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DJIA 13107.21 Closed

NASDAQ 2897.95 Closed

NIKKEI 8841.98 ▼ 1.0%

STOXX 600 271.76 ▲ 0.9%

10-YR. TREAS. ▲ 10/32, yield 1.721%

OIL \$85.68 ▲ \$0.14

GOLD \$1,710.50 ▲ \$2.80

EURO \$1.2958

YEN 79.62

PERSONAL JOURNAL.



Your Car's Inner Glow

Ambient Lighting Adds Splash of Color **D3**



Team Targets the Touchdown Dance

SPORTS D6

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Wednesday, October 31, 2012 | **D1**

Sizing Up the New iPad Mini



The Smaller Set

A comparison of three tinier tablets



	IPAD MINI	NEXUS 7	KINDLE FIRE HD
Base Price	\$329	\$199	\$214*
Base memory (Gigabytes)	16	16	16
Weight (ounces)	10.88	11.99	13.9
Thickness (inches)	0.28	0.41	0.40

The Strange Science Of Translating Sarcasm Online

By KATHERINE ROSMAN

Seriously, did he really mean that? Since the dawn of email, using sarcasm in digital communication has created strife and confusion between friends, colleagues and romantic partners. Sarcasm, after all, is best conveyed using tone of voice, a wink or a nudge.

Now, as more people are sharing their opinions with casual acquaintances and strangers on social-media sites like Twitter and Facebook—rather than in private text messages to people who know their senses of humor—the sarcasm disconnect is even greater.

“My work email is down. I’m devastated,” or, “because that was so much fun the last time we did it,” could mean completely different things to different readers. The confusion has driven some people to cre-

Sleeker Designs Bring Modern Cool to the Fireplace

By ANNE MARIE CHAKER

The fireplace, pushed aside by the television as the emotional center of the American living room, is finally fighting back.

Sleek, modern fireplaces, with flush facings, oblong shapes, glittering glass and light-show effects, are designed to fit in better with the sharp angles and edges of modern décor—especially those of flat-screen TVs, which are often mounted right above. These new fireplaces can turn a whole wall into a design element that draws the eye to the fireplace first.

For the \$250,000 renovation of his Gilbert, Ariz., home, Ki Ngo, a 40-year-old dentist, wanted a big, new fireplace to be the focal point of the main family room.

But he wanted his flat-screen TV too, and he worried it might fight for attention with the fireplace. Interior designer Angelica Henry combined both on a wall with what she calls “wow factor.” The client chose a linear fireplace, rectangular and 6 feet wide, where flames emerge, shimmering, from black glass. The effect “is like jewelry,” says Dr. Ngo. The firebox’s streamlined shape complements the TV, which is recessed a few feet above. Surrounding both is

dramatic dark-wood paneling.

At a total cost of about \$25,000, the entire wall is “an architectural element,” says Ms. Henry. “It focuses you on the glow of the fire.”

Whether powered by a remote control or twigs and a match, a fireplace creates a zone not only for warming cold hands and feet but also for cuddling or celebrating in the primal glow. While no longer an essential provider of light and heat, “it’s still conceptually the center of the home,” says Seattle architect Betty R. Torrell, who has written about the hearth’s history in architecture. “It dominates the room that it’s in; chairs are organized around it, it’s the focal point.” The beauty of fire remains “emotionally sustaining,” she adds, “even if it’s not physically sustaining anymore.”

Traditional fireplaces consist of the firebox, where the actual fire burns, the smoke chamber, which directs the exhaust gases away from the room, and the chimney or flue, which takes them up and out of the home. The mantelpiece facing into the room is a place for displaying family photos or holiday decorations.

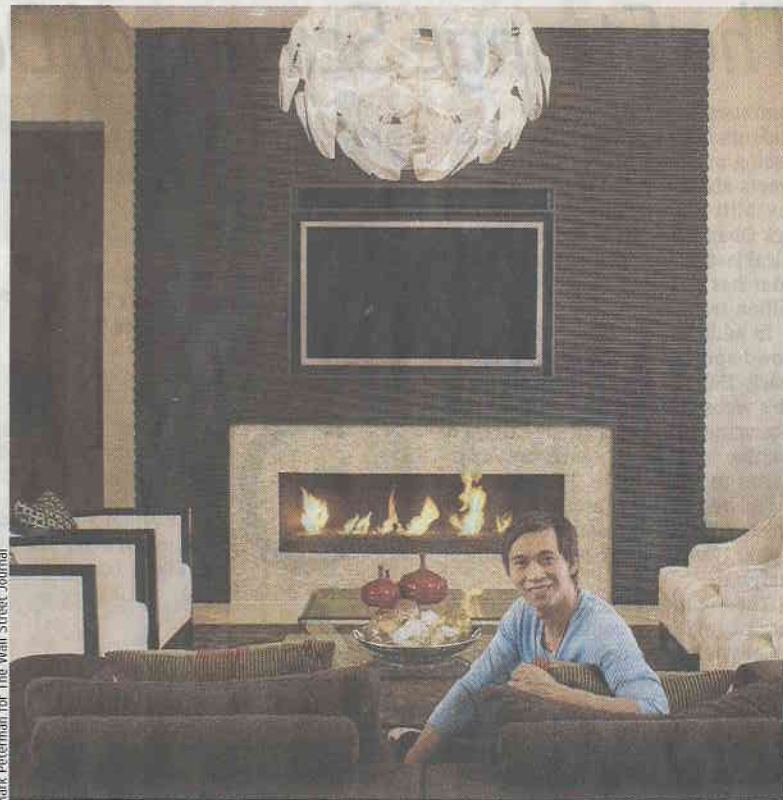
Many insist nothing beats the flicker and crackle of a wood fire. But the gas fireplace, which entered the market about 25 years ago, has be-

come mainstream by offering the ease of push-button ignition and less mess. In its early years, the gas flame often looked “too blue,” says Mike Pennington, vice president of engineering and product development at Lennox Hearth Products, a unit of Innovative Hearth Products. Today, technology has evolved to create a gas fire that is practically indistinguishable from a wood-burning fire. “Dancing, billowy, yellow flames are typically the target,” he says.

Today, 69% of fireplaces sold are gas-fueled and of those, most are “direct vented,” not requiring a chimney. Vents can be installed through almost any exterior wall, so that even multi-unit apartment and condominium buildings can have fireplaces. Direct-vent fireplaces are sealed combustion systems: Air from the outside—rather than inside—fuels the fire, and byproducts are vented back outside. The sealed combustion process requires a glass cover on the front of the firebox, to provide a barrier that can keep carbon monoxide from entering the room.

There are downsides. The glass front can get hot—exceeding 500 degrees Fahrenheit. After a number of lawsuits involving small children burning their hands, the fireplace in-

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Mark Peterman for The Wall Street Journal

TV, Meet Fireplace

Ki Ngo has a streamlined fireplace that complements the TV at his Gilbert, Ariz., home.

Modern Fireplaces: Wide Screens, 'Spa Stones,' Holograms



Wide-Screen Flames

A recent introduction from Regency Fireplace Products features a four-foot-wide rectangular firebox that's akin to a wide-screen TV.

Regency (2) ; Corbis (below)



Light Show

Enamel inner panels reflect the flames, which can emerge from stones or reflective crystals in this Regency fireplace.

dustry, with oversight from standards organizations, has in recent months developed new requirements that manufacturers equip fireplaces with protective barriers by 2015.

Some companies have flush screens that fit on existing glass fronts. Lennox has metal "safety guards" that will fit over any of the company's glass-front fireplaces, and it is offering them at no charge to customers who contact the company. The company is working on developing more "barriers" that will meet the new requirements and look good, too. Regency Fireplace Products, of Canada, says it also is working on designing guards, available next year, to fit units already in the marketplace.

Hologram Images

In some fireplaces, says Walter Moberg, a Portland, Ore., designer, "abstract expressions of the fire have taken the place of the traditional fireplace." These abstract fireplaces might feature images on a video-screen, holograms or fires that appear to be coming from stars in the sky or directly out of the ground. Such designs can at times be "hard for people to relate to," he notes.

One of the fireplace models Regency introduced this year features a 4-foot-wide rectangular firebox. When framed with a sleek faceplate, the result looks a bit like a computer or a TV screen, and it is popular with designers for that reason. Those

shapes complement each other, says spokeswoman Rachel Romaniuk. Reflective enamel panels inside the firebox amplify the appearance of the flame, and customers can opt for it to emerge from "spa stones," river pebbles or various colored crystals. (The cost is \$3,140 to \$4,140, installation not included.)

At 54 inches across, Lennox's Rhapsody fireplace is another "wide

screen" design, which the company introduced this year. The model provides options for creating a "blinged out" fireplace, says Joe Benedetti, product manager for fireplace products. There's a "designer floor" of crushed crystal glass and an "illusion" panel that gives a sort of light show when the fire is turned off. (Costs range from \$4,999 to \$8,999.)

Other models include a "see

through" fireplace that can be enjoyed from separate rooms (the Montebello See-Through fireplace ranges from \$5,999 to \$8,999) and three-sided "peninsula" fireplace configurations (\$3,399 to \$4,999).

In the \$2 million renovation of a New York City duplex, designer James Rixner used a three-sided fireplace as a divider between a master bedroom and a sitting area, visible

through" rooms.

"This created intimacy on both sides, without visually breaking the rooms up," says Mr. Rixner. The fireplace gives the spare décor some warmth and "balances" a big industrial window, adding counterpoint to the big glass feature. "It's a nice play," he says.

Black and White Design

A new fireplace look doesn't always require thousands of dollars in high-tech gear. In South Pasadena, Calif., a fireplace makeover involved refacing an old brick mantel with a simple geometric design using pine boards, says designer Tamara Kaye-Honey. The boards were painted a glossy white (Benjamin Moore "China White") to blend with matte walls painted in the same color. The firebox's interior was spray-painted black, and a few logs inside were painted white. The graphic black-and-white look suited the scheme in the rest of the home and cost less than \$500.

The homeowner, Traci Fleming, says her Southern California gas fireplace is primarily decorative but does function. She loves what it says about home and family.

"It's such an anchor," says the 46-year-old mother of two and founder of a furniture line. She places her children's craft projects on the mantel. Even when it is turned off, she says, "in a weird way, it still has the warmth of a fireplace."



Bling Factor

A Rhapsody fireplace can be 'blinged out' with options like a crushed glass 'designer floor' and a back-lit display when the fire is off.