



A sneak peak at Wilma's Christmas gift list

computer notes from the road

by WILMA MELOT

What do you get the person who has everything for Christmas? You know who I'm talking about – the one who has few needs and even fewer wants.

If you have a tough person to shop for, here are a few things I'm buying for family, friends and co-workers.

The hottest gift this year for Mac users is an external hard drive. With the recent winter weather power outages, this gift gives peace of mind to any Mac user on your list.

External hard drives work especially well if you have Leopard OSX 10.5.

Leopard's time machine feature will automatically backup your system to the external hard drive. If you want the ability to boot from your backup, a firewire drive is needed. If not, USB drives work well and are cheaper than firewire.

The cheapest firewire drive I found was \$100 and the cheapest USB drive was \$75. However, the prices of both vary a lot, depending on the storage size you want.

A great backup solution for OSX 10.4 (or less) users exists in a shareware program called SuperDuper.

For \$27.95, this program enables the user to create a fully bootable backup in

a very understandable and easy process. SuperDuper is available at:

<http://www.shirt-pocket.com/>

Another great gift is a set of computer speakers. One of the best sets I've found is Logitech X-230. These speakers combine performance with price, and retail for around \$30.

Altec Lansing VS2221 computer speakers run around \$40, and everything I've read gives them solid ratings.

Any publishers looking to reward employees? Think about investing in new monitors.

Through my travels around the state,



I've sat in front of many machines with old, fuzzy monitors.

It's hard for me to look at those screens for eight minutes and yet many of you are staring at them for about eight hours a day.

Some old computers need adapters for new monitors, but you'll be able to find them easily at local computer or department stores.

Other Christmas gift ideas are ergonomic office products. Not only are these gifts functional, but most people don't think about ways to reduce pain encountered at work.

One alternative is a monitor stand. I found one, built by Kensington, that is adjustable to someone's eye level. It costs \$39.99 and is available at:

<http://us.kensington.com/html/6541.html>

Is your office chair made to sit in for eight hours a day? Many chairs I've sat in this year aren't.

Though some ergonomic chairs are pricey, office chairs that are designed for heavy use are wise investments. A good selection of chairs is found at:

<http://www.sitncomfort.com/erchair.html>

Back cushions can also be found on the above Web site by clicking the "Back Support" link in the upper left corner.

When you get your new office chairs, give me a call. I'd love to test your furniture out while solving your computer woes.

What you should look for when purchasing a good, used computer

Thinking about buying a used computer? Many of you with tight budgets and OSX upgrade costs on your mind have asked about this lately.

Here are a few things to look for when buying a used computer:

- How old is the computer? I don't recommend buying a computer more than three years old. Also, make sure it runs system software that is compatible to what you're using.

- Has the machine been looked at and worked over by a computer tech? This is known in the computer industry as 'refurbished.'

- How much RAM does the machine hold? For today's programs, at least one gigabyte is required.

If it doesn't have much RAM, can you add memory by upgrading? Luckily, RAM is cheaper than it used to be.

- How big is the hard drive? At least 40 gigabytes are preferred. After installing all programs, most of the 40 gigabytes will be used. A 120 gigabyte hard drive would be even better, as it would allow for half of that memory to be used as a backup.

- Look for at least 700mhz in a co-

processor. Any less is too slow to run OSX and the Internet well. A machine with OSX and OS 9 pre-installed is a great buy. And if you can get the OS disks that installed the system, do so.

- What's the purpose of the machine? Do you need a Windows machine for your reporters to e-mail their stories over the network?

If you do plan on networking a PC into a Mac network, be aware that it takes extra software to pull this off. It takes less work if you are OSX. PC MacLan was our standard for many years. With OSX and a professional version of Windows XP, the networking should function through the TCP/IP.

- Where do you plan on buying the machine? Department stores have great deals on PCs, especially around Christmas. If you go to one of the big electronics stores you will get better help than a regular department store. While you're there, look for name brands like HP/Compaq, Acer, Toshiba or Dell. Remember, if you want more than word processing you will have to buy software for the PC. And

you'll want to buy InDesign or Quark instead of PageMaker.

If you're shopping on eBay, check the seller's ratings and feedback to ensure they have a good history of selling online. Don't be afraid to e-mail your questions to learn how the seller operates and to know what you're buying.

If you're buying from an online used computer dealer, make sure they've been in business for a number of years.

- How much should you pay?

Any more than \$600 is too much, especially when you can buy new systems for anywhere from \$600 to \$1,000.

A machine is a great value if it does what you need and isn't too old. If you anticipate that it will immediately need to be upgraded to keep up with your needs, find a different machine.

And as always, do your homework on each type of machine. A good place to comparison shop and see if you're getting a good value is:

www.LowEndMac.com

Good luck. I hope this gives you a place to start your research for a good, used computer.

plugged IN

Top scanner for 2007

The Canon CanoScan 8800F Flatbed Scanner is my favorite for 2007.

While it's a little more expensive than other scanners, it comes with good software to make production easier.

For example, it uses high-luminance white LED lamps that warm up immediately. This means there's no wait time before you can scan.

The 8800F's maximum color dpi resolution is 4800 x 9600. Couple that with its 48-bit color depth, and you can yield over 281 trillion colors.

In addition, the 8800F has built-in retouching technology to remove most dust and scratches that may exist on a picture or piece of art.

But in my opinion, the best feature is the 8800F's software.

This scanner's software includes ArcSoft PhotoStudio, Presto! Page-Manager, ScanSoft OmniPage SE and Adobe PhotoShop Elements. Adobe Photoshop Elements will not work on CMYK photos but excels on black and white photos.



The Canon CanoScan 8800F Flatbed Scanner

Tips for OPEN uploads

When you set up your classified and legal pages for OPEN, you already know the codes of CAXCA (for classifieds) and LPXLP (for legals) are to run at the bottom.

You also know the codes must run in a 10-point, sans serif font.

I've seen some larger papers auto flow their classifieds onto a one-page Quark template that builds the pages. As a result, there doesn't seem to be a place for the codes.

A solution exists in Quark's Library file. A Library is an independent file that operates like a palette in your program window and is saved to your hard drive.

Libraries can hold objects, such as OPEN codes, that you can drag onto the page. To create a library, go to File>New>Library.

