

Buying Tech Equipment By Tom Kreuzer

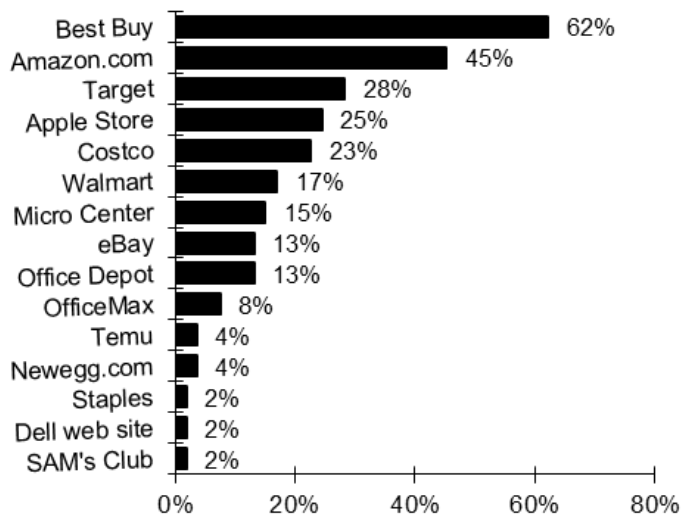
Most retailers have already kicked off their holiday sales. Consumers have to decide whether to buy early to make sure they get the items they want, or hold off in hope of getting the best deals. Many deals masquerading as fantastic bargains are not as good as they look, and it's easy to be fooled. AI has added confusion to the mix.

Where to Buy

Top 5 Shopping Sites:

1. www.Amazon.com
2. www.Target.com
3. www.NewEgg.com
4. www.BestBuy.com
5. www.Walmart.com
www.Temu.com New Player

Where 3M PCC members buy (From 2024 3M PCC Survey)



Tips

- Start early - Deals are kicking off earlier but also because hot products may sell out quickly, or fail to arrive at your doorstep on time. Be flexible because of limited stock.
- Skip the in-store sales and shop online. Retailers offer more promotions online that they do in stores. Most online stores offer free delivery, ship-to-store, or curbside pickup. The bigger the item or more complex it is, see it in person before you buy. Example: TVs, monitors, laptop, keyboard, smartphones, etc.
- Use websites and apps to check how good the deals really are. Use Google Shopping, PriceGrabber, and Shopzilla. When you're in a store, smartphone apps such as BuyVia, Shopkick, ShopSavvy, and Shopular let you scan barcodes or QR codes to compare prices, get discounts, and score coupons. Use websites like BestBlackFriday.com, DealNews, TheBlackFriday.com, Deals Plus/BlackFriday.fm, and GottaDeal. Sign up for deal alerts, which you can usually filter by product category. Browser extensions like CamelCamelCamel, <http://camelcamelcamel.com/>, and Honey can show you price histories and price alerts or coupons as you shop online.
- Use loyalty programs. Store loyalty programs grant members early access to coupons, sales, and promotions, free shipping, then let them earn rewards on what they buy.
- Get social. The Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter feeds of your favorite retailers are a great way to find out about exclusive deals and promotions.
- Create a budget and stick to it. Do your best to resist impulse buying.
- Check all store policies in advance. It's always good to know a store's price-match and return policies. Example, Target has already announced that shoppers buying anything from Oct. 10 through Dec. 24 will be able to request a price adjustment if the price drops later in the season. Target also says it will continue its policy of matching select competitors' pricing within 14 days of a customer's purchase.

- Add items to your shopping cart if they have a price you like, so you can find them again quickly and be all set to order. Then go check the websites of other retailers to see whether the price is really special. Putting an item in your cart doesn't reserve it, you need to place your order and get confirmation that it has been received.
- Google search for reviews. Example: Best tablets review. Use the links to learn about products, the good, the bad, and options. Don't click on ad sponsored links that begin with "Sponsored". Be aware that fake reviews have proliferated everywhere.
- Refurbished Devices - If buying a laptop, tablet, or phone make sure it contains a new battery. If they have an OS make sure it can run Win 11. Check Chromebooks for their end of life date.
- If buying secondhand - Facebook Marketplace and Craigslist are good for local buying. eBay is great to check "Sold Prices" for what is a good price for used equipment.
- Set a time limit to make a shopping decision before you start. Spend more time on big ticket items and less on small common products.
- Understand the shipping and return policies before you buy. Is there a return window, how to return, what documents do you need, or if there is a restocking fee?
- Buying a New PC? First define what you plan to use the device for. That determines what device (phone, tablet, laptop, desktop) would be best and what level of device (basic, mid, or advanced) is needed. Example: If you want to edit videos, play games on a desktop at a top level, or AI you need a high end PC with a very fast CPU, lots of very fast RAM, very fast graphic card, multiple monitors, and more. Basic is fine for eMail, simple photo, viewing 1K video like YouTube, Facebook, limited documents and spreadsheets. With Windows 10 no longer supported in Oct 2025, there will be millions of new PCs bought in the next year. Most likely that will drive prices up the closer we get to Oct 2025 or with the elections we may have tariffs against China drive up prices. New AI PCs coming out like Windows "CoPilot+" or Apples AI. They require high end CPUs, lots of RAM, fast Graphics, and lots of SSD storage..

What is Popular/Holiday Ideas

10 Things to Buy This Season:

- AI devices (laptops, desktops, tablets, phones)
- Televisions - Cheap 4K & 8K or 100" are ripe for the picking.
- Low-Priced Laptops - Don't forget about Chromebooks.
- Tablets - Amazon Fire tablets, iPad deals.
- Smart Speakers - Have gone from niche gadgets to must-have devices.
- Headphones and Earphones – Wireless and others.
- Smart Watches/Fitness Trackers – We all plan to live our best lives...next year.
- Smartphones - Big box stores often offer gift cards with the full-price purchase
- Video Games and Consoles – 2 for 1 deals.
- Cameras - High-end digital cameras, point-and-shoot devices, and GoPros.

Must-Have Tech Gifts Under \$50 - <https://www.pcmag.com/picks/29-must-have-tech-gifts-under-50>
 Terrific Tech Gifts Under \$100 - <https://www.pcmag.com/picks/best-tech-gifts-under-100>
 Great Tech Gifts Under \$100 - <https://www.cnet.com/gifts/best-tech-gifts-under-100/>
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Additional Links and Information

Carondelet Tech Help Resources: <https://carondeletvillage.org/tech-help-resources/>
 Questions or comments can be sent to: TCKreuzer@gmail.com