



Islander December 2010 Technology Update

Christmas Gadgets

Christmas is coming and not only the goose is getting fat. The season of shows and entertaining is only half way through. The Monaco Show, providing medical assistance at the Pinmar and visiting the Fort Lauderdale Show have put their toll on my waist line. We are now moving onto METS, the Global Superyacht Forum and finally the Antigua Charter Show. However, you can't hang about when thinking of the best gadgets to buy your nearest and dearest this Christmas!

So in an attempt to help you shorten the decision making process here are a few ideas that will not cost an arm and a leg.

Channel Green TV

My first recommendation this Christmas would be a Channel Green TV box with a GBP15 monthly subscription. This provides UK TV via the Internet directly on a TV wherever you have a decent broadband internet connection.

How does it work?

The Channel Green TV (CGTV) concept is very simple. You buy a small lightweight set top box and you pay a small monthly fee. The set top box plugs into your network router or ADSL line switch to connect to the internet to receive the TV signal and into your TV or monitor to display the TV



programmes. As long as your internet link is fast enough to support the service, you will be watching UK TV within minutes of opening the box. We offer packages including the CGTV set top box plus 3G, VSAT or Wi-Fi to make sure you have all you need to watch IPTV on your yacht, in your villa or in your hotel.

There are basically three types of content delivered – Live TV, recorded programming and 'video on demand'. With Channel Green, this means that you can get news, sports, movies, music, documentaries, and special interest programmes from the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel Five and a number of regional and specialist programme providers. You can record programmes to watch again later. Additional channels are being added all the time. If a programme or channel is billable, it will be deducted from your account just like 'pay per view' on other services.

Channel Green owns all the licensing so there are no issues with legality and home users can dispense with the satellite dish that makes the garden look like Cape Canaveral. This is an ideal solution for anyone living outside the footprint of the digital UK TV satellite services or even for those within the footprint, as we are in Mallorca, who cannot put up a large satellite dish but who also have a good internet connection or maybe have multiple residences and want to take the set top box with them from one to another. This service is also cheaper than the conventional UK sat TV services; however the programming is not as extensive.

It would difficult to find anything easier to install. The kit comes with the following:

1. Channel Green Set Top Box
2. Remote control with batteries
3. Ethernet cable to connect to your router
4. Scart/HDMI cable to connect to your TV
5. Power cable

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Once you have plugged all the above together, you press the 'on' button and it works. We tried it in our workshop and it really was as simple as that. Just contact us if you want one.

I've always had a passion for anything radio controlled and Christmas is always a good time for RC toys. As technology gets cheaper it's amazing what you can get to have fun with.

Radio Controlled Duck

This is great. Have hours of fun with this new upgraded version of the classic yellow rubber duck – its radio controlled, so bath time can be a so much fun!

This is an aquatic bird that will banish bath time blues once and for all - a bird that your children - or perhaps even your grown-up chums - will be falling over themselves to play with again and again. It's easy to see why. RC duck has the standard duck appeal: innocence and, well, a duck's face. But he also has extreme mobility, thanks to two discreet propellers at his rear - which enable him to be steered independently left and right - or more correctly port and starboard for our esteemed readers.

Sadly, not as much fun in the shower!

Remote Controlled Tarantula

This tarantula is based on the Goliath bird-eating tarantula, Theraphosa Blondi - the world's heaviest spider. Although harmless to humans, it is a fearsome predator, using its venom to paralyse its prey. It then regurgitates fluid from its stomach to externally digest its victim, before sucking up its juices. The tarantula is controlled with an infra-red remote control and can be moved in any direction.

The best bit though is that it also has a unique "prepare-to-scare" mode. When primed, the tarantula remains still for 30 seconds, before moving at full speed and in random directions for 20 seconds. This is the most realistic remote-controlled tarantula ever produced.

Household Spider Tarantula Catcher

Ideal for removing all household spiders tarantulas and insects cleanly, quickly and without harming them, all whilst keeping you at a safe distance from the spider tarantula.

It's around 65cm in length, and activated by a trigger handle, the Spider Tarantula Catcher has two sets of bristles at its furthest end. These bristles gently and effectively grab, if you can catch it, and hold the creature, keeping it a safe distance from you, whilst you transport it safely outside. No need to squash the insects. All you have to do is then remove the batteries from the Tarantula Radio Controller.

Everyone who professes to be terribly busy needs one of the following gadgets for a literal demonstration of how time flies.

Flying Alarm Clock

Brilliant! I love things that are so bizarre. This is a clock that flies away so you have to get up to retrieve it. If you have trouble getting up in the mornings this alarm clock is sure to fix that! Just set the alarm to the required time, and when the alarm sounds the unit is launched up into the air and flies around the room. The tough part is that you have to physically get up and return it to its base before it stops. By then you're bound to be awake!

My next recommendation, the Frostfire Moon Candles, caught my eye because, again, it is such a bizarre idea. Flameless candles controlled by a remote control!

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Frostfire Moon Candles

Frostfire Moon Candles are the world's first flameless candles combining 4 and 8 hour timers as well as a remote control. Enjoy real wax vanilla scented candles without the messy wax and dangerous flames as well as convenience of the remote control.

Three ivory coloured flameless pillar candles with remote control and timer
Includes one 10cm, 12cm and 15cm tall candles x 7cm diameter
The remote control has 6m range. The timer for 4 or 8 hours, candles automatically turn off after elapsed time. Amazingly we are also told in the sales blurb that "flameless candles are safe around home furnishings, children and pets". Well that's a surprise.

Wowee listen to my "radome speakers"!

Finally the Wowee. This is a great compact, simple, high tech and trendy piece of kit that is a perfect Christmas present.

It's a small, rechargeable, portable device that you plug into your iPod, laptop or PC and place on a nearby flat surface. It then turns that resonant flat surface into a speaker, with a phenomenal bass frequency of 40Hz to 20kHz.

It uses Gel Audio patented technology to transfer the bass to the surface. Since I reported on this last we have discovered it works particularly well on sat TV, Fleet Broad Band or VSAT radomes. Radomes are those big domes you see on top of large yachts. It creates a great acoustic effect due the sound box created by the enclosed air working along the same principle as an acoustic guitar. Most yachts have a couple of domes so easy to do stereo, but some sailing yachts have a number of domes paired together on each mast and could, with very little effort, set up a 5.1 surround sound system in the rig! How do you think the boss would like that as surprise Christmas present!

Wowees are available from reputable stores such as Camper & Nicholson in Club de Mar and e3 in Portals or stop an e3 car to order one or even six.

I hope my selection has inspired you to have some fun. Enjoy your Christmas and New Year celebrations. A great thank you to all our clients for your support. Let's hope 2011 will be a better year from all points of view.

Roger Horner of E3 Systems

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