Latest on DVD Players



An employee of Japan's electronics giant Matsushita Electric Industrial displays the new portable DVD player "DVD-LX97", at the company's showroom in Tokyo. Priced 775 USD, this little gizmo is equipped with the world's first digital broadcasting tuner and a 9-inch wide LCD display and it enables a user to manually adjust it to a variety of different angles.

Seagate Snips Its Cord



At the rate they're going, the folks at Seagate will overrun the planet with hard drives by the end of 2007. The company recently announced a whole slew of new drives, including this 2.5-inch wireless USB number that will eventually work with the up-and-coming breed of wireless USB chipsets. That doesn't mean a whole lot right now, but within the next couple of years, it could be a really big deal. In addition to the wireless drive, Seagate introduced six other new drives, including the world's first 2.5-inch 7200-rpm notebook drive with 100GB of capacity, the Seagate Momentus 7200.1 SATA.

Your computer tells if you are annoying

A hand-held computer that can pick up on people's emotions is being developed to help people with autism relate to those around them. If the wearer fails to generate the listeners interest in his conversation, the computer vibrates. This would alert the autistic user, as the person they are conversing starts showing signs of getting bored or annoyed. An autistic person lacks the ability to pick up on social cues. Rana El Kaliouby of the Media Lab at the MIT says that these type of people fail to notice that they are boring and confusing, their listeners which could turn-out to be very damaging. "It's sad because people then avoid having conversations with them," he said. The device consists of a camera small enough to be pinned to the side of a pair of glasses, connected to a hand-held computer running image recognition software plus software that can read the emotions these images show. If the wearer seems to be failing to engage his or her listener, the software makes the hand-held computer vibrate. The software picks out movements of the eyebrows, lips and nose, and tracks head movements such as tilting, nodding and shaking, which it then associates with the emotion the actor was showing. Timothy Bickmore of Northeastern University in Boston, who studies ways in which computers can be made to engage with people's emotions, says the device would be a great teaching aid. "I would love it if you could have a computer looking at each student in the room to tell me when 20 per cent of them were bored or confused," he said.