

# TimeOut

## Chicago

The where-to-go what-to-do weekly

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**Billy Corgan**  
on the new album, *God*  
and *The Great Gatsby*

**208**  
FREE EVENTS  
THIS WEEK

**Hooray  
for rosé!**  
Putting a cork  
in wine myths

**Natural  
Woo-man**  
Deconstructing  
the Cubs'  
biggest fan

# What to read

The best beach books, memoirs and more

**PLUS**

**Hot local authors**  
**Indie bookstore crawl**  
**Cool comics**





# No strings attached

Untangle your life with Bluetooth, a technology that makes wires obsolete **By Jaime Vázquez**

The present generation will likely be the last to remember gadgets with wires. Cables of all kinds are quickly going the way of the 8-track, and hands-free cell phone kits will soon be the only way to legally talk while you drive in Chicago. So what's the easiest way to go wireless? Bluetooth, a wireless technology (ideal for ranges up to 32 feet) showing up in most modern PDAs, cell phones and smartphones. Today's nice-to-have gadget is tomorrow's necessity—so start shopping now.



## Drive legally

Beginning next month, hands-free cell phone car kits will be the new seatbelts—and cops can already ticket you for not using one. If earpieces aren't your thing, try the **Nokia HF-6W** (\$179, available this summer at [www.nokiausa.com](http://www.nokiausa.com)). The device looks like the head of a golf club, plugs into your car's power outlet, and acts as an omnidirectional speaker/microphone. The sound quality is remarkable, and the device is capable of filtering out a lot of outside noise—calls are clear even when the windows are down, but you'll still have to turn off the radio to talk. Setup is a snap, depending on your phone; we were able to connect in three clicks on a smartphone. Make sure the HF-6W will fit in your car, though; stick-shifters may have trouble finding a safe place to put it.

# CheckOut

A smart buyer's guide to style and services



## Keep all your contacts in one place

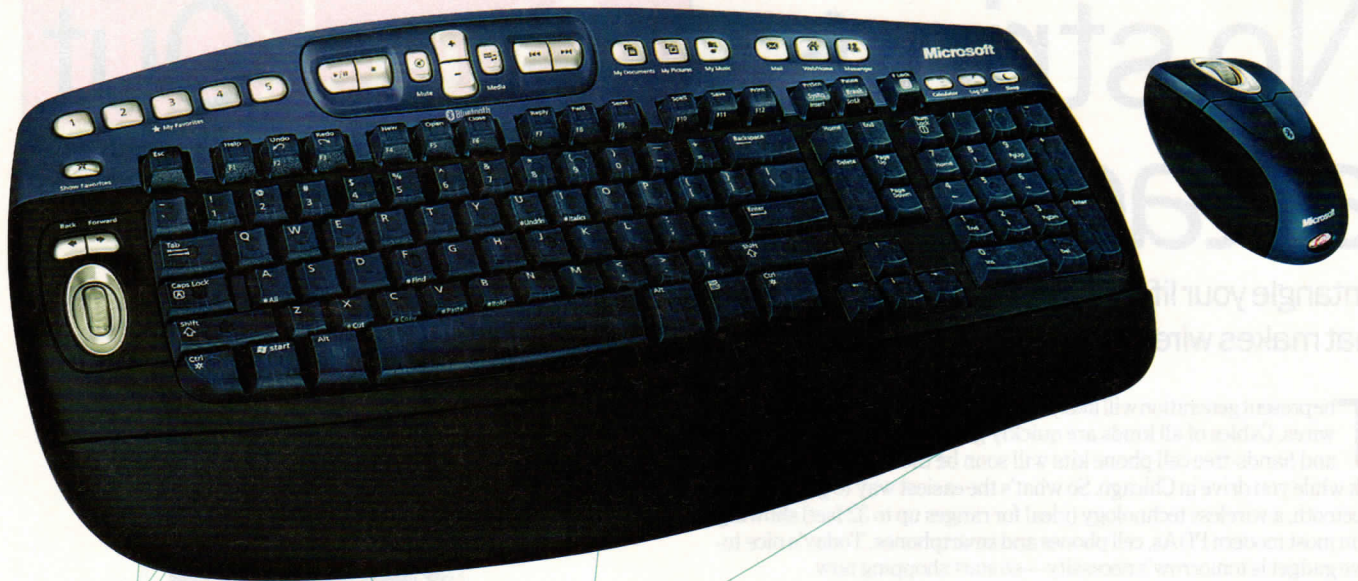
Synching up PDAs is pretty painless, but the truly technophobic will appreciate Bluetooth's ability to automatically update calendar, e-mail and contacts wirelessly. Mobile phones that do all this and more are called smartphones. The current cream of the crop is Palm's **Treo 650** (\$699, [www.palmone.com](http://www.palmone.com)), which does everything from playing movie clips to offering WiFi Internet access and acting as your little black book. Shutterbugs will love the built-in VGA camera (which can also take short movies), and the nimble-fingered will appreciate the responsive keyboard. The Treo 650 shines brightest when it comes to communication: It handles e-mail, instant messaging and text messaging beautifully, and it's even easy to use the device for keeping separate professional and social calendars. Just prepare to be as available as your phone makes you. But beware: The software's learning curve is stiff, and El riders may long for the one-handed ease of reading e-mail on a BlackBerry.



## Walk and talk, hands-free

It's almost normal these days to see business types walking and talking to themselves, so long as you can spot the earpiece. Most of the Bluetooth earpieces out there still look pretty *Star Trek*, but Jabra's **BT800** (\$150, [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com)) is svelte and subdued. The BT800's only drawback is that it takes a while to get used to such a small earpiece; the microphone picks up your voice from fairly far away, but getting over the "yellular" instinct takes time.





### Clean up your desk

Bluetooth keyboards and mice are getting more affordable every day, and ditching your cables frees up a lot of space, fast. Microsoft's Bluetooth keyboard and mouse, the **Optical Desktop Elite** (\$150, Micro Center, 2645 N Elston Ave between Leavitt St and Logan Blvd, 773-292-1700) is the industry standard for all-in-one Bluetooth keyboard/mouse kits, if gawdy and hard to look at. Because the kit is manufactured by Microsoft, it integrates seamlessly with Windows. Mac users should go with Apple's equivalent—and more elegant—versions (\$59 each, available at The Apple Store, 679 N Michigan Ave at Huron St, 312-981-4104).

CHECK OUT

## Essential extras

Before you take the Bluetooth leap, make sure you're prepared with the right extras to get your gadgets communicating. Pick up one of each of these and you'll likely save yourself multiple trips to the store.

**Bluetooth adapter** It takes two to make a thing go right. Remember that your computer won't be able to connect to your Bluetooth phone or PDA without the proper equipment. Adapters come in different shapes and sizes, but the most important factor is the connectivity range. Generally, any old adapter will do, but be wary of no-name companies that claim ranges over 100 feet, and make sure you have a spare USB port on your machine.

**A spare charger** The one thing that Bluetooth cannot transmit wirelessly is power, so using it frequently can cause your battery to die much faster. Extra chargers are never a bad idea, but with Bluetooth, they're indispensable.

**Synching software** Sure, your gadget comes with proprietary software for wirelessly synching your data, but you're not limited to what they give you. Alternative synching software can sometimes provide functionality not found in the manufacturer's version. Try [www.pocketmac.net](http://www.pocketmac.net) for a variety of solutions, including software to trick your iPod into thinking it's a PDA.



### Turn your phone into an iPod

Using a cell phone to control iTunes may sound like a silly geek trick, but it's a tech necessity for those with severe listening habits. Change the volume, skip a song, even view album artwork on your phone—just make sure you have the **Bluetooth Remote Control for Smartphone** software ([www.labtech.epitech.net/remotecontrol](http://www.labtech.epitech.net/remotecontrol)) for PCs, or **Salling Clicker** (\$20, [www.salling.com](http://www.salling.com)) if you're a Mac daddy. Either piece of software takes about 20 minutes of set-up time and is easily mastered. Think of it as a way to turn your phone into an iPod while you're at home.