



Beam me up Scott-e

Face it — you're a techie geek. You talk like one, you act like one. But there's no excuse for looking like one. Now, thanks to a handful of companies that have jumped on the 'technology enabled clothing' bandwagon, you can be stylin'.

Last year, a Chicago-based company started making waves with version 1.0 of SCOTTeVEST, a garment conceived with the gadget-encumbered in mind. The vest was billed as the only piece of clothing containing the patent-pending Personal Area Network (PAN), a series of conduits hidden inside the garment.

The vest is targeted at those in need of somewhere to store electronic devices, sunglasses, wallet, disks, change, even a notebook computer. All told, there are 17 pockets designed for discreetly holding, concealing and connecting cell phones, pagers, PDAs and CD/MP3 players.

Shortly after its release, SCOTTeVEST began garnering attention from some big hitters: Business Week, the New York Times, and — yes — Playboy jumped all over it. Miss August 1999, Rebecca Scott, was brought on board as a spokesperson for the SCOTTeVEST late last year and appeared at the Consumer Electronic Show in Las Vegas. Wow. Suddenly, techie dweebs of the world were shedding their propeller caps and donning SCOTTeVESTs, and next thing you knew, former Playboy Bunnies wanted to have their picture taken with them.

Spurred by the success of its creation, SCOTTeVEST unleashed version 2.0 at the beginning of the year. Version 2.0? Get a grip ... it's a vest, people. But no matter. New enhancements include zip-off sleeves, so you can wear it as a full jacket, or, when you really want to tell the world, "I'm a geek with style," you can zip 'em off.

A network administrator friend of mine told me he'd been trying for months to impress a girl in accounts payable, regaling her with anecdotes of how he foiled a port scanning episode and rewired the server closet in less than six hours. But nothing was working, he sighed. She wouldn't go for a latte with him. Then bought the SCOTTeVEST, left his Batman utility belt in the 20th century, and



loaded up his pager, cell phone, RIM Blackberry, MP3 player and scientific calculator — you know, the one capable of calculating pi to 65 decimal places — and took a stroll into the finance department. "The moment she saw my SCOTTeVEST, she was putty in my hands," he says. "Within five minutes, she had agreed to join me at the Star Trek film festival next weekend." Now that's what I call a vestimonial!

But come on, techies of the world, let's not limit our sights to a single vest. Plenty of other firms are creating clothes for those who understand CMOS backplanes. Royal Philips Electronics and Levi Strauss & Co., for instance, have branded an Industrial Clothing Design that consists of four different jackets, each with a simple body area network that includes wires integrated into the design. With this network, users can use a unified remote control to operate the Philips Xenium GSM mobile and Philips Rush MP3 player.

New York's famous Sanyo Fashion House has jumped on the tech clothes spree as well. Last fall, it unleashed a multi-function pocket system overcoat that includes a special pocket designed for a Palm handheld, lined with static shielded material. No word on whether it's capable of repelling Kryptonite, but it never hurts for a techie to have another outerwear option for those cool fall nights.

Not to be outdone, Dockers has come out with its Mobile Pant (with a name like that, wouldn't you be afraid that your pants might get up and walk away on their own?), featuring invisible storage pockets designed for surreptitiously carrying gadgets in your pants without sacrificing the style Dockers wearers are accustomed to. With these babies, there's no fear of being asked the ever-mortifying question: "Is that a PDA in your Dockers or are you just happy to see me?" The Mobile Pant includes seven pockets, each with its own distinct purpose in mind.

So let's see: with my SCOTTeVEST up top and my Dockers' mobile pants down below, I can now leave the house knowing I've got 24 pockets to play with. In cooler weather, I'll wear my Sanyo overcoat on top and that takes me to 30 pockets. Suddenly my life is aglow with the promise of adventure, electricity and surely, Playboy Bunnies. I'm so excited, I think I'll give my propeller a twirl. **CBIZ**