Holiday Wish List

GREAT GIZMOS FOR YOUR LAW OFFICE

by Michael R. Arkfeld and Michael Jimmerson

Just in time for the holidays. Your year has been, shall we say, challenging. There was too much work, and too little time. Your (select one) partner/boss/client had the impression that you were married to your job. Perhaps they were right.

As the year 2000 winds to a close, your duties may even be multiplied as you add the daunting task of picking out the perfect gift this holiday season.

That’s where we come in. We’ve turned our legal search tools to a new task. We sought out items to enlighten your life and lighten your load. We went online and offline, down highways and byways, all to bring you gear that can make more joyful your hours spent toiling in the law office—and even your pleasant hours out of that office, should you ever get there.

Don’t get caught up in the monotony of a gift like a tie or handkerchief. Instead, go high-tech.

May it please the readers, here we set out some of the brightest, shiniest, quickest and trendiest products that work both in and out of your practice.

Herman Miller Aeron Chair

If you want the ultimate office chair that will quickly be the envy of all your officemates, Herman Miller has the right stuff. The Aeron chair is the most comfortable, ergonomic chair you will ever rest your gluteus maximus upon. The chair is a result of award-winning design and high-tech materials. Adjusting the chair to your exact posture and needs is possible using nearly a half-dozen adjustment levers and knobs: Adjust the height of the chair, the forward tilt, armrest angle, and more. The chair has a wide seat that is quite comfortable. The Pellicle material distributes body weight equally on the chair and back, resulting in ultimate comfort. The patented mesh fabric breathes easily so the chair will never be sticky, even in the summer heat. The Aeron is on casters that roll easily without the jerky motion found in some chairs. Sitting never looked so good.

Herman Miller | www.hermanmiller.com | MSRP: $699
Handspring Visor Deluxe

The Palm Pilot was the first truly successful personal digital assistant. Its compact size and ease of use drove it into the mainstream. The Handspring Visor is the next generation PDA that threatens to surpass the venerable Palm Pilot. The company was formed by the original founders of Palm computing, and they have extended their concept.

First, the Visor Deluxe is extremely cool, with a variety of colors that make the Palm Pilot look anemic in comparison. Get the Deluxe model, with 8 MB of storage. The Visor uses the Palm OS so that all your favorite applications are still available and even slightly better. The Visor has a sync cradle that attaches using a USB port. Its most revolutionary feature is the Springboard expansion slot that supports any number of devices, including applications, games, cameras, GPS and, most recently, a cellular phone called the VisorPhone. The Springboard provides versatility for the Visor with new modules. If you are looking for a PDA, forget the Palm Pilot and get a jump on other PDAs with the Handspring Visor.

Handspring Visor | www.handspring.com | MSRP: $249

Olympus Digital Camera D-340R

Digital cameras are fun and easy to use. Why wait to get pictures developed? With the Olympus D-340R, you can snap photos and view them immediately. This camera has a megapixel resolution (up to 1280 x 960) and produces very high-quality images. The D-340R uses SmartMedia memory cards with storage up to 32 MB. On a 4 MB card, you can store approximately 10 images at the highest resolution.

The camera comes with software to download images to your PC. Images are stored in JPEG format. It also includes Adobe Photo Deluxe. Using the QuickStitch software, you can take multiple photos with the D-340R in panorama mode to create wide-angle views. The D-340R is very easy to use; just push the shutter open and shoot. It has a fixed lens, but it has a telephoto mode for taking photos at 2X zoom. This camera also has auto-shutter so that you can take up to 10 photos in half-second increments using the sequence mode. The built-in flash automatically senses light conditions. Picture quality with the Olympus D-340R is exceptional. This camera is highly versatile and a great value.

Olympus D-340R | Olympus USA | www.olympus.com | MSRP: $399

GPS Casio System

Can’t find your way to the courthouse? Well, consider the new GPS Pathfinder. It is the world’s first wristwatch designed to receive and process data from the Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites that ring the globe. GPS is a system of 27 satellites developed and maintained by the United States. Data from these satellites are used to determine any location on the globe. The press of a button on the watch displays your current latitude and longitude, heading and distance to a destination, current speed, waypoints, progress between waypoints and more. You even can store information about your movements in memory for later recall. A built-in antenna picks up signals from satellites orbiting high above the Earth to produce instant position and navigation data. Your position will appear on the display as quickly as four seconds after you trigger the measurement operation. Besides, it even keeps time.

GPS Pathfinder | Casio | www.casio.com/gps/ | MSRP: $300
**Adaptec GoBack**

Okay, so this is not a gadget. However, any gadget lover will absolutely need and love this product. If you ever have messed up your computer while installing a new device or piece of software, you know the pain in restoring your system to working order. What if you had something watching in the background that could restore your computer to its state before you mucked things up?

Enter Adaptec GoBack. This ingenious software captures snapshots of your system at various intervals. When your computer malfunctions, just press the spacebar as your system boots and display the “GoBack” screen. The program offers various points in time—how far depends upon how much space you have allocated to GoBack. Just keep going back until your system is restored to full working order. This is the best program ever for people who tinker with their systems.

GoBack also provides the ability to recover individual files. For example, if you have to restore your system from the day before, you may need those data files you modified in the previous 24 hours. No problem with GoBack. Look for files by date or name and choose those you want restored. This program is worth its weight in gold.

**Stowaway Keyboard**

The Palm Pilot is a great assistant for storing your calendar and address book. However, you typically do not scribble tons of new data into the Palm Pilot using Graffiti. In most cases, you type the information into your computer and sync the data. However, this unique folding keyboard changes all that by providing a full-size keyboard for the Palm Pilot. After purchasing the keyboard for your exact model, load its driver into your Palm Pilot, unfold the keyboard, place the Palm Pilot on the keyboard cradle, and start typing. The Stowaway works perfectly with your Palm Pilot and includes hot keys for the calendar, address book, to-dos and memos. It also has keys to perform most functions such as *New* and *Done*. With the Stowaway, you could use your Palm Pilot as a note-taker without having to use Graffiti. These keyboards are also available under the Palm Computing and Targus brands. This is a remarkable device and the ultimate in cool for any Palm Pilot user.
Portable storage has come a long way in recent years. The old standby, the floppy drive, is dead for all intents and purposes. Iomega, the maker of the Zip and Jaz drives, effectively revolutionized the concept of personal computer storage. However, Iomega always has been expensive, particularly Jaz drives and cartridges. A 2 MB Jaz cartridge costs $125—6 cents per MB. A challenger, the Castlewood Orb, provides blazing speed, high reliability and dirt-cheap prices.

The Orb is a compact drive, about the size of a Jaz. It comes with either parallel, IDE or SCSI, or USB connections. Definitely go for the SCSI or USB connector. The others are just too slow for this size media (2.2 GB per cartridge). The media are small and easily fit into your briefcase. Best of all, they are inexpensive, at $29.95—or 1.4 cents per MB. The Castlewood Orb is easy to use and comes with bundled software for backing up your computer. Its only downside is that it is not as prevalent as Iomega drives, so if you need to exchange media with other users, you might run into snags. However, if you just need portable storage and archival ability, the Castlewood Orb is hard to beat.

Castlewood Orb | www.castlewood.com | MSRP: $159–$199 (media $29)

Kodak’s Smart Picture Frame
Have you ever wondered how you were going to display all those digital pictures you have taken with your new digital camera, the pictures you scanned into the computer, or the digital pictures that your friends or kids have sent you? Now we have the answer—Kodak’s Smart Picture Frame. This is the future for displaying your pictures and even for seeing the weather or getting messages from family and friends.

It looks like a traditional wooden picture frame, but this LCD panel is loaded with power. With this, you can view pictures that have been downloaded off the Internet or loaded through compact flash cards from compatible digital cameras. When you set up the frame, you have to register at the StoryBox Network Web site. The frame dials a free 800 number, confirms it is properly registered, and then finds the best local phone number for future connections. Through the Web site, you can upload your own pictures to the frame; send and receive greeting cards; share pictures with others; and even set news, weather, sports and similar “channel” content to be loaded into your frame. It looks and feels just like an ordinary 8 x 10-inch wood-and-glass frame, although the image displayed is closer to 5 x 7.

Kodak’s Smart Picture Frame is designed to bring this technology to those without the technology savvy. The frame is set up to snatch the latest pictures in the middle of the night. You can program the device to dial at other times, however, and if you want to retrieve photos right away, you can press a button on the back. At the Web site, you can create a buddy list to let pals dispatch images to your frame—or send pictures to the frame you bought for Grandma so she won’t have to worry about messing with a computer.

The Internet frame contains no obvious signs of PC technology. With only two switches on the back of the frame, the device does not require the user to interact with any software or operating system.
HP CapShare 920

The HP CapShare is an essential piece of equipment for any lawyer. This compact device, about the size of a paperback book, is a scanner and copier. The CapShare is easy to use: Just swipe the unit over a piece of paper, moving up one side of the sheet and down the other, covering the whole page. The CapShare stitches the page together and automatically straightens the page. The image can be cropped to remove any extraneous bits. The CapShare can hold approximately 50 pages in memory, and it includes software to offload stored images into your computer either via a serial cable or its infrared port. Alternatively, you can print to any HP printer with an infrared port by pointing the CapShare at the printer’s port.

You can find a million uses for the CapShare. Use it to store articles and get all that paper out of your office. Or use the CapShare to copy documents at the library or the courthouse. Forget feeding the copier; the HP CapShare is all you need!

Olympus D1000 Digital Recorder

Everything these days is digital. Cameras, phones, music and movies all have gone digital. What’s next? Voice recorders! The advantages that digital voice recorders have over old-fashioned tape-driven ones are numerous. You do not have to wind through reels of tape. You can bookmark sections and jump to them instantly, like music on a CD-ROM player. And then there’s the recording quality: It’s like comparing cassette music to CD—digital voice recorders are just so much clearer and sharper than analog, and however many times you play back your notes and messages, you’ll rarely find a drop in clarity.

But wait, there’s much more. Say you have dictated that critical motion, letter or other correspondence and you need to get it back to the office—just e-mail your recorded files back to the office or to a convenient outside transcription service. Or wait until you get to your PC and transfer the file to your PC to be converted to text using a voice recognition program, like ViaVoice from IBM. Or just pop out the removable flash memory card and give it to your secretary, who will transcribe the dictation. There are no moving parts. You can play a message faster or slower without changing the pitch of the voice, which is useful for a slow audio typist. These voice-activated systems allow editing freedom: Insert, delete or overwrite at will.

Olympus | D1000 Digital Recorder | www.olympus.com | MSRP: $199

HP CapShare 920

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