

Technology Corner  
By: George Champine



### **Cool Technology Gifts**

This part of the column on gifts written by our guest columnist Andrew Olson of Hudson.

Christmas is rapidly approaching and technology provides an array of interesting and useful gifts, especially for young people. Products include flat panel TVs, MP3 players, cell phones, and computer games. Flat panel TVs have dropped in half in the last two years. LCD technology is best for under 30 inches, and plasma is good for the larger sizes. My favorite is the new DLP technology, which is not as thin as LCD or plasma, but weighs much less and is more reliable. The leading MP3 player is the iPod from Apple. The iPod Nano can hold up to 1000 songs and is the size of a credit card. The iPod video include an FM receiver and can also store and display photos and videos. Songs can be downloaded for 99 cents and videos for \$1.99. The Motorola ROKR is like an iPod with a cell phone. Cell phones are available from many vendors and are extremely useful gifts for kids in school in these busy times.

Computer games can be very educational and can develop creative thinking and problem solving. The leading computer game systems are: Microsoft Xbox, Sony Playstation, Nintendo Game Cube. The games I really like are: 1) The Sims, 2) Age of Empire III, and 3) Rise of Nations. Thrones and Patriots is an excellent expansion pack for Rise of Nations, and the other games also have excellent expansion packs. To conclude, I recommend any Star Wars game because Lucas Arts is really doing well with their games. See <http://www.cdmag.com/> for more information.

### **Computers available to Hudson Residents**

Hudson residents can use Hudson High School's new Virtual High School computer lab at the school Monday and Wednesday evenings 7- 9 PM. After-hours computer use is free, and advanced signup is not required. Residents are invited to surf the net, design a flyer, scan or print a document or photograph, send e-mail and attachments, or do research on the Internet. An HHS faculty member will be available for those needing assistance. For more information, call the school at 978-567-6250 or e-mail [gcruz@hudson.k12.us](mailto:gcruz@hudson.k12.us).

### **Sony Spyware**

Spyware is an increasing problem in this new age, and even a high quality company like Sony has been found guilty. Sony included Spyware on about 20 music CD titles which monitored your music usage and reported it back to Sony with the purpose of preventing illegal pirating of music. This only occurred if you played the music on a computer with Microsoft Windows, and is not a problem if you played it in a normal CD player or a MAC. You can remove the spyware by going to : <http://www.microsoft.com/> and click on "antispyware".