



# TechTips

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Technology news, information and interesting stories.  
Published monthly for Geeks and non-Geeks.

## Fort Mac/Alberta Forest Fires

I usually reserve this prime spot for informing you, the readers, about all things computer-related. This time, computers are taking a back seat. This month, I am using this spot to talk about the most costly disaster in Canadian history. Yes, I'm talking about the forest fires in Alberta, Canada.

Over the past month, horrific images and stories have blazed (no pun intended) over the Internet, social media, and news. As many horrible stories there were, there were some heart-warming, 'hope-in-this-human-plagued-universe' type of stories.

The rest of the country stared in shock at the images flashing across our screens. That lasted only a moment, then we went into action. The entire country has donated everything from food, clothing, diapers, to money and manpower.

Yes, there were the usual derelicts that rode the highways trying to sell gas and water at an insane price, trying to make a buck off of someone else's tragedy. But these wastes of oxygen were greatly outnumbered by people buying food, water and gas out of their own pockets, and risking their own safety, just to deliver these desperately needed supplies (for FREE) to people and families stranded on the highways leading from Fort Mac during the evacuation. Restaurants and hotels giving people and families meals, lodging, and sometime even clothing and supplies..all for free. People giving grad dresses, suits, and even the venue for FREE for graduating classes that missed out on their graduation due to the fires.

THAT is how Canadians get it done!

**\*\*Please beware of email and social media scams supposedly asking for donations for Fort Mac and other evacuees.\*\***

**If you want to donate**, please go directly to: [https://donate.redcross.ca/ea-action/action?\\_ga=1.53750891.29639789.1462619616&ea.client.id=1951&ea.campaign.id=50639](https://donate.redcross.ca/ea-action/action?_ga=1.53750891.29639789.1462619616&ea.client.id=1951&ea.campaign.id=50639).

Or go directly to the Red Cross Website, and search 'Alberta Fires Appeal'.

**\*\*Please remember that donating to the Red Cross will in fact double your donation, as Prime Minister Trudeau has stated he will match Red Cross donations.\*\***

**Think about it...**



## 6-Packs Save Lives—No Crunches Required!

We're talking about the plastic rings that tie a six-pack together. Oceans and waterways are filled with these rings of death. Animals and sea creatures get tangled in them, and are strangled or starve to death.

Thanks to an innovation by Florida-based brewery, [Saltwater Brewery](#), we can feel a little better about enjoying a six-pack this summer. They have created what they call the "first fully edible beer can packaging". Made from the beer byproducts of the brewing products such as wheat and barley, their six-pack holders are fully biodegradable and completely digestible.



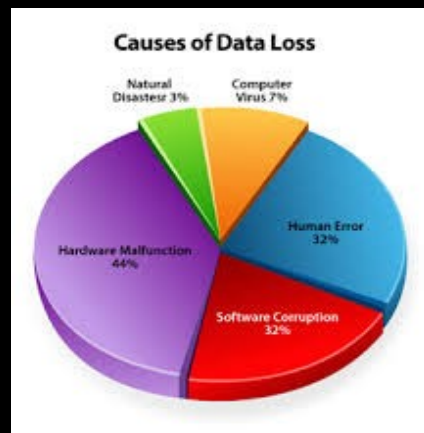
While the edible holders are more expensive to make, Saltwater Brewery wants to set an example for other beer producers and encourage them to adopt the idea. They hope that if their edible holders become commonplace, they could potentially become just as cheap as the regular plastic ones.

AND they have tested to be just as strong as the plastic variety, so your beer stay safe.

## Think You Don't Need BACKUPS?

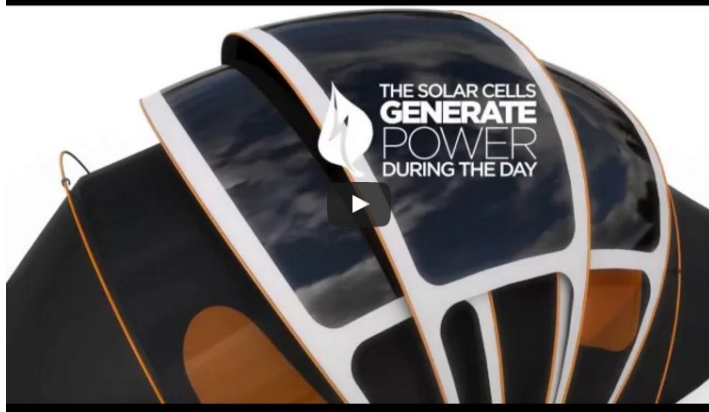


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## Pitch a Tent

Tents have evolved little over the years. Yes, the look is less army-like, and more family-functional, but other than that, they've pretty much stayed the same.

The new [Orange Solar Tent](#) is about to change all that. It combines the classic small and portable tent aesthetic with solar power capabilities. It's actually able to charge your electronics!

The Orange was designed by U.S.-based design firm [Kaleidoscope](#), in collaboration with UK telecommunications company [Orange Communications](#). The tent is currently being showcased at music fests such as the [Glastonbury Festival](#) in the U.K.

Their hope is to revolutionize camping by combining solar power and camping systems, and make the outdoor activity more appealing to younger generations that cannot survive a day without their electronics.



## 2nd-Hand Farts Healthy

Experts at a Devon University have reported that a gas found in farts could have a wide range of health benefits.

Boffins at Exeter University have found that hydrogen sulfide—which smells of rotten eggs—could be beneficial for people that suffer from diabetes, stroke, heart attacks, and dementia when used in the right, tiny dosage.



Professor Mat Whiteman from the University of Exeter's medical school stated, "When cells become stressed by disease, they draw in enzymes to generate minute quantities of hydrogen sulfide. This keeps the mitochondria ticking over and allows cells to live. If this doesn't happen, the cells die and lose the ability to regulate survival and control inflammation."

Fellow researcher Dr. Mark Wood, who was also involved in the 2014 study states, "Although hydrogen sulfide is a well-known as a pungent, foul-smelling gas in rotten eggs and flatulence, it is naturally produced in the body and could in fact be a healthcare hero with significant implications for future therapies for a variety of diseases."

We should tell all teenage boys this. If they think they're healthy—they won't do it!



## Paint in 3D

Google has unveiled their new app [Tiltbrush](#). With a stroke of the digital brush, users wearing a connected HTC Vive headset can paint life-sized 3D objects.

The app has already become a plaything for a select group of artists invited by [The Google Cultural Institute](#) to trial the technology in Paris earlier this year.



Graffiti artist [Chu](#) stated Tilt Brush is “going to revolutionize how people are going to view immersive artworks.”

All reviews I found were very positive, but that you need a rather large space in the middle of the room to be able to really use it.

The down-side: You have to own their virtual reality glasses, [HTC Vive](#), to be able to see it.

The app is available for purchase on [Steam](#) for \$32.99 CDN.

There is currently a [Steam special offer](#) now on, that if you purchase the HTC Vive now, you can get some apps free, one of which is the Tilt Brush. The price: \$1,149.00CDN.



## The Ultimate Theft Deterrent

Most bike locks don't do more than slow down and irritate a thief. One inventor has an invention that scares the crap out of them!

Creator Yannick Read initially was looking for a better way to protect his own stuff, after he had a bike and a motorcycle stolen. He came up with the [Bike Mine](#).

Although the Bike Mine won't leave a smoldering crater where the bike and the bike thief should be, it does use the magic of explosives to scare the crap out of the would-be thief (hopefully literally!). The Bike Mine uses the same kind of blanks that are commonly used in ceremonial salutes, or to scare away nuisance birds. They're loud as hell (approx. 150 decibels), but not dangerous enough to seriously hurt anyone.

Attach the Bike Mine to your bike, slide in a blank, and connect the included titanium wire to one of the spokes. When an unsuspecting thief tries to wheel away your bike, the wire pulls the “trigger” and detonates the blank. This sounds like a gunshot going off, which is likely enough to send the would-be thief packing.

The Bike Mine is held onto the bike by a couple of Velcro straps, but is so small and inconspicuous, it's likely to be overlooked by all but the most observant thieves. It's also low-tech, so you never have to worry about it not working due to a dead battery.

Once Yannick saw how well the Bike Mine worked, he figured others might like to put it to use too. You can support Read's Kickstarter campaign to produce the Bike Mine, or purchase one for yourself, at: <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/673350631/bike-mine-the-ultimate-alarm-to-protect-your-precious>.