

## CONSUMER

# Tips for Holiday Tech Toy Shopping

NewsUSA

(NU) - Are you looking for a new computer, gadget or electronic “toy” this holiday season? If so, then listen up. These tips offer guidance to shoppers looking to purchase new electronics:

- Know what you want. Does your travelling partner need a smart phone or personal digital assistant (PDA) to access contacts, memos and e-mail from the road? Perhaps your college-aged daughter wants a laptop that she can use for photos, music and videos. Knowing what function the electronic device needs to perform will determine the features and memory required.

- Just the facts. Each season, new gadgets and computers flood the market with bells and whistles designed to catch your eye, and your wallet. Shop smart. Before heading to the store, prioritize add-ons separating the features you need from those that “might be nice.”

If your brother “might” need GPS on his new cellphone, skip it. Ignore extras that are tempting but not necessary, no matter what a salesperson says.

- Trust the pros. Read reviews to find out what gadgets live up to their hype. Check out reviews on Consumer Reports, a non-profit, independent organization that tests products and services. For technology equipment, visit computer-industry Web sites like CNET.com, PCWorld.com and PCMag.com.

- Keep it all together. Mind the components and manuals that



**Before purchasing an electronic gift, do your homework.**

come with new gadgets. If the device needs to be returned to the manufacturer or store within the first 30 to 60 days, it might need to be repackaged exactly the way it came. Knowing where everything is also helps with troubleshooting and resale.

- Give the gift that gives back. For new computers especially, it's a nice touch to help loved ones protect their digital assets such as music, movies, photographs and documents. Consider software like Acronis True Image Home ([www.acronis.com/home-computing/products/trueimage/](http://www.acronis.com/home-computing/products/trueimage/)).

If there is a virus or other breakdown, backup software allows you to restore digital memories in a matter of minutes. When shopping, look for features that allow easy file transfer to a new device, and that will wipe an old device clean to remove sensitive information before it's recycled or donated.