

Bastille-inspired revolutions in news

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Hidden treasure Power Meter gadget is free with free

Many of the Cyber Power UPS models for folks like us bundle Power Panel Personal Edition, a very cool helper app. Most users don't know that installing that also installs (but does not automatically activate) a very cool Power Meter desktop gadget. With 8 choices available we set ours to show how much power our system is drawing, the UPS battery charge status & how much runtime remains. (Saving this document just added 8 Watts while the drive was writing). Note that it's another gadget featured on their home page; that one is a Cyber Power product selector for the gang in IT. **Contact: Jonah Cagley, CyberPower Systems (Shakopee MN) 952-567-7943 jcagley@cpsww.com <http://cyberpowersystems.com>**

HoverCam doesn't just scan in a snap: auto page change

When you have more than one sheet to scan the Flex helper app that loads to your PC or Mac the first time you plug in a new HoverCam Mini 5 (\$249) has some amazing stuff to strut. One of our favorites: a motion detector watches for the page to change, gives you time to get your hand out of the way & automatically snaps a scan of each new page. We say "snap" because scanning takes much less than a second; what would you call it (other than cool, must-have & a wow)? **Contact: John Miewald, Pathway Innovations & Technologies Inc. (San Diego, CA) 858-750-3499x203 johnm@thehovercam.com <http://thehovercam.com>**

Boost-goosed bass not out of place in Blu Note

Normal A2DP stereo playback with a Spracht Aura Blu Note (\$99 list, \$50-75 online) is quite good, better than most Bluetooth speakers we get to hear, but it has 2 more tricks up its sleeve. Its buttoned-down sound feels closer to the ground when you tap its bass boost button (roomy, not boomy). It feels even roomier when you push the wide button & a psychoacoustic effect seems to make its speakers sound like they're yards apart. Many of you already have one to review (done that yet?); if you don't, push Gary's button. **Contact: Gary Crock, Spracht (Shanghai) 650-215-7500x206 gary.crock@spracht.com <http://spracht.com>**

TextBuster block thwarts attempts to unblock texting

Most texting blockers are apps that rely on GPS to detect motion; many teens or young adults can find workarounds to disable that protection. TextBuster (\$179 online & soon AutoZone) uses an easy-DIY hideaway hardware module so motion doesn't matter; when the car's on texting's off. Yes, there are Android or BlackBerry apps to install but that only happens with the car owner's cooperation, which involves hooking to his or her registration. Any attempt to uninstall the app gets reported & that's just one of several anti-tampering measures; get the full briefing (a unit, too) from Brett. **Contact: Brett Barta, TextBuster (Steubenville, OH) 800-561-1110x2131 brettb@textbuster.com <http://TextBuster.com>**

Stop giving iPad key pad the finger

Can you touch type on an iPad? That's kind of tough with no true home key. Can you hunt & peck or does your hand get in the way of those graphic substitutes for keys? Put a Touchfire (\$50) 3D keypad on any full-size iPad & use its more familiar keyboard look & feel to make the

capacitive connection to those characters. It's easier, faster, more accurate, less stressful & helps Steve. Ask him to get you a Touchfire to review. **Contact: Steve Isaac, Touchfire Inc. (Seattle, WA) 425-466-4177 steveis@touchfire.com <http://touchfire.com>**

TPMS wise disguise fools bad guys

In one Sherlock Holmes story, a man everyone regards as wealthy actually secures his income by dressing as a beggar & panhandling. The Zimri TPMS (Tire Pressure Monitoring System, \$169, soon rising to \$199) hides some elegant electronics behind a very useful but not very expensive-looking plastic face on the monitoring unit that occupies the lighter plug. Left in, it doesn't look like something that's worth breaking in to steal & in fact there have been very few instances of these ever being stolen. Ask Doug to get you one to review & see how all that value hides behind a very proletarian face. **Contact: Doug Lee, Zimri Group (Baldwin Park, CA) 626-968-9000x318 doug@zimri-group.com <http://zimrispeakers.com>**

Special Report: Why NAS

Network Attached Storage devices keep reinventing themselves. Network file servers made sense in an era when storage was considerably more expensive; of late its deployment is more likely in enterprises or work-sharing environments than in most SMB sites. The home media server debuted to lots of hype but only limited-niche ownership; these days it's regaining some interest as wireless sources to storage-limited handheld devices. Today, NAS devices may be deployed to provide version management of frequently updated documents or data when those needs aren't on a big enough scale to justify a database server. Note that in these deployments the limited bandwidth of Gigabit Ethernet & the limited R/W speeds of an HDD don't present a challenge. We are seeing early signs of SSD-involved drive arrays capable of throughput rates that do make Gigabit a bottleneck; these are early heralds of the upcoming 10G-BaseT era in SMB networks with access to shared drives on a par with fast local drives.

Revisited: Linksys RE2000 Wireless-N Range Extender

We spent some additional time troubleshooting the Linksys RE2000 Wireless-N Range Extender & traced our difficulties to an overly aggressive security setting on our router; after adjusting that it took only one button push & a few minutes to get this product up & running. Our new bottom line: The Linksys RE2000 Wireless-N Range Extender is a slick & quick way to put WiFi where it doesn't yet reach.

Newstips Review: Cobra iRadar Atom

The Cobra iRadar Atom starts by being the smallest radar (X, K, Ka & laser) detector we ever saw, sensitive enough to allow time to respond & with all-audio alerts, among the least distracting. Take away the latter if you Bluetooth-pair it with an Android or iPhone running their iRadar app which presents a map/dashboard screen that shares reports from other iRadar users & adds alerts for red-light & speed cameras. For drivers who use such information in an attempt to ignore speed limits with impunity we can think of nothing as dangerous as more distractions; for more careful drivers with passengers willing to monitor such warnings on their behalf it can provide a useful early alert to trouble areas. Bottom line: the Cobra iRadar Atom does a great job alone & in the right hands a better job when connected.

Newstips Review 2: Fitbug Air

We are always puzzled why developers think they are improving a product when they make it less friendly, not to mention downright unfriendly. Fitbug Air is a fine little pedometer & timer for keeping track of your exercising if you choose to do that; they should have stopped there. They built in Bluetooth pairing with an iPhone app to keep track of all that exercise & nag you if you come up short of your goals. It is tedious to set up, confuses some of the users we surveyed & ultimately wants you to keep coming to an interface that does a great deal more to scold than to encourage. Bottom line: the bug in Fitbug Air started when they got it to pair.

Newstips Review 3: D-Link Cloud Camera 1150

We earlier reviewed a close companion to the D-Link Cloud Camera in front of us now; the chief difference is that the DCS933L Cloud Camera 1150 doubles as a WiFi range extender. It looks alike, has IREDS for night vision, does motion detection & lets you monitor it from afar with a login to MyDLink. Bottom line: the D-Link DCS933L Cloud Camera 1150 takes a WiFi day/night camera that performs well & adds a welcome WiFi extender role.

Newstips Review 4: Piqx Xcanex book scanner

It took a very long time for Piqx to get us their Xcanex book scanner for review & this will not be a very comprehensive review because the software necessary for it to run would not install on our 64-bit Windows 8 PC. The scanner itself is about half as thick, just as wide & half again as long as a bank's banded bundle of bills; add to that a folding stand & a folding scanning base pad. The scanner head holds a camera, a LED & a laser/detector pair; it's on 2 hinges about 2" apart & a pivot. The demo video shows it scanning book pages & automatically responding to the end of motion (from page turning) to automatically snap following pages. They show it strapped to a notebook rim but it is a bit too big & heavy for toting though it's fine for stowing in a desk drawer. Bottom line: the Piqx Xcanex is well suited for environments with compatible platforms & an ongoing need for book scanning.

Newstips Review 5: BugBand

BugBand sent us a collection of their insect repellent products including sprays, wipes & their eponymous wristband. Rather than DEET these products use geraniol which may explain an aroma reminiscent of citronella. In our tests, they neither caused any observable insect deaths nor sent the bugs skedaddling but they did seem to keep their distance. Bottom line: BugBand bestows a bubble benevolently bereft of bothersome bugs.

Newstips Review 6: Ryobi Tek4 LED utility light

We had several Ryobi Tek4 series lights & testers here so we asked to get their Tek4 LED utility light in to use around our ultrasonic nest. We can mount it to metal because it's magnetic; a rotating bar with 3 pair of LEDs turns high-medium-off with a front switch & we can power it with either a Tek4 rechargeable or with a same-geometry 3-AAA holder. Our overhead ducts make it easy to place the light over the ultrasonic tanks or over the sink. Bottom line: the Ryobi Tek4 LED utility light gets us the brightness boost we want.

Newstips Review 7: EnPower power usage meter

For us this is a test bench item; for most people it's a way to tattle on unexpected power suckers; for others it may be a way to bring their power usage closer to zero. The EnPower power usage meter puts an LCD display & 3 buttons (plus an overload LED) on a pass-through outlet good for up to 15A. You enter the time of day & your cost per KWH. For whatever you plug in it can tell you the draw in Amps or Watts or Kilowatt-Hours & (assuming it's been that long) the cost per hour or week or month per year or to date. Bottom line: the EnPower power usage meter gives you the power to observe your electrical consumption.

Newstips Review: Mack's Ultimate Shooting Safety Kit

McKeon Products sent their Ultimate Shooting Safety Kit for eye & ear protection. The safety glasses are impact-resistant & come with a carry pouch & lens wipes. Hearing protection comes 2 ways with both a packet of NRR 32 foam ear plugs & foldable NRR 21 muffs; you can use both for an overall NRR 34. We found these elements effective both individually & in concert. Bottom line: anywhere, anytime high sound levels can threaten hearing & debris can imperil eyesight, Mack's Ultimate Shooting Safety Kit let eyes & ears assuage their fears.

Newstips Review 9: Brownells AR15 Handguard Alignment Tool

Behind the gun barrel in the upper of the AR15 is an assembly called the receiver which generally has a flat top outfitted with a Picatinny rail. The barrel & the gas tube (which uses

some of the propellant pressure of a shot to cycle the old casing out & the new cartridge in) join the upper there. The barrel (which gets hot quickly) is usually surrounded by a handguard which also has a top rail; many to most such rails are free-floating (not clamped to the barrel) with 3 components: the handguard, a barrel nut & a tube lock collar. The Brownells AR15 Handguard Alignment Tool is a bolt-joined 2-piece jig; a larger part mounts on the rail above the receiver & a smaller part to the rail on the handguard. It serves as a guide to assure precise alignment before the tube lock collar is tightened. Bottom line: the Brownells AR15 Handguard Alignment Tool is a solid antidote to the problems that misalignment can bring.

Newstips Review 10: ICC frangible 9mm & .40-cal HP ammo

International Cartridge Corporation offers several kinds of frangible ammunition, meaning the bullets are designed to disintegrate when they hit something solid like a steel target or a structure wall while still being effective at stopping a threat. These are often referred to as reduced-ricochet rounds. This review looks at 2 of their Green Elite HP (hollow point) offerings. They sent 100-grain 9mm Luger rounds (1250fps & 351ftlbs) & 125-grain .40-cal rounds (1275fps & 463ftlbs) both using copper-tin (lead-free) bullets. In defensive use, this means effective stopping power with a somewhat reduced likelihood of ricochet fragments doing unintended harm. Bottom line: these two ICC frangible HP semi-automatic weapons are especially good choices around ricochet-inducing solid metal walls.

Marty get your gun

When driving to the range (40mph on a 4-lane road) with the Walther PPQ we reviewed a pickup truck turned in front of Marty & wasn't doing much over 25mph. Marty moved to the right lane, got ahead & with clearance (despite the pickup madly accelerating), pulled back in. The pickup moved left to the turn lane, abruptly cut in front of Marty & stopped at an angle. The driver got out, yelling, punched Marty's car window & made some threats. Marty turned to the window & said, "I have a gun in here; would you like me to use it?" The driver quickly returned to his pickup truck. When sharing the tale with his home-county (not the same as the episode) sheriff, his response was "Mom always said that life is graded on the curve & most of us get a solid C, then you meet somebody like that & all of a sudden you know you're a B+". Any similar tales of adventure you'd like to share? **Contact: Martin Winston, Newstips (Novelty, OH) 440-338-8400; marty@Newstips.com Skype: [martywinston](https://www.skype.com/user/martywinston) <http://Newstips.com>**

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