



HOLIDAY COUNTDOWN

GADGETRY GIFTS

What to buy, what to buy? With so many new and improved products, and devices filling store shelves, gifts for techno-junkies often make for the most difficult holiday purchases. So here's a list of gift ideas in a wide range of prices to make holiday shopping for gadget hounds young and old a bit easier.

— Kirk Baird
BLADE STAFF WRITER



▲ **Plasma TV:** Panasonic recently announced it was getting out of the plasma TV business. But the electronics giant is not going quietly, with some calling its recently released TC-P55VT60 the best overall TV since Pioneer's legendary Kuro Elite. This 55-inch 1080p 600Hz 3D Smart Plasma HDTV is also surprisingly affordable. **Best Buy, \$1,799**



▲ **The Fitbit Flex wrist band** syncs wirelessly with Android and iOS devices and counts calories burned and steps taken throughout the day. Lightweight, comfortable, and stylish, the Fitbit Flex also monitors sleeping patterns and has a silent alarm. **Walmart, \$99**



▲ **I-MEGO Throne Headphones:** I-MEGO Throne Headphones offer an immersing, impressive music experience, comfortable memory foam ear pads, and stylish leather headbands in a classic radio-era design. I-MEGO Thrones plug into any tablet or phone, and feature a one-button control for play, pause, and skip control, as well as an integrated microphone for hands-free conversation. **Best Buy, from \$105**



▲ **Bose Solo TV Sound System:** The Bose Solo TV Sound System is perfect for those wanting a multi-speaker sound from one powerful and easy-to-connect source. Just plug the sound system into the TV and wall. It also doubles as a stand for most TVs up to 42 inches. **Appliance Center in Maumee, \$399**



◀ **Chromecast** is Google's answer to Roku and Apple TV. This thumb-sized device via Wi-Fi streams Netflix, YouTube, Google Play Movies, and TV, and other content from a computer, or Android and iOS tablet or smart phone to a television. **Best Buy, \$35**



▲ **LeapFrog LeapPad2 Explorer:** The LeapFrog LeapPad2 Explorer is an easy-to-use and rugged starting point for children ages 4 through 9. (Think of it as a pretablet.) It comes with 4GB of memory, a camera for photos and videos, and offers a considerable library of available apps. **Walmart and Target, \$79**

▶ **Amazon Kindle Fire HDX 7-inch tablet (Wi-Fi):** Amazon's affordable tablets are popular with adults, but the Kindle Fire HDX 7-inch tablet is perfectly sized for children. And because kids need a break from homework and learning apps, there's access to Amazon's extensive library of media content: books, music, movies, and TV. **Amazon.com, \$229**



▲ **Ultra HD,** which offers four times the resolution of 1080p HDTVs, is the future. For now, however, many experts suggest holding off on the nascent technology, citing lack of 4K content and the inability for most consumers to discern a difference in picture quality from their couch. But for the early adopters, check out Samsung's 65-inch Class 4K Ultra 120Hz 3D Smart HDTV (UN65F9000). **Appliance Center in Maumee and Sears, \$4,499**



▲ **Nest Learning Thermostat:** The Nest Learning Thermostat is among a new wave of intelligent devices created with green in mind: cash savings and lower energy consumption. The Nest stores temperature preferences as well built-in Wi-Fi connectivity for adjustments via a computer, tablet, or phone. There's also an Auto-Away feature for an energy-efficient setting when no one is home. **Home Depot and Lowe's, \$249**



▲ **iPad mini Retina:** Apple released its iPad mini last year to great acclaim. The only thing missing from the iPad's smaller brother was the super-sharp display found in its small-tablet rivals. The new Retina addresses that problem, with a resolution of 2048 x 1536 in its 7.9-inch screen. **Mac Café, Best Buy, and Sam's Club, \$394 and up, depending on features**

* Prices and availability subject to change