

# holiday helpbook

TECHNOLOGY TIPS TO HELP YOU THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

## 50+ TIPS

for a more CREATIVE, STYLISH,  
SAFE & FUN HOLIDAY!

PLUS: slide show suggestions,  
holiday hits, digital photo help  
and lots of great gift ideas!

Kitchen confidential:  
PUT YOUR PC  
TO WORK!

LAST-MINUTE  
shopping miracles!

JAZZ UP your  
tired holiday  
hearth

Reunite your  
FAMILY for  
the holidays

PLAY YOUR  
CARDS RIGHT!  
Create your own  
holiday greetings





# Treasure your holiday moments



## SNAP

Enjoy the spontaneity of taking and printing fun-filled photos with your family and friends this holiday. With an HP camera and photo printer, you can snap, print and share your favourite photos quickly and easily. Start with an HP Photosmart camera like the **R817 digital camera**, with 5.1 MP and featuring a powerful 5x optical zoom, a two-inch image display screen and 15 shooting modes. Then, connect your camera directly to the USB-enabled HP Photosmart printer for convenient & affordable printing with brilliant results.

**HP Photosmart R817 Digital Camera** \$399.99\*



## PRINT

The **HP Photosmart 475 Photo Printer** is the only portable printer of its kind that stores digital photos. Store up to 1,000 photos right in the printer and print 5x7 inch borderless photos, 4x6 inch photos or 4x12 inch panoramas, perfect for framing or gift-giving. Print almost anywhere with this lightweight, easy-to-carry printer that delivers 4x6 inch photos for as little as 30 cents a print using HP Photo Value packs featuring HP Premium photo paper and HP Vivera ink cartridges. Use the 2.5-inch display screen to edit and view your photos right on the printer.

**HP Photosmart 475 Photo Printer** \$349.99\*



## SHARE

Visiting family and friends this holiday? Take the portable **HP Photosmart 475 Photo Printer** with you. Choose your favourite photo from those stored in the printer's memory. Flip-up the image display screen to edit the photo using HP Real Life technologies such as instant red-eye removal. Then add fun borders, crop, zoom and print. Leave your loved ones a unique printed photo keepsake!



# contents



Forget the presents, forget the decorations – to me, the holidays are all about family. Sitting down to a delicious dinner with loved ones is what I look forward to most!

Who could have guessed a few years ago that a family member living overseas could sit at your holiday dinner table – via webcam? Or that your computer could be the ultimate sous-chef and help with your holiday baking and cooking? These are traditions that technology has helped to create, but it can help you preserve family traditions, as well.

For example, use your PC to organize photos from holidays past into a slide show for friends and family. Or to play the perfect music mix at holiday gatherings. Or even to transfer your child's photo onto a stocking.

Our tradition, the annual Holiday Helpbook, provides these ideas and many others to help reduce the stress of this busy time of year by putting your computer to work, whether it be decorating, shopping or card-making. And for extra inspiration, we've included quotes from our readers across Canada about their holiday traditions.

We hope all these ideas will inspire and help you, leaving time to relax with your family and enjoy your traditions both old and new.

Happy holidays,

*Tara*

Tara Nolan, Editor



## Making a difference

Last year, Sherry Zhong of LaSalle, Que., won the annual Holiday Greeting Card Contest held by Microsoft Canada and the Boys and Girls Club of Canada. Her entry, based on a "one person can make a difference" theme, was chosen from more than 500 illustrations across Canada. Find out more about the Boys and Girls Club and this year's winner: [www.bgccan.com](http://www.bgccan.com)

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Photo: istockphoto

Publisher: *Microsoft Canada Co.*  
Creative | Strategic Direction: *iPrimate*  
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The Holiday Helpbook is published once a year by Microsoft Canada Co., and is derived from Microsoft Home Magazine ([microsoft.ca/home](http://microsoft.ca/home)). All product specifications and prices were correct at press time. Reproduction in whole or part is prohibited without prior written permission from the publisher. © Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

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[www.hpshopping.ca/joy](http://www.hpshopping.ca/joy)



# quickclicks

Microsoft®

## They'll thank you later

10 ways Microsoft Student 2006 & Office 2003 can help your kids with their homework

## present protection

**You just received a great new photo printer and digital camera for the holidays. Here's how to keep them – and all your new loot – safe and sound!**

Store them safely and dispose of boxes, says Constable Earl Fletcher of Halton Regional Police Services in Ontario. "House entry definitely goes up over the holidays," he explains. Follow these simple tips to stay safe.

❖ **Keep boxes inside:** There is a tendency for people to look in garbage cans and recycling bins, says Fletcher. If boxes are inside, there's no way to peek at possible holiday gifts.

❖ **Break down boxes** and turn them inside out to camouflage the original contents. Break down larger boxes by cutting them into pieces or pulling them apart. Place material headed for the garbage in bags for added security.

❖ **Draw the curtain** when you're out caroling or enjoying a holiday feast, so opened gifts aren't in full view. Your holiday haul should only be yours to enjoy, says Fletcher.

❖ **Take inventory** of your new belongings. Video or photograph your goods – and make special note of serial numbers. It's always a good idea to have a detailed list of what you own, no matter the season.

❖ **Decent exposure:** Instead of keeping purchases on the back seat of the car when heading off to do more shopping, put them in the trunk, out of view, says Fletcher. ~ Jessica Padykula

Photos: Corbis, Rubberball

## Money on the move



If your child won't make it home for the holidays, consider sending an e-mail money transfer. It's a safe and easy way to send cash – and some extra cheer.

Canada's five major banks all offer e-mail money transfers. Log into your account, fill in the amount you're sending, the recipient's name and e-mail address, and create a security question.

Hit Send and voilà: the funds make their way to the inbox of your choice.

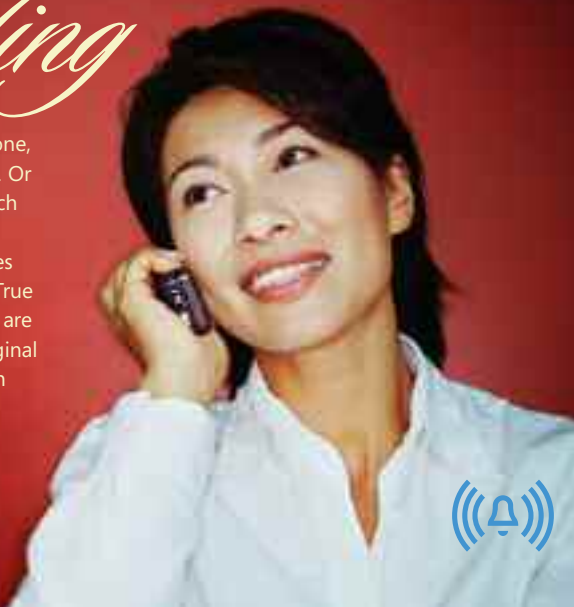
Recipients receive an e-mail notifying them of the transfer. They log in, answer your security question and select the account into which they wish to deposit your gift. ~JP

## Ring-a-ling

Frank Sinatra croons from your cellphone, announcing your spouse is on the line. Or maybe the music is by Green Day, which means one of your kids is calling.

Until recently, downloaded ring tones were nothing but synthesized jingles. True Tones, available through most carriers, are the real thing: compressed clips of original recordings – as authentic as the person on the other end of the line.

Give yourself the gift of a true tone. Not only will your day be peppered with great music, but you'll know when to pick up – or not! ~JP



Give a holiday gift that will help your child have a successful school year. Families with children in Grades 6 to 12 will find Microsoft Student 2006 the ideal learning companion to Microsoft Office 2003 or Office XP. Your kids can use these two software programs together for all the tools, templates, project starters and research information they'll ever need to make the grade!



1. Set up the computer in a quiet, designated study area that has ample space, good lighting and a comfortable chair.
2. Schedule a consistent homework time using the calendar and reminder tools in Microsoft Outlook.
3. Install programs on your PC that they will need every day, such as Microsoft Word for history reports and Excel for science charts.
4. Get things going with homework starters that offer step-by-step guides and tools to help them begin to organize multiple homework assignments from start to finish.
5. Help them create an English paper with flair using Style Guides that help with spelling, punctuation, grammar and word choice.
6. Build confidence with Microsoft PowerPoint, an essential program to make eye-catching presentations.
7. Send them to sources with the Encarta Encyclopedia. It includes articles and online information on all topics, a dictionary and a thesaurus.
8. Master math with an easy-to-use, customizable, 3-D graphing calculator that won't be left in the locker at school.
9. Parlez-vous français? Enrich their French skills with tools that help with language assignments, such as templates, spell-checks and alphabets for writing in French.
10. Research online with the Web Companion, a tool that will bring up accurate information next to search-engine results.



Microsoft Student 2006 \$99.00\*  
Office 2003 Student and Teacher Edition \$209.00\*  
\* Estimated retail price. Resellers' pricing may vary.



www.microsoft.ca/home

Visit [www.microsoft.com/canada/student](http://www.microsoft.com/canada/student) to see how Student and Office work together





## merry melodies

Get into the festive spirit – Canadian style. According to Puretracks.com, here's what we downloaded in 2004 while shopping, baking and wrapping.

1. Barenaked Ladies' *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen/ We Three Kings*
2. Michael Bublé's *Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow*
3. Sarah McLachlan's *A Song for a Winter's Night*
4. Anne Murray's *Joy to the World*
5. Chantal Kreviazuk and Avril Lavigne's *O Holy Night* ~ JP

## get in the game

It's that time of year when kids want the latest of everything – including computer games. But which game is right for which age?

"My advice would be to research any game that you are acquiring, and be sure to check the ESRB [Entertainment Software Rating Board] rating to ensure that it is recommended for your child's age group," says Jonathan Graff, president of Kaboose Inc. ([www.kaboose.ca](http://www.kaboose.ca)), an online community for kids and families.

### The ESRB rates games as follows:

- EC** (*Early Childhood*): Suitable for age 3 and older
  - E** (*Everyone*): Suitable for age 6 and older
  - E10+** (*Everyone 10 and older*): Suitable for age 10 and older
  - T** (*Teen*): Suitable for age 13 and older
  - M** (*Mature*): Suitable for age 17 and older
  - AO** (*Adults Only*): Suitable for age 18 and older
- For more information on game ratings, visit [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org)
- To find out if the games you select will work with your PC, analyze your system with Windows Game Advisor: <http://gameadvisor.futuremark.com> ~JP



Photos: Photodisc, iStockphoto, Stockdisc, Jupiterimages

## deck your halls online

Looking to incorporate elements of Kwanzaa, Hanukkah and Christmas in your home this holiday?

Head to Ikea Canada ([www.ikea.ca](http://www.ikea.ca)) for Glansa hanging Christmas wreath lights, a Lagerbar Hanukkah vase and Jubilar candles in Kwanzaa colours. ✨ Count down to the 25<sup>th</sup> with the handcrafted ornaments on the Bombay Company's ([www.bombay.ca](http://www.bombay.ca)) Days of Christmas Tree. ✨ Make your holiday toast with stunning snowflake flutes from Birks ([www.birks.com](http://www.birks.com)). ✨ Add style to any Hanukkah celebration with sleek ceramic and glass vases from Home Evolution ([www.home-evolution.com](http://www.home-evolution.com)). ✨ Set your Kwanzaa table with a green tablecloth, red runner and black napkins from Tablecloths Etc. ([www.tableclothsetc.com](http://www.tableclothsetc.com)). ~JP



Don't worry about blurry or out-of-focus pictures — get it right the first time with an HP camera. HP takes the guesswork out of picture-taking with features including in-camera red-eye removal and Adaptive Lighting technology that lightens dark regions in photos for awesome results.

Want to email, print and save photos? HP's Instant Share software makes it simple to organize and e-mail photos and with a click of a button you can print and share your photos using the **HP Photosmart 3310 All-in-One printer**. [See page 27 for details.]



**Keep things simple**  
**HP Photosmart M517**  
Capture outstanding photos with this 5.2 MP, easy-to-use camera. View shots on the two-inch image display screen and print beautiful 4x6 inch photos. \$249.<sup>99\*</sup>



**Take it anywhere**  
**HP Photosmart R717**  
Try out this cool, 6.2MP camera featuring 12 shooting modes so you can capture photos in any situation. This small and sturdy stainless-steel camera goes anywhere you do. \$349.<sup>99\*</sup>



**Photos and video, do it all**  
**HP Photosmart R817**  
Multimedia enthusiasts will love this compact stainless-steel, 5.1MP camera. It features a powerful 5X optical zoom, high-quality video with audio, a two-inch display screen, and 15 shooting modes. \$399.<sup>99\*</sup>

[www.hpshopping.ca/smile](http://www.hpshopping.ca/smile)

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Are your photos flawed? Visit the Photos and Music section of [www.microsoft.ca/home](http://www.microsoft.ca/home) to learn how to fix your pics with Digital Image Suite.

By André Demers

## Five tips for great holiday pics

The family is gathered. The children are smiling. The presents are stacked. The tree looks stunning. Before you lies the perfect holiday moment. A photo like this will surely be framed and displayed atop the mantel.

**click. flash. beep.** oops. start over.

Smiles become forced, the kids scatter and wrapping paper dangles from the tree. The moment is... gone.

Nadisha Hosein, a software project leader from Montreal, knows the feeling all too well. "Look at these!" she groans, as she scrolls through photos of a recent family gathering. Her monitor displays silhouettes, blurs of action and hazy shapes in a seemingly unlit room. "What do I do with them?"

Robert Innes, a photography expert in Montreal, has sold hundreds of digital cameras. He has also seen what happens after the fact, when customers come in groaning about their images. "People want all of their pictures to be perfect," he explains. "Even though today's digital cameras are much easier to use, you still have to know some basics."

Innes says most digital cameras include a handful of features that are invaluable in certain settings – such as holiday gatherings.

★ Always use **flash indoors** – it can make the difference between a great shot and a blackened blur. Hint: Know your flash's limit, especially when zooming. Most flashes work best at two to three metres.

★ Set the camera to its **highest resolution**. A low-resolution image is fine for e-mailing, but not if you want to print your photos.

★ Activate **red-eye reduction** (usually a button or alternate flash setting), which works by emitting several pre-flashes so pupils dilate. Hint: Prepare people for multiple flashes so they don't look away after the first burst.

★ Turn on the **night shot** feature – which lengthens the time the shutter is open – with the flash to capture the warmth of holiday lights or candles in the background. Hint: Use a tripod with the night shot feature to prevent light blur.

★ Use the fast shutter speed of **action or sport** mode to freeze the blur of excitement as kids shred wrapping paper and play with their shiny new toys.



My favourite tradition is to use my computer and digital camera to make a family calendar for the following year. I like to think it keeps the family close."

Lawrence Cote, Winnipeg

## THINK OUTSIDE *the* (PHOTO) BOX

By Heather Camlot

**CD envelopes:** Forget cold, plastic cases. Treat your CDs – and those who receive them – to a personalized sleeve.



CD envelope, Paula Jones. Photos: Veer. Envelope photo: Shun Sasabuchi. Tray photo: James Ise.

**Photo tablecloth:** Share memories of holidays past by adding family photos to a generic tablecloth with iron-on T-shirt transfer paper.

**Calendar:** Bind 12 standout photos into a calendar with the help of an online photofinishing service.

**Wall art:** Turn super snapshots into works of art by printing them onto printable fabric paper or canvas and mounting them in beautiful frames.

**Photo tray:** Keep cherished images and items in one functional place. (see page 18)

Microsoft®

## Accessorize your digital camera

If your family likes to take, edit and share photos, why not accessorize your digital camera with Microsoft's fantastic new Wireless Optical Desktop 5000 package? This wireless keyboard, mouse and digital-imaging software combo will help you get the most value and fun out of your digital camera in one easy package.

With keyboard features, such as convenient shortcuts to photo tools and a zoom slider to zero in on the details, the Wireless Optical Mouse 5000 and Wireless Comfort Curve Keyboard help save photo-lovers time and energy. And when you want to edit your photos or get creative with crafts and other projects, the digital-imaging program Digital Image Standard makes working with photos a snap! Digital Photo Bundle \$139.00\*

\* Estimated retail price. Resellers' pricing may vary.



### Digital Photo Bundle includes:

#### Microsoft Wireless Comfort Curve Keyboard

- ❖ PhotoCenter Hot Keys make photo-editing a one-step process
- ❖ Built-in zoom slider allows you to move in and out of photographs quickly and easily
- ❖ Access your favourite pictures, programs and websites with one click using the "My Favorites" buttons
- ❖ Comfort Curve design and cushioned palm rest for optimal comfort



#### Microsoft Wireless Optical Mouse 5000

- ❖ Optical Technology means this mouse is easy to use and moves smoothly
- ❖ Just point and click the Magnifier button to better view photos
- ❖ Choose how you manage your mouse with five customizable buttons
- ❖ Tilt wheel makes scrolling easy in four directions



#### Microsoft Digital Image Standard 2006

- ❖ The simple way to edit, organize and help improve your photos
- ❖ Instantly correct lighting, exposure, colour and common photo errors with one-click auto-fixes
- ❖ Resize, crop, zoom, straighten, sharpen and clean up photos easily
- ❖ Organize your photos by date, subject or keyword in the Digital Image Library



Consider these **stocking stuffers** in your quest for the perfect holiday shot

- ↘ a **mini-tripod**, to steady the camera and increase sharpness when photographing a large group of people.
- a **large memory card**, because you can never take too many pictures.
- a **photo lab gift certificate**, a quick and inexpensive way to get dozens of prints without emptying your home printer's ink cartridge.



Find templates and instructions at [www.microsoft.ca/home](http://www.microsoft.ca/home)



# ❄️ get the party started

By Heather Camlot

Have a collection of swinging tunes to get your guests in the holiday spirit? Create a playlist in Windows Media Player, then sit back and relax – or get down and party – without having to worry about changing discs.

- ✓ Upload songs from your CDs or download songs from music sites into Windows Media Player.
- ✓ Under File, click New Playlist and give your collection a name, such as Holiday Spins.
- ✓ To move music into your new playlist, click the song title in the music list (left-hand window) and drag it over to the playlist name, which will be highlighted when your mouse glides over it.
- ✓ Double-click the playlist and enjoy.



## moving pictures

By Marc Saltzman

Like many Canadian moms, Monique Singer takes countless digital photos of her kids, which she then copies onto her computer.

"It's a mess," jokes the Richmond Hill, Ont., mother of three-year-old twins. "I have thousands of photos, so I stopped printing them." That said, Singer would like to do something special with her favourite photos, especially with the holidays quickly approaching.

### put together a slide show for holiday guests

With free programs like Microsoft Photo Story 3 for Windows ([www.microsoft.com/downloads](http://www.microsoft.com/downloads)) and Windows Movie Maker, which comes with Windows XP, you can make a memorable slide show with your digital photos, all set to music. Best of all, a slide show is a cinch to create.

Here's what to do using Photo Story 3:

- ★ Once you've downloaded the program, click Begin a New Story. Select your best, funniest, most touching digital photos, or scans of older photos.
- ★ Your pictures will appear in a timeline. You can change their sequence and build a story by dragging and dropping the images into your preferred order. You can also add effects, like turning photos black-and-white or sepia.
- ★ Next, you can add captions or audio narration if you have a microphone for your PC. Describe in detail the story of how your grandparents met and came to Canada, or the day your son took his first steps.
- ★ Now add poignant music, which is included with Photo Story 3. Click to select from the program's collection.
- ★ Finally, decide what to do with your masterpiece. You can save it to your computer, copy it to a supported cellphone or PDA, or e-mail it. If you burn copies to CDs to hand out to guests over the holidays, use your computer to create a custom holiday-theme CD envelope.

**"What I like to do with my family is gather up all the year's photos and video to use in an end-of-the-year family video! I use Movie Maker and it's a real hit at our Christmas parties."**

*Gabriel King, Toronto*



Photos: Bananastock, iStockphoto

## start something **CU·ri·OUS**

Start discovering lost cities. Learning new languages. Mastering Equations. Making scale models. Amazing your teachers. Start feeding your brain.

With a world of software and devices that run on Windows® XP, the choice is yours. Go to [windows.ca](http://windows.ca) and start anything you like:



### Windows xp



Your potential. Our passion.™  
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# FAMILY TIES STAY CONNECTED WITH LOVED ONES AROUND THE WORLD

By  
Mara  
Gulens

WHO: **AIJA**  
WHERE: **CAIRO**  
seven hours ahead of me

COMMUNICATES WITH  
**BLOG**

My friend Aija started her travel blog in Toronto and has stopped off in places like Cairo to post messages about her journey. Her blog lets me share in her adventures – and view her photos just as quickly as she can post them.

WHO: **ED**  
WHERE: **LOS ANGELES**  
three hours behind me

COMMUNICATES WITH  
**WEBCAM**

My kids squeal with delight when Uncle Ed comes to visit. But they also do so when he shows up on the webcam, makes a funny face and pretends he's in the next room.

**S**OMETIMES I WISH MY FAMILY WERE PART OF SANTA'S ENTOURAGE. Then we could just jump into his sleigh and travel around the world, stopping off to visit friends and family along the way...

WHO: **MELINDA**  
WHERE: **SYDNEY**  
14 hours ahead of me

COMMUNICATES WITH  
**INSTANT MESSAGING**

Melinda is that best friend who never stays grounded in one place for more than a few years. While she's Down Under, we communicate with Windows Messenger – yakking so much you'd think we were back in high school again.

WHO: **ANN**  
WHERE: **PARIS**  
six hours ahead of me

COMMUNICATES WITH  
**ONLINE PHOTO ALBUM**

Ann and I were inseparable during the few years we lived in Cairo, but since then, we don't see much of each other. We do stay in touch virtually though, mostly through pictures. We both post photos online to "show" each other what we're up to.

WHO: **ART**  
WHERE: **TOKYO**  
13 hours ahead of me

COMMUNICATES WITH  
**CELLPHONE**

My friend Art e-mails me cellphone snapshots from crazy locations, like a downtown Tokyo mountain. His short messages, often written on the subway, land on my computer in seconds. With immediate communication like that, distance is almost irrelevant.

Fortunately, distance is no obstacle when it comes to sharing files, music and photos. And, these days, we can talk to and even see one another on our computers. Oceans and kilometres may divide us, but that doesn't mean we can't stay connected with the use of technology – especially during the holidays. Pick the communication method that suits you best and connect your family with loved ones around the globe. It's the next best thing to being there. In fact, it can bridge the gap in ways that make you feel you really are there.

WHO: **RAITIS**  
WHERE: **STOCKHOLM**  
six hours ahead of me

COMMUNICATES WITH  
**VoIP**  
(VOICE OVER INTERNET PROTOCOL)

Friends since we were knee-high, Raitis and I talk for free over the Internet to stay current on what's up with our kids – or on music. Sometimes he'll just call to check on hometown weather.

WHO: **DAD**  
WHERE: **RIGA, LATVIA**  
seven hours ahead of me

COMMUNICATES WITH  
**E-MAIL**

When my dad makes trips across the Great Pond, he likes to stay in touch with his 11 grandchildren. What could be easier than e-mail? If there's no computer, Dad's sure to find an Internet café.

These are some of the people in my life whom I connect with on a regular basis. It makes the world seem a little smaller – and warmer.



Illustration: Photodisc





Let's face it – kids love video games! And most parents are OK with that, as long as the kids play in moderation and as long as the games they play are worthwhile and age-appropriate. Unfortunately, not all of the games that are available on the Internet or at the local video store fit the bill...

To help parents make sure their kids play it safe, Bell Sympatico has created a new computer program called kidsmania™ that's a great gift for kids ages 3 to 12. Kids get to explore a secure world with unlimited play on 50 educational computer games featuring popular titles like Freddi Fish™, Pajama Sam™, Clifford™ the Big Red Dog, Reader Rabbit®, Caillou®, TumbleBooks®, Crayola® and Math Missions™.

kidsmania is not a website. You sign up and download kidsmania onto your home computer. You have three different worlds to choose from based on preference and age. And you have total control, thanks to security features like password protection that prevents kids from changing computer settings or visiting unapproved web content when they're all done playing.

**Try a free 3-day trial.**

**www.kidsmania.ca or www.foulejeux-jeunesse.ca**

kidsmania is also a great deal. For the cost of a video game rental or two, you can give your kids access to over 50 complete, high-quality games. You'll save money – and you'll save time and avoid stress, too. No more driving to the video store to search for a good game. No more driving back to return it. And no more late fees!

kidsmania is easy to set up and easy for kids to use. It updates itself automatically. And it's reliable! If you have an issue, Bell Sympatico's 24/7, bilingual customer support will make sure everything gets resolved on the double. Parents love kidsmania for its educational quality and safety features, which offer peace of mind. Kids love kidsmania because it's fun!

**Available in English and French**  
**Just \$6/month for Bell Sympatico subscribers!**  
**\$14.95/month for non-subscribers.**



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Where entertainment and family  
come together



HP Digital Entertainment Center

For the family that loves to play together at holiday and beyond, Intel® invites you to go for a new entertainment PC. This single device does everything a DVD player, stereo, VCR, gaming console and computer does. It's a snap to set up and even easier to use, thanks to a funky remote control.

**Just hook up an entertainment PC powered by an Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology to your TV and stereo and you can:**

- ▶ Get the most out of your DVD collection through online features
- ▶ Catalogue your entire CD collection in one place
- ▶ Enjoy digital TV
- ▶ Share and edit digital photos
- ▶ Experience realistic and challenging game play – and much more!



For more on entertainment PCs and the digital home, visit [www.mydigitalhome.ca](http://www.mydigitalhome.ca).

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# DRESS UP your hearth with A FEW bright ideas

A FIREPLACE IS THE FOCAL POINT OF ANY ROOM, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO THE HOLIDAYS. Adorning the hearth is no easy task – understated elegance can quickly become kitschy catastrophe when faced with too many decorations and too little direction. To inspire your holiday decor, we offer two looks – one traditional and one modern – fit for a warm family gathering or a rockin’ New Year’s bash. Best of all, our ornamentation is homemade, so you can easily adapt it to your space.

STORY Heather Camlot  
CRAFTS Julie Stoyka  
STYLING Heather Camlot  
and Tara Nolan  
PHOTOS James Tse

28 Series, electric fireplace set, Twinstar, Home Depot, Stocking hooks, A Christmas Rose, Vinde rug, Ikea



## stockings

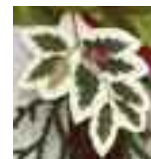
**IT'S A WONDER OLD ST. NICK** never mixes up the children on his list. Help him out by printing a photo of each member of your family onto linen-style printable fabric and sewing or ironing it onto individual stockings. Those cherubic faces may even make Santa think twice about delivering coal to naughty girls or boys.



**FORGO CARDS FOR GIFT TAGS** made from a timeless kids' classic – Shrinky Dinks. We used the beautiful botanical prints from the plates and wrote the recipient's name on the shrinkable plastic, then popped them in the toaster oven. It's still a thrill to watch Shrinky Dinks at work – perhaps even more so knowing the results are pretty and practical.



gift TAGS



**THE 18TH CENTURY WAS THE GOLDEN AGE** of two of today's most sought-after collectibles: transferware porcelain filled the demand for inexpensive yet decorative dinnerware, while botanical prints exploded under the influence of German artist Georg Dionysius Ehret and French artist Pierre Joseph Redouté. We've combined both elements by using Clip Art botanical images and waterslide transfer paper for inkjet printers.

## botanical PLATES





**NO NEED TO SYNCHRONIZE WATCHES.** Our above-the-mantel artwork does double duty as a clock to help count down to the New Year. The striking black-and-white orchid is a Clip Art photo reproduced onto multiple sheets of paper and glued onto foam core board. We then made a hole in the centre and popped in a store-bought clock mechanism. If only our New Year's resolutions were so simple.

## champagne FLUTES



### TOAST THE NEW YEAR WITH STYLISH GLASSWARE.

Flutes are a must as the clock strikes midnight, but why not liven them up with designs etched into the glass? Print a pattern onto decal paper and cut it out with a sharp utility knife. Wrap the paper around each flute and apply etching cream. You can create a matching set or experiment with individualized glasses. Cheers!

Holiday decorating doesn't

### TIPS from a PRO

have to be complicated or costly. Peter Fallico, host of HGTV's *Home to Stay*,

offers some **fun and festive** ideas for creating a memorable holiday mantel.

■ The first step is to **decide on a theme**, like vintage, contemporary or traditional.

■ **Three to five** repeated holiday items, such as candles\*, vases or ornaments along your mantel make for a clean, contemporary look.

■ An **artists' canvas** covered with beautiful wrapping paper, ribbon and bow makes a wonderful piece of **art** for over your mantel.

■ One or two white feather boas add a twist to the **White Christmas theme**. Rest the boas on the ledge of your mantel and use **silver or chrome accents** to complete the look.

■ **Natural elements** are always classic. Consider decorating your mantel with pine cones, cedar boughs and holiday plants, such as holly, poinsettias or amaryllis.

*\*Never leave burning candles unattended and don't place them near flammable objects.*

By Jessica Padykula



## PHOTO tray



**NEW YEAR'S IS A TIME OF CELEBRATION**, but also of reflection. Keep cherished memories top of mind by presenting the champagne flutes or appetizers on a tray embellished with digital prints of loved ones, past and present.

## wall CLOCK



Electric white fireplace, Twinstar, Home Depot. Black vases, leather footstool and graphic cushion, here Toronto. Snuggly candleholder, Soda ice bucket, Parodi glass vase, Blanda Blank bowl and Fenja rug, Ikea.



Microsoft®

# Put your child's smile on a stocking



Give your stockings a new look this year by adding your children's precious smiles! Digital Image Suite makes it easy to take your favourite photos and turn them into memorable keepsakes. Easy-to-use tools allow you to organize, edit and improve your family pictures in no time. Follow the steps below to create a new twist on the traditional stocking. You never know, it may be hard for Santa to resist adding an extra present!

## Step One:

Using Digital Image Suite, choose a digital photo of your child from your collection in the Digital Image Library and open it for editing in Digital Image Editor.

## Step Two:

Improve your picture using the Auto-Fix buttons. With one click, you can edit the exposure, colour, contrast and remove red-eye. Use the Smart Erase tool to eliminate unwanted objects and the blending brush to reduce busy backgrounds. Then add a timeless touch with the new black-and-white effects tool. Play with different gradients to achieve different colour and lighting effects.

## Step Three:

Crop your picture and use the Edges tool to add a colourful and fun border. Now your photo is ready to print onto T-shirt transfer paper. Follow the instructions on the package.

## Step Four:

On a flat surface, iron the transfer paper to your stocking. Allow to cool before removing the backing. Now you can hang your personalized stocking.



**Digital Image Suite 2006**  
**\$139.<sup>95\*</sup>**

\* Estimated retail price. Resellers' pricing may vary.

**\$40** mail-in rebate, and an additional **\$20** if it is purchased within 30 days of purchasing a digital camera

FOOD PROCESSOR



# PUT YOUR PC to WORK in the KITCHEN

By Alyson Munroe

VANCOUVER'S Shannon Richardson loves to cook. She collects food magazines, scours the web for recipes, creates weekly menu plans, and bakes squares and shortbread cookies for colleagues during the holidays. This year will be different, though, as it's her first as a mom. She knows the only way she'll be able to manage it all is to plan ahead.

That's exactly what *Globe and Mail* food columnist and LCBO's *Food & Drink* magazine food editor Lucy Waverman recommends.

"Make a list of the types of events you're planning, like cocktail parties and Christmas dinner," she says. "Use your computer to search for recipes that fill your menus, including those that can be made ahead of time." For example, Christmas pudding and chocolate truffles can be made well in advance and kept in the freezer.

Divide your list into what you can do early and what needs last-minute preparation. Waverman also advises cooks to always grocery shop with a list.

FIND CULINARY INSPIRATION ONLINE

Unless you're an expert, she says, you should only use websites that test their recipes, like Epicurious ([www.epicurious.com](http://www.epicurious.com)), *Food & Drink* magazine ([www.lcbo.com/fooddrink](http://www.lcbo.com/fooddrink)) and Baking 911 ([www.baking911.com](http://www.baking911.com)).

Richardson's favourite, Allrecipes ([www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)), offers printable recipe cards, perfect for clipping and adding to your recipe box. She also appreciates the reader reviews, saying they often factor into choosing a recipe.

TURN TO FOOD TOOLS FOR YOUR COOKING QUERIES

If you come across recipes with unfamiliar measurements or strange ingredients, you can find handy conversion charts ([www.readersdigest.ca/food/metric.html](http://www.readersdigest.ca/food/metric.html)), substitutions tips ([www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com) under Cooking) and other food tools online.

It's always nice to include the recipe when you give food as a gift. Head to the Template gallery at Microsoft Home Magazine ([www.microsoft.ca/home](http://www.microsoft.ca/home)) for free recipe card templates. And if you're used to people asking you for your fabulous spinach dip recipe at parties, keep copies in your purse so you can hand it over instead of e-mailing later.

## SENDING A GIFT BASKET WITH YOUR OWN HOMEMADE GOODIES? CREATE PERSONALIZED JAR LABELS AND LIDS

Go to HP ([www.hp.ca](http://www.hp.ca)) and search for Canning Kits under Home & Home Office.



If you still find yourself in a rush, order food baskets and goodies online to save time and hassle. Here are some Canadian options to consider:

**President's Choice**  
[www.presidentschoice.ca](http://www.presidentschoice.ca)

**Urban Fare**  
[www.urbanfare.com](http://www.urbanfare.com)

**Purdy's Chocolates**  
[www.purdys.com](http://www.purdys.com)

**Prince Edward Island Preserve Company**  
[www.preservecompany.com](http://www.preservecompany.com)

**Canada Flowers**  
[www.canadaflowers.ca](http://www.canadaflowers.ca)

**The Sweet Basket**  
[www.thesweetbasket.com](http://www.thesweetbasket.com)

Photos: Veer, Food Collection, JupiterImages



"I have a cookie and recipe exchange. I send out computer-made invitations asking friends to search the Internet for a new cookie recipe. We each make six dozen of whatever we choose, then we get together and exchange cookies and recipes."

Joyce Poyton, Hamilton, Ont.

[www.microsoft.ca/home](http://www.microsoft.ca/home) 21



[www.microsoft.ca/home](http://www.microsoft.ca/home)





## Mother's little helper

### INTRODUCING KIDSWISE: TV THAT'S GOOD FOR KIDS

KidsWise™ is an interactive TV service from Bell ExpressVu that offers educational games, puzzles and activities; helping children develop math, language and critical thinking skills – in both English and French!

Kids ages 3 to 8 use a remote to play along, allowing them to learn by doing, not just watching. Programs (with difficulty levels you set) are based on award-winning materials that engage and reward children while they learn.

Any time is playtime.  
Just \$3/month.

Available in English and French.  
Available only on Bell Expressvu.

Call 1-888 SKY DISH  
or click [www.bell.ca/interactivetv](http://www.bell.ca/interactivetv)



Making it simple.™

Pixel Software Technologies and Licensors. All Rights Reserved. 2004 KidsWise™ content is proprietary to Pixel Software Technologies and/or Licensors, including all respective tradenames and trade-marks. Bell ExpressVu 3100, 5100, 5800, 5900 or 6100 model receivers are required. ExpressVu is a trademark of Bell ExpressVu, L.P.

“ During the holiday season my children like to make custom Christmas cards on the computer and send them to our family and friends.”

*Lisa Goodeve, Tara, Ont.*

STORY Tara Nolan  
CRAFTS Julie Stoyka

# CARD TRICKS

TURN  
PLAIN PAPER  
INTO  
SUPERB  
SALUTATIONS

**D** O YOU HAVE HOLIDAY CARDS THAT YOU'VE KEPT FOR YEARS?

Perhaps a painted-pasta greeting from your daughter or a watercolour from your aunt? A handmade card is always more meaningful than the store-bought variety, because someone has taken the time to design it especially for you.

With a few craft materials, you can whip up your own creations. Take your holiday cards from wallflowers to conversation pieces by accessorizing them with the help of your computer. We've provided three eye-catching options that range from easy to ambitious. These cards can be made in no time – especially if you enlist some little elves looking for something to do on a blustery afternoon.



Photography: Shun Sasabuchi





**STICK IT**

This cartoon fireplace may not be fit for Santa, but it does demand to be decorated. Equip your kids with a sheet of cheerful stickers so they can jazz up the hearth – while you tend to the rest of your holiday list. We used Pop Dots to add dimension to this animated scene.



**STAMP IT**

Carve your own joyful imprint out of linoblock, an easy to use material found at any local art supply store. All you need is a high-contrast image and some carbon paper to transfer it over. Roll on your favourite festive colour and stamp your way through a pile of blank cards. Finish off with a personal note and your signature.



**SURROUND IT**

Enfold a delicate paper card in a custom vellum cover. Search online for ornate Clip Art images – or use your own digital snaps. Printing a design on both card and vellum will add a layered effect. Repeat the image on gift tags and wrap for a matching set.

Photography: Shun Sasabuchi

# A crafty gift for crafty people



This holiday, give the craft-lover in your life a gift they are sure to enjoy: The affordable and powerful HP Photosmart 2575 All-in-One printer with networking capabilities. Create and share scrapbooks, greeting cards, photo printing, recipe cards and family newsletters. Give your loved ones the tool they need to scan, copy, and print all of their favourite crafts in true-to-life colour.



photoprinting



recipe cards



scrapbook



wrapping paper



holiday cards



school projects



newsletter



scanning

**HP Photosmart 2575 All-in-One**

- Save space but still have all the tools you need to be creative – enjoy scanning, copying and printing
- Get it done fast with print speeds of up to 30 pages per min. in black and up to 24 in colour
- Print true-to-life quality photos using the 2.5-inch colour display, memory cards or your camera via USB

**HP Photosmart 2575 All-in-One \$249.99\***

Create your own holiday card with HP greeting card paper. Includes 10 cards and envelopes. For hundreds of free creative projects, visit [www.hp.ca/create](http://www.hp.ca/create)



[www.hpshopping.ca/joy](http://www.hpshopping.ca/joy)

© 2005 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. \* Except where noted, all prices are suggested retail price in Canadian dollars. Retailer may sell for less, and prices are subject to change.



# WHERE TO BUY GIFTS ONLINE WHEN YOU'RE SHORT ON TIME

By Jessica Padykula

It happens to all of us. Suddenly you're counting down to the holidays and in desperate need of some last-minute gifts. What to do? We searched the web for sites that let you shop in the comfort of your home. From flowers and cookies to travel vouchers and movies, these retailers deliver up to the last minute with gifts that are sure to impress.

## Two weeks and counting:

Retail gift cards from Best Buy ([www.bestbuy.ca](http://www.bestbuy.ca)), CompuSmart ([www.compusmart.com](http://www.compusmart.com)) and Future Shop ([www.futureshop.ca](http://www.futureshop.ca)) are perfect for any tech lover.



Recipients can purchase anything from a laptop or PDA to a digital camera, photo printer or memory card.

Order online and allow five to seven days for delivery.

Order "hound bucks" from Greyhound Canada ([www.greyhound.ca](http://www.greyhound.ca)) so your teen can make it home for the next long weekend. The \$10 and \$20 certificates arrive in five to seven days and can be redeemed for travel at any Greyhound terminal.



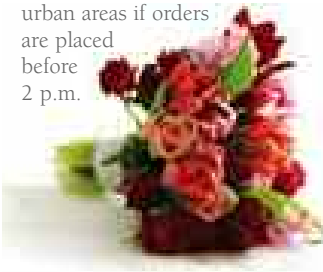
Give the gift of romance with a weekend for two at a Marriott Hotel ([www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)) in the United States, Canada or Mexico. Order before December 19 to ensure timely delivery.

## One week to go:



Please both kids and the Cookie Monster in your life with a cookiegram ([www.cookiegrams.com](http://www.cookiegrams.com)). Tins, jars and boxes of cookies and brownies, bouquets of flower cookies and cookiegrams ship anywhere in Canada and the U.S. the next business day, except weekends and holidays.

You can never go wrong with flowers! Other than weekends and holidays, Canada Flowers ([www.canadaflores.ca](http://www.canadaflores.ca)) delivers the same day in most urban areas if orders are placed before 2 p.m.



Know someone who wants to see this year's holiday blockbuster? Purchase Cineplex Galaxy ([www.cineplexodeon.com](http://www.cineplexodeon.com)) gift certificates before 11 a.m. EST and they'll be shipped the same day, except weekends and holidays.

It's a treat they won't be able to resist. Purchase a Starbucks card available at any Starbucks location – and head online ([www.starbucks.com](http://www.starbucks.com)) to load it with as much money as you want. Voilà! A coffee, tea or muffin, on you.

## Last-minute miracles:



Down to the wire? Gift certificates from Amazon ([www.amazon.ca](http://www.amazon.ca)) are great for the voracious readers on your list and are delivered immediately across the world via e-mail.

Entertain friends and family by ordering tickets to a musical, sports event or rock concert from Ticketmaster ([www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca)) and print them off yourself.



Get into the groove. Order a gift certificate from Puretracks.com ([www.puretracks.com](http://www.puretracks.com)) and have it e-mailed to the recipient of your choice.

## Advertising Supplement

“My favourite thing to do is browse online for gifts. I usually buy last-minute items, such as books and gift certificates for family members who are impossible to buy for.”

Alexis Morrison, Coquitlam, B.C.



## SEVEN STEPS to help with SAFE ONLINE SHOPPING

Using the web for holiday shopping? Mei Velasquez of Visa Canada provides these tips to help with a safe – and simple – shopping experience:

1. Keep user names and passwords secret.
2. To help with a secure data transmission, use a secure browser (such as Internet Explorer).
3. Only provide credit card details when initiating a purchase.
4. Keep a record of transactions, either through e-mail confirmations or by writing down confirmation numbers provided by the merchant. Review monthly credit card statements thoroughly.
5. Check the site for merchant delivery and return policies before making a purchase to ensure items can be returned if not in satisfactory condition.
6. Never respond to an e-mail request for personal or account information, even if it appears to be from a trusted source.
7. Never send payment information via e-mail. E-mail is not secure and can be read by outside parties.

Photos: Veer, JupiterImages, iStockphoto



## Great gifts the whole family will enjoy



### The memory maker HP Photosmart R817 Digital Camera

This compact, easy-to-use 5.1 MP camera features a powerful 5x optical zoom for exceptional family photos. It features a two-inch image display screen, 15 shooting modes, advanced manual controls and high-quality video with audio to capture every priceless moment. \$399.<sup>99\*</sup>



### A crafty printer HP Photosmart 2575 All-in-One printer

The whole family will enjoy taking part in crafts this holiday with this affordable All-in-One printer that does it all: scan, copy and print. View and edit photos on the 2.5-inch colour image display and print with true-to-life colour for stunning results. \$249.<sup>99\*</sup>



### Photos on the go - virtually anytime, anywhere HP Photosmart 475 Photo Printer

Instant gratification – made affordable. Take and print your photos at family functions with this one-of-a-kind, lightweight, easy-to-carry printer. Organize and store up to 1,000 photos right in the printer and print up to 5x7 inch photos. Use the 2.5-inch display screen to edit, share, archive and print your photos almost anywhere. \$349.<sup>99\*</sup>



### Ultimate All-in-One HP Photosmart 3310 All-in-One printer

This versatile, powerful and reliable printer is a dream for any family. It is the world's fastest photo printing All-in-One printer and will get your family faxing, scanning, copying and printing photos with ease. Bring home a printer everyone will enjoy with an oversized scanning area, 3.6-inch colour image display, wireless networking, negative scanning and affordable individual HP Vivera ink cartridges that produce radiant colours and exceptional black-and-white prints. \$399.<sup>99\*</sup>

[www.hpshopping.ca/joy](http://www.hpshopping.ca/joy)

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## Microsoft holiday gift buying guide

Each person on your shopping list is unique, and so are his or her holiday wish lists. Avoid the stress of aimlessly wandering through stores looking for that ideal item. From games to family software and hardware, the Gifts that Click buying guide from Microsoft helps you match the perfect presents with the loved ones on your list.

### For the history buff

The strategist in your family will love travelling through the ages in this epic game where they are immersed in a variety of timeless civilizations. With downloadable story content, stunning visual detail, New World scenes, a variety of combat units, historical figures and fantastic battles, this character-driven strategy game is truly history in the making. Rated T for Teen.



Age of Empires III **\$64.95\***

### For someone who makes a difference

Choose a gift that gives back. When you buy this special-edition mouse, a portion of the sale will be donated to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation (CBCF). The wireless mouse features a convenient tilt wheel for four-way scrolling, six months of battery life for the average user, ambidextrous design, Optical Technology for smoother responsiveness, and is adorned with a pink breast cancer awareness ribbon. Available only at CompuSmart stores or [www.clickforthe cure.ca](http://www.clickforthe cure.ca) for a limited time.



**\$10**  
From the purchase is donated to the Foundation.

Microsoft "Pink Ribbon" Wireless Optical Mouse **\$39.99\***



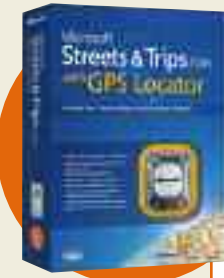
### For the entrepreneur

Do you or someone in your family take work home? Microsoft's most powerful operating system will meet the needs of your home office and those of the whole family. Manage music, photos and files easily while taking advantage of reliable, secure processing power. Connect to your company's network, surf with Internet Explorer, keep in touch with Windows Messenger, and access your office computer from home with the Remote Desktop feature.

Windows XP Professional **\$429.00\***

### For the family traveller

Give the gift of stress-free holiday travel. Make it easier for your family to travel far and near with this advanced mapping software. The built-in route planner lets you view, add, delete and rearrange destinations while keeping an eye on fuel costs, driving speed and preferred routes. The built-in GPS locator will keep you on track and even offer alternate routes if you get lost.



Streets and Trips 2006 with GPS **\$174.99\***

### For the Mac user

Is there a Mac user on your list? This version of Microsoft Office is specially designed to help students and teachers with Macs create, share and manage ideas. This stylish and budget-friendly software includes Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Entourage for e-mail. It is an ideal educational tool and homework helper for the Mac student on your list. For Macs running OSX. Microsoft Office is also available for PCs.



Office Mac 2004 Student and Teacher **\$209.00\***

\* Estimated retail price. Resellers' pricing may vary.





**For the home entertainment buff**

Everyone loves entertainment! Get complete control over your Windows XP Media Center from the comfort of your couch with one keyboard. This awesome all-in-one keyboard/mouse/remote allows you to manage all of your media with one integrated keyboard. It works up to 30 feet from your computer and has backlit keys so you can change the channel even in the dark.

**Media Center Keyboard \$139.00\***

**For the comfort seeker**

For those who put comfort above all else, check out this keyboard and mouse duo. The keyboard has a curved, split design that makes it easier to type. A zoom slider allows you to enlarge images and programmable buttons mean your favourite websites are only one touch away. The mouse is easy to handle and hold and includes a magnifier button to enlarge and edit photos; and a tilt wheel with four-way scrolling.



**Natural Ergonomic Keyboard 4000 \$84.95\***  
**Comfort Optical Mouse 3000 \$34.95\***



**For the avid gamer**

Here's a gift for the gamer who can't get enough. This stylish laser mouse is highly responsive, precise and smooth for fast and detailed gaming. A sensitive scroll wheel helps measure movement, making jumping and dodging a cinch. The magnifier button allows gamers to enlarge details for intense play and five customizable buttons means this mouse will put the great gaming experience at their fingertips.



**Laser Mouse 6000 \$74.95\***



**For the animal lover**

Here's a game that animal lovers of all ages will enjoy! Create your own ultimate zoo and care for more than 100 land, aquatic and prehistoric animals. Get even closer to your favourite endangered creatures with the new Endangered Species Expansion Pack for Zoo Tycoon 2. Care for rare animals, such as the orangutan and Komodo dragon, and observe them in new ways with sky trams, elevated paths and vehicle tours. Rated E for Everyone.

**Zoo Tycoon 2: Endangered Species (Expansion Pack) \$34.95\***

**For the fantasy fan**

Who on your list can't get enough of fantasy games? Dungeon Siege II is an absolute must for action addicts. With real-time story telling, detailed interactive graphics, rich party dynamics and a whole new level of player powers, this is an ideal follow-up to the extremely popular first version. The story evolves with each player as he or she completes quests alongside new specialized allies and encounters intelligent monsters with advanced fighting tactics. Rated M for Mature.



**Dungeon Siege II \$64.95\***



**For the whole family**

This year, get a gift the whole family can enjoy—the Xbox 360 video game and entertainment system, offering stunning graphics, unrivalled power and the best games, all in a gorgeous package that will look great in the living room. Along with amazing games, Xbox 360 also plays all your CDs and DVDs, links to your Windows XP computer and connects directly with your digital music player. The next generation in games and digital entertainment, Xbox 360 is sure to be a hit with anyone on your gift list.



Starting at  
**Xbox 360 \$399.99\***

\* Estimated retail price. Resellers' pricing may vary.



# WIN ENORMOUS ENTERTAINMENT!

[www.microsoft.ca/home](http://www.microsoft.ca/home)

Enter the Holiday Helpbook Games Contest for your chance to win a super gaming entertainment package **worth over \$8,000** for your home. Includes an HP Entertainment PC from Intel, Xbox 360, great products from HP and Bell, the latest in Microsoft software and more.

Brought to you by:

**Microsoft**

**intel**

**XBOX 360**

**Bell**

**hp**  
invent

\* No purchase necessary.  
Contest open to residents of Canada who have reached the age of majority in their province of residence. The contest runs from November 1, 2005 to January 2, 2006. See [www.microsoft.ca/home](http://www.microsoft.ca/home) for full contest rules and details. The winner is required to answer correctly a skill-testing question.

Photo: Brand X Pictures