



# HOLIDAY COUNTDOWN

## WHAT TO BUY

# FOR THE FAMILY

# TECHNOPHILE



**T**he number of gifts available to the techno-junkie on your list overflows with new products, updates, and gadgetry galore.

— KIRK BAIRD  
Blade Staff Writer

◀ **Laptop — Aspire S7 Series Ultrabook.** The thin, light, and oh-so-pretty MacBook Air has been turning heads for a nearly five years, and now Aspire gets into the act with a range of slim 13-inch laptops that are less than a half-inch thick and weigh less than 3 pounds. The **\$1,399.99** model features a 256GB speedy solid-state drive, and the just-released **\$654.99** entry has a standard 500GB hard drive. Both include 4GB of memory, Bluetooth, and HDMI output. **Best Buy.**



▶ **Universal Remote — Logitech Harmony 650.** Having a dream home theater system can be a nightmare for many family members, who stare blankly at a set of remote controls. Make it easier on them — and you — with the **Logitech Harmony 650.** It supports more than 5,000 brands and 225,000-plus devices and it's considerably less than many universal remotes at only **\$79.99.** And what good is a great home theater if no one can use it? **Best Buy.**



Kindle Fire

Surface

iPad

iPad mini

Nexus 7

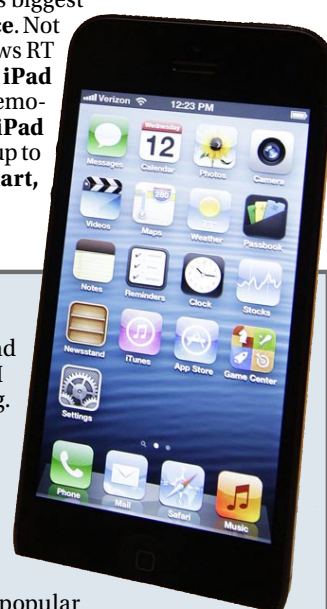
▲ **Tablets —** Tis the season for the tablet, as Google, Amazon, and Microsoft make significant pushes to unseat Apple as the king of portable media that are sandwiched between a phone and a laptop. Amazon has several budget-conscious tablets that are popular, ranging from **\$159** (Kindle Fire with 8GB of memory) to **\$549** (Kindle Fire HD 8.9-inch 4G LTE wireless, with 64GB of memory). Google recently unveiled its own tablet, the **Nexus 7**, which ranges from **\$199** for 16GB memory to **\$299** for 32GB memory. And Microsoft made its biggest product launch since the Xbox with its line of tablets, **Surface.** Not all are available yet, but check out the **Surface** with Windows RT for **\$599.** Apple recently released a new line of tablets: the **iPad mini** — starting at **\$329** for the base model with 16GB of memory to **\$529** for 64GB of memory — and refreshed its popular **iPad** line with better specs, starting at **\$499** for 16GB of memory up to **\$699** for 64GB of memory. **Best Buy, Apple, Target, Walmart, Radio Shack, and Verizon stores.**

▼ **Game System —** Let the console wars begin anew, as Nintendo launches the **Wii U**, the first video game console in the cycle of next-generation systems. With the **Wii U**, Nintendo goes full high definition, 1080p, offers a new slate of titles, and entices consumers with the system's most significant feature: the **Wii U GamePad** controller, which features a built-in touchscreen. The basic set features 8GB of memory and is **\$299**, and **\$349** for the deluxe set, which features 32GB of memory. The **Wii U** looks to be a hot holiday item, so it might require several stops at **Best Buy, Toys R Us, Target, Walmart, and GameStop.**



▲ **Blu-ray — The Panasonic DMP-BDT220.** If you're shelling out for the Panasonic VT50, you can save a few bucks on a 3D Blu-ray player with this do-it-all model also from Panasonic. It features built-in Wi-Fi and can stream Netflix, Hulu Plus, Pandora, and CinemaNow, and also provides access to Facebook, Twitter, Skype, and Picassa. Oh, and it does a remarkable job of playing movies as well. **\$100 to \$110 at Best Buy.**

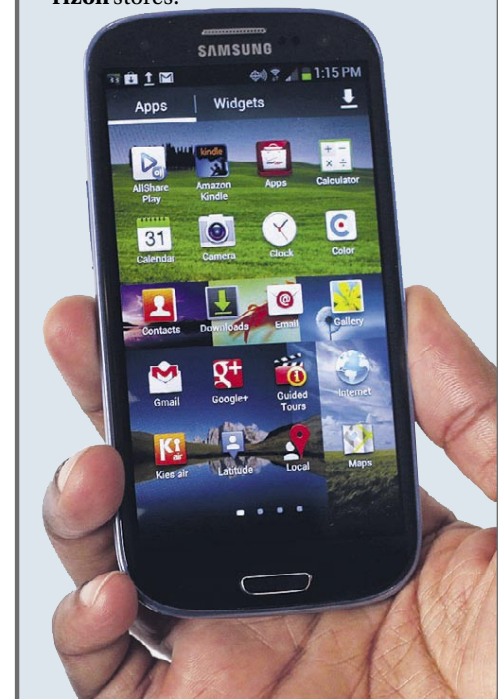
**Phones — iPhone 5 and Galaxy S III** by Samsung. There are many options when it comes to cell phones, and two of the more popular choices are the **iPhone 5**, ranging from **\$199** for 16GB to **\$399** for 64GB, and the **Galaxy S III**, in two models: **\$199.99** for the 16GB and **\$249.99** for the 32 GB phone. Both have sharp screens, fast LTE downloads, and big (iPhone's 4-inch) and bigger (Galaxy S's 4.8-inch) screens. **Best Buy, Target, AT&T, and Verizon stores.**



▲ **Streaming Video Boxes —** There are many ways to stream media such as **Netflix** and **Hulu Plus** on your TV, but the **Roku LT** and **Apple TV** are the most popular. **Roku LT** sells for **\$49.99**, and the **Apple TV** for **\$99.99.** While Roku offers more streaming options than Apple, including Amazon Instant and Pandora, Apple TV streams in full 1080p and offers access to the Apple ecosystem, including iTunes, iCloud, and AirPlay. **Best Buy, Target.**



▲ **TV — Panasonic TC-PVT50.** The 55-inch plasma is pricey at **\$2,499.99**, but stellar reviews suggest this flat screen is the best overall TV released this year, with the color accuracy and inky blacks — courtesy of the infinite black ultrapanel — videophiles crave. It's also a THX 3D-certified display, with a Viera connect and Wi-Fi built in with Web browser. Available at **Sears or Amazon.com.** For a more affordable plasma, check out **LG's 50-inch 720p, model 50 PA 4500**, for **\$499** at **Appliance Center** in Maumee.



Prices subject to change



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