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FEATURES

TECH KNOW



Corn-Y For You

J Mark Lytle Separates The High-Tech Wheat From The Low-Grade Chaff.



We're often accused of being too corny for our own good; well, this time we need make no excuses. Sanyo has thoughtfully cast pearls before swine in offering us a product made entirely of, well, corn. Panasonic also got us geed up with an update to one of its best products, while Sony has pitched in with a revamp of its own.

Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ10 digital camera



BUYLINE

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- Televisual entertainment is never far from the hearts of the Japanese and the ledgers of the electronics big boys, so we've had a twiddle with a couple of the newest gadgets in the field and pondered a groundbreaking new recording medium. Elsewhere, music soothes the savage breast.
- [526: Future perfect](#)
- J Mark Lytle comes to grips with a few of the more out-there gizmos around.
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The zoomiest digicam on the market just got even better when Panasonic doubled the resolution of its original Lumix FZ camera, which we've sworn by for a year now. The standout aspect of the FZ series is the inclusion of a 12x optical zoom, which is considerably more powerful than other cameras in this price range. Now, with 4-megapixel resolution, there's really no excuse for not snapping clandestine shots of your neighbors. For the technically minded, the ¥70,000 FZ10 has F2.8 brightness throughout the entire zoom range, a zoom equivalent to a 35-420mm lens on a 35mm film camera, a liking for SD memory cards, and an anti-shake system that really works. It takes little QuickTime movies too.

<http://panasonic.jp/dc/fz10/index.html>

Sony NW-MS90D Network Walkman



About nine months ago, Sony teased us with a Network Walkman that was a "fur coat and no knickers" product—a looker, but a bit skimpy underneath, particularly on the memory front. Now, with its MS90D (¥45,000), the company has doubled the onboard to 512Mb and swapped its silver case for black, making it worth another look. If you're in the market for a player with solid-state memory (as opposed to a hard-disk-based one, like the iPod), it's an option only if you can put up with Sony's insistence on using the ATRAC format for encoding music, rather than MP3.

www.jp.sonystyle.com/Product/Paudi/Nw-ms90d

Campho Advance GameBoy videophone

J Mark Lytle cooks up a storm of high-tech desirables.

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J Mark Lytle shakes himself from the post-holiday slumber to get wired all over again.

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J Mark Lytle gets all nostalgic and picks the cream of this year's crop.

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J Mark Lytle reports on five products that'll get your tech-hungry heart racing.

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With the launch of its first retail shop outside the US, a resurgent Apple takes aim at a market that loves its gadgets. Steve Trautlein goes shopping.

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Our latest gadget grab-bag includes some odd ofuro entertainment, the world's most losable MD player, and several ways to fill that USB-shaped hole in your life. J Mark Lytle reports.

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The recent CEATEC show for the electronics industry produced a treasure trove of Good Things, including Sony's PSX do-everything machine and a credit-card-sized digital video camera. J Mark Lytle reports.

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J Mark Lytle separates the high-tech wheat from the low-grade chaff.

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So, you bought a handheld game machine and you wish you'd spent your pennies on a videophone instead? That's daft if you ask us, but Digital Act has the answer in the shape of its Campho Advance (¥15,000)-just stick it into your GBA's cartridge slot and plug a cable into an ordinary phone line to begin videophoning to your heart's content. Obviously, you need to have a friend with the same kit to actually use the thing, but what's such a minor point in the face of dazzling technology? At ten frames per second, performance is even just about acceptable, but you'll have to wait until next year before it goes on sale. Product info: www.digitalact.co.jp Order info: www.lik-sang.com

Sanyo MildDisc CDs

We'll keep this one brief. Sanyo, in its infinite wisdom, has decided to make CDs out of corn. Yes, it spent years and lots of money working out what to do with that vile-tasting yellow vegetable and came up with a way to save the planet. No longer need we fear that those billions of discarded free-trial AOL CDs will clog the arteries of the Earth's ecosystem.

The discs are normal CDs (ten from a single ear of corn) that are biodegradable, decompose into soil, and give off no dioxins when burned. Brilliant! www.sanyo-mavic.com/index.html

Sharp DV-HR350 HDD/DVD recorder

J Mark Lytle delivers the latest and greatest from Japan's high-tech wonderland.

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J Mark Lytle tracks down more of the latest gadgets that make our stay-at-home pals green with envy.

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J Mark Lytle rounds up five of the hottest new pieces of high-tech kit to keep you looking cool this summer.

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Carlo Niederberger combs the city for spots to visualize the future.

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As three big wireless LAN projects race to hook up Tokyo, cable-free Internet connections are as close as a local café, hotel or train station. Martin Webb reports.

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Cathy Frances scopes out some high-tech devices for the dog days of summer.

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Weblogs offer users the chance to post their lives online. Steve Trautlein checks in with the Tokyo bloggers.

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Today's technological fantasies are fast becoming reality. Cathy Frances peeks at the wonders that wait just around the corner.

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Somewhere between not-so-totable laptops and impossibly tiny PDAs, ultraportables offer an appealing alternative. Hanna Kite scopes out five of the latest miniature PCs.

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Cyber-pets are coming out one after another. Cathy



We like the new Sharp combo hard drive and DVD recorder simply because it's a mere 59mm thick (or thin, perhaps) and as shiny a bauble as an otaku could wish for. The HR350 (¥90,000) is well fitted out, with a 120Gb drive and a soothing-to-the-masses LCD front display. That chunk of HDD real estate will hold about 150 hours of telly, after which the simple-to-use software makes dumping it onto a DVD (-RW/+RW) child's play.

www.sharp.co.jp/products/dvhr350

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one after another. Cathy Frances tracks down the home-entertainment companions that may give you a run for your money.

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Digital cameras are getting smaller and packed with even more features. Sachie Kanda zooms in on the latest models.

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Camera-equipped cell phones have spawned a generation of gadgets that make digital photography even hipper. Hanna Kite takes a peek.

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On the 10th anniversary of the MD, a new generation is hitting the shelves. Sachie Kanda listens in.

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Cybird is leading the mobile Internet content revolution with help from Star Wars and SIM cards. Chris Betros reports.

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Used PCs are piling up in landfills and ruining ecosystems around the globe, but innovative manufacturing techniques and NGOs are here to save the planet. Hanna Kite reports.

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