



# Ross Ipsa Loquitur

*A Wisconsin Law Journal Bi-Monthly Column*

## Summer Diversions: Gadgets for Overworked Lawyers

by

**Ross L. Kodner**

©2004 Ross L. Kodner, All Rights Reserved

It's finally summer here in Wisconsin. In between the near-daily monsoons, we've actually had a few warm days. During those rainstorms, what better way to fritter away otherwise billable hours than ordering and playing with gadgets. It's the perfect summer reality diversion for any overworked lawyer or legal staffer. Here are a few of my current "favorites" in both the truly useful and the truly useless categories:

### **Got Cables?**

I'm obsessed with cable neatness. I can't stand wires, cables, cords jumbled everywhere in my laptop bag. With companies like Ziplinq and Ultra producing a plethora of small, inexpensive retractable cables, I'm in organization heaven. Readers of Mobile PC magazine have a "secret" hot cable deal available. Go to the special Mobile PC page at TigerDirect and find a 13 piece Ultra Retractable cable kit (Item no. 3) which is normally \$50, only \$10 after rebates. It's got everything from RJ-11 (modem), RJ-45 (network/High speed Net), USB, Firewire and various adapters. Amazing, especially when each of these is normally \$10 each. There's no other way to get to this link through the TigerDirect site and I don't know how long it will last. But mine's on the way!

### **Combo USB Flash Drive / Laser Pointer**

The new adage: "There's a USB version of everything." Continued proof comes in the form of a new combination laser pointer and USB flash drive available from Wolverine Data, a company which extorts us to "Empower Yourself with USB." With capacities ranging from 32MB (\$35) to 256MB (\$70), it's hard to argue with the practicality if you're a CLE speaker or presenter. Light it, store it . . . works for me.

### **Laptop Ergonomics Rolls Onto Your Desk**

Keynastics, an Austin, Texas company with expertise in ergonomics, has released the Laptop Stand with Wheels. Screaming for a better name (LapRoller? LapWheels?), I'll be writing a full review as soon as I receive my evaluation unit. The concept looks brilliant - good laptop positioning, getting the screen height up so the neck can be held straight. At the same time, lowering the typing height for better wrist positioning. And the ability to roll the whole thing out of the

way when you need to. Makes a lot of sense. After communicating with Keynatics principal Greg Bright, I loved the fact that his e-mail sig lists him as "Partner / Inventor." We need to see more "inventors" out there. \$79 with a free shipping special currently and a 30 day money back guarantee.

### **Four Dollar Air Conditioning**

More or less. ComputerGeeks.com sells a private-labeled (actually no label at all) version of Kensington's USB FlyFan. This is a soft-nylon bladed fan mounted on a 14" flexible metal stalk which plugs into and is powered by any USB port. Bend the fan head towards you and the soft-touch nylon blades throw a surprising amount of cooling air, virtually silently. Of all the over-priced, big-promise gadgets I've spent money on over the years, this is the best \$4 I've ever spent. I use mine every day - I travel with it - I'm cool during presentations. Get the real Kensington model for \$10 at [www.kensington.com](http://www.kensington.com) or the ersatz work-alike, look-alike from ComputerGeeks.com.

### **Run For Your Lives! It's Hubzilla!**

OK, you've got to see it to believe it - At Charismac they've got Hubzilla - it's a 4 port Firewire hub actually built into an 8" tall plastic Godzilla figure. Why? Seriously, why would you even ask . . . just because. Note that the specs list two key characteristics: "Doesn't bite" and "Rarely eats." Note the latter has a footnote to the disclaimer which states: "Disclaimers: \*Charismac claims no responsibility for broken personal or business related property should Firewire Dino go on a rampage. As always, a clean and fed Firewire Dino results in a happy Firewire Dino. \*\*Please keep small children away from Firewire Dino, just in case." \$75ish.

### **Why? Please Just Tell Me Why?**

One of the coolest sites for the elite gadgeterazzi is Dynamism.com. This site offers a mind-blowing array of the latest Japanese electronic wizardry that is sold only in the home market. For years, Dynamism takes these items, anglicizes them with English language manuals, keyboards, Windows versions, and then sells and supports them to U.S. and other customers worldwide. Certainly, take a few moments and wander the virtual aisles - I can guaranty that like me, you'll begin to drool and wonder . . . how can they not ship us this stuff! Once you're past the tiny laptops (check out the \$3000 Carbon Fiber 2 lb. Sony VAIO - wow), and you dig into the "Gadgets" listing on the Products page, scroll down to find the i-Duck ([www.dynamism.com/iduck](http://www.dynamism.com/iduck)). I stared at my screen for at least two minutes before I formulated the single thought: "Why?" What is an i-Duck? It's a 256 MB USB 1.1-compatible flash memory drive in the shape of little rubber duckie. In six different color schemes. Including one that is pink with little hearts on it. And when they plug them, the little duckie glows. If you can answer my question, please write to me!

More gadget info will be posted regularly at the new Techno.Tidbits page of my company's website - look for the main page link at [www.microlaw.com](http://www.microlaw.com). Happy gadgeteering!

---

**Ross Kodner** is a "recovering" lawyer turned legal technology consultant and Founder/President of MicroLaw, Inc. in Milwaukee. He writes the "Ross Ipsa Loquitur" column for the Wisconsin Law Journal and Chairs the Milwaukee Bar Association's Technology Committee. He can be reached at [rkodner@microlaw.com](mailto:rkodner@microlaw.com), via [www.microlaw.com](http://www.microlaw.com) and 414-540-9433.