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Tech Toys Take Over At Toy Wishes Holiday Preview

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More than ever it seems kids need great coordination, imagination, and concentration just to play with their toys.

A quick peek at this year's annual Toy Wishes Holiday Preview reveals lots of the must-haves hitting shelves in time for the upcoming winter holidays, are getting further and further from the traditional blocks and Barbies we dads and moms grew up with.

Lots of the old standards, like stuffed dogs and dolls, including Barbie herself, are now tied to massive online worlds. And stuffed dogs are no longer just stuffed with polyester but rather circuits and sensors, like the \$50 Mio, who plays and responds to your voice and affection.

□The sensors are on her head, on her back when you pet her back, they're also under her chin, she has one in her mouth when you feed her bone,□ says Aja Gabriel of Gabriel Hasbro. □Her nose has a sensor to turn her on and off. If she□s being bad, you might tap her on the nose.□

If only it was that easy to get your kids to stop messing around with your computer. That's why the folks at LeapFrog are offering the \$60 ClickStart, a computer for mashing and learning to prevent the real one from crashing and burning.

□It mimics a real, working desktop, but it's on the TV, so there□s no internet connectivity, nothing dangerous, everything safe, and they're learning at the same time,□ says Jenna Martin of LeapFrog.

Or if mom and dad are banking on junior pulling in big bucks as a Hollywood director, for about \$100, the video creation station is one box with a video camera, green screens and computer software that simplify making somewhat complex special effects.

□What you can do is film yourself against our green screen and you can replace it with any video background, any image background, you can add extra objects on top, and all sorts of cool stuff and when you're done, there's actually a one click to YouTube button so you can post it right up to the internet,□ says Avi Rosenstein of Toy Quest.

From the Spielbergs of the future to the Einsteins of the future, there are also toys to help turn your child into a budding, or should we say bubbling scientist.

Ranging from \$10 and \$40, Mad Science kits are basically a collection of those high school science experiments that actually had you looking forward to class.

□There are all sorts of scientific principles,□ says Rob Diaz of Mad Science. □They learn the very basics of physics, very basic chemistry with the goo maker, they see polymerization reactions and all sorts of other chemical reactions, with the bubble blower, and they'll learn about surface tension.□

And while with this stuff there's zero danger the kids will accidentally blow up your home, but no promises they won't make it disappear for a few hours.

□ *Adam Balkin*

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