



User-Friendly stocking stuffers

IS SANTA Claus computer literate?

The question arises because so many people now have personal computers of so many different brands and styles that trying to put a little something under the tree for the computer-user in your family may be yet another exercise in frustration.

Is it possible to find something for a personal computer user, even if you're not really sure what kind of computer he has, or what type of software she uses? Something that costs less than \$20, comes in a small enough box to be gift-wrapped and won't make you look foolish when it's opened on Christmas morning?

In other words, are there such things as "one size fits all" computer accessories for non-computerized Santas?

"Absolutely," replies Tim Carr, market development manager in charge of more than 50 accessory products for 3M, the world's largest supplier of computer storage media.

There are a number of useful computer products that even the least knowledgeable computer shopper can

stuff in a stocking or slip under the tree with confidence that they'll be appreciated. And used.

For instance, almost every computer has a screen. A computer screen can create fatigue after extended periods of time. Some people get red eyes, tired eyes, even headaches. The dirtier the screen gets, the harder the eyes have to work. The screen gets dirty because it generates static, which attracts dust and debris just like the screen of a television set. Yet very few people clean their screen.

SCREEN CLEANING kits cost less than \$10. Most contain pretreated, disposable cleaning pads designed to remove dirt and debris while at the same time eliminating static buildup. 3M's system, called Clean 'N Safe, comes in a handy box that can be attached, removed and reattached to the side of the CRT screen.

For a stocking stuffer with a handsomer touch, try a Diskrite permanent felt-tip pen, but writes in permanent gold ink with a specially designed soft tip that allows it to be used safely,

even on the black PVC jackets of computer diskettes.

If Santa's Christmas fund is a little larger, a static control strip or pad can be a nice "touch." When the user touches the keyboard, static in the body can drain into the computer, zapping data or even ruining a delicate computer chip. An antistatic mat or strip is grounded, so touching it first allows the user to channel static away from the computer. Mats go under the computer or keyboard; 3M's anti-static strip can be positioned unobtrusively on the keyboard itself. They all sell for around \$20.

MOST COMPUTERS are hooked up to printers, for which there are lots of inexpensive printer accessories to choose from. A sturdy plastic Universal Printer Stand fits the printer, regardless of the style or brand being used, allowing paper to be stored and fed to the printer from below.

For platen (the black roller on the typewriter, printers and sheet and envelope feeders), there are cleaning kits like the Clean 'N Safe platen cleaner and restorer pak. Cleaning the platen

extends the life of that important part by restoring its "grip." That, in turn, prevents paper from sliding and also eliminates the transfer of ink and oils from the platen to the back of the paper going over it.

Does Santa need more ideas? How about a non-magnetic copyholder (magnetic fields can distort and destroy the computer user's data) that puts work at a comfortable eye level while saving desk space, and 3M's version can be folded up for compact storage when not in use.

Santa's helpers don't have to be full-fledged computer users to choose something a computer user will appreciate. Most computer stores carry a wide selection of computer accessories to fit almost any need or budget.

Water, then drain

Water poinsettias when the soil becomes slightly dry. Just lift the pot from its container and take it to the sink, water thoroughly and let drain.

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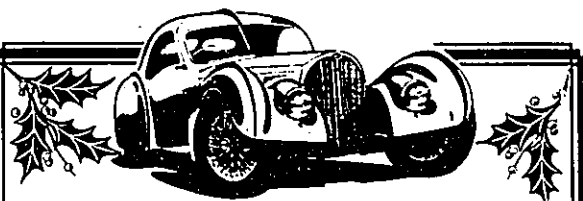
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