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# New Gadgets Worth Exploring

Mitchell Brown

A session entitled "60 Gadgets in 60 Minutes" was presented during the SLA Annual Conference in Denver, Colorado on 6 June 2007. Barbara Fullerton (Manager Librarian Relations, 10-K Wizard), Brian Neale (IT Manager; Mayer, Brown, Rowe and Maw LLP), and Holly Pinto (Director of Library Services, Holland and Hart), shared with a very full room (200+ people) their list of fun, flashy, and phenomenal technologies ready to buy now or coming up soon. The slides of the presentation are posted to the SLA Legal Division (<http://units.sla.org/division/dleg/>) and from [http://llrx.com/\(www.llrx.com/features/60gadgets07.pdf\)](http://llrx.com/(www.llrx.com/features/60gadgets07.pdf)).

In this brief overview of new, pending, and fanciful technology, I will highlight some of the new tech gadgets presented in the fast-paced hour-long session – a spirited way to learn about new products in the marketplace. Librarians and information professional need to know what devices might influence their work environments as library users begin using them and look to libraries to develop services to support them. The products include a series of smartphones, charging stations, USB-powered devices of all sorts, and some fun gadgets.

These are some of my favorite gadgets highlighted in this program:

*Apple iPhone* (Figure 1) had not yet been released at the time of the session so the crowd was excited about the phone's possibilities. With a 3.5 in. multi-touch screen with proximity and light sensor, the unit will switch from iPod to telephone when held next to your face. The unit includes a 2-megapixel camera, full Mac OS X operating system, virtual keyboard with spellcheck, stereo Bluetooth 2.0, WiFi, and Quad-band GSM with EDGE. The only service provider for the iPhone is AT&T. The phone offers 5 h talk or

Figure 1. *Apple iPhone*



video playback and 12 h music. With a list price of \$499 (4 GB model) and \$599 (8 GB model), the phone is pricier than either the Treo 755 or BlackBerry Curve ([www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)). Still, this is a beautiful phone/iPod/video player/workspace device.

*The Treo 755* (Figure 2) comes with a color touch screen, Palm OS, Versamail 3.5.4 (push email), integrated Google map and IM application, web, docs to go, speakerphone, keyboard, camera/video, and Bluetooth. Service is available through Sprint ([www.palm.com](http://www.palm.com)).

*RIM BlackBerry Curve* (aka BlackBerry 8300) (Figure 3) is the latest update to the Blackberry line. It is the smallest and lightest model to date with a QWERTY keyboard, 2.5-in. diagonal screen, trackball navigator, 2-megapixel camera with 5× digital zoom and flash. The unit uses quad band GSM/GRPS, 64 MB memory, micro SD card slots for additional storage, and Bluetooth enable wireless stereo. With 240 min of talk time, this newest Blackberry has a list price of US\$ 199.99 ([www.wireless.att.com/](http://www.wireless.att.com/)).

*Golan i.Tech virtual keyboard* (Figure 4). Does not everyone want a virtual keyboard? Just stop in at your

Figure 2. *Treo 755*

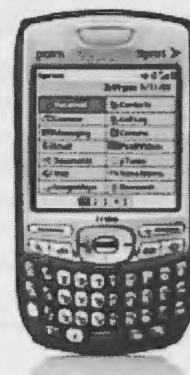


Figure 3. *BlackBerry aka BlackBerry 8300*



favorite coffee shop or cyber cafe, drop the Golan sensor (the size of a cell phone) on the table and type your email on a virtual keyboard. The unit uses Bluetooth technology to connect wirelessly to the user's handheld device (laptop, handheld, cell phone). Golan uses infrared technology to project a full size QWERTY keyboard wherever you like, on flat surfaces in cafes, offices, airplane tray tables, and such. Sensors recognize your fingers as keystrokes. You will be typing wherever you please. ([www.vkb-support.com/](http://www.vkb-support.com/)).

**Figure 4.** Golan i.Tech virtual keyboard



**Charging station** (Figure 5). This desktop unit can hold your keys, watches, jewelry, pens, and power up to four electronic devices at one time. This charging station has got a space-saving design that allows you to easily recharge cell phones, PDAs, MP3 players, and games from a surge-protected power strip hidden neatly away inside. A way to reduce clutter when powering your handheld technologies ([www.frontgate.com/jump.jsp?sort=-1&itemID=7747&itemType=PRODUCT&AS=1&keyword=charging%20station](http://www.frontgate.com/jump.jsp?sort=-1&itemID=7747&itemType=PRODUCT&AS=1&keyword=charging%20station)).

**The cellular-book reader** (Figure 6). This has a rollable, foldable display that extends to 5 in. It gives you email, RSS feeds, and e-books. And it has a ten-day battery life. Right now this device is only available in Italy but look for it to migrate our way ([www.polymervision.com/News-Center/Press-](http://www.polymervision.com/News-Center/Press-)

**Figure 5.** Charging station



**Figure 6.** The cellular-book reader



Releases/TelecomItaliaandPolymerVision announce the CE.html).

**Chillin' & Grillin': iGrill** (Figure 7). Tired of leaving your desk for lunch? Bring the thrill of grilling burgers to your desktop with this handy gadget that cooks a hamburger in 2 min. Works from your computer's USB port and you can start the grill from any Internet connection so your lunch will be hot and ready when you arrive ([www.thinkgeek.com/stuff/looflirpa/igrill.shtml](http://www.thinkgeek.com/stuff/looflirpa/igrill.shtml)).

**Helio: The Ocean** (Figure 8) is a phone with two keyboards and a 2.4 in. display with 200 megabytes of internal memory for audio recordings, video, and media files. The Ocean includes a 2-megapixel camera, internal GPS and USB connections, and with a list price of \$295, the Ocean will be giving Apple's iPhone some competition ([www.helio.com/#homepage](http://www.helio.com/#homepage)).

**Audio-Technica ATH-ANC7** (Figure 9). Turn down the volume on noise in your day. These headphones have 85 per cent noise cancellation and Wired magazine rated them 9 out of 10 ([www.jr.com/JRProductPage.process?Product=4153680&JRSource=nsa&nsa=1](http://www.jr.com/JRProductPage.process?Product=4153680&JRSource=nsa&nsa=1)).

**Figure 7.** iGrill USB powered grill



**Figure 8.** Helio: The Ocean



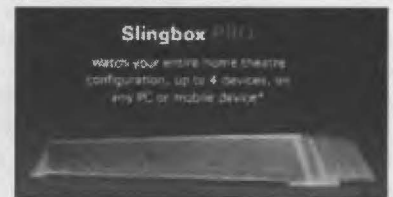
**Figure 9.** Audio-Technica ATH-ANC7



**Slingbox PRO** (Figure 10). Do you hate missing your TV shows and movies when you are out or traveling? Here is your answer. Watch and control up to three standard definition and one high definition video devices anywhere you go. By using an internet-connected computer or mobile device, you can watch and control your home TV, DVR, basic cable, digital cable box, or satellite receiver (<http://us.slingmedia.com/page/home>).

**Phone Labs Doc-N-Talk** (Figure 11) is a universal cell phone docking station and charger that supports up to 1,100 models and can be used with home wired and cordless phones. If you have a

**Figure 10.** Slingbox PRO



**Figure 11.** Phone Labs Doc-N-Talk



whole lot of cell phone minutes to use up each month this may be for you. The unit connects to the phone in your house – wired or cordless – but uses your cell phone service/minutes while supporting caller ID and SMS text messages. You can switch seamlessly from home phone to cell phone ([www.phonelabs.com](http://www.phonelabs.com)).

**Eye-Fi** (Figure 12). Now you have an option to upload images directly from your camera without removing the storage device. This SD card has a 1 GB memory storage and WiFi all in one card. The card automatically uploads your photos to the Internet, your PC, or to a commercial photo processor for printing. The card's design uses less memory in the camera and can be configured wirelessly from your web browser ([www.eye.fi](http://www.eye.fi)).

**Digital microscope** (Figure 13). High quality images and video can be displayed on your PC using a simple USB connection with magnification up to 200x. It can take snapshots or time-lapse movies and you can manipulate the images with drawing and painting tools ([www.popgadget.net/2007/04/usb\\_digital\\_mic.php](http://www.popgadget.net/2007/04/usb_digital_mic.php)).

**Illiad** (Figure 14). Not just an e-book reader but a device that lets you read and write as you would on paper. The device

**Figure 12. Eye-Fi**



**Figure 13. Digital microscope**



**Figure 14. Illiad**



allows you to take notes, annotate, and then transfer to and from your PC. The 8.1 in. grayscale screen supports downloading of e-books and digital subscriptions with 64 MB RAM and is WiFi/Ethernet enabled ([www.irextechnologies.com/products/iliad](http://www.irextechnologies.com/products/iliad)).

**The Jawbone** (Figure 15). Although larger than many wireless headsets, this Bluetooth unit has excellent sound quality due to DARPA Noise Shield technology. It is ergonomic and lightweight, includes an earloop and earbud, and gives you 6h talk time. Originally developed for battlefield applications the units are available in red, silver, and black with a list price of US\$99.99 ([www.jawbone.com/](http://www.jawbone.com/)).

**24 karat gold iPod** (Figure 16). For the music lover with a taste for the flash comes a new way to personalize your iPod. The 24-karat gold iPod are available with white or black faceplates. Price: US\$600-800 ([www.newlaunches.com/archives/apple\\_ipod\\_in\\_pure\\_24\\_carat\\_gold\\_as\\_precious\\_as\\_your\\_music.php](http://www.newlaunches.com/archives/apple_ipod_in_pure_24_carat_gold_as_precious_as_your_music.php)).

**Harmon Kardon GPS-500** (Figure 17). A 4 in. screen integrates navigation and entertainment on the same unit. With a 5h battery, the unit can load MP3

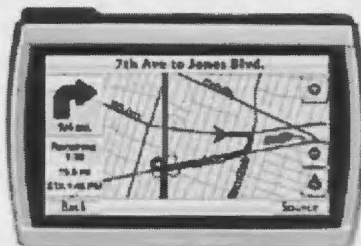
**Figure 15. Jawbone**



**Figure 16. 24-karat gold iPod**



**Figure 17. Harmon Kardon GPS-500**



music to the 4 GB mini Secure Disk for entertainment and navigation. GPS resolution of the unit jumps to three feet resolution ([www.harmonkardon.com/gps500/default.aspx](http://www.harmonkardon.com/gps500/default.aspx)).

**USB warming mouse pad** (Figure 18). A USB enable wool and cotton pad that covers your mouse and keeps your hands warm on chilling internet sessions. The warming pad warms at 10F (1°C) every 5 min. for a maximum of 42F (6°C) ([www.coolest-gadgets.com](http://www.coolest-gadgets.com)).

**Figure 18. USB warming mouse pad**



**Figure 19. Clocky the alarm clock**



Lastly, here is my recommendation for the "Most Fun" gadget of the session.

*Clocky the alarm clock* (Figure 19). Maybe this will cure you of hitting the snooze button. If you do not turn it off quickly enough, Clocky jumps off the table (up to 3 feet vertical leap), rolls

around on the floor, with the alarm going off at random intervals, and hides out until you can find it and finally shut it off. With dimensions 5.25"×3.5"×3.5" Clocky can hide under dressers, beds, or roll across the room until you catch it. Some things are just worth the price (list

price \$49.95), ([www.nandahome.com/products.clocky.html](http://www.nandahome.com/products.clocky.html)).

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