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NEWS

- Angry Birds Beta Hits Android Phones

http://www.appscout.com/2010/09/angry_birds_beta_hits_android.php

Android phone owners who have watched their iPhone and iPad-owning friends enjoy the wildly popular physics game Angry Birds for iOS can rejoice. Rovio, the company behind Angry Birds, has released a free beta version of the game for Android mobile phones, and is offering it to the Android community to give them a teaser for what the full game will feel like.

- CES: Psyko 5.1 Gaming Headphones for PC and Xbox

http://www.gearlog.com/2010/01/ces_psyko_51_gaming_headphones.php

Psyko Audio Labs announced and released its 5.1 Gaming Headphones for the PC at the end of 2009--and promptly sold out of them. For CES this year, Psyko unveiled a completed version of their 5.1 Gaming Headphones for the XBox, which they expect to be ready for store shelves sometime early 2010. At CES, Psyko had the XBox version of their headset available to use while playing games like Halo 3 and Gears of War, and its quality matches up with its PC counterpart.

- Arthur C. Clarke (1917-2008): Writer, Futurist, Visionary

http://www.gearlog.com/2008/03/arthur_c_clarke_19172008_write.php

Arthur C. Clarke, author of hundreds of books on science, science fiction, space, and even underwater exploration, died in his home yesterday at the age of 90. For many, Clarke embodied the future. He was a writer, the man behind epic tales such as "2001: A Space Odyssey," "Rendezvous with Rama," and a host of other sci-fi classics. He was an explorer, documenting his dives to the Great Barrier Reef in incredible detail. And he was a futurist, suggesting that satellites would be useful in making radio communication global long before Sputnik was launched, and predicting a world where we routinely watched men and women skyrocket into orbit long before anyone dreamt that such a thing was possible.

- Apple New Music Event: New iPods, New iTunes, New Apple TV!

<http://www.gearsandwidgets.com/2010/09/01/apple-music-event-new-ipods-new-itunes-new-appletv/>

... Apple's culture of secrecy is starting to show a few cracks, but not really of Apple's own doing – it's just impossible to get as large as Apple is and have as many partners as Apple does and not have breaches here and there – especially when your company is so popular yet so secretive that people are actively looking and scouring the web for possible leaks and clues into what your next move will be.. ...

FEATURES

- Dear Liferhacker: Should I Go Back to School?

<http://liferhacker.com/#15745940/should-i-go-back-to-school>

Thousands of people struggle with the same question: whether or not they should stay in a job that pays the bills but offers little when it comes to job satisfaction or personal fulfillment. We're big fans of continued education and self-improvement, but you shouldn't necessarily turn your life upside down to do it if you have no idea what you want or you don't think you can manage it.

The short answer is that whether you should stay in your current job or go back to school depends entirely on your personal situation: how much you hate your job, whether you have an education path in mind that you'll like any better, whether you can afford to go to school at all, and whether you think you could do better professionally with a degree in your field. Going back to school isn't cheap, but it can certainly pay off in the long run. Here are a couple of things to think of when making your decision.

- Roll a Powerful Media HTPC for Less than \$500

<http://liferhacker.com/#15745937/roll-a-powerful-media-htpc-for-less-than-500>

Sure, you can always pick up a set-top streamer like an Apple TV, a Roku, or a Boxee Box, or even use your Xbox 360 as a Media Extender, but when you go that route, you give up one important feature: control. That's fine if one of those devices (and its pre-packaged software) has all of the features you want and need in a streamer, but if you're looking for more flexibility in your set-top box, it might be worthwhile to roll your own. That way you can install any set-top software you like, and if something else catches your eye, you can switch to that just as easily.

- Are Premium Gaming Peripherals Worth Your Money?

<http://www.tomshardware.com/reviews/gaming-peripheral-mouse-keyboard,2467.html>

If you believe the hype, it would be crazy to try and be competitive (or even competent) without sinking several hundred dollars into gaming peripherals before firing up your favorite shooter or log in to the World of Warcraft. Depending on the popularity of your favorite game and the peripheral vendor's opportunity to make some money, you might even find a range of products specifically designed to improve your performance in that particular title.

Of course, there are many more gamers than there are people buying all of this stuff, so the question stands: do you need a desk full of high-end extras in order to be a good player? Do you actually get more kills in Team Fortress 2 by having a higher-DPI mouse? Are you a more effective healer in your WoW raids if you have a keyboard with macro buttons? Or is there simply value in owning a more comfortable headset?

- Flipboard: A Personal Magazine Featuring Your Social Media

http://www.appscout.com/2010/07/flipboard_a_personal_magazine.php

One of the best things about the iPad as a platform is the flexibility developers have to aggregate media and other Web content in an interface that looks attractive and feels natural when you interact with it. Most Web services and content aggregators that have developed apps for the iPad look great, but none of them really capture the magazine-like feel of Flipboard, a new iPad app that aggregates social media in a unique and attractive way.

- Spinning Gears: What Would Steampunk Look Like Outside of Europe?

<http://www.gearsandwidgets.com/2009/10/28/spinning-gears-what-would-steampunk-look-like-outside-of-europe/>

That being said, it's not like Europe was the only part of the world to play with steam-powered technologies, and if that rose to prominence in Europe, I'd be curious to see what some of the other prevailing regional technologies could have arisen in other parts of the world without the same influence of Europeans at the same time periods. In other words, what would a steampunk-style Asia look like? Or Africa? Maybe South America? What would a steampunk Incan or Aztec city look like? How about a steampunk (or equivalent technology) Masai tribe?

- Our Favorite Top-of-the-Food-Chain Tech

<http://www.popsoci.com/gadgets/article/2009-10/top-food-chain-tech>

Almost every day, we see so-called "upgrades" to technologies that really don't need the extra attention. Plenty of everyday gadgets haven't changed much since they were introduced or invented, because, well, they work just fine the way they are. And trying to improve on something that's already at the top of the food chain is a) a waste of time and b) likely to just make it worse for the wear. Companies need to face facts: there are technologies (like these five) that are practically perfect just as they are.

- A Geek's Guide to Picking the Right Tie

<http://www.theclassygeek.com/2009/12/a-geek%E2%80%99s-guide-to-picking-the-right-tie/>

Modern times call for modern dress, and while our fathers and older brothers may have certainly been "cuttin' a rug" in their high-water pants and waist-length coats, if you want to be a sharp-dressed geek, you would do well to pick the right attire for the right situation. You've got a brain in your head that can impress at any cocktail party; why not look impressive to match? There's a lot of ground to cover here, but let's get you started with something simple: the right tie.

There are a couple of different things to consider when you're choosing a tie to purchase versus choosing a tie to wear out one night. Let's start with the hypothetical you, standing in a clothing store, completely confused as to what you should buy. Now pretend I'm there with you. I know: you feel better already.

- News and Thoughts from the World of Warcraft: Cataclysm Press Tour

<http://azeroth.metblogs.com/2010/06/15/news-and-thoughts-from-the-world-of-warcraft-cataclysm-press-tour/>

Blizzard took the media on a whirlwind tour of some of the new features and changes coming in *World of Warcraft: Cataclysm* at the end of last week, and dropped a few bombshells that were worth paying attention to, especially for those who are looking forward to the expansion based on information that's been previously provided...

REVIEWS

- Hands On with the iMojito from Malcolm Frontier!

<http://www.gearsandwidgets.com/2010/01/28/hands-on-with-the-imojito-from-malcolm-frontier/>

I carried the iMojito around with me for a couple of weeks to get the hang of it, and once I was over the feeling of missing my wallet in my back pocket, I found the iMojito to be remarkably useful. ...

The iMojito has a soft fabric interior where your mobile phone goes, and durable polyurethane exterior that has a smooth feel. (Meaning it feels smooth like leather but without that whole dead animal skin thing going on.)

- Hands On: Twitter's Official Android App

http://www.appscout.com/2010/05/hands_on_twitter_releases_offi.php

Perhaps the best thing about the Twitter for Android app is how elegant and simple it is. As Twitter clients go, it doesn't offer a world of special features, but its clean interface does make it easy to use and simple to do most things that even some more popular Twitter clients don't allow you to do (like view your Twitter lists, for example).

The Twitter for Android app isn't perfect however; it only supports Twitter's retweet feature, so retweeting using the old style or including your own comments is very difficult and involves copy/pasting text. The app also only supports one Twitter account, so if you manage multiple Twitter accounts, you're out of luck.

- 4 New Keyboards, Tested

<http://www.tomsguide.com/us/Keyboard-Wireless-Test,review-1566.html>

While summer isn't traditionally keyboard season, this year manufacturers decided to launch new keyboards just ahead of the back to school season. If your current keyboard is getting a bit crusty, or you're simply looking to upgrade, consider one of these: we've got options for multimedia gurus, budget-oriented consumers, and gamers looking for something different.

To compare these new keyboards, we'll examine them based on five areas: design, value, features, performance, and build quality.

- Hands On with the New Grooveshark: Same Great Taste, New Features

http://www.appscout.com/2009/10/hands_on_with_the_new_groovesh.php

Today, Grooveshark unveiled a new version of their Web service, which retains its familiar, easy-to-use look and feel but adds a ton of new features. The last time we reviewed Grooveshark we found it a great service, but the new version comes with customizable themes to fit your mood, faster song searching and streaming, smarter playlists, more sharing options, and a more jukebox-like feel that will make users coming from desktop apps much more comfortable with the layout

- Hands On with the Satek Cyborg 5.1 Headset

http://www.gearlog.com/2008/02/hands_on_with_the_satek_cybor.php

When it comes to computer headsets, I generally think of companies like Plantronics and Logitech for clear communication and ease of installation. Some headsets offer excellent mic quality at the cost of sound playback, and others offer good in-ear sound but have a terrible microphone. Now, Satek has entered the game with the Satek Cyborg 5.1 stereo headset. The Cyborg proved easy to use, easy to install, providing exceptional sound quality, both in my ears and over the microphone.

- Hands On: the mAudio xSession Pro

http://www.gearlog.com/2007/11/maudio_xsession_pro_not_for_pu.php

I was skeptical when I unpacked the mAudio xSession Pro mixer and audio controller. It looked cool, but when I picked it up I realized it was incredibly light. My worries were soothed when I plugged it into my computer, installed the software, and wound up making some incredible mixes, all within minutes. It was a little easier for me to get used to since I'm a DJ, but even someone with no experience behind the turntables could plug this into a PC, import some music to a playlist, and get a party started with minimal effort. It may not take a lot of skill to use, but I was pleased to see that it did take some skill to use well. Even so, by the time I was finished with the review unit, I was so pleased that I had already begun shopping around for one.

- Why Are Rented Movies Okay, but Rented Music Not?

<http://www.gearsandwidgets.com/2010/02/03/spinning-gears-why-are-rented-movies-okay-but-rented-music-not/>

... We're all comfortable with the concept that we pay a monthly fee to watch as many movies as we can stand or the mail can deliver to us, and when we're finished watching or we send it back, the movie's gone forever unless we want to watch it again. When we cancel our accounts with Netflix or Blockbuster Online, our access to that content is gone forever.

So, then, why isn't the same for subscription music services? The Zune Marketplace, Rhapsody, Napster, all of those services operate using exactly the same business model, if not more generous than the video services' are. The Zune Marketplace, for example, gives you a number of credits you can spend monthly to download and permanently own the songs you really like, instead of losing access to them if you ever terminate your account. Netflix doesn't say every month "you've been such a great customer, why don't you keep these movies from your queue, go ahead, take them," but in order for a service like the Zune Marketplace to survive, they have to.

Why are we so okay with essentially leasing our movies from Netflix and Blockbuster Online, but we're not okay with leasing our music from Zune Marketplace and Rhapsody in the exact same way? I have a couple of ideas, but it mostly has to do with history and perception – not functionality. Let's dive in. ...

- Will the iPad Save Publishing and Content Producers?

<http://www.gearsandwidgets.com/2010/04/14/spinning-gears-will-the-ipad-save-publishing-and-content-production-companies/>

... The trick is that the iPad itself won't save content producers from themselves; neither will Android mobile phones, or the iPhone, or any other smartphone. Neither will subscription models that drive customers away instead of bringing them into the content that a producer creates. What will save content producers is the ability to quickly and creatively provide paid content optimization and added features, not paid content itself.

- Roll Your Own Drinks to Suit Your Tastes

<http://www.theclassygeek.com/2010/02/roll-your-own-drinks-to-suit-your-tastes/>

If there's anything I'm a huge fan of, it's customizing drinks to suit your own needs. I mean, I'm a geek, but I also love a good adult beverage – and when those two interests collide, I wind up making some crazy drinks at the bar to try and experiment with new flavor combinations. ...

Now I hear your cries already – it wouldn't save you any money to do this, and it wouldn't really get you anything terribly different from the genuine article – so why bother? I can answer that for you: control. You get complete and utter control over the mix of ingredients in your drink. If you prefer your Bailey's more chocolatey than it comes in the bottle, you can make it that way. If you prefer it creamier, you can do that as well. If you prefer it with more vanilla flavor, you can do that too – it's entirely up to you.

INTERVIEWS

- TechTV Forever Interviews Becky Worley; Star of Yahoo! Tech's Hook Me Up!
<http://www.techtvforever.net/?p=874>

It's been a while since we last had the opportunity to talk to the wondrous Becky Worley, and we're glad she took the time out to talk to us about her most recent work, including her new show on Yahoo! Tech, Hook Me Up! as well as her recent global travels hunting for fame, fortune, and treasure!

It's been a while since the days of TechTV, but Becky is still definitely at it; doing gadget and gear segments for Good Morning America, travelling the world hunting treasure for the Travel Channel, working on a blog for Yahoo! Tech and working on Hook Me Up!, and staying on top of her personal life and keeping active in the community!