

Business & Innovation

THE BOSTON GLOBE MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2005

Personal Tech

BY MARK BAARD | HE CAN BE REACHED AT MARK@BAARD.COM



DIGITAL RECORDING

'Widescreen' portable video from DISH Network

Have you seen the TV commercial in which lanky kids loll on highway medians and in airport lounges, watching TV shows on their cellphones?

The blank expressions on the faces of those actors conjured for us memories of the subservient TV viewing masses in the John Carpenter film "They Live."

But if you insist on fulfilling every marketer's dream by carrying a TV in your jacket, why not go all the way, with a portable widescreen LCD set, one that stores hours of near-DVD quality video, recorded directly from your home entertainment system?

The PocketDISH AV700E, made for the DISH Network by Archos, is a widescreen all-in-one unit with a 7-inch viewing area and enough disk space to accommodate 100 movies or 20,000 songs. It can plug right into your satellite DVR receiver or other home video equipment, making it easy to make your favorite programs portable.

The larger screen on the AV700E should also help to hypnotize more than one little passenger in the back seat on those long holiday road trips.

INFORMATION

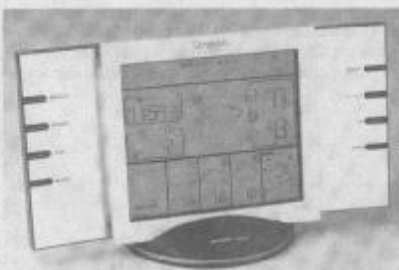
A rich data source for weather bugs

Do you dream of having your own weather station, but dread the thought of having to wire up one of those wind cup contraptions on your roof?

We have good news for you.

Oregon Scientific is taking the Y out of DIY with a console that provides more weather information than you could ever hope to get from your outdoor instruments.

The data displayed by the tabletop console, called the Complete Regional Weather Station with MSN Direct, come from the



Weather Channel. The console tunes into the MSN Direct satellite FM radio network.

The console's LCD simultaneously displays local temperature, humidity, wind speed, and direction. It also provides a three-day

forecast and many other data points of interest to weather junkies.

There are several Dick Tracy-like "smart watches" that pick up MSN Direct channels — those typically require paid subscriptions. But Oregon Scientific says the data the MSN Direct weather console receives are free.

CALENDAR

Digital backups for your (paper) datebook

Each New Year brings another opportunity to refill your old, reliable Pliofix datebook, or to reinvent yourself as a Moleskine-toting artist. You may even resolve to scrap your paper calendar altogether, and become a hotshot, PDA-wielding road warrior.

But this year brings even more options to the appointment-minded and calendar-conscious: ballpoint pens with miniature cameras that can record your every jot.

The Elephant Calendar is one such system: It permits you to continue writing the old-fashioned way, with pen on paper, secure in the knowledge that you have digital backup. The system includes a software CD and a paper calendar, whose pages have a special dot pattern that a camera "smart" pen uses to keep track of your writing.

When seated in its cradle, a smart pen, such as the Logitech iO2, transmits a copy of your handwritten notes to your PC. The iO2, which has a tiny camera near its tip, is about the size and weight of some cushioned ballpoint pens. The pen costs about \$200,



putting the Elephant Calendar package itself (\$40) at the cheap end of the deal.

The Elephant Calendar does more than copy your handwritten dates and appointments, however. It creates a truly navigable, digital calendar on your computer, which you can view by day, week, or month.

In January, you will also be able to post your calendar to the servers at Elephantcalendar.com to share it with your friends and workmates. That also amounts to triple backup redundancy in case you lose your book and fry your computer. (All of this depends, of course, on your being religious about docking your smart pen to the cradle every day.)

And if you have grown overly attached to your leather datebook, take heart: You can buy a loose-leaf version of the Elephant Calendar, which is compatible with certain versions of the Day Runner, Day-Timer, and FranklinCovey calendar books.