel Mouse and Wireless Keyboard interact with a receiver via two-channel radio frequency technology. They will operate up to 1.8 m (6 ft.) from the receiver, according to Microsoft. An unbroken line of sight to the receiver is not required. The devices require Windows 98, Me, or Windows XP and a PS/2 port.

Like other Microsoft peripherals, these come with with IntelliType Pro keyboard and IntelliPoint mouse software, which offer fast smooth scrolling (in the case of the mouse) and allow users to reassign mouse and keyboard buttons to frequently used functions.

The full desktop is available for \$99.95. The wireless mouse can be purchased separately for \$54.95.

--TCP Staff



Full-screen VCD playback from Mireth

Vancouver, B.C.-based Mireth Technology (www.mireth.com) has released version 3.2 of MacVCD, its full-screen video CD player for computers running MacOS.

VCD movies are frequently stored in multiple files (called tracks) and often on more than one disc (in the case of CDs). MacVCD automatically recognizes this format, finds, loads and plays the movie, automatically chaining tracks together and auto-ejecting a disc when it's done.

According to Mireth, MacVCD offers full-screen display, even on large monitors. Other features include track and chapter selection support; support for both multi-language and karaoke soundtracks; and movie file saving. The new version adds hands-free speech-activated control; playback on a second display (like a TV); and advanced movie controls including slow motion.

Minimum system requirements for MacVCD are Mac OS 9 and QuickTime 4.0. MacVCD X 3.2 is available for Apple hardware running OS X.

MacVCD for Mac OS 9 can be downloaded from Mireth's Web site. The download includes a demo version that can be run without a registration key, which is required to unlock the full version. The key is US\$15.

--TCP Staff

Cloak encrypts handheld, PC data

Chapura Inc. (www.chapura.com) has unveiled Cloak, software that encrypts information stored on allows Palm OS-based handhelds and Windows PCs. The software resides on both the handheld and the PC desktop and synchronizes data between the two. It incorporates 128-bit encryption, and requires that the user name and password for the application matches on both devices, for additional security.

Cloak is available for download from the Chapura Web site, for US\$19.95.

--TCP Staff

Norton readies OS X-compatible tools

Symantec Corp. (www.symantec.ca) has upgraded its line of Norton security and utility software to support Mac OS X.

Norton Internet Security for Macintosh 2.0 includes Norton Privacy Control, a feature that allows users to track sensitive information, such as credit card numbers, and control what information leaves their machine over the Internet. It also offers an ad blocking, which the company says will improve online speed.

Other components include Personal Firewall, which has a new stealth mode to hide Mac users from online hackers; AntiVirus for Macintosh 8.0; Who's There? Firewall Advisor by Open Door, which provides details on attempted intrusions; and iClean by Aladdin Systems, which clears cookies, cache, and history files.

Norton SystemWorks for Macintosh 2.0 includes native Mac OS X disk repair and data recovery, according to Symantec. The new version will also feature Norton Scheduler, for automating virus scans and software updates.

The new version of SystemWorks includes Norton AntiVirus for Macintosh 8.0; Norton Utilities for Macintosh 7.0, which recovers lost files and erased data; Retrospect Express Backup 5.0 by Dantz; Spring Cleaning 4.0 by Aladdin Systems, which uninstalls applications and associated files, as well as hard-to-find Internet cookies, cache, and history files; and DiskWarrior Recovery Edition by Alsoft, which scavenges hard drives to recover files and folders.

Norton Internet Security for Macintosh 2.0 and Norton SystemWorks for Macintosh 2.0 have estimated retail prices of \$159.95 and \$199.95, respectively. Current users of Symantec's Mac products and some competitive products can upgrade for \$109.95 and \$129.95, respectively (after mail-in rebate).

The firewall, antivirus, and utility products can also be purchased separately.

--TCP Staff



ViewSonic targets home theatres

ViewSonic Corp. (www.viewsonic.ca) has unveiled two projectors designed to meet the requirements of business, but also to appeal to home users.

The company is billing the PJ500 and PJ550 as affordable alternatives to stationary, bulky and expensive big-screen TVs. The units each weigh 2.25 kg (5 lb.) each, and can be used with video and TV signals (including HDTV), as well as with PCs and laptops. The higher-priced PJ550 offers higher XGA resolution.

According to Viewsonic, both projectors operate at 33 decibels and offer one-

touch setup. Other features include 1,200 lumen brightness, a short focal length for large clear images at a short distance, digital keystone correction, and zoom functions, as well as enhanced video inputs for component and s-video, and an eco-mode setting for energy and lamp life conservation.

The PJ500 and PJ550 carry estimated street prices of \$3,189 and \$4,149, respectively.

--TCP Staff



Typing tutor revamped

Individual Software Inc. (www.individualsoftware.com) has introduced a new version of Typing Instructor Deluxe. Version 12.0 contains an updated database that tracks and reports on user progress, and enhanced 3D graphical hands to guide users in correct finger placement.

Instruction is organized into lessons, tests, and practice material along a travel theme, which can be supplemented with material from the Typing Instructor Web site. Users can follow pre-set lesson plans or design their own plans targeting specific problems.

Progress reports show improvement and identify weak areas by key finger, hand, and key row, and with bar, line, and stack graphs.

Typing Instructor Deluxe has a suggested retail price of US\$29.95 (single user licence fee), and supports Windows XP, Me, 2000, and 98. A business version is available directly from Individual Software.

--TCP Staff

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