

Q&A

Ray Shaw

Q What are the advantages, if any, in using Gmail over a Windows program like Outlook Express?

A Gmail is a web-based email system provided by Google. Being web-based your material is stored on their web servers and you can access it, just as you can access any web-based email like Hotmail, from any PC or even over your data-enabled mobile phone. Windows Mail and its forerunner Outlook Express are free mail clients that reside on your PC and store your mail locally. They will access Gmail as well. Gmail is interesting for its built-in spam control, use of Google to search and managing email in a "conversation view" that is similar to an internet forum. But it still has a long way to go before I would trust my email with it.

Q I want to transfer music from cassette tapes to the computer hard drive so that I can burn CDs. Alternatively, how do I bring it into iTunes?

A Just run a sound cable from the cassette player to the PC's line-in jack. Then you will need a sound recorder (let's assume you don't want to edit and clean up the sound too much) like Audacity (audacity.sourceforge.net). It can also burn .wav files to CD. Once the files are on your PC you can import them into iTunes so it will load on to an iPod.

Q Since Christmas my ADSL internet connection has become unreliable and frequently drops out. My modem is a Netcomm NB1300 that is now a few years old. Would changing it to a newer, more powerful modem help?

A Changing a modem will not compensate for line quality issues and you should pursue your ISP to get them to request a line quality check from whichever company provides the copper to your house. You should, however, go to www.netcomm.com.au and download the latest drivers and firmware, which may assist. Also check that you have line micro-filters/splitters on all phone points and disconnect any older phones or devices that are no longer in use.

Q We have trouble receiving Windows Mail and accessing the internet. Our connection is terribly slow or just freezes. We get the error message "Ox.800CCCOF". I have looked at this error message on the web and it is recommended that a free program called RegCure will fix the problem.

A Do not use RegCure. Like DriverCure, it is a bait-and-switch program that tells you it can cure things but then charges you to do so. The issue is probably due to your anti-virus software and/or some corruption in Windows. A qualified technician could sort this out easily for less than \$100 and give you a better result than snake oil programs.

Q I have been trying to access your website (www.rayshaw.com.au) without success. Are your previous Q&As still available in some other way?

A My site was hacked and every time I get it online a bot attacks it again. I can't afford to pay for a new site at present so it's down for a while. Several of my columns have been archived on *The Courier-Mail* website (www.couriermail.com.au) and can be accessed if you search for "Ray Shaw".

Send questions to hitech@qnp.newstfd.com.au with Ray Shaw in the subject field or post to The Editor, Connect, GPO Box 130, Brisbane, 4001.

iPhone power \$59.95

THE APPLE iPhone won over many followers with its touchscreen and finger-friendly menus. But its battery is not so popular due to its tendency to run out of puff prematurely. Kensington's new gadget can rescue iPhone users from this calamity. The iPod and iPhone Mini Battery Pack & Charger connects to your favourite Apple product to deliver an extra three hours of talk time or 30 hours of music playback. An LED battery meter even tells you how much power it has left in the tank.

Kensington: 1300 366 376, au.kensington.com

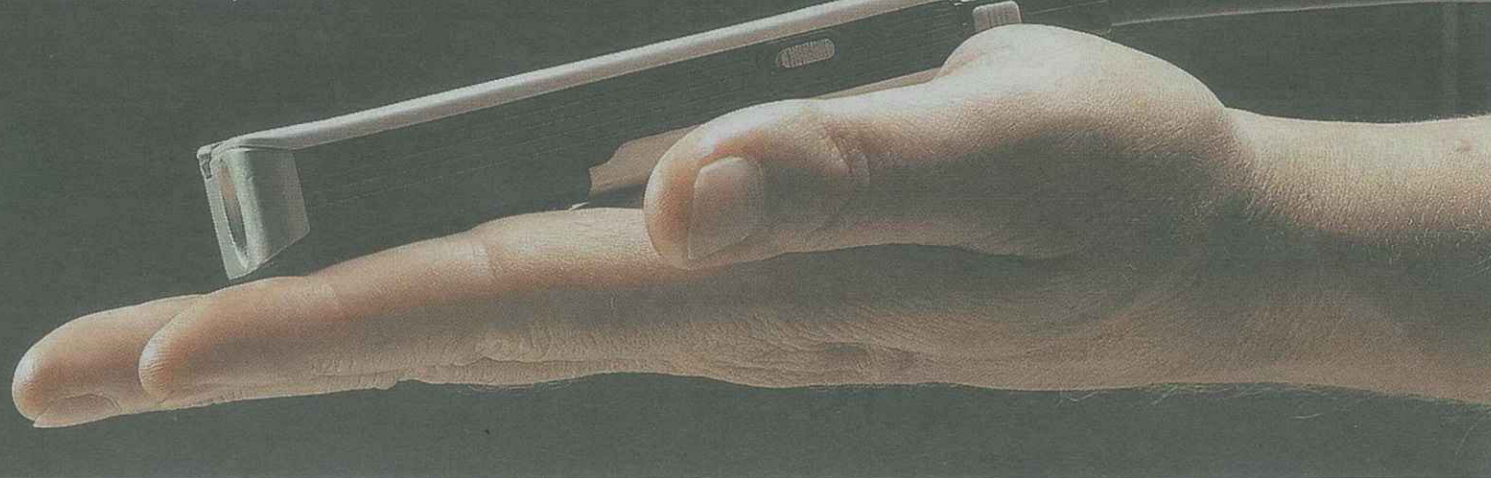


Kensington

Mini projector \$725

MOVIE projectors really can fit into your pocket these days. 3M is the latest company to launch a miniature, battery-powered projector, and its effort weighs 152g and is about the size of your palm. The Micro Professional Projector MPro110 will beam movies, images or even documents on to the nearest wall at up to 1.2m in size, and will do so for up to 60 minutes per battery charge. The gadget comes with an AC adaptor, is video capable and will connect to standard tripods.

3M: 136 136, www.3mmpro.com.au



Products

Jennifer Dudley-Nicholson

Discount netbook \$499

WHEN you're undercutting other netbooks, you know your computer is cheap. The Kogan Technologies Agora Netbook is the first in Australia to launch under the \$500 barrier and features most of what you'd expect from a portable PC. It weighs 1.2kg and has a 1.6GHz Intel Atom processor, 1GB RAM, 160GB hard drive, a 1.3-megapixel webcam and 3 USB ports. The only thing missing is Microsoft Windows: it uses the gOS operating system, a variant of Ubuntu Linux. Kogan Technologies: 1300 304 292, www.kogan.com.au



Water-friendly MP3 player \$169

SWIMMERS who love music can listen to music while they exercise, thanks to this updated release from NU. The company has released its second-generation waterproof MP3 player in the Dolphin Touch, which now features a curved touchpad and two-line liquid crystal monitor. This waterbaby also comes with an FM tuner capable of underwater reception and stereo earbuds, an armband and a pen clip. NU: 1300 727 474, www.nu-global.com



High-zoom camera \$1099

WHO needs a DSLR when compact cameras do as much as this? The newly released Sony Cyber-shot HX1 camera packs a lot in, including a long-reaching 28-560mm lens, Intelligent Auto setting and an Exmor CMOS sensor that enables the camera to take up to 10 photos per second at its full 9.1-megapixel resolution. The HX1 also captures full HD video and features a new Sweep Panorama mode that stitches photos together. Sony: 1300 720 071, www.sony.com.au

