

# hotgear

Reviews by Richard Conrad



### Headphones \$149.95

GERMAN electronics maker Sennheiser has released three fab new headphones for our portable listening pleasure: the \$99.95 HD 218, the \$149.95 HD 228 (above) and the \$199.95 HD 238. The HD 218 is an over-the-ears design for cutting background clatter when out and about. The HD 228 has a closed design, extra-soft cushioning and a rich bass sound. The HD 238 has high-end, open-style 'phones to please fussy listeners at home or on the move.

[www.syntec.com.au](http://www.syntec.com.au)



### Game console \$249

THIS limited-edition release of the best-selling Nintendo DS Lite in "metallic rose" (above) is packaged with the *More Brain Training* game as a Mother's Day gift. To sweeten the deal, Nintendo will make a donation to the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre.

[www.nintendo.com.au](http://www.nintendo.com.au)



### Laptop lock \$29.95

LAPTOPS are vulnerable to theft, and smaller, lighter netbooks are even more so. Kensington's Netbook Security Lock is a compact variation of its popular laptop lock. The new netbook version with a four-digit combination lock has a coiled cable that expands to 1.8m.

[au.kensington.com](http://au.kensington.com)

### USB gimmick \$49.95

THE USB port on computers can power a weird and wonderful range of gadgets, including the USB Bamboo Water Fountain (left). This quaint 17.5cm-high poly-resin desktop ornament cycles water up from the base. As anyone who's ever spilt a drink on their PC keyboard or laptop would know, liquids and electronics are not a good mix — so position with care.

[www.latestbuy.com.au](http://www.latestbuy.com.au)

### Portable media players \$649 and \$799

SONY Walkmans ruled the streets in the 1980s and '90s — first portable cassette players, then CD players. Apple iPods stole the market when audio went digital and held it when video was added to the mix. Sony's latest effort to claw back lost ground is Walkman X-series MP3 players. There are two models: the 16GB NWZ-X1050F (above) for \$649 and the 32GB NWZ-X1060F for \$799. With 3-inch OLED touchscreens they tackle the iPod touch head-on. Killer features include digital noise cancellation, claimed to remove 98 per cent of ambient noise on planes, trains and buses. As with the iPod touch, the X-series includes wi-fi for web browsing, emails, podcast downloads and YouTube streaming. In shops from late next month.

[www.sony.com.au](http://www.sony.com.au)



### Waterproof MP3 player \$169

ABOUT \$40 more than the new iPod Shuffle is the NU Dolphin Touch Waterproof MP3 Player. Both digital audio players have 4GB of storage, but the Dolphin Touch player and headphones are waterproof to a metre (IP67 rating) for use while splashing around at water sports. The Dolphin also includes an FM radio, touchpad controls, surround sound and a small two-line screen to display track information.

[www.bluechipit.com.au](http://www.bluechipit.com.au)

## extratech

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Fanatics Welcome?

# New way to think thin

LED joins LCD and plasma in the TV stakes, reports **Stephen Fenech**

**A** NEW species of television screen will hit the Australian market next month.

We're switching from CRT (cathode ray tube) to plasma and LCD. Now there's a new choice and acronym to learn: LED (light-emitting diode).

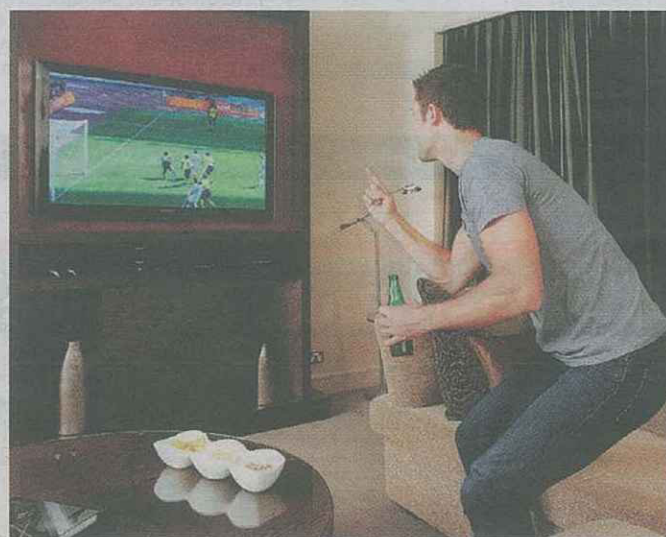
The diodes are positioned around the edges of the panel. Millions of mirrors behind the screen reflect the light exactly where it needs to be, meaning finer picture quality and black levels equal to those found on high-quality plasmas.

LED also enables the building of much thinner large-screen TVs because a bulkier light source no longer needs to be sandwiched inside the panels.

The result is a television about 2.5cm thin.

But picture quality is the No.1 factor consumers consider when buying a new TV, followed by design and energy efficiency.

Samsung's LED range delivers on all fronts. White LED lighting handles



**Six stars:** the Samsung Series 8 LED TV is energy efficient.

colour the same way the human eye does. White light is broken down into the colours of the spectrum, resulting in more natural reproduction.

The contrast ratio is listed at 3,000,000:1, delivering blacker blacks and crisp, bright colours.

No fluorescent lighting means no mercury, which is a plus for the environment.

Samsung's LED range will use up to 40 per cent less power than a similar-sized LCD TV.

The LED panels will earn six

energy-rating stars (the more the greener). LCD earns four and plasma is on the nose with only two.

For example, Samsung's 139cm (55-inch) LED uses the same amount of energy as a 81cm (32-inch) LCD TV.

The 200Hz Motion Plus picture processing in Samsung's top LED model adds frames to make action-packed movie scenes smoother.

The Hz level can be adjusted to suit the source material.

The new Samsung LED TVs bring the internet to viewers too, via Media 2.0. Widgets (small applications) put news, sport, weather and YouTube clips on the bottom edge of the screen so as not to detract from the main program.

More widgets to come later will enable the viewing of sites such as Facebook and use programs such as Google Earth.

A built-in content library contains recipes, exercises, games and a gallery of famous art to be used as screensavers, thus turning your panel into a masterpiece.

There's a USB port for plugging in USB drives so you can play video files and music and display pictures.

With the addition of a wireless dongle, the LED panel can stream content from your computer or a network hard drive to the panel via the local wireless network.

There'll be three series of LED TVs from Samsung: 6, 7 and 8, with screens of 101cm (40-inch), 116cm (46-inch) and 139cm (55-inch). Only the 8000 series offers 200Hz.

Series 6 costs \$3699 (40-inch), \$4499 (46) and \$5499 (55); 7 costs \$3899 (40), \$4699 (46) and \$5799 (55); and 8 costs \$5299 (46) and \$6999 (55).

The first units are due in shops here next month.