

Gadget → Guide

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Those who lack lust for tech toys shall never know the true joy of gadget gifts: the ability to survive holiday gatherings without a whit of small talk. Instead, ward off technophobic relatives with pulsating LEDs, cheerful beeps and vigorously wielded styluses.

Though it's too late to score the much-desired PlayStation 3, there's plenty more to baffle and amaze, from the Nintendo Wii's motion-aware controller to watches that interface with cell phones. And not all gadgets plug in, such as purely analog updates of Sudoku and the basketball.

Finally, an important note to givers of gadgets: Open the box. Make sure it works. Charge it up, if needed. Because nothing's more coal-in-the-stockings sad than waiting six hours to play with a new toy — or spending Christmas morning with tech support.

KENNETH TERRELL AND VICKY HALETT (EXPRESS)



▶ **EQUIPPED WITH A LEXA LENS** (translation: really good) and a 10x optical (translation: really big) zoom, the five-megapixel Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ15 takes great pics even far from the action — handy when you're stuck in the nosebleed seats at FedEx Field. (\$300, Best Buy)



▶ **TEENY IMAGES ON A VIDEO IPOD** will strain your eyes — unless you slip on View-Video Eyewear. Through these magic glasses (which will slip over prescription specs), you can gaze at an episode of "The Office" as though it's running on a 43-inch flat-screen. It also works with personal gaming systems for better views of your butt-kicking skills. (\$300, Sharper Image)



▶ **WORSHIP THE ENIGMA BEFORE YOU.** It is Sudoku. It is a cube. When it's finished, you'll have solved 33 puzzles in all, with rows wrapping around the cube horizontally and vertically. Beginners can enjoy solving each cube face independently, though. Prepare for Metro rubbernecking. (\$10, sudokucube.net)

Road Warriors

Gizmos for the weary traveler — or commuter

▶ **SURE, THE RADIO CAN** pinpoint Beltway back-ups. But the talking Magellan RoadMate 2000T can direct you around bad traffic on the spot. Or, detach it from the dash and use it as a GPS guide on hikes — it's waterproof! (\$500, magellangps.com)



▶ **BLACKBERRIES ARE TOO STUFFY.** Sidkicks are too hip. For those Goldilocks who aren't locked into a smartphone contract, there's the just-right Treo 680, which repackages the much-admired PDA into a slimmer, more colorful casing. Its music and video capabilities make it even more fun. (around \$200 with contract, palm.com)

