

# TOMORROW'S PRODUCTS

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# TOMORROW'S PRODUCTS

Stylish modules for mobile devices which can be snapped together according to taste. A social network for frequent flyers. A transdermal patch for measured drug delivery. Our forays into the world of prototypes and beta versions have yielded examples for approaches which have excellent prospects. We have drawn up a shortlist of ten „tomorrow's products“ – a small yet classy selection of what we found to be forward-looking in 2007. Blockbusters have not made it onto the list, but ideas promoted by young start ups. They find surprising uses for technology, are lovingly designed and – we think – help to make life a little more beautiful and easier. Qualities we want to see in all products in the future.

## LIVESCRIBE: SMARTPEN



Livescribe is a pen which is able to hear and see. While its user makes notes in a meeting, the smartpen records and simultaneously films the notes. Later, its user is able to access any part of the audio recording by touching the respective part of the notes with the pen. The smartpen is an intelligent answer to a well-known fact: New technologies hardly ever fully replace old ones, rather, they supplement them – a completely paperless working environment will very likely never materialise. The Livescribe combines the best of the new and the old world in a logical and charming way: Audio recordings can be navigated with ease, and cryptic notes can be put in context immediately. The smartpen will be available in 2008.

## TOMORROW'S PRODUCTS

## BUG: YOUPHONE



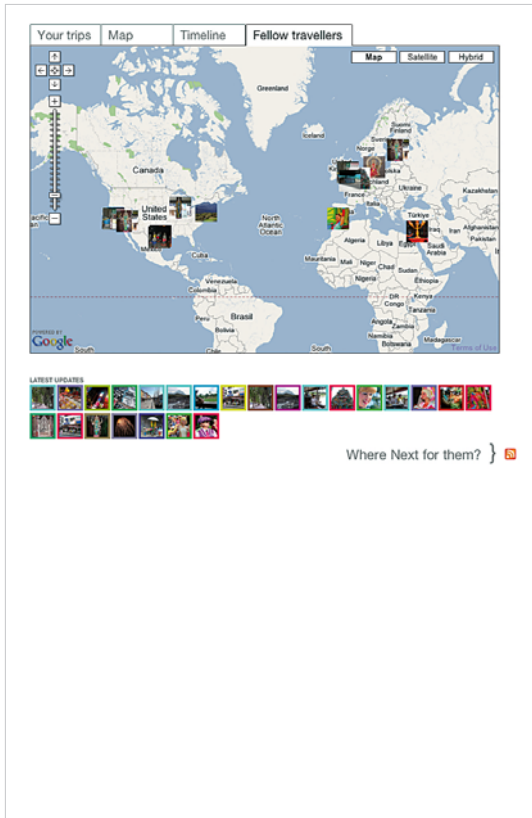
BUG is a system of mobile modules that snap together like Lego pieces. On offer are, for example, a digital camera, a GPS system, and a motion sensor, a telephone module would also be possible. The idea of a hardware platform with attachable peripherals is impressive and establishes a new paradigm of mobile convergence: No jack-of-all-trades smartphone, no networked gadget swarm, rather, a flexible device architecture for geeks – you won't need a major in engineering to develop your own BUG modules. „User-generated devices“ become feasible, hardware hacking and community electronics are the buzzwords of the hour – and BUG is a trailblazer. The BUG Labs store has already opened, shipping will start in March.

## DESKTOP FACTORY: MINIATURE FACTORY



Desktop Factory is a 3D printer for domestic use. Importing standard files, it builds three dimensional objects, one layer at a time – for instance Lego blocks, dishes, or lens covers. These printers have been available for quite a while, Desktop Factory is now trying to use aggressive pricing to find a broad audience for its product. The printer is advertised for just under \$ 5,000, but this price is to drop to \$ 1,000 by 2010. In the mid-term, it will become an option for any interested home user. 3D printing for the masses, DIY replacing the consumer society – ambitious hopes are connected to the „Fabbing“ concept. Desktop Factory will bring them one step closer to fruition. Shipments are scheduled to begin in the second quarter of 2008.

## DOPPLR: TOUR GUIDE



We may run across distant acquaintances in the supermarket, the paths of frequent fliers cross in airport lounges – by accident. Dopplr has turned this observation into a service: Users may share their travel plans privately with a group of friends and colleagues. Using embedded Google Maps, other peoples' itineraries can be traced, and accidental meetings turn into spontaneously arranged meetings in the middle of nowhere. This service is exemplary for the trend to create added value by mirroring existing social networks in the Web. Strictly speaking, Dopplr (like many other Web 2.0 services) is no „real“ application, but rather a feature – well thought-out and finely tuned. Dopplr completed its beta-phase on December 11, 2007 and is now open to the public.

## PATCHPUMP: HEALING PUMP



Transdermal patches have been manufactured for two decades as „adhesive medication“ – the best-known example are nicotine patches. They have, however, the drawback that they offer only very limited options for delivering accurately measured quantities. Patchpump, by contrast, delivers drugs in precisely defined quantities which patients may change on demand (e.g. in the case of break-through pain events) by pressing a button. It uses a miniature pump driven by a specifically developed battery which expands, dispensing with the need for an engine. Patchpump allows a first glimpse today at the nanotechnology-based performance envisioned for ten years hence: Unburdening patients by delivering pain medication in an intelligent way. Patchpump will be market-ready in 2009, a prototype was introduced in September 2007.

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## ZONBU: THE CLOUDBOOK



Like other notebooks, Zonbu is comfortable in its user's lap. Its actual home, however, is the „cloud“ of applications which are available as a service on the Net and run on the supplier's server instead of locally. Based on broadband Internet connections, the desktop becomes a webtop. There are many indicators that in the mid to long term, this model will replace the „Personal Computer“. Zonbu is already heading in this direction today: The hardware costs only some 200 Euros and is replaced in the case of failures. The heart of the product concept is the service plan which the user automatically enters when purchasing the computer. It gives him access to a bundle of standard applications, automatically backs up one's won system online, and offers large amounts of Web storage – provided by Amazon. The notebook has been available since January 2008.

## STANDBYBUSTER: ELECTRICITY POLICE



The vast array of gadgets our households have turned into even consume energy when every device is switched off. Standby Buster puts an end to this: Using a remote control, appliances can be switched off completely so that they use no electricity – a simple and practical part of smart homes. Simultaneously, this is a reminder of a rather inconspicuous innovation field which will hit the headlines in the coming years: the wall socket. Networked sockets would make it possible to read out the consumption of individual appliances and record it in one place. Utility companies would be able to use this information for appropriate services. And surveys have shown that an increase in transparency can lead to far reaching changes in consumer behaviour. Sometimes it is the most inconspicuous of innovations which are the most sustainable. Standby Buster has been available since 2007.



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## LIGHT-EMITTING WALLPAPER: MOOD MAKER

Jonas Samson, a Dutch designer, has used a combination of electro-luminescent material with run-of-the-mill wallpaper to create light-emitting wallpaper. It both decorates the wall and lights the room and may even display small animations by turning on individual parts in succession. This offers a foretaste of a future when not only objects, but surfaces are used as sources of light. Flexible, large-scale OLEDs are to make this possible. Warm or cold light may flood a room, depending on mood and time of day. Swirling psychedelic patterns are possible, if not always practical. If you purchase Jonas Samson's wallpaper today, you can already get used to moving pictures on your wall. The product has been available since Autumn 2007 and is designed and manufactured individually.

## TOMORROW'S PRODUCTS

## GREEN AIR: MR. CLEAN



Green Air cleans the air in an ecologic and simultaneously cost-efficient way – with the help of plants. A fan mounted inside a ceramic body (which is to be attached to the wall) optimises the cleaning process, making Green Air 15 times more powerful than a regular plant. A simple sensor registers when the plant requires water and, by changing from blue to brown, signals the owner to use the watering can. Green Air illustrates just how much potential approaches have which use natural processes creatively – and is graceful and beautiful at the same time. Green Air was designed by Julia Burke, a student, who won the bronze medal at the 2007 International Design Excellence Awards.

## SYSTEM ONE: KNOWLEDGE MINE



System One is a tool for knowledge management and collaboration in the corporate environment which supports project work, makes brainstorming easy, and can be used as a non-invasive internal communication channel. This browser-based software combines features of blogs and wikis with advanced contextualising: search results from the Web or the corporate database which fit the topic on one's current page are offered dynamically. One click turns a page into a journal entry, catching the eye of every staff member when logging in. User guidance is simple, stylish, and up-to-the-minute. System One is in use since the beginning of 2007 – and since the summer at Z\_punkt, too.

# LINKS TOMORROW'S PRODUCTS

**SMARTPEN** <http://www.livescribe.com>

**BUG** <http://www.buglabs.net>

**DESKTOP FACTORY** <http://www.desktopfactory.com>

**DOPPLR** <http://www.dopplr.com>

**PATCHPUMP** <http://www.steadymed.co.il>

**ZONBU** <http://www.zonbu.com>

**STANDBYBUSTER** <http://www.standbybuster.com>

**LIGHT-EMITTING WALLPAPER** <http://www.jonassamson.com>

**GREEN AIR** [jburke5@gmail.com](mailto:jburke5@gmail.com)

**SYSTEM ONE** <http://www.systemone.at>

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