

Put a charge in your devices

Gadgets

By Gregg Ellman

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With so many of today's portable gadgets having bigger and better LCD screens, the question comes up often: What should you do for portable power, especially with the summer travel season coming up?

Fortunately, the solutions are never-ending — and keep getting better.

Recently, I tested the iSound Power Max backup battery and was amazed at how well it kept my iPod, iPad and BlackBerry charged. And I didn't have to connect any of them to an AC outlet.

The box's label says it gives up to 480 hours of power, and, while I didn't count my hours, the charging never stopped for my USB devices.

It has five built-in USB ports, and the USB splitter cable gives you the chance to charge a sixth device.

Charging times will vary depending on the device and how many devices are plugged in at once.

Campers will also like the built-in flashlight.

The battery, which weighs a little over a pound, is simple to use. Once it is charged up — that takes seven to nine hours — just turn it on and plug in your devices with a USB cable.

www.isound.net, \$86

Injury-proof keyboard

Smartfish has introduced the Engage Compact Keyboard as a great companion to its Whirl Laser Mouse.

It's designed with ErgoMotion technology that tracks hand movement on the keyboard and helps prevent the repetition that causes injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

The full-size keyboard is split into two sections, which does take some getting used to.

The two sections periodically make slight movements — up, down and sideways — to change your hand positions, increasing blood flow and alleviating discomfort and fatigue.

The keyboard is connected and powered via USB.

www.smartfishtechnologies.com, \$149

Android tablet

Pandigital, known for its innovative

^{Pandigital} digital photo frames, entered the crowded tablet market with the Novel Color Multimedia eReader.

The touch-screen tablet runs on the Android platform and is easy to use.

The Novel comes loaded with the Barnes & Noble online bookstore app to let you buy and download books, but it can do much more.

It wirelessly connects to the Internet, so you can surf, use the calendar, set an alarm, check your e-mail and upload photos.

For music, video and audio books, it accepts MP3, AAC, WAV and MPEG4 files.

It has 2GB of internal memory and a card slot (SD/SDHC) for unlimited expansion of 32GB cards. This allows users to read and carry hundreds of books, magazines and newspapers.

The basic apps are preloaded and displayed on the home screen. Additional apps are accessed with the swipe of the arrow on the screen.

Since I use a Mac to get my e-books from the Arlington library, the Android-powered reader required me to download and install the Adobe eBooks program to both my computer and the Novel.

After this simple process, I just downloaded the books into the Adobe software on my computer.

Then I plugged in the Novel with the included USB cord and dragged the books over to it.

You can either swipe your finger across the screen to turn the pages or you can press the forward and back buttons at the bottom of the tablet.

It measures 5.75 by 9.5 by 0.05 inches and weighs 20.5 ounces, so traveling with it is a breeze.

The tablet runs in English, French or Spanish and is compatible with Mac OS X and Windows 2000/XP/Vista/7.

The battery is charged with the power adapter or USB cable (both included).

It also has a port for standard stereo-mini headphones (not included) if you don't want to listen with the built-in speaker.

www.pandigital.net, \$174



Pandigital's color eReader