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2014 Christmas Gift Guide: Gifts for the PC Enthusiast

by Ben Mansell | Monday 17 November 2014 | Comment Now

We're all enthusiasts, here at PC & Tech Authority. At least in terms of passion and appreciating the finer PC components and peripherals. Let's share some of that.

A new NAS

Gone are the days when a NAS was a dumb device. A box'o'storage and nothing more is an outdated concept, these days. Now, a modern NAS will have a powerful CPU and enough system memory to run a virtual machine. And for apps, there's usually one for everything. This year we've enjoyed testing NAS products from the likes of Synology, Qnap and Thecus, which tend to give you enough software and apps to run the NAS as an environment for managing your personal cloud. Two that impressed us especially this year, and which we think would make outstanding gifts, are the Qnap TurboNAS TS-863 Pro, which is a high-end NAS (\$1852), and the baby Synology DS411c Slim (\$349), a wee thing that takes 2.5in drives – so is a perfect little speed demon for those of you lucky enough to have a few spare SSDs lying around (or just use boring old 2.5in hard drives, if you must).

WHO WOULD LOVE IT: An enthusiast-level PC needs enthusiast-level storage!

Venom BlackBook 15 Starting from \$2699

The Venom range from MLN doesn't hold back in any area. Its specifications are essentially a collection of the best of the best, so for road warriors who appreciate pure power and beautifully excessive engineering, this is a gift that will earn you a lifetime of gratitude. We hope. With a 3.4GHz i7-4700MQ, up to 32GB of DDR3 and M.2 PCIe SSD storage it's a blazer, but there are many high-end power laptops. This one is special. A proper Sound Blaster X-Fi audio processor is able to deliver the extremely good audio, and we especially like being able to switch the GPU currently being used between the discrete (GeForce GTX 970M or GTX 980M) depending on how much processing power your game needs.

WHO WOULD LOVE IT: Anyone who loves their laptop – or doesn't, but deserves to.

AN SSD

Any SSD will do, even a budget model like Crucial's MX100 series will bring a new level of performance to your PC that will leave you amazed. For the converts who have already discovered the joys of SSDs, now is the time to add more. Back in the day when SSDs first appeared, a small capacity (80-120GB) drive was the go for your OS and a few favourite apps, but now falling prices have made it feasible to include a larger drive of around 500GB to use as an install drive for almost everything. Speed demons like the Samsung 850 Evo and Sandisk Extreme Pro offer a slight boost in performance over the cheaper models, but it's marginal at best so give your PC an SSD array that's within budget and you'll never look at a hard drive again.

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If you purchase an Intel 6600K or 6700K CPU from an Intel Technology Partner* between 8/8/15 and 10/2/15 you can win the stunning new Intel 750 Series 1.2TB SSD.

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