



Clever contraptions offer practical solutions

By Kitty Yancey
USA TODAY

An Iowan has converted a rolling suitcase into a portable worktable and is scrambling to fill orders.

Michael DeVolder of Des Moines, a veteran travel marketer, came up with "The Travel Table." It's not the only portable laptop table around, but it was nominated as one of the innovative new products of 2010 by the Travel Goods Association.

It's a tray table that attaches to the handle of a rolling suitcase in fewer than 10 seconds, allowing travelers to work on a laptop, eat neatly or let their kids color while waiting at the gate or otherwise killing time at the airport.

DeVolder, speaking from his car after hours of consulting with his manufacturer, says he has been "overwhelmed" with orders.

The table weighs 1.7 pounds, he says, and will easily support



By James D. Fidler, The (Des Moines) Register

A level working field: Michael DeVolder uses his laptop table top at the Des Moines airport.

the weight of a laptop. It costs \$49.95 plus shipping at travel-table.com.

Other unusual devices for travelers seen on the road and in the skies this summer:

► **The "Cup-Pilot."** It's a collapsible cup holder with mesh bottom that attaches to a roll-aboard or hangs from the pocket of an airplane seatback.

The benefit: hands-free toting through airports or stable storage on planes and in cars. It can hold a hot coffee, soda or a small water bottle. It's available for \$19.95 at cup-pilot.com.

► **The "GoGirl."** This soft, funnel-like device accommodates the large number of women who do not want to come in contact with strange toilet seats while traveling.

The benefit: It allows women to stand when using the loo. Then it can be rinsed and slid back into the provided plastic bag. The GoGirl, which also is suggested for use by hikers, is available in pink and camouflage, for some reason, and starts at \$9.99 at go-girl.com.

► **Cocoon GRID-IT organizers.** These flat board-like travel accessories have webbed sur-

faces of rubberized elastic bands that can be configured in any number of ways. They come in many sizes.

The benefit: They can securely hold cellphones, chargers, earphones, batteries, iPods, pens — and even can be stowed in a large purse to organize makeup.

GRID-ITs also come in bigger sizes to fit into briefcases and roll-aboards, and there's one that organizes items on the rear of a car's sun visor.

GRID-ITs are available starting at \$9.99 and can be bought at coconinnovations.com.

David Elbert of *The Des Moines Register* contributed to this story.

