

Inspect the gadgets

Camilla Chafer rounds up the best new gadgets to plug in, play and even pull



Games for a laugh

Compiled by the **Games Mistress**

Adults, Club Penguin is not aimed at you. It's been a major online hit among children worldwide for several years, and the latest game, **Elite Penguin Force** (£17.99, www.play.com), is out now on DS. Split into a variety of missions and mini-games, players chat with other penguins to solve mysteries and customise their penguin character with clothing. Change the date on the DS to see new missions – 31 October will load the Halloween party. Good, harmless fun for the over-fours.



In a similar family-friendly vein, **PopCap** (around £14.95 each, www.PopCap.com) has a variety of puzzle, word, action and mystery games to play online or for download to PC, Mac or phone. Bejeweled Twist is a deceptively simple strategy game that will appeal to Tetris fans. Jewels must be twisted and matched in lines to score points. Try it on 'zen' level for easy play or 'blitz' for a fast five-minute game to test your skills.

Gamers might want to visit Manchester's Urbis for interactive exhibit **Videogame Nation** (£3, www.urbis.org.uk). Simulated gaming environments span seaside arcades and football stadiums, or you can geek out with the Spectrum in a bedroom setting and play forgotten gems like 1983's Manic Miner and the newly released Nintendo DSi. It runs from 14 May to 20 September.



1 The latest satnav from TomTom's quality line-up is the **XL IQ**. Its 4.3-inch touchscreen and QWERTY keyboard make for easier data input, and it can help you out of a 'where-am-I?' pickle in over 42 European countries. Nervy drivers get extra help with advanced lane guidance. Just remember it's your slave, not the other way round. From £149.99, www.tomtom.com

2 This clever British-made **Hybrid PA** bag separates into three pieces: main bag, laptop case and a weekend bag that can be carried on as hand luggage. And it's even cleverer than that: there's internal gadgetry, including an anti-gravity handle and motor technology, which helps with gradients and kerbs and makes the bag easier to manoeuvre.

Live Locator ID helps reunite owner and bag in case of loss. £295, www.liveluggage.com

3 Windows Live Messenger has launched free reading application **Time for a Story**, which aims to help family members who are away from their young children. You'll need a PC with webcam, mic and speakers at both ends, so that you see and hear each other in real time. Stories, such as *Noddy*, are displayed on screen, and the words appear for you both to follow. It's currently in beta trials so expect more story choices soon. www.timeforastory.com

4 The wireless **Motormouse** is based on the Porsche 911, with flashing headlight buttons and an opening boot for batteries. Its

paint finish, chrome alloy wheels and rubber tyres give it a realistic, glossy sheen. Other models such as the Audi TT are due out this year. £29.99, www.motor-mouse.net

5 The **Voix PYT** speakers have been designed to slip an iPod inside the frame, so while it will work with the Nano 3G, the size of the gap means it looks better if you have an iPhone or Touch. The four speakers give a really clear performance, and operation couldn't be simpler – the volume buttons are on top. £39.99, www.voixltd.com

POWERING UP

Most seats on Virgin Trains have access to a power point so you'll never run out of juice, no matter what gadgets you bring aboard