



Connection Reflection

Demonstrate an Idea Digitally

By: Dr. Henry Thiele
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Connections

One of my favorite activities is suddenly much more possible to accomplish—the use of pictures and video to demonstrate an idea. The sharp price drop in digital cameras and digital video recorders has made it easier to get the tools required for these demonstrations into the hands of teachers and students. If you are looking for something to give your favorite student, teacher, or school over the holiday season you might want to consider the following:

The Flip: (www.theflip.com) is one of the easiest tools I have ever seen for recording



The Flip comes in a variety of "designable" cases

digital video and instantly moving it on to a computer. It has a built-in USB connection that flips (hence the name) out of the side of the camera. You can then plug it into your computer and instantly download, edit, and share your videos.

Ranging in price from \$150 for regular definition, to \$230 for high definition, this pocket-sized camera records up to 1 hour of video footage running on 2 AA batteries and is always ready for a quick shoot. It even has a built in LCD screen and speakers so you can see and hear what you just shot. The only real downside is that it is designed for video and does not capture still images.

If you are looking for the perfect all-

in-



Dr. Henry Thiele

imaging device, you might want to consider the Sanyo Xacti (<http://tinyurl.com/5uhz2n>). This palm-sized device records 6 megapixel images and



Sanyo Xacti Compact Digital Movie Camera

640X480 video at 30fps onto an SD or SDHC flash memory card. You can even interrupt video recording for a quick still shot with the click of a button—and, it works under water! The base model can be found online for

\$225 this season with higher end models going as high as \$800. It has a rechargeable cell phone-type battery that holds a great charge. The video compression it uses allows for 2.5 hours of video on a 2GB SD card. This is a perfect camera for every basic shot you want to take. It is very easy to use; in fact my 3-year-old

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Special points of interest:

- Technology ideas about this holiday season!
- Video and pictures are excellent classroom project tools.
- Have you tried a netbook? You'll like many of its features.
- Media cards make great storage devices.

Finally, Great Laptops at Great Prices Here Come the Netbooks

By: Judy Okazaki
Executive Director

As you consider gifts for this holiday season a netbook might just fit the bill. The netbook, also known as the mini-laptop or the sub-compact laptop is great for anyone who is on the go. Laptop manufacturers aren't excited because netbooks are low cost computers. If you can be satisfied



Acer Aspire One

with a netbook then you might not be spending big bucks on larger, more fully loaded laptop models. Netbooks are great in many ways. Netbooks are significantly smaller so they take up much less space in a tote bag, backpack or even a large purse than a laptop. This also means it can easily fit on your lap when sitting in an audience or for times where you might have limited table space, like at a student desk. For a college student the netbooks are practical for carrying around campus. Netbooks are light in weight (the lightest model is only 2 pounds) so your back and shoulders won't be stressed from carrying one around.

Even though the netbooks are much smaller than traditional laptops the



Samsung NC10
Top Choice

you want to connect to the internet, take notes, do some word processing or make presentations netbooks are a great solution.

How do you decide which one is right for you?

Just compare the various features and decide which are most important to you. Battery life ranges from 2 hours and 20 minutes to almost 7 hours.



Asus Eee
Cost Effective

Screen size will be either 8.9" or 10". Weight without the power adaptor will range from 2.4 pounds to 3.2 pounds and with the power adaptor from 3 pounds to 3.6 pounds. Although you can save money purchasing one with the Linux operating

system, for compatibility you're better off considering one that uses XP Home or Vista Business. There are variations in hard drive size but unless you need to store a lot on your internal hard drive, this is not a major concern. Remember, you can always put presentations, pictures and music on external USB

drives. There are other variations in features, such as memory, wireless transfer rate and quality of the video display, but the variations are minimal.

Of the many models available, we recommend five: the Acer Aspire One, ASUS Eee, HP 2133, MSI Wind and the Samsung NC10.



MSI Wind

If money isn't an issue the NC10 is definitely the first choice with the longest battery time at almost seven hours, one of the lightest and one of the largest keyboards, but at \$478.99 it is at the top of the price range. The bargain recommendation is the ASUS Eee priced around \$345 and found every once in a while for as low as \$299. Although the heaviest at 3.2 pounds, this is a great deal.

For a few dollars more the two



HP 2133

models that come closest to the NC10 are the Acer Aspire One and the HP 2133.

The netbook may be the right gift for someone on your gift list, or it might be one of those gifts you put on your own wish list. As with any



Judy Okazaki

External Portable Storage—A Great Gift!

By: Alice Schmitz
Director of Education and
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"It's the holiday season . . ." The songs of the season bring visions of sleigh rides, fires with roasting chestnuts, cups of steaming hot cocoa, and being home for the holidays. I love the songs, visions, smells, excitement, and social gatherings of the season. On the other hand, it can all be stressful, and I'm thinking that most of you, our members, have a different reality than sleigh rides and sitting by the fire sipping hot cocoa right now.

Most schools end December 19. If you celebrate Christmas, that gives just five days to do it all. If you celebrate Hanukkah, you have even fewer days! Hopefully *The Connection Reflection* can make gift selection a little easier whether it be for you or someone else. Dr. Thiele's suggestion of a Flip video will definitely make your holidays more fun—see you on You Tube! The netbooks Judy Okazaki discusses will make your work life easier—unless weight lifting is one of your New Year's resolutions. Here's another idea. Why not give a gift of external portable storage. You can back up home computers, carry picture files, or store music for a Smartphone. Since external, portable storage comes in a variety of forms, here are a few that may work for friends, students, or yourself!

USB Flash Drives

You may already have one or more USB flash drive(s) which seem to most



commonly hold between 1 gigabyte (that's 1 billion bytes) and 16+ gigabytes of data. They are manufactured on key chains, in colors, sealed to block perspiration—yes, you can work out with some models in your pocket! They come from a variety of manufacturers such as Lexar, SanDisk, or Kingston. Their names may include descriptions of speed and reliability such as "turbo," "lightning," "cruzer" or "survivor," and they are priced from under \$10 to over \$100 depending on the amount of storage provided. A must for anyone using multiple computers.

Storage Cards

Storage cards, commonly identified by specific name, Memory Card, SD (Secure Data), or CF (Compact Flash), hold data, pictures, music, etc. just like a flash drive. Have you thought to use a storage card for applications other than digital camera pictures? You could carry your presentations on a storage card. They, too, are priced from under \$10 to over \$100 depending on the amount of storage provided.

I like to have a card reader for the storage cards I use in my digital cameras. That way, I'm not always looking for a camera cable to transfer pictures to the computer. I just plug the reader into a USB



port. Many printers have slots for storage cards too—just plug it into the slot and print!

This holiday season, there seem to be several suppliers who are packaging a storage card with a USB reader.

Portable USB Drives

Do you find that you have large quantities of data to carry around? You may have heard of "My Passport." It is a portable, external hard drive the size of a 3" x 5" index card. It is a great off-site data backup solution.

Common storage capacities of these large portable USB drives are between 160GB and 500GB though there are drives with 1T of storage (that's a terabyte or one trillion bytes of data) and is most likely more storage than you need. Priced between \$100 and \$200+, you could transport a lot of student projects back and forth with these devices! Seagate, Western Digital, and Iomega are some of the manufacturers.

I regularly run the backup program found on my Gateway computer by saving the backup file to my portable USB drive. I'd be lost without the files on my computer and crushed if the computer crashed and I lost the years of photos stored there. Even if you



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For information on RTI, check out our website. There is a link on the left side of the home page for Special Education Topics. Then, click on RTI for links to a variety of articles, tips, models, and other pieces of information

Additional Gift-Giving Ideas



New-Generation Rechargeable Batteries. Unlike older rechargeables, which lost much of their power in a few months, the newer batteries keep a charge for up to a year.

Pulse Smartpen by Livescribe. This is a must have gift for students and business men and women. Its a pen and audio recorder and links what was said with what was being written at the time, so written notes will be in sync with audio.



Satellite-Navigation Systems. Prices have fallen sharply over the past few years on GPS Nuvi 360, originally listed at \$600, can now be found for as little as \$175 at Amazon or \$230 at Best Buy. A feature worth paying for—voice turn-by-turn directions.

Peek Email Device. For the T-Mobile user who needs mobile e-mail? This device tackles just that single task. No phone, no browser and no camera. It has an easy-to-use interface with simple setup menus.



Admetior Digital Spoon Scale. Serious cooks scoff at volume measurement for exacting recipes. Instead, weight is the way to go. Use it to spoon out a portion of fleur de sel (French sea salt) and an instant reading gives its mass to the nearest tenth of a gram (300 grams max). \$30

Roll-Up Piano Keyboard. Forty-nine-key digital piano. Offers 100 instrument tones, 100 rhythm accompaniments and piano features. Records and plays back—you can relive your greatest performances! (Editor's Note: Saw this at Restoration Hardware and loved it!)



Digital Picture Frame. A must have for the individual who loves to take pictures with a digital camera. They are so competitively priced right now and can be found in larger screen sizes than in past years.

Wii Fit Balance Board. And what list would be complete without the most sought-after item of the season. The Wii Fit Balance Board controls on-screen action with your movements on the balance board as you work your way through a variety of challenges aimed at getting you off the couch and into the action. Good luck trying to procure one; however, you might like to purchase on-line for delivery after

