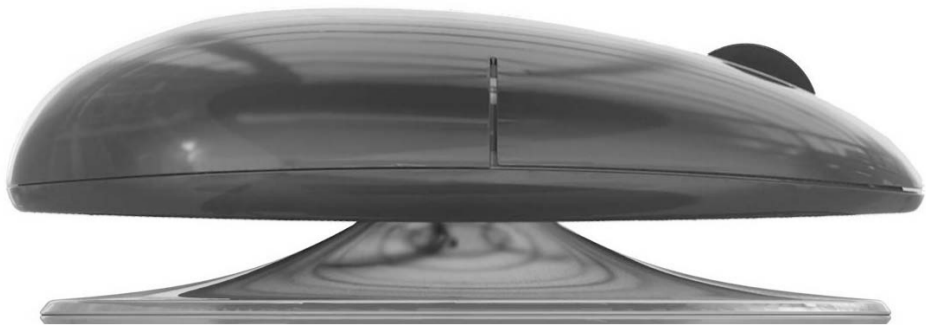


# Give this ergonomic mouse a hand for computer comfort

By Gregg Ellman  
Special to the Star-Telegram



Smartfish

The Smartfish ErgoMotion Laser Mouse offers comfort even while computing for long hours.

The main feature is ErgoMotion, which was developed by medical professionals and is described in a news release as "the most advanced computer peripheral technology designed to relieve discomfort and prevent repetitive-stress injuries related to extended computer usage."

Using this mouse is no guarantee against such injuries, but after using it I can see how it helps.

The mouse adjusts, with its patented swivel mechanism, to your hand position while scrolling or clicking. Your hand pivots back and forth on the mouse, which sits on a pedestal base housing the laser.

There was a short learning curve, but after a few minutes it was obvious

how this can make a difference long-term.

No software is needed. Just insert the two included AA batteries and plug the 2.4-gigahertz USB receiver into a Mac or Windows system.

Smartfish says the batteries can last up to 10 months; this will vary depending on usage, but the on/off button will help.

www.getsmartfish.com, \$49.95

## Walkman digital player

Long before the iPod came into the world, the portable music player was the Sony Walkman. Digital music didn't exist, so we were stuck with AM and FM radio for the most part.

The iPod caused the explosion in digital music, but the Walkman still thrives in the newly released E Series of pocket-sized MP3 players.

The reasonably priced player has all the features you would want from a pocket-sized device without a lot of expensive bells and whistles.

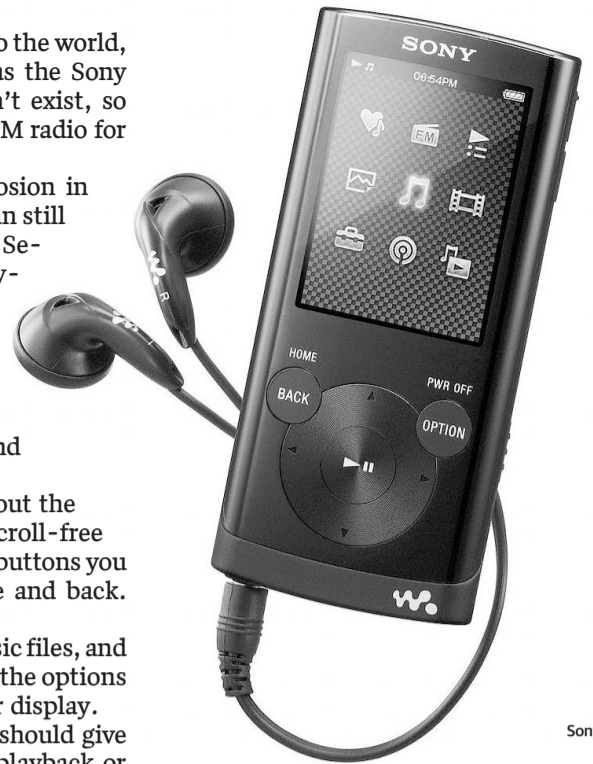
It's simple to operate without the need for a touch screen. A scroll-free display wheel contains all the buttons you need from pause, play, home and back. The volume is on the bottom.

It plays several types of music files, and can display photos and video; the options are shown on the 2-inch color display.

Once charged, the battery should give you up to 50 hours of audio playback or about 10 hours of video playback.

Included on the player is Sony's Content Transfer Software, for easily transferring digital files to the player from a PC or iTunes.

As on recent models, an FM radio is in-



Sony

cluded and 30 stations can be chosen as presets.

It's available in red, blue or black, with 4GB models selling for \$64; 8GB models are the better deal at \$70.

www.sonystyle.com

## Cellphone headset

Bluetrek Metal Evolution has made a specially designed Bluetooth headset for the iPhone 4 and 3GS.

What makes the match perfect is the Bluetooth chipset, which is produced by the same company that supplied the one in the iPhone.

Just like the attractive and stylish media player, the Bluetooth headset is built with style; it has a brushed metallic finish with a reinforced aluminum casing. Outside noise is minimized with Bluetrek's NoiseLock noise cancellation technology. While testing the device on a non-iPhone, sound was crystal clear as advertised. Everyone I spoke to confirmed the clarity on their end.

Another nice feature is the ability to simultaneously connect a pair of cellphones to the Bluetooth headset.

Everything is easily controlled with three buttons on the back of the headset. These are for answering calls, voice dialing and controlling the volume.

After a full charge via USB, expect about five days of standby time or 4.5 hours of talk time.

www.bluetrek.com, \$59.99



Bluetrek



Mimoco

## Mimoco flash drives

If you want a flash drive that stands out from just about every other, Mimoco, makers of designer USB flash drives, has some new

ones on the market.

The recently launched Badtz-Maru, Hangyodon and the classic Hello Kitty drives are part of the company's second wave of

Sanrio character flash drives.

Preloaded are desktop wallpaper, screen savers, avatars and icons.

Windows or Mac sys-

tems will support each drive, available in 2GB (\$24.95), 4GB (\$34.95), 8GB (\$54.95) and 16GB (\$79.95).

www.mimoco.com

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## Q&A with Groupon founder

Eric Lefkofsky uses technology and the Internet to update industries.

By Darren Dahl  
The New York Times

Asked to name the world's wealthiest entrepreneurs, few people would think of Eric Lefkofsky, who is 40 and keeps a deliberately low profile in his hometown of Chicago. But Lefkofsky has an impressive entrepreneurial track record, one that recently led *Forbes* to estimate his wealth at \$750 million.

The first business Lefkofsky started, StarBelly, made tools for building websites; he sold it in 2000 for \$240 million. He then started two companies that have since gone public – InnerWorkings, which provides printing capabilities over the Web, and Echo Global Logistics, a transportation and logistics outsourcing business he founded with a law school friend, Brad Keywell. He also founded MediaBank, which helps companies buy advertising. In each case, Lefkofsky used the power of technology and the Internet to update an industry.

And then came Groupon, the social-coupon website that he bankrolled and started in 2008 with Andrew Mason – a venture that has been called the fastest-growing company ever. Groupon offers its followers a deal-of-the-day coupon, sponsored by a local business, which the followers are encouraged to share with their social networks. The local business gets customers, and Groupon takes a share of the coupon proceeds – a business model that has led to talk that Groupon, still privately owned, could be worth as much as \$3 billion. More recently, Lefkofsky and Keywell started an investment fund with \$100 mil-

lion of their earnings. It's called Lightbank, and it invests only in early-stage technology companies that are built around social media. The following is a condensed version of a recent conversation with Lefkofsky.

### Did you have any idea how big Groupon would be?

Not when we first launched. It's nearly impossible to predict or even comprehend this level of growth. We have grown from a handful of employees to more than 2,700 over the past two years. This year alone we have expanded into 29 new countries.

### Was there a key decision or strategy that made Groupon a success?

ThePoint.com, the predecessor of Groupon, was a failure until we found the right recipe, which was to make buying a social experience. Now, Groupon is a very well-run business with great operational control and a metrics-driven culture. As a result we have revenue, profits and cash flow.

### Companies have been overwhelmed or even destroyed by running a Groupon special. How do you feel about that?

I find it almost absurd that the biggest complaint people have been able to levy against Groupon is that it actually delivers too many customers. More than 95 percent of all Groupon merchants want to run another Groupon discount. There is no greater evidence of value than that.

### There's a study that indicates 42 percent of your customers wouldn't run another promotion. What do you make of that?

The study is flawed. They chose an absurdly small and incomplete sample set and their thesis is

largely inaccurate. First of all, we conduct regular surveys and our merchants are overwhelmingly happy. Secondly, we have featured about 5,000 merchants more than once, which would never occur if they weren't making money off Groupon.

### Why have you decided to focus on social media with your investment fund?

We think that the most disruptive business models will take advantage of that social graph over the next five to 10 years. Take travel as an example. You should be able to plan your entire trip online, invite your friends to come with you and even interact with other friends who have already been to that location.

### In what industries are you seeing similar changes?

Think about the way most companies currently hire. You post a job and then get blind résumés in response. This should be a social experience. If you took everyone and asked them to list everyone they knew, you could create an enormous social graph of several million people. There's no reason to hire people that we can't learn something about through some connection of our personal network. There's no site today that takes advantage of the social graph in this way, yet.

### Doesn't LinkedIn do that?

LinkedIn does part of it. It's a great example of a company that is leveraging the social graph to grow and deliver value.

### What is it missing?

The site is missing some of the key social features that make Facebook so compelling. The ability to quickly understand someone based on whom they know, what they share and what others think of them, for example.