TOOLS ‹‹‹‹‹‹
››››››of the TRADE

Nokia N8

Nokia's latest smartphone, the N8, combines very capable still and video cameras, entertainment services that feature HD-quality video and Dolby Digital Plus, Web TV, social networking with live feeds from Facebook and Twitter, and free global Ovi Maps for driving and walking guidance in more than 70 countries. The Symbian 3 software now has support for gestures like multitouch, flick-scrolling, and pinch-zoom. The software improves memory management and, along with the N8's new 2D and 3D graphics architecture, provides a faster user interface and more applications that can run in parallel for faster multi-tasking. Onboard memory is 16GB storage with 135MB internal memory. You can add memory with micro SD cards up to 32GB. The camera is a 12-megapixel still camera with Carl Zeiss optics and a Xenon flash. You can both shoot and edit HD-quality videos using the built-in editing suite. The phone offers a variety of Ovi Store apps covering productivity, games, and audio-visual. Battery life is about six hours' talk time and 390-400 hours' standby. Music playback is about 50 hours, video is seven, and Web TV is about three hours, 20 minutes. The N8 has an aluminum body available in five colors—dark gray, silver white, green, blue, and orange. www.nokia.com

Apricorn EZ Writer II

Apricorn, an external storage and backup specialist company, has a portable optical drive that will burn dual-layer DVDs containing up to 8.5GB of data or up to four hours of high-quality video or images on a single DVD+R DL disc. The DL stands for double layer, and this type of disc has about twice the capacity of single-layer discs at 4.7GB. Meant to replace lower-capacity writers in your PC or notebook or to add backup capacity for driveless netbooks, the Apricorn EZ Writer II weighs very little (11.7 oz.) and measures slightly more than the size of the discs it loads. No batteries or external power cords are needed because the Writer is bus-powered through the USB cable that folds away into its side housing when you pack it away. The software suite includes BurnAware for recording and VLC MediaPlayer for playing a variety of multimedia formats. www.apricorn.com
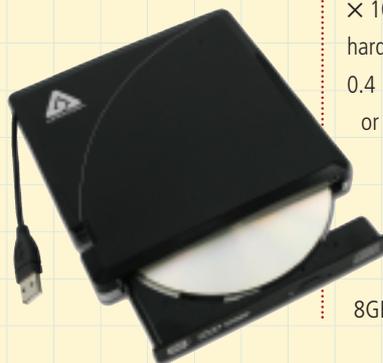
LaCie MosKeyto USB drive

With a line of the most innovative designs in USB storage devices already, LaCie has now added the MosKeyto drive, an almost invisible additional 4GB–16GB of removable memory. You can get LaCie drives that literally look like keys—several different shapes to keep your storage categories separate on a keychain—and drives that are in the shape of different denominations of coins. Now, the MosKeyto drive joins the catalog and is distinguished not by its eye-catching design but by its barely noticeable presence plugged in to a side or back port on your laptop. This is a drive that you can plug in and leave until you need to take it to another machine. The part that protrudes is only 6mm—that's 0.23 inches. Actually, the overall dimensions are 21 × 16 × 10mm, which translate to a hard-to-notice 0.83 × 0.63 × 0.4 inches. It weighs 10 grams, or 0.35 ounces. There's a key ring strap that connects through a protective cap for times away from your laptop. Available in 4GB, 8GB, and 16GB, the prices

begin at a modest $18. The MosKeyto uses Hi-Speed USB 2.0 connections and is Windows ReadyBoost compatible. It can operate with the latest versions of Windows, including XP, Vista, and Windows 7, as well as Mac OSX 10.5 and 10.6.
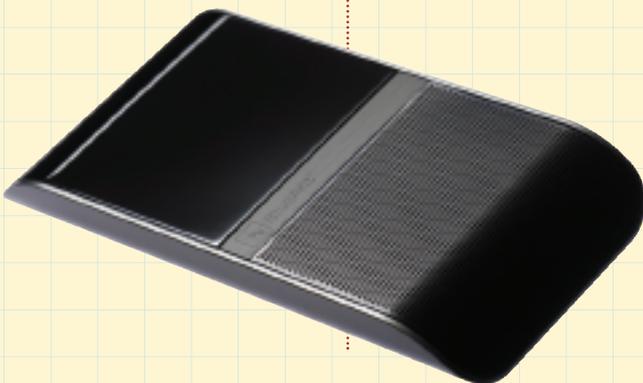www.lacie.com

BlueAnt S4 Handsfree

The BlueAnt S4 handsfree voice-controlled car speakerphone lets you make and answer calls using your voice instead of your hands. The 4.9-inch long by 2.4-inch wide device clips onto the sun visor and provides up to 10 meters (33 feet) of RF coverage. There are touch-sensitive volume controls, but the overall operation is handsfree. Text-to-speech reads aloud the names of incoming callers and can store up to 2,000 phonebook

entries per paired device. Multi-point connects to two phones and answers the one that rings. Outgoing audio is filtered through wind, road, and background noise reduction, and the full duplex, high-volume speaker provides clear, deep incoming signals. Set to On, the BlueAnt will listen for your command to initiate calls, use favorites, redial, call back, check battery, update phone book, or cancel. And it will read aloud SMS messages received from Android devices and e-mail from BlackBerry systems. The clip on the back is magnetic and can be moved around for a better fit on the visor. The rechargeable lithium ion battery provides up to 20 hours' talk time and up to 700 hours' standby time. It recharges in three to four hours via a micro-USB connection.
http://myblueant.com

TECH FORUM

It's Not Your Grandfather's Internet

By Michael Castelluccio, Editor

The World Wide Web is 20 years old and already experiencing a premature decline, according to Chris Anderson of *Wired* magazine. The magazine wailed the warning in two-inch-high black caps on its dayglow September cover: "The Web is Dead." What Anderson explains in his article is that the Web part of the Internet is losing its grip. "One of the most important shifts in the digital world has been the move from the wide-open Web to semi-closed platforms that use the Internet for transport but not the browser for display." In a word, traffic is shifting lanes from the Web-page neighborhoods to the on-ramps for apps that don't have the "www" prefix on their digital mailboxes.

For many, there isn't a clear distinction between the Internet and the Web, so we'll start there.

The Internet is a worldwide system of interconnected computer networks. Literally millions of computers are connected on this network, and your computer can join the connection as long as it's using the correct languages or protocols. One of those languages, the HTTP protocol (hypertext transfer protocol), is used by an application on your computer (a browser, such as Explorer or Firefox) to connect to depositories of information called Web pages or sites. The browser submits addresses with "www" prefixes to access the information on something called the World Wide Web. Technically, the Web is an "information-sharing model built on top of the Internet"—more like an application running on the Internet.

But there are other languages, or protocols, and other means for transferring information over the planet-wrapping network, and these other services are bearing more of the traffic on the Internet as the Web carries less.

OVERPOWERING WAVE OF APPS

Instant messaging, news from RSS feeds, Skype, e-mail, free music broadcasts like Pandora, social networks like

Facebook and Twitter—these are the force fields drawing traffic away from the Web's traditional websites. And the seismic shift away from PCs to mobile hardware, smartphones, and tablets will only reinforce the new polarities. Anderson claims the "post-Web future" is already here, and, instead of browsers, there's the "Apple and the iPhone/iPad juggernaut leading the way, with tens of millions of consumers already voting with their wallets for an app-led experience."

Consider the phenomenal sales of the iPhone, and now the iPad, and the number of apps, growing at 500+ a day, ceaselessly adding to a lurching quarter-million total so far, and Anderson's claim seems more believable. Perhaps the number that's the hardest to factor in is the download total. As of September 1, 2010, Wikipedia shows more than 6.5 billion total Apple App-store downloads.

But there's even more evidence of the shift when you look past the Apple to get a glimpse of the rest of the landscape. Serious sources report that a growing list of Android-driven devices, smartphones mostly, are currently outselling Apple devices. In a world served by the Internet, there are approximately two billion TV screens, one billion personal computer screens, and five billion cell phones. About 73% of the world's population has mobile phones, and, in the U.S., 286 million, or about 93% of the population, have them. Today 25% of those are smartphones, and the growth of the smart technology is spiking globally. Mobile connectivity to the Internet is like a rising sun with its consequent gravitational pull.

The end result? *Wired's* numbers assert that the application called the Web is responsible today for "less than a quarter of the traffic on the Internet…and it's shrinking."

A few caveats seem appropriate here concerning the numbers supporting the "Web is Dead" thesis on *Wired's* front door. It seems true that the percentage of traffic for websites has decreased—but only as a percentage of an overall total that has itself greatly expanded. In other words, it's possible that the volume of traffic to websites has increased even though the Web's share of the total has decreased.

The tech blog BoingBoing offered a set of numbers to balance *Wired's* Web autopsy. "In fact," wrote Rob Beschizza, "between 1995 and 2006, the total amount of Web traffic went from about 10 terabytes a month to 1,000,000 terabytes (or 1 exabyte). According to Cisco, the same source *Wired* used for its projections, total Internet traffic rose then from about 1 exabyte to 7 exabytes between 2005 and 2010."

In *Wired's* graph profiling growth, video is at the top of the chart, hogging a wide swath of bandwidth. Bandwidth total is one way to measure popularity, but you shouldn't lose sight that one video stream might grab the same space that could deliver a number of text/graphic conventional websites. So do you consider the bandwidth or the number of items delivered in formulating generalities about success?

It's certainly true that there's a revolutionary shift over to mobile that's frightening PC makers and annoying netbook importers, but the path that might widen to the road most taken has only one high-profile traveler so far. With his truly remarkable tablet device, the iPad, under his arm, Steve Jobs is alone on that road. Expect that to change soon. At the recent IFA Consumer Electronics show in Berlin, manufacturer Elonex announced nine different Android tablets that resemble the iPad. The expected retail on these eTouch devices will range from about $125 for the one with the five-inch screen to $200 for the top-of-the-line tablet with a 10-inch screen (iPads have 9.7-inch viewing areas).

REDESIGN

It's unlikely that the traditional website format is going to disappear anytime soon. Because the design and arrangement of Web pages and archives are usually so much better suited to larger screens, the standard storefront/publication/museum/utility websites will continue to prosper on the desktop/laptop. And the website that migrates to mobile devices without serious adjustments will continue to frustrate users trying to read the large-page content on the three-inch screen of their smart phone. There's always work before a website is emigrated out to pockets or tablets.

An interesting Web genre to watch is the online newspaper. A traditional paper like *The New York Times* has more inertia to overcome with a new design simply because people have seen the same basic front page going back to 1851. The new home page on the Web, like the paper newspaper, lets you scan the front page for stories and indexes of links, but there *is* clutter from some rather large ads. The design for the iPad tablet is cleaner but contains far less content. The NY Times Editor's Choice app, available free at the App Store, opens to a front page of Editor's Choice|News. An understated banner ad at the bottom of the page doesn't interfere with the dozen or so selected stories on the two pages of the "News." You scroll to the second page with a horizontal finger sweep. At the bottom of the page, there's a thin black band with seven icons for other two-page sets of Business, Technology, Opinion, Arts, Features, and Videos. It's a very clean presentation. And if you want the whole paper version, you can still use the Safari browser on your tablet to call up the Web version. **SF**