

'Tis the Season

Leslie Miller

December 1 usually finds my holiday spirit flying high—ready to find the perfect gift for every one on my gift list. However, by the time the holidays actually arrive, I have usually run out of time and inclination to shop around town. Instead, those poor people who fall to the bottom of my list usually end up with something akin to the snowman pen I stole from the sales clerk after I signed the credit card receipt. Well, this year will be different!

With the myriad options that online shopping affords, every one on my gift list will be getting a gift especially chosen for their personality. If you haven't had a chance to complete your holiday shopping yet, don't despair. The web sites featured in this article can point you in the right direction. They helped me complete my shopping. When you have checked off every one on your gift list, be sure to check out this month's game of the month and "Product Snapshots" for gifts you may want to get for yourself.

WEB SITES

My dad just got a new surround-sound system for his home theater. So it seems only logical that I buy him something to enjoy with his new toy. At Buy.com (www.buy.com), I picked up a DVD of his favorite movie, *Terminator 2*, and a CD of his favorite soundtrack, *Remember the Titans*. Buy.com offers hundreds of thousands of other gift ideas. For example, at Buy.com, you can purchase everything from computers to software to games to golf clubs. In addition, Buy.com offers a "wish list" feature so that you can build a list of the items you would like to receive and tell your friends and family where to look. (Obviously, if you tell others about your wish list, chances are greater that you will actually get something you like. In addition, your friends and family will probably compile their own wish list—making your shopping that much easier!)

Next on my list is my six-year-old nephew. At the Discovery Store (www.shoppingdiscovery.com), I found the perfect gift for my dinosaur-loving nephew. The Anatomics Master Dino Kit has enough universal pieces to assemble three different dinosaurs at the same time. The Discovery Store offers gifts for all ages. As a bonus, all of the products offered at the Discovery Store are designed to make learning about the world fun!

My best friend loves to read. In addition, she collects first-edition books. Spending time searching through shelves and shelves of books at the used bookstore can eat up a lot of time—time that is perilously running short. Luckily, I found BiblioFind (www.bibliofind.com), which enables you to search through thousands of booksellers to find rare, used books. How-

ever, BiblioFind does not sell the books directly. Rather, it acts as an agent, bringing seller and buyer together.

BiblioFind has an extensive search engine that enables you to set specific parameters. For example, you can search for a book by author, title, subject, and/or price. In addition, you can specify if you are looking for a first-edition or a signed copy of the book. If a book you are looking for is not at BiblioFind, you can put the book on your Personal Want List. If the book becomes available, BiblioFind will notify you. This year, my friend will receive a first-edition copy of *A Child's Christmas in Wales* by Dylan Thomas.

Finding a gift for my grandmother is always challenging. After all, at 96, my grandmother is hardly interested in getting more stuff! However, like everyone, she wants to be remembered at the holiday season and throughout the year. So, this year, I enrolled my grandmother in Harry and David's fruit-of-the-month club (www.harryanddavid.com). Each month during the next year, my grandmother will receive a box of fresh fruit. Not only is it healthier than my usual box of chocolates, but she will know that I am thinking about her no matter where I am during the year.

Finally, I still needed to find the perfect gift for my mother-in-law. It seems like every year I find my carefully chosen gift for her stuck in a closet the next time I visit. This year, I fixed that: I bought her a gift certificate at GiftCertificates.com (www.giftcertificates.com), which offers original gift certificates from a whole host of merchants. You simply choose a merchant from the merchants listed at GiftCertificates.com (such as Macy's, Marriott, or T.G.I. Friday's) and then choose the amount of the gift certificate you would like to send. If sending a gift certificate to a specific merchant seems a bit risky, you can choose the SuperCertificate, which is redeemable through GiftCertificates.com for a gift certificate to any participating merchant. (Now there's a gift I can be sure my mother-in-law will use: a gift certificate for a gift certificate.)

If you're still at a loss for what to buy someone on your gift list, check out GiftWorld.com (www.giftworld.com). At GiftWorld.com, you can search for the perfect gift by using the Gift Wizard. The Gift Wizard enables you to enter a few criteria, such as age, gender, and interests of the recipient; general category; and price range. GiftWorld.com then returns catalog items from which you can choose. GiftWorld.com also provides a gift registry and a free reminder service.

NETWORK RESOURCE

NetWare Connection is changing its name. Effective January 1, 2001, *NetWare Connection* will be *Novell Connection*. In conjunction with our name change, we are also changing our URL. You can now find us at www.ncmag.com. At www.ncmag.com,

Product Snapshots

While I was doing my holiday shopping, I came across a few products that I wouldn't mind receiving. Please note, since I haven't actually received these products, I haven't tested them. And by the way, if you want to send them to me, don't hesitate.

AIWA PORTABLE DVD PLAYER

According to AIWA, with the AIWA ultra-thin DVD Player, you can watch your favorite movies anytime, anywhere. The rechargeable battery offers more than 3 1/2 hours of viewing on a single charge. When the player is folded, it is only one inch thick. In addition, the AIWA Portable DVD Player also plays regular audio CDs. The AIWA Portable DVD Player features an active matrix color TFT screen. The AIWA Portable DVD Player also features DTS and Dolby Digital output for 5.1 channel theater surround sound, S-Video Output, Composite Video Input/Output, Q Surround, a rechargeable NiMH battery, and an AC adapter.

You can purchase the AIWA Portable DVD Player through retail channels for the suggested price of U.S. \$999. For more

information about the AIWA Portable DVD Player, visit www.aiwa.com.

MVC-CD1000 DIGITAL CAMERA

According to Sony, the MVC-CD1000 digital camera is easy for even the novice photographer to use in fully automatic mode. The camera also has numerous advanced camera features such as aperture priority and shutter priority. In addition, the camera features a 3:2 aspect ratio, date and time stamp and self time. The MVC-CD1000 features a 10x optical/20x precision digital zoom lens and has a 35 mm camera equivalency of 39 mm to 390 mm.

The camera stores images directly to a 3-inch CD-ROM disk, which can be removed from the camera and played in your computer's CD-ROM drive. A 3-inch disk will hold more than 160 high-resolution pictures. The camera ships with a lithium battery and 5 CD-R disks for image storage.

The MVC-CD1000 digital camera supports Windows 98 and 95 and is available through retail channels for the suggested price of U.S. \$1,499.95. For more information about the MVC-CD 1000 digital camera, visit www.sony.com. b

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GAME OF THE MONTH

This month, I decided to take a break from the role-playing, shoot-'em-up game I typically feature as the game of the month—much to the disappointment of games guru, Eric Quigley. This month, FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer from EA Sports earns game-of-the-month honors. The 2001 edition of FIFA Major League Soccer is getting rave reviews from both critics and players. The plot of FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer isn't too hard to describe. You choose your league and your team; then you manipulate your players to score more goals than the opposing team.

If you're playing with one of your favorite teams, you probably know the key strengths and weaknesses of each player. However, if you really want to get a deeper understanding of your players, as well as scout the opposition more fully, you can study the player attributes. The player attribute values range from one to seven. Depending on the field position of a player, some player attributes are more important than others, and it pays to be aware of them when managing your team in the Transfers screen.

FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer features improvements to players, including more human realism and diversity in player faces, improved facial animation, and more joints in player skeletons. Defenders mark better, especially in their own half, and goalies play smarter and their skills make scoring more challenging. FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer also has improved animation in kicks, sprints, shots, crosses, and saves. In addition, the game shows smoother transition and blending between animations and precise contact points in player-ball collision.

FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer has also improved the playing environment by including new sideline geometry (such as 3-D tunnel and benches), improved crowd textures and animation, dramatic stadium lighting with animating shadows, animated crowd props, dynamic weather effects, and aggressive sound effects from the pitch and the stands.

You can play FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer in standalone mode or with up to eight players on the Internet. You can also play FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer with up to 20 people via a network connection.

You can purchase FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer through retail channels for the suggested price of U.S. \$49.95. FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer supports Windows 98 and 95. FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer is also available for PlayStation and PlayStation 2. For more information about FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer, visit www.easports.com.

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