

top gear

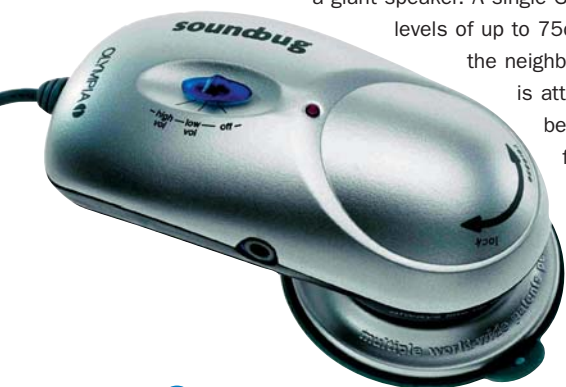
⬇ Olympia Soundbug

Speaker alternative

Soundbug has been developed as an alternative to headphones or loudspeakers for use with portable CDs, MP3s, handheld games consoles and so on. Just smaller than a computer mouse, it plugs into a standard headphone socket and can be stuck to a wall or piece of furniture by its sucker. Using the signal from the audio device the Soundbug creates a sounding-board out of the surface to which it's attached, turning it into a giant speaker. A single Soundbug can generate sound levels of up to 75dB (decibels), which may annoy the neighbours to whose adjoining wall it is attached. Two bugs can also be linked in parallel to generate full stereo sound.

Olympia: www.soundbug.biz

Price: £29.99



⬇ Pogo Flipster

Mini entertainment centre/MP4 player

Flipster is about the size of a deck of cards and plays digital audio and video files, shows off digital pictures and plays voice recordings and video games. Running Windows CE, it features a clamshell design that flips open to reveal a 2.5in TFT (thin-film transistor) colour display. It can connect to a PC via USB and comes with software that lets you drag and drop files to be downloaded to the device. Flipster is available in two versions – one with 64MB and one with 128MB of internal flash memory. It also includes an expansion slot for MMC (multimedia card) or SD (Secure Digital) memory cards.

Pogo: www.pogoproducts.com

Price: around £280



⬆ Logitech Z-560

PC speakers

Logitech's Z-560 system is a set of five surround-sound speakers that claims to offer a mighty 400W of noise. Its four satellite drivers feature a polished aluminium phased plug designed, according to Logitech, for supreme tone quality. There's also a 'brute force' subwoofer, which comes with M3D Matrix technology to create more realistic surround sound. The product also includes a TouchSound control centre that includes volume, fader and bass controls, so you can easily adjust the sound for different applications.

Logitech: www.logitech.com

Price: £199.99



⬇ Yamaha DD55

Electronic drum kit

Thanks to its volume control the DD55 is a fantastic way of thrashing out some tunes without disturbing the neighbours. Yamaha's electronic drum kit has an impressive 192 different sounds built in, plus there's an option to program the device with any extra sounds you choose. There are 100 songs for you to play along to, so you can teach yourself how to drum out a tune without too much difficulty – you can even customise the songs with your own beats.

The Yamaha is easy to play (well, as easy as any drum kit) and the pads can be switched between stick and hand playing, which changes the sensitivity and creates a realistic drumming experience.

Yamaha: www.yamaha-music.co.uk

Price: £180

⬆ LG MZ-60PZ10

Plasma display panel

This huge plasma display screen measures a massive 60in, which will create (almost) life-sized viewing. The silver-encased screen is part of LG's range, although its incorporated speakers and stand mark it out from the rest. The silver-encased TV can be attached to the wall or used on the stand provided. It has a resolution of 1,280x720 (XGA) with a 160-degree viewing angle. The screen also features PC, video and DVD input sockets for connectivity with a multitude of devices.

LG: www.lge.co.uk

Price: TBA



⬆ Packard Bell PocketGear 2060

Personal digital assistant

Packard Bell claims this 146g PDA (personal digital assistant) is the smallest and lightest device on the market. The PocketGear 2060 runs an Intel-powered 206MHz processor and offers 64MB of RAM, so it's more than capable of word processing, emailing and running other applications while on the move. The 3.5in screen's 320x240 resolution makes text easy to read and there's a USB cradle for recharging the battery and for synchronising with a PC. The unit comes with a built-in SD (Secure Digital) card slot and can be fitted with a Rocketeer module that accepts CompactFlash II or PC Cards. This extra storage facility makes it easy to add on modems, WLAN (wireless local area network) and Bluetooth.

Packard Bell: www.packardbell.co.uk

Price: £429



⬆ Mitsubishi IC

Mobile phone

This design-concept phone isn't available to buy yet but is part of Trium's range of communication products. The IC (intimacy and conviviality) bears little resemblance to a common handset. It consists of two display units, one on top of the other, which can open out like a fan or be separated and used by two people. During a call the upper unit acts as a video that shows who you are talking to, and the lower display is for the phone's operation, including dialling and organising. The IC will not be launched (at least) until 3G has taken off and will incorporate much of what 3G promises, such as streaming video.

Mitsubishi: www.mitsubishi-telecom.com

Price: TBA

