

## 4 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR DIGITAL LIFE

**H**ow often have you wished for another hour in your day to complete or even start an essential task? Even people with the best time management skills feel the pinch of not having enough time in the day. To help me get through the day more smoothly, I rely on the help of a few helpful gadgets. Here are a few of my recent favorites.

### Wireless Video Monitor to Check on Pets

It's never easy to leave your pet at home while you go to work. This year, my family added a new member, a mini golden doodle named Waffles. So to check on her when we're gone, we got a Clever Dog wireless video monitor from Amazon. It was a fun (although not strictly necessary) use of \$36, since I can check on Waffles throughout the day via my iPhone and even talk to her by using the built-in microphone and loudspeaker.



Don't have a pet? This monitor can also be used as a baby monitor or a security camera. This device and many like it can save you a trip home to check on your pup, a walk across the house to check on your child, or even an awkward conversation with a salesperson at the door.

### Home Automation Through Virtual Assistant Devices

Virtual assistant devices are quickly becoming the gadget of the year, with Amazon Echo, Google Home and now Apple's HomePod, which will be released in December. All have their strengths and weaknesses, but ultimately will allow you to control almost any internet connected device in your home. You can change the thermostat, play music, control specific outlets remotely and even order products through your virtual assistant. Using the Amazon Echo, if I am washing dishes and realize I am about to run out of dish soap, I just tell the device, "Alexa, order Dawn dishwashing soap."



I think this is a fascinating advancement in e-commerce, because I no longer even have to be at my computer or phone to order! It will be interesting to see which "assistant" gains the most market share, since these are still in their infancy. But because my family has Sonos for music, my hope is for Amazon, since I've heard Sonos integration is coming later in the year. But I'd never bet against Apple or Google; just having them in the mix will dramatically increase the rate of adoption for home automation products.

### Finding Things Made Easy with Bluetooth Tracker

Do you often misplace objects and then spend a ton of time searching for them? A way to protect from this situation is by using a Bluetooth locator like Tile. Tile is a tiny Bluetooth tracker and app that helps you find misplaced items in seconds. Place the thin Tile tracker on any of your frequently-misplaced items like your keys, wallet, laptop, or even on luggage. With a push of a button on the Tile app, the Tile tracker will ring so you can locate the item by sound.



If you're out of the Bluetooth range (100 ft.), the Tile app will remember the last place you were in range of your item and display that location on a map. Also, once the Tile app is on your phone, you can press a button on the Tile tracker that will ring that cell phone if you misplace it! The Tile tracker is available for \$25 a piece or you can get four for \$70.

### Keeping Track of Loyalty and Gift Cards

Do you have a handful of credit and debit cards along with 40 different loyalty or gift cards? Keeping up with all of these items can cause clutter, a fact that gift card providers love, because between 2 and 20% of gift cards never even get redeemed! The Key Ring app is looking to solve that problem with a one-stop shopping solution. This free app allows you to store all your loyalty and membership cards, which you can later redeem from your phone. You can also search for coupons and even allows you to create a shopping list that can be shared with your friends and family. Key Ring can even find nearby deals by using your phone's location.



Call me a geek, but products like these really do improve my digital life. I hope they improve yours too!

**Kendra Wright** started her career managing non-profit fundraising events. Then in an "about face," she took a job managing global Internet strategies at a Fortune 1000 company in 1995, just as the Internet came to being. She left that company in 1998 to found Wright Strategies, working with clients like KEEN Footwear, Nike, Jeep, Chrysler, Intel and Panasonic. Then in 2009, Kendra launched Saffire to do integrated online marketing and ticketing for hundreds of events, venues and destinations. It's been a wild ride! Kendra can be reached at [kendra@saffire.com](mailto:kendra@saffire.com), and more information about Saffire can be found at [www.saffire.com](http://www.saffire.com).