

# Nearly everybody has a \$500 flashlight

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 [devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20070917-01](http://devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20070917-01)

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When I described using a laptop computer as an impromptu flashlight, that triggered a lot of comments from people using their cell phone or PDA as a flashlight. One nickname I've heard for this phenomenon is "the \$500 flashlight", \$500 being the price of a PDA or SmartPhone at the time the term was coined. (I was amused to find that even Scott Adams does this.)

A few years ago, on a trip to Tikal, I took part in a pre-dawn hike into the park in order to observe the sunrise from atop Temple IV. For many people (including me), this was an impulse tour rather than a planned option, so we hadn't packed flashlights in our gear. There were a lot of \$500 flashlights on that hike.

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