

the digital life

edited by jesse kuch kuchj@tcp.newsLtd.com.au



▶ BITS & BYTES



In the frame

Imagine updating images on a digital frame through email. That's what the new Kodak Pulse 7-inch digital photo frame can do thanks to wi-fi connectivity and its own email address. Give this to your parents or friends and you can keep them updated with the latest photos from anywhere in the world.

■ The Kodak Pulse 7-inch is \$179 from Kodak.com

Step up for Sony

The latest addition to the Sony digital SLR range is the Alpha 390, a camera that will be right at home in the hands of either a beginner or a professional. The device has 14.2 megapixel resolution, an improved CCD sensor and SteadyShot image stabilisation. The Alpha 390 has a mini HDMI terminal that is optimised for faster transfer of image files and makes it easy to display your pictures on a flatscreen television. It also works with interchangeable lenses from other Sony Alpha models.



■ The Sony Alpha 390 retails for \$799 (single lens) or \$999 (twin lens) from sony.com.au

Noise assassin

Jawbone, a standout in the Bluetooth headset market, has just released its latest model – the Icon. It features Jawbone's proprietary NoiseAssassin, the world's first and only military-standard noise elimination technology. Icon comes with the MyTalk software platform, allowing users to personalise the device and download updates via the web. An easy access button can also be programmed to link to services such as voice mail and directory assistance. Simultaneous multipoint means users can link two mobiles to the Icon and switch between calls on the different devices.

■ The Jawbone Icon is \$129 from jawbone.com

Ride the wave to a good night's sleep

Sleepless nights might be a thing of the past thanks to this nifty new Philips device, writes STEPHEN FENECH

WHEN we were infants our parents used to rock us off to sleep – now a new device which can simulate the same sensation is helping insomniacs finally get some rest.

Philips Sleepwave, which was researched and developed in Australia, is attached to the mastoid bone behind the ear using a sensor cable and sends electric pulses into the vestibular system.

This stimulates the balance centres in our middle ear to create a gentle swaying or rocking sensation.

Paul O'Sullivan, from Philips Home Healthcare Solutions division, says the Sleepwave is the first product of its kind in the world and offers a non-drug alternative for insomniacs that won't have the hangover effect and addiction seen with sleeping pills.

"They've known for a long time that people rock their babies to sleep and people fall asleep riding in cars and trains," he said.

"It's that rocking motion that seems to put people to sleep."

The Sleepwave device, which is about the size of an MP3 player, has been tested in Philips' sleep labs in Sydney and Melbourne and was found to decrease 67 per cent of severe to moderate insomniacs



down to a level of no clinical significance.

Jayne Brown, 42, from Melbourne participated in the trial after 15 years of insomnia.

"I've tried tablets and relaxation methods and nothing seemed to work," she said.

"I decided to try it (Sleepwave) and found I was sleeping extremely well with it which was an adjustment for my body because I am not used to that much sleep.

"The first time I tried it was strange – I was sitting upright and looking at the floor and

you're rocking but you're not moving. When I lay down it was a very soothing feeling."

Dr Anup Desai, consultant physician for sleep and respiratory disorders, says the Sleepwave is a novel way of treating insomnia.

"Insomnia is a very common problem and it not very well treated in the community," he said.

"A lot of people take sleeping tablets for too long when they should be using other therapies."

Using the Sleepwave is so simple that anyone can operate

it without much fuss.

The device is attached with a cable behind each ear on the mastoid bone which sits above the vestibular system (middle ear) which controls balance.

Once it is activated it sends an electrical impulse into the middle ear to create a sensation that feels like a swaying or rocking motion.

Device switches off automatically once the person is asleep.

■ The Philips Sleepwave retails for \$440 and can be prescribed to patients by a GP or sleep doctor. It will also hit local pharmacies soon.

▶▶ GAME ON!

POWERED BY IGN.COM

Metro 2033 (XBox 360 - THQ / 4A Games)

In this post-apocalyptic title, Russia has been ruined by nuclear devastation. You play young survivor Artyom, fighting his way through hordes of mutants in dark, grimy tunnels alongside some very odd types (with, be warned, quite foul mouths)



to unravel a mystery.

You know, it takes the jolt of being immersed in an accent other than American to realise how thoroughly saturated the game market is with US-developed titles.

This Russian-developed game gives a taste of a culture rarely encountered outside Soviet-era caricatures, but perhaps sacrifices too much action for atmosphere. You'll spend a lot of time at the various metro stations, meeting allies, overhearing stories and trading ammo, the game's currency, for new weapons and survival gear.

Maybe we're playing this wrong, but guns seem so expensive that I often go without buying anything at a depot.

The action parts mostly involve trying to minimise ammo use as beasts jump out of the many shadows.

Between the quick controls and the detailed environments, I got motion sick quickly.

By the time I started to suspect that there might be something in the shadows willing to help, I'd largely lost interest, stuck at a frustrating point where I die over and over.

There were also some interesting moments with language conversions.

At the start, I struggled to find an item that was left in a "crate", only to discover the "crate" was actually a locker.

Metro 2033's Russian roots give it intriguing novelty, but not enough to overcome its slow pace and frustrating gameplay.

Maybe if developers have included some kind of multiplayer element, either online or split screen, it may have increased the game's long term appeal.

But with so many solid shooters out there on the market, it's hard to be captivated by something that doesn't quite reach the lofty heights of its competitors.

■ Metro 2033 is out now. Review by Rob Farquhar and Jesse Kuch.

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