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special report: high-tech boston

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Test drives: Some gadgets from high-tech Boston

 By Eddie Medina, Globe Correspondent [▶ MORE TECH NEWS](#)

MicroOptical Eyeglass Monitor

Bespectacled folks who cringe at the memory of being called "four eyes" can take heart in a gadget that could change the way people see the world and those who wear glasses: a cyborg-like clip-on that projects an image of a computer monitor onto an ordinary pair of eyeglasses.

The device, made by Westwood-based MicroOptical, projects an LCD image of a computer monitor or other electronic device onto one of the lenses of the glasses. The magnified image of the monitor is reflected into the eye and appears to float a few inches in front of the viewer.

MicroOptical makes two versions, the CO-1 Clip-on and the EG-7 Integrated Eyeglass models. The company created them in a partnership with MIT, and sells the products for \$2,500 on its Web site, [MicroOpticalCorp.com](#), as evaluation kits to developers.

The kit consists of a 40-gram swivel arm that attaches to the frame of the glasses. A wire runs from the arm to a brick-sized black box that transforms the computer monitor's signal into LCD data and carries a 7.2-volt lithium ion rechargeable battery.

The company believes the CO-1 Clip-on model has applications for any task requiring an eye on both an object and a monitor: military infantry, medical surgery, or electrical engineering, to name a few.

MicroOptical is developing the EG-7 Integrated Eyeglass with an eye on fashion. The EG-7 uses a prism inside the lens itself to reflect the image into the eye and do away with the swivel arm.

MicroOptical has struck a deal with the maker of Varilux lenses to produce prescription lenses with the reflection prism included. This model also requires a wire and black power/transformer box. MicroOptical is developing the product for mobile professionals, like stock brokers, who currently turn to tiny cell phone screens or handheld screens for news and information.

Caveo Anti-Theft PC Card

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Laptop computer theft is a big problem. Just ask the FBI. The bureau confirmed in July that it was missing 184 laptops, 13 of which it believed had been stolen. Safeware Insurance Company estimated 387,000 laptops were stolen overall in 2000.



For \$99, there may be no better laptop anti-theft system than one made by Caveo Technology LLC of Cambridge.

The company makes a PC card that contains a tiny motion sensor, a 110-decibel alarm and an encryption key that renders a hard drive's data

useless if the drive is removed without a password.

The PC card slips into its slot, and contains a microscopic Analog Devices computer chip that can measure the trajectory and velocity of the laptop, accurate to 100 angstroms. The owner can easily use software that comes with the card to memorize a movement as a password. Pick the laptop up, tilt it, spin it, whatever. The laptop will store it as a password.

If the laptop is moved without the right movement, or if it is taken beyond a certain perimeter, an alarm sounds inside the PC card and the computer is rendered useless. Without a typed password, the computer can't be accessed again.

Caveo expects to finish beta testing in time to bring the product to market by January or February. Distribution models haven't been set yet, but Caveo plans to target the corporate market.

Lock maker Kryptonite also plans to launch a new series of laptop security products in late October. The Canton company will introduce a new simplified motion sensor alarm and four improved combination/key cable locks for laptops.

The systems will retail for under \$50, and the company plans to begin rolling them out this fall. Kryptonite's current laptop anti-theft line is available at nationwide retailers including Staples, Best Buy, and MicroCenter.

Boston Acoustics Unity System

Boston Acoustics of Peabody has teamed up with Kenwood Corp. to bring theater-quality sound to the family living room for under \$1,000.

The Unity system consists of six gray acoustically-matched speakers, a sleek silver Kenwood-made DVD player/AM-FM stereo, and a universal remote. The partnership takes advantage of the speaker maker's surround sound expertise, and Kenwood's electronics experience.

Boston Acoustics, a designer of fine audio speakers since 1979, makes a type of speaker that can measure the acoustic frequencies they receive and dampen them if they're too low for a tweeter or too high for the deep bass of a woofer.

The Boston Acoustic Unity speakers create the sense of surround sound by isolating very low frequencies to an 8-inch woofer, which can be heard, but not located by the human ear. (With 100-watts of power, its location can be seen because it will vibrate nearby light fixtures.)

Four three-quarter-inch satellite speakers and a central, three-inch mid-woofer speaker combine for crystal clear sound, but to maximize the surround effect - and save power - much of the speaker synchronization is done by the Kenwood DVD player before the signal goes out to the speakers. The Kenwood stereo can be used to play sound from auxiliary sources, and it's compatible with DVD, CD, CD-

R, CD-RW, and MP3-formatted CDs.

The Unity system will retail for \$999 in October. The three quarter-inch satellite speakers and sub-woofer will comprise Boston Acoustic's next multimedia speaker system, the BA-7800, which will retail for \$279 in mid-October.

Tivoli Audio Model One Table Radio

The latest invention by audio industry legend Henry Kloss is worth a look by radio lovers.

The man who invented the KLH Table Radio, Advent Corp., high-quality projection TV, and Cambridge Sound Works Inc. has updated the old KLH radio to create the Model One Table Radio.



Tom DeVesto, who co-founded Cambridge Sound Works with Kloss, says he liked Kloss' Model One so much that he created Tivoli Audio to sell it, and plunked the company down in the heart of South Boston in a office above Amrheins Restaurant.

The Model One looks like the KLH radio. Weighing five pounds, it measures four-by-eight-by-five inches, with a walnut, cherry or maple finish. Though the Model One appears retro, it's thoroughly modern. Kloss says the new radio employs circuitry originally designed for cell phones. The company claims that gives the radio better reception ``with increased clarity on closely spaced local stations as well as those far away."

The Model One has one large geared-down tuner, a LED light that glows brighter as a station's reception improves, a volume knob, and a dial that toggles between AM and FM. It also has only one three-inch, long-throw speaker that's light on the bass but rich because the Model One uses ``frequency contouring" to balance the speaker's output every half-octave.

Kloss' new radio won't play CDs, but it will fill a room as well - if not better - than a Bose Wave Radio. It began retailing last September for \$99 and can be found on TivoliAudio.com Web site. Tivoli plans to introduce a new radio around early October. The Model Two will have an extra satellite speaker for true stereo sound and a few extra perks for \$159.

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