



Technology

A

We live in an age where it seems that new smart gadgets are being created every day. A few may become essential parts of our lives and we'll wonder how we ever lived without them. Others? Well, time will tell. Take a look at these recent inventions and decide for yourself if you think they'll sink or swim.

B

The Hushme Voice Mask has been created by a team of inventors from Ukraine. At first the mask looks like a pair of headphones, but you put it around your mouth, not your ears. The mask uses insulation so your voice won't be heard by others. There are two main reasons why the mask is used. Firstly, because you're thinking of others and don't want to disturb them when you're speaking on your phone in a public place. Secondly, because you're interested in private conversations remaining private. They've even added sounds to the mask so that, instead of you, people hear another sound, for example a monkey! So you don't only look strange, but you sound strange, too.

C

The first TV remote control was invented in 1950, although it was actually connected to the TV by a cable. Today we have a battery-operated Remote Control Cushion. It has the advantage that it's more difficult to lose than a normal remote control. But who knows what will happen if you sit on it by mistake? Or imagine that you fall asleep, move your head, and accidentally turn the volume all the way to the top!

D

Everyday inventions are usually designed to save us time and/or energy. Take the vacuum cleaner for example. Well, now we have vacuum shoes. The idea is you clean the floor while you walk. A Japanese company called Denso organised a competition to find the best new design concept. The competition was won by these vacuum shoes. Some people who have worn the shoes say they're heavy and not particularly attractive. The big problem is that they don't really work unless you keep stepping in the same place for a while. That means you don't get very far wearing these shoes.

E

Sometimes when a new invention appears it can take a while before people get used to it, and before the price becomes more accessible. Maybe one day Laundroids will be found in every home. The Laundroid is a large rectangular box, a bit like a wardrobe or giant fridge. At the bottom is a smaller Insert Box. This is where you throw in the clothes you've just washed and dried. The Laundroid learns to fold each different item of clothing. Thanks to Artificial Intelligence, it will also learn which member of the family the clothes belong to and will then separate them onto different shelves. But get ready to pay around \$16,000!

F

There are lots more smart gadgets appearing every day. Examples include smart toasters that learn how you like your toast (can't you just select your favourite setting already?), smart water bottles that tell you when you're thirsty (don't you know that already?), and selfie-stick spoons so you can take photos of yourself eating your favourite cereal in the morning (but ... why?!). Some smart gadgets don't always seem that smart.

 43 Which paragraph (A–F) tells us about ...

- 1 an invention that helps you clean the house?
- 2 inventions that leave the writer very confused?
- 3 the fact that the future use of new inventions is not always guaranteed?
- 4 an invention that can help you to be good to others?
- 5 technology that gives us information we don't really need?
- 6 an invention that might bring you problems if you don't use it carefully?
- 7 an invention that could save you time and energy.