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Technology Now

Friday, December 8, 2006

Time Magazine releases list of Best Inventions Of 2006

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By: Adam Balkin

Add Time Magazine to the growing list of lists that inventors hope to make come the end of every year. The just-released 6th Annual Inventions of the Year issue includes everything from robots to edible brewed coffee.



"It can be anything, for health, a toy, a scientific breakthrough, a car and then we all vote on which ones we like," says Anita Hamilton of Time Magazine. "It has to be a breakthrough; it has to either be really fun really useful, or just something we've never seen before."

For example: water. The lotus sanitizing system, in either a bowl or through a spray bottle, promises to create a kind of super water that'll rid your fruit or countertop of 99.9-percent of bacteria like e-coli and listeria.

"You just add water and then through some sort of chemical process that oxygenates – it creates ozone so you get this super-oxygenated water which actually cleans off all the bacteria so you have very clean food without having to put anything weird on it," says Hamilton.

I wonder, though, if it'd work on the NanoNuno umbrella, made with a nano-technology. One shake and it's dry fabric.

"It's able to just repel the water and so you just give it a shake and it'll just woosh off," says Hamilton. "It never really seeps in."

One product with a lot of weird potential is called a "hug shirt." You put it on and then a loved one puts one on – let's say your wife or husband, or girlfriend or boyfriend, then no matter where you are or where they are – you could be in New York, they in China – and you can actually give each other a virtual hug.

Developed by a company called CuteCircuit, the shirt has sensors that detect touch, skin warmth and heartbeat. You then give yourself a hug and send it to a loved one via a Bluetooth phone as a text message. As soon as they open the message, assuming they're wearing the shirt, they feel the hug.

Finally though, if you're trying to keep too much warmth away from your shirts, try the Oliso iron.

"It has sensors in the handle so when your ironing and you let go, it stands up," says Hamilton. "It has little feet so there's no way you can burn your shirt or anything else."

C'mon, it's not a magic iron. I'm sure I could still find a way.

WATCH THE VIDEO

Best Inventions of 2006

'Tis the season for more and more magazines to honor inventors from around the world. Tech Beat reporter Adam Balkin, again this week, rounds up some new nominees vying for your opinion as best invention of the year in the following report.

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