

# focus @n TECH

## A wearable camcorder, web browser news and an affordable office suite

By Art Snyder

What a great way to start the new year: Looxcie has developed a portable video camera that helps you take full advantage of the Internet for your rink's outreach and similar customer marketing efforts. Your tech-savvy customers — middle-schoolers and high-schoolers, as well as the 20-somethings — will go nuts over this. Plus, if you think you'd like to take the plunge into online marketing, a segment below will get you started. And, new software from Adobe Photoshop Elements, SoftMaker Office 2012 and others awaits your inspection. Full details are below.

### Looxcie LX2 Wearable Bluetooth Camcorder

Here's your opportunity to bring the excitement of roller action to your rink's Facebook page, blog or website: Wear a Looxcie LX2 Wearable Bluetooth Camcorder around your head and begin filming as you take to the floor and skate, play hockey, meet-and-greet birthday celebrants during their private sessions, or demo a few sharp moves.

The Looxcie camcorder weighs less than an ounce and comfortably fits over either ear (it's similar to a wearable wireless telephone). After you hook it over an ear — the ear loop is bendable, for comfortable use by any user — simply turn it on and aim it just by looking at anything around you or ahead of you as you skate. Despite its tiny size, the Looxcie LX2 can record an hour's worth of rink action, activities, parties, skaters in private sessions, and other customers. This filming should be especially exciting with hockey competitions and all your after-school sessions. The young ones will go wild with the novelty of being on camera and later seeing video clips of themselves (or at least looking for themselves) online, for all their friends and the whole world to see and squeal over.

Once you're done filming with the Looxcie, take it to your computer and upload it as you normally upload imagery and video clips to wherever you have an account that's open to and viewable by the public. Typically, this will be a Facebook page, YouTube, Twitter or other social site on the Internet.

The Looxcie models (there are three of them) are compatible with iPhones, iPads, Android and similar smart phones. Pricing on Looxcie models ranges from \$120 to \$180, depending on the model's video storage capacity. That can range up

to 10 hours. Overall, the cost of filming and staffing is negligible, and the fun quotient runs to the max. Moreover, you'll create a very positive buzz with all your skaters and their friends, to make the most of your marketing budget and staffing time. The Looxcie video experience might be the most exciting thing to happen in the skating industry in some time, and it really fits today's tight budgets with a great comfort factor. For more, visit [Looxcie.com](http://Looxcie.com).

### Goodsie's storefront software

If you've contemplated opening an online store to sell rink services, skates and other fare, in addition to letting your community know more about you, you no doubt been held back by reservations. Where do you start? How does e-commerce work? How can it complement my

can think of this mature, smooth and comprehensive bundle as your new Windows office suite. It's that good.

The most significant program in this office suite is TextMaker, a full-fledged word processor that can do everything that MS Word can do, and then some. Notably, all the latest Microsoft document formats — .docx, .xlsx and .pptx — are fully compatible with TextMaker 2012 and the rest of the SoftMaker 2012 suite. Additionally, TextMaker and the other programs in the suite are just as fully compatible with documents made in earlier Microsoft Office versions, Office 2010, 2007 and 2003.

It's a joy to see TextMaker seamlessly in action, and its abundance of sophisticated features confirms it's all you'll ever need as you craft bills, address envelopes, make newsletters and media releases, and

been released, and it's easy to see why this powerful program has become the #1 consumer photo-editing software available for both Windows and Macintosh alike. It's easy to edit photos and make photo creations using automated options, for use with all your rink media and marketing activities. The program is less than \$90, and it's much cheaper as an upgrade. For more, visit <http://snipurl.com/20z6ufy>.

•**Windows XP usage and fate:** Windows XP has turned 10 years old, and with its renowned reliability and capable features, it's easy to see why the operating system still commands more than 50 percent of the world's PC market. Still, Windows 7 appears to be a very solid update (please overlook Vista), and Microsoft has said that the company will support the XP system only until 2014. Go ahead and make that switch to Win 7, the next time you opt for a new computer or two for rink duty.

•**Web browsers:** The online world has grown as few would have imagined it to be possible a decade or two ago, but the reality is that now the Internet is essential to rink success. That holds for secure online bill payment (and receipt), marketing, advertising, inventory management, tax fulfillment (the IRS soon will be online-only for small businesses) and overall staff productivity, day after day in the back office. Central to all of this is the right Web browser, one that's relatively immune to hacking and other mischief.

Today there are several top-line browsers that offer better security and more features than the industry standard, Internet Explorer. At the top are Firefox, Chrome and Opera browsers. Each is impressively featured and sophisticated, perfect for today's rink and general peace of mind. To read all about them, visit [PCWorld.com](http://PCWorld.com) for professional tech evaluations and reports, and visit each browser's home site to evaluate and download your favorite browser for free. The addresses: [Firefox.com](http://Firefox.com), [Opera.com](http://Opera.com) and [Google.com/chrome](http://Google.com/chrome).

Products mentioned in this column are widely available. Check local office suppliers, computer and technology vendors, mass-merchandise and discount retailers, and mail-order and online sources. With broadband Internet access, software programs are a fast, easy and often cheaper download, saving you staff time and improving efficiency in many ways at your rink.

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### SoftMaker Office 2012

bricks-and-mortar rink facility? The questions are valid, and the information is too extensive and detailed to cover here. But there is hope: You can go to an online site that'll open the doors for you, so to speak, and help you weigh the pros and cons of online retailing. To see the possibilities, start with a visit to Goodsie, at [Goodsie.com](http://Goodsie.com). Their advice is free, fresh and extensive. For comparisons and added insight, visit these recommended sites, too: [Shopify.com](http://Shopify.com), [Magento.com](http://Magento.com), [About.me](http://About.me) and [Flavors.me](http://Flavors.me). Good luck, whatever direction you choose.

### SoftMaker Office 2012

Microsoft's Office software is at the heart of the company, and it's their top moneymaker. A very lucrative one, at that. Why? They think they have little or no competition, but that's changed. SoftMaker Office 2012 has just been released, and you

do all the other typical rink tasks, day after day. The clincher with SoftMaker Office 2012 is the price. It's only about \$60 as an upgrade, and \$80 as a new office suite. For detailed feedback on SoftMaker Office 2012, visit the company blog, at [SoftMaker.com/english/blog](http://SoftMaker.com/english/blog), and the SoftMaker site, at [SoftMaker.com](http://SoftMaker.com). You can order a CD of SoftMaker Office 2012 or simply download the suite via a broadband connection (it's a huge program, so speedy access is vital). Bonus: You also can download free user manuals at [SoftMaker.com](http://SoftMaker.com), to read all about the new suite, and SoftMaker also offers large, reasonably priced collections of typefaces (often erroneously called fonts), for those who like better artistic expression as you tweak newsletters and craft spiffy marketing fliers, for example.

### Quick takes

•**Adobe Photoshop Elements 10:** Adobe Photoshop Elements 10 has just