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From the September 2010 Issue

It's almost an annual rite for me. Just as geese and New Yorkers fly south for the winter, by the time summer is in its hottest days and I'm cooped up in front of a monitor, I get gadgety. That is, I get an urge to check out the latest in hardware technologies that may have debuted in tradeshow like CES at the beginning of the year, but are just now really coming to market.

Even with cloud computing and SaaS promising to eventually take virtually all of our programs online, there's still a need for hardware and physical tech gadgets. This includes basic gear, such as monitors and input devices like mice and keyboards (even if touch screens are all the rage), as well as more specialized equipment designed for enhancing workplace efficiency and even the social lives of today's professionals and their employers. And I haven't even mentioned one of the most important devices for the paperless office: the scanner.

In this year's roundup, I've found a few hardware options that may help you or your clients be more productive, perhaps more mobile and certainly more gadget savvy. Next month, I'll return with my regular column with some practical tips on social media. But for now... hardware!

AMBIR

TECHNOLOGY — WWW.AMBIR.COM

When it comes to specialty scanners and signature capturing systems, Ambir has a collection of devices to fit virtually every business need. Ambir's product lines include healthcare solutions designed to streamline insurance card acceptance by scanning both sides and using OCR technology to identify

patient names, account numbers and other data for retail clinics, medical practices

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size, USB power, high resolution scanning and the ability to scan directly to PDF.

BARCODING, INC. — WWW.BARCODING.COM

For businesses with workforces that are always on the go, mobile technologies are imperative to performing at peak efficiency. This is especially true for organizations with warehouse, distribution or logistics functions, and Barcoding, Inc. provides highly customizable barcode, RF and RFID, and mobile computing technologies combined with powerful software to streamline inventory tracking, maintenance and management. With Barcoding Inc.'s hardware and software solutions, keeping up with vehicles, parts, tools, office computers, retail inventory or even office supplies can be performed quickly and even automated, whether the items are in the room next door, in a warehouse in another state or on the road somewhere in between. For advanced fixed asset accounting and tracking, Barcoding, Inc. offers several solutions, including IntelliTrack DMS, RedBeam, epcSolutions and Savant WMS.

BUFFALO TECHNOLOGY — WWW.BUFFALOTECH.COM

Whether used for moving large amounts of computer data from one location to another, or as a backup system, external hard drives offer both portability and security. Buffalo Technology offers a wide collection of hard drives, as well as solutions for network storage and wireless networking, all designed to give businesses and individuals reliable digital storage capabilities. Buffalo's DriveStation line of desktop companion hard drives includes USB 3.0, 2.0 and FireWire connectivity, which enables use with PC or Mac computers. The DriveStation

HD-HXU3 model is the latest from the vendor, with storage capacities of up to three terabytes and super high-speed transfer of up to five gigs per second,

which is 10 times faster than USB 2.0. The system includes the Memeo backup

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servers, printers, keyboards, monitors, ad infinitum. The latest geek chic offering from the company is the Dell Streak, a brand new tablet/phone device released in August that some are seeing as direct competition to the iPad. The personal entertainment, communication and computing gadget is smaller, however, giving it greater portability. And it's the first tablet to use the Android operating system. It includes a touch screen and familiar options for 3G, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, but also includes camera, camcorder and phone capabilities. Dell has also recently introduced a new line of smartphones that run on the Android platform: The Smoke, Flash and Thunder. The more advanced Thunder model includes a 4.1 inch touch screen and an 8 megapixel camera.

DYMO

— WWW.DYMO.COM

Even in the modern paperless office, there's still paper ... and there's definitely a need for labels and scanning solutions. With solutions for professional offices, industrial applications, educational settings and even for home use, DYMO has long been a popular brand of label and postage printers. The company's sleek LabelWriter 450 Twin Turbo printer is among the coolest of their desktop tools, giving users high-speed printing of dozens of label styles and sizes and with the convenient ability to hold two different sized rolls of labels at the same time. There's also the option to use the no monthly fee DYMO Stamps postage labels service. The LabelWriter family supports Mac and PC computers via a USB connection. DYMO also offers CardScan, a handy device designed for scanning business cards and then using included software to pull the personal and business contact information from the card and integrate it into a contact management

system. CardScan systems are available in Executive, Team, Personal and Mac

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workgroups, the ScanSnap fi-6010N network scanner offers heavy-duty utility, with high-speed scanning and a 50-sheet feeder tray. For mobile scanning needs, the ScanSnap S1300, a full-color, dual-side scanning device fits easily along with a laptop in a carrying case. Fujitsu also offers advanced paperless document storage capabilities with its Rack2-Filer digital binder software.

KODAK

— WWW.KODAK.COM

Kodak used to be almost synonymous with photography, but the company offers so much more, especially when it comes to technology gadgets. They still make cameras and camcorders, of course, but they also have popular lines of printers, scanners, media players, digital frames and other accessories. For the professional office, Kodak's ESP Office 6150 all-in-one printer offers easy-to-use print, copy, scan and fax options, with wireless networking capabilities and exceptional high resolution. For higher workloads, the new ScanMate i1129 Scanner gives users quick scan-and-organize functions along with bundled software that offers document management tools and the ability to save scanned documents and images into searchable PDFs, TIFF, JPG, RTF and BMP format. The Smart Touch feature adds even more usability, giving quick access to file management, e-mail, printers and integration with Microsoft SharePoint server.

MATIAS

— WWW.MATIAS.CA

Even with touch screens on monitors, iPads and other devices, sometimes you just can't beat the tactile feel of a real, full-sized keyboard. Unfortunately, it isn't always easy to take a keyboard with you on the road, which is why I've loved the Matias Folding Keyboard since the company debuted it a couple of years ago. It is exactly what its name suggests: A folding, full-sized wireless keyboard with 10-key that can fit easily in a computer case, thereby

freeing the user from cramped laptop QWERTYs. Matias also makes several other

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Many screen monitors are pretty much the standard now in professional practices. But while most new desktop PCs and Macs now come with support for two monitors, they don't always support more than that. If your primary workstation is a laptop, adding multiple monitors can seem even trickier. Matrox makes it simple, though, providing the DualHead2Go and TripleHead2Go systems that simply plug into each monitor and into the computer. No more opening up a PC box to change video cards or worrying about complex hardware requirements. Matrox makes adding multiple monitors easy.

**SUTUS,
INC. — WWW.SUTUS.COM**

With integrated phone and data lines, servers, point-of-sale systems, remote locations and numerous networked devices, maintaining an IT infrastructure can quickly become more than even most small businesses can manage. That's where the Business Central 200 system from Sutus, Inc. comes in, helping to streamline and simplify many of these functions. With the ability to integrate router, wireless, file storage, VPN and VoIP, the system provides a unified and highly customizable approach to business IT management.

Technology

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