

The Great Gadgets and Gizmos Christmas Special

As my loyal reader will know, in previous years, I've had great fun reviewing some very entertaining gadgets for the Christmas issue, and this year is no different! It makes a change from the serious and admittedly very dull technology that I review throughout the rest of the year. My mission, on your behalf, is to search out stuff that is just plain daft, entertaining, funny and, occasionally, quite useful. In several cases, the most amusing aspect is the seriousness with which the supplier treats his product. I like to think that their descriptions are tongue in cheek, but I'm afraid that's not always the case.

How about this first item? It has nothing to do with technology, but it certainly cheered me up!

Pawz Rubber Dog Boots



Benefits of the Pawz Rubber Dog Boots:

- These Rubber Dog Boots go on easily without straps or zippers
 - Use them as winter dog boots to protect paws from road salt, ice and cold. In summer they protect paws from hot pavements or lawn chemicals
- Pawz Rubber Dog Boots protect without padding, so dogs can feel the ground they walk on

This is a serious pooch product and they have stock! Can you believe it? Maybe the photo has been photo-shopped, as these would last a maximum of 30 seconds on my dog, and in our garden, it's the lawn chemical containers which need to be protected from the dog, rather than the other way round! Also, it is me, or does this dog look like it's wearing four cacti on its paws?

Wearable Technology

However, back to technology. This Christmas, how about getting your loved ones some new wearable technology, and I'm not talking about watches, hearing aids or iPod headphones. No, these are the latest in EL clothes, where EL stands for "electroluminescence".

T-Clock T-Shirt

Firstly, how about the T-Clock? As you can probably imagine, it's a t-shirt with a large clock displayed on the chest. But here's your dilemma. Is it a t-shirt that thinks it's a clock? Or a clock that thinks it's a t-shirt? And if you look in the mirror, will time go backwards? It



even ticks like a clock, and it beats the pants off that old SuperYacht Cup t-shirt you keep wearing. Just be sure to disconnect the battery before washing, swimming or going out in the rain.

The T-Clock is a minor technological miracle, in the form of a fashionable black t-shirt. It looks like the common or garden variety beloved of rock musicians and teenage emo girls, until the timekeeping modification is switched on, and your chest lights up to display the current time!

In the future, all t-shirts will be made this way, for wearable technology is very much the shape of things to come.

Wi-Fi Detecting t-shirt

The next one I found is the brilliant and practical Wi-Fi Detecting t-shirt. When the Wi-Fi Detecting option is enabled, your chest shows a digital display panel bearing the current strength of Wi-Fi in your immediate vicinity. How about that? Every yacht crewmember should wear one to help the guests locate the hottest spots onboard. The technology at the heart of the Wi-Fi Detecting T-Shirt is a fully functional electroluminescence panel that practically lights up like Piccadilly Circus.

Graphic Equaliser t-shirt

The next EL t-shirt is a novel way to demonstrate what a hip groovy dude you really are. Turn yourself into a living, breathing graphic equaliser and make a dynamic response to every sound around you. The T-Qualizer is a minor technological miracle, in the form of, again, a simple, fashionably black t-shirt, until the equaliser feature is enabled.

A sonic activation device connected to an electroluminescence panel is what really does the business. Plug in the battery from its discreet pocket, then rock on to the latest chart-topping sounds, or the hushed tweet of birdsong in the garden. With a bold set of dynamic yellow and red colour bars that change as your environment changes, it's bound to make a splash in the nearest club. Kids, be afraid, be very afraid, of Dad getting up to dance, as he becomes a one-man illumination visible from space to the sounds of Abba's "Dancing Queen"... Again you must disconnect the battery before washing or, for old men, sweating too much!

Animal Specials

Sorry, back to animals again. Animal gadgets are clearly not designed for pets at all, rather for their indulgent owners, and there are some great gifts out there for your four-legged mate this festive season. How about an Inflatable Dog Wash, an Indoor Dog Restroom, a Pet Booster Seat for the back of the car so that Rover can see out of the window, Leg Extensions (surely not?) for the shorter dog in your life, or a Remote Pet Feeder N Camera Kit. No



idea what that is! However, let every dog have his day and the perfect present for that day is.....

Headlights for Dogs

This new dog collar with attached LED flashlight just might be the most important pet product since the leash! It illuminates 70 metres forward and 25 metres to each side, so your dog is more visible to traffic at night, and your path is lighted so you can see any potential hazard to you or your dog. Besides the obvious safety benefits for owner and dog, it also makes it easier to clean up after your dog in the dark, scares off wild animals like skunks and coyotes (not a regular hazard in Mallorca), helps older dogs see better in the dark, and makes your dog easier to find when he's off the leash!

The light has 3 ultra-bright white LEDs, is practically weightless, and the adjustable elastic band fits 8" to 26" neck size (so pretty much every pooch from Chihuahua to Great Dane). It even incorporates a full headlight dipping action activated by a single bark to avoid blinding oncoming dogs! It is specially designed to keep the light out of your dog's eyes, and a fur guard keeps your dog's fur out of the light, thank goodness. This gadget is endorsed by the American Canine Association and made in the USA. Well, where else??

And now for the feline fans. How about this for your favourite kitty? Specially for you, I have discovered a Casita and Bungalow Cat Tree, a Feline Recreation Room, a Kitty-Go-Krazy Cat Toy and a Kitty-Flies-Out-of- Window Toy for grown men.

Fling-ama-string

Any ideas? What can it be? This is a cat toy that someone has actually spent time designing, developing, producing and bringing to market! Evidently, it is outrageous fun for both cat and owner. If you don't believe me, check it out for yourself on youtube. An elastic loop runs through the battery-operated motor, pulling a silky string randomly about. Evidently kitty will go completely bonkers. Winner of Best in Show at the Global Pet Expo, and it attaches usefully to any standard doorknob. Made in the USA, of course.

Cat Russian Roulette Laser Beam Toy

Keeps your cat entertained for hours on end, so you can get on with the rest of your life. Just lift up the lid, and the beam inside will bounce its light off the lid's mirror onto a nearby wall in quick circles, then pause for a second or two, then start right up again and pause somewhere else. This should keep Kitty busy! The sting in the tail is that if Kitty slows up, she could be blinded or cut in two. Three AA batteries included. Where is it made? No, not in the USA, but in our very own workshop in Portals.



Indoor "Holiday" décor

I've intentionally used the word "holiday" in the title as I have copied it directly from the catalogue I have been reading. Needless to say, this is also from the USA, where the "C" word seems to be politically incorrect these days.

Grow your own Christmas Tree

If you've got a few years' spare time on your hands, how about a wonderful stocking stuffer for the baby that he or she can grow up with. It's a grow-your-own Christmas Tree!

Everything's included to grow your own Christmas tree: peat growing medium, Douglas fir seed (just the one), ceramic pot -- even a jingle bell ornament. With the Christmas Tree Grow Kit, your baby can enjoy watching the tree get bigger for each Christmas. Let the little fella grow up with his own tree or you can transplant it to your landscape. Lid doubles as plant saucer. How useful is that? And it's green...

Needle Nabber

When moving the tree you have so lovingly moved between your house and your landscape year after year since you were a baby, what you need now is the handy Needle Nabber.

Before you drag your natural tree out the door, wrap it in this Needle Nabber "tarp" first, to avoid leaving a trail of needles and sap, and scratches on walls and hardwood floors. Tree-shaped wrap has sewn-in nylon ties, plus drawcords at the ends to keep needles contained. Tear-resistant, and reusable, unlike an old plastic garbage bag! For trees up to 8-1/2' tall. Must have one of those!

And finally more dogs, well Huskies actually

Too many reindeer on your street? I understand they're becoming a real pest in Calvia. Be the first on your block with handsome Huskies pulling a gift-laden Sleigh.

This unique charming yard display dazzles at night, thanks to 300 clear mini-lights, and looks colorful even during the day, thanks to the vibrant, soft tinsel fabric covering. Stakes, extra bulbs and fuses included. Assembly required. Express delivery by dog sled only across the frozen north. I know some one whose got on in Binnasalem!

I hope you enjoyed my light-hearted selection of Christmas gadgets and gizmos. Have a great Christmas HOLIDAY. It's been a tough year, so relax, enjoy and recharge for 2010.

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