

# Perkins Computer Center

hSoft Consulting



## Back to School Tech

As students of all ages prepare for another school year and parents all over are sighing with relief at another summer vacation's passing, we at Perkins Computer Center were busy compiling a list of our top picks for Back to School Tech. Put away your pencils and paper, we're on hi-def mode now...

### Elementary School: VTech V Smile V Motion Active Learning System \$40 amazon.com

Keep kids moving, learning, and having fun with the award-winning V.Motion Active Learning System from Vtech. This educational gaming system is designed to keep kids aged three to seven amused and motivated for hours at a time. They will have plenty of fun using the wireless controller to practice hand eye coordination, solve puzzles, and win races. This system won the National Parenting Center's Seal of Approval and the Creative Child Seal of Excellence. A variety of age-appropriate games teach concepts like numbers, letters, and shapes for younger children and let older children work on skills like counting, vocabulary, and matching.



### Middle School: DigiMicro 200X Zooming USB Digital Microscope \$30 dealextreme.com

It features a magnification ratio of 10x to 20x, and also has the ability to take still images and video. Though not same as bio lab microscopes, it can plug into home computer and encourage continuous learning and exploration at home.

### High School: Livescribe 2GB Pulse Smartpen (APA-00002) \$125+ amazon.com

Capture Everything! The Pulse smartpen records audio and links it what you write. Missed something? Tap on your notes or drawings with the tip of your Pulse smartpen to hear what was said while you were writing. No Need to Lug the Laptop: The Pulse smartpen automatically captures everything as you write and draw. Transfer your notes to your computer, organize them, and even search for words within your notes. Find what you want in seconds.

Share Your Notes: Transform your notes and audio into interactive movies. Upload your creations online for everyone to see, hear and play



### College and Beyond: Desktop vs. Laptop (notes from Joel Santo Domingo – Pcmag.com)

Netbooks and nettops are fine for simple writing and researching. The majority of "full blown" desktops are perfect for most students' needs. Find a dual core-powered system for the best balance between power and price. Students in the Sciences and the Arts will want a quad-core system, for added computing power. High powered quad-core multimedia PCs are perfect for students that need to crunch a lot of numbers before their next study session.

Integrated graphics will be fine, unless your curriculum mandates a certain graphics card. For example, a card capable of running CAD/CAM for engineering or a high-powered graphics card for work in Adobe CS4. Your pre-term information sheets should point out the cards that your school recommends.

All-in-one PCs fit great on tiny dorm desks, can be used to watch movies during downtime, and have larger screens than almost any laptop. Though it may be tempting, don't buy the cheapest PC available. Remember that "cheaper" PCs will feel "slower" before you know it.

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Inside this issue

Back to School Tech

Retro Candy Nostalgia

End of Summer

Recipes

## Back to School Facts

- ✓ **\$7.2 billion:** The amount of money spent at [kids clothing](#) stores in August 2009. Only October, November and December -- the holiday shopping season -- were sales greater than \$5 billion.
- ✓ **100:** Percentage of public schools with [Internet access](#). In 1995, the proportion was 50 percent.
- ✓ According to the [American School Bus Council](#), federal law mandates that school buses be yellow and include other school bus cautionary markings. Back in 1939 that color was created specifically for use on school buses because black lettering would be seen easiest on it in early morning light when school buses are picking up kids for school.
- ✓ A company called Henkel (now known as [Pritt](#)) invented glue sticks in 1969 because they were inspired by the ease of twisting up lipstick.

## Back to School Tech (cont.)

The Liberal Arts student concentrating in Creative Writing will need a simpler PC than the one a potential J.J. Abrams successor would need in a Graduate Film program.

There is a downside to cheaper PCs: the specter of bloatware. Like broadcast TV and "free" cell phones, one of the reasons why the PCs are so cheap is because some other entity is subsidizing the low prices. The PC manufacturers ship their PCs with those Microsoft, Intel, or AMD stickers on the case, and there's almost always a copy of Microsoft Office 2007 60-day trial on the hard drive. Companies like eBay and Wild Tangent also get prominent placement with shortcuts on the desktop and extra programs in the Start menu.

Word to the wise: When you're trying to save money, it's tempting to buy the cheapest PC you can find—but don't do it. If it doesn't have these recommended parts, you'll wind up with something that is super slow or, worse yet, unusable within a year. That "incredible buy" may cost you more money in the long run.

**1900S:**

**HORSHOUND &  
LICORICE OLD FASHIONED  
CANDY DROPS**



**SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS**



**1930s:  
Valomilk**



**Zagnut**

**1960s:**

**abba zabba**



**flying saucers**

**1960S:**

**CRY BABY**



**FRUIT STRIPE GUM**

**REMEMBER WHEN...  
RETRO CANDY  
NOSTALGIA...**

## End of Summer Recipes

### Watermelon Bombe

- 2 pints pistachio ice cream
- 1 pint Vanilla Ice Cream
- 1 quart Watermelon Sorbet
- 4 Nabisco Famous Chocolate Wafers, broken into 1/4-inch pieces
- 1 six-inch-round layer Vanilla Sponge Cake



Line a 3-quart metal mixing bowl with plastic wrap, and leave the edges overhanging. Place lined bowl in freezer for 10 minutes; this will be the mold. Chill the bowl of an electric mixer as well. Place pistachio ice cream in the chilled mixer bowl. Using the paddle attachment of the mixer, beat on low speed until ice cream is spreadable, about 30 seconds. Remove chilled mold from freezer. Using a rubber spatula, coat inside of mold with all the pistachio ice cream, making a 1/2-inch-thick layer. Return mold and clean mixer bowl to the freezer for 30 minutes.

Place vanilla ice cream in chilled mixer bowl. Beat on low speed until spreadable, about 30 seconds. Remove mold from freezer. Using the rubber spatula, coat pistachio layer with the vanilla ice cream, making a 1/4-inch-thick layer. Return mold and clean mixer bowl to freezer for 30 minutes. Place sorbet in chilled mixer bowl. Beat on low speed until sorbet has softened, about 1 minute. Fold in wafer pieces. Remove mold from freezer. Pack sorbet into center, making an even layer that comes to 1/3 inch below the top of the ice cream layer. Cover sorbet portion with sponge cake; trim cake if necessary. Return mold to freezer until completely hardened.

To serve, place a serving plate upside down on top of the mold. Holding plate against mold, invert both. Place a hot wet kitchen towel over the mold. Remove the metal bowl. Immediately before serving, remove the plastic wrap. Enjoy!

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### Grilled Chicken Sausage with Pears

- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 4 firm, ripe pears, cut lengthwise into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 8 precooked chicken-and-apple sausage links, pricked with a fork
- Fresh thyme, chutney, and assorted mustards, for serving

Preheat grill to medium-high. (If you are using a charcoal grill, coals are ready when you can hold your hand 5 inches above grill for just 3 to 4 seconds.) Whisk lemon juice with mustard. Add oil in a slow, steady stream, whisking until emulsified. Whisk in salt and pepper. Toss pears with 2 tablespoons dressing. Grill sausages, turning frequently, until heated through, 10 to 12 minutes total. At the same time, grill pears until softened and lightly browned, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Top sausages and pears with thyme, and serve with chutney, mustards, and remaining dressing.