

Tips, Tricks and Advice from your local “IT Guru”

This month I want to talk to you about Christmas. Yes, it's that time of year again so I thought I would give you some ideas for the gadget lovers in your life.

Starting at the top of the price range is a new computer. It will come as no surprise to regular readers that I would suggest Apple products, so I'll begin with those. For a desktop system I would recommend a 27" iMac, and for a laptop it has to be a 13" Macbook Air. Both are going to be about £1300, so this is defiantly not a cheap present, but as far as I'm concerned both represent the best of the best. If this sort of present is outside of your price range, then how about a Tablet? Again, regular readers will know that I think there is only one option: the iPad. This will cost around £600, and is a must have for any true gadget fiend. If we lower the price range even more, we can look at smartphones. For an Apple lover it has to be an iPhone, but if your intended recipient uses a Windows PC then the latest Nokia Lumia 800 will be a great companion for most. If, however, your loved one spends all their spare time fiddling with the computer, running registry clean-ups, de-fragging disks and tweaking every aspect of their system, then you should buy them an Android phone! Something like the Samsung Galaxy S2, or ideally the Samsung Galaxy Nexus, will keep them quiet for weeks setting it up "just so".

If all the above are still too expensive, then a good option to consider for your loved one is a peripheral for their computer. A nice big monitor, perhaps something over 22 inches, is always a good option, and can be found for around £150. Alternatively, an external hard disk for those important backups I'm always going on about will set you back about £50. Something else to consider is a new wireless keyboard and mouse set, and at around £25 it's a much more sensible gift to consider. At the very end of the lower price range are items such as USB memory sticks. These are always useful and, at under a tenner, make for good stocking fillers.

If you don't feel comfortable buying hardware then an Amazon or iTunes gift voucher is a good idea. I think you can probably buy almost anything on Amazon nowadays, from music to sweets and with everything in between. An iTunes voucher from Apple, on the other hand, allows you to purchase music, videos, or software from their store. A further option is a subscription to Audible, the service that allows you to listen to books on your MP3 player or Smartphone. It's a great way to pass long journeys, or to keep up with your reading at times that you normally couldn't.

Talking of reading... how about a Kindle eBook reader? For around £80 you can get a device that stores hundreds of books, and in my mind is one of the best reading experiences I've ever seen. I know that lots of people say it's not the same as a "real book", but the liberating feeling of being able to carry all your books in a thing the size of a thin paperback has to be experienced to be believed.

For a truly unusual present, why not consider a domain name? You can register your loved ones name as an Internet address, assuming it's still available, with a service like www.123reg.co.uk! With the magic of the internet, they could then have their email address as something like mail@davikeppler.com. How cool is that?

What would I like? Well, I've got my eye on a Promise Pegasus 12TB RAID external disk system to keep all my clients backups on. But, at £1300 I might be waiting a while!

I hope I've given you at least a glimmer of an idea for the techy people in your life, and that you have a great holiday season!

If you have any questions or anything you would like me to cover in this column, email me at look@4-11consultants.co.uk

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