

UW-Marathon County Library Restroom Reader

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As you are thinking about your holiday shopping and are comparing brands and products, you might want to take a look at the library's subscription to *Consumer Reports*. This publication has a buyer's guide edition for 2010 rating a variety of things from TVs to tractors. Below are some shopping tips from *Consumer Reports* that might help you with your purchasing decisions.

LCD vs. Plasma TVs

An LCD is a better choice than a plasma in certain situations. 1. LCDs are generally brighter than plasma TVs, and their screens are generally less reflective. 2. With an LCD there is no chance that static images from video games, station logos, and news tickers will burn in. With a plasma TV, burn-in has been a concern though most new models have features to minimize that risk. 3. Some LCDs use slightly less power than comparably sized plasma TVs. It won't cut your utility bills by more than a few dollars a month, but there is an environmental advantage to using a less power-hungry TV.

Cell Phones

1. Consider shape and size. This depends on personal preference so visit a store and hold the phone if possible. Make sure you can comfortably use most keys with one hand. 2. Check the display. Most screens are fine in dim and normal light, but some are harder to see in daylight. Make sure important indicators such as battery life and signal strength are clearly visible. 3. Consider the keyboard. If you plan on doing a lot of typing, look for a keyboard with keys that are raised, clearly labeled, well-spaced, and well-sized. The keyboard should be easy to read under different lighting conditions.

And considering where you are now, let's look at some shopping tips for buying **Toilets** in 2010. 1. Check the valve on gravity models. Models with flush valves 3 to 3.5 inches wide delivered more thrust than models with 2-inch valves. 2. Decide on shape. Toilets with a round bowl take up the least room and accept the widest variety of seats. More stylish elongated bowls allow a longer seat for more room and support for a variety of users.

Digital Cameras

1. Don't focus on megapixels. Despite the prevalence of 8-, 10-, and 12- megapixel cameras, 6 megapixels is all the resolution most people need. 2. Try it out. If possible, test cameras at a store before you buy it so you'll know which one fits your hands best. 3. Forgo the extended warranty. Digital cameras have been among the most reliable products in *Consumer Report's* subscriber surveys.

Desktop Computers

1. Consider tech support. *Consumer Report's* user surveys found major differences in the quality of tech support. Apple was ranked best for both laptop and desktop support. 2. Play down the processor speed and focus on RAM. Current processors deliver all the speed most people need. Instead, get at least 2 GB of RAM. 3. Get your coupons. Check out deal sites such as Ebates, FatWallet.com, and Techbargains.com

Printers

1. Consider supply costs as well as price. High ink- or toner-cartridge costs can make a bargain-priced printer a bad deal in the long run. Shop around for the best cartridge prices, but be wary of off-brands. 2. Be skeptical of vendor specs. Specs for print speed and resolution are not all that useful, even for comparison purposes, because each company performs its tests in a different manner.

Tip from your IT Department at UWMC: *Students:* Remember to log in to your new email account and forward any old messages to yourself before you leave for winter break! Anything that you do not transfer by Dec. 23 will be lost.



Have a safe and fun holiday season!

