ARTICLE

HDTV Buyer's Guidelines

Here is some helpful information to help you navigate key HDTV purchase decisions:

When it comes to choosing between Plasma and LCD, it's important to shop in the mindset that one high-def TV is not necessarily better than another – rather, it's a question of which one is right for you. That said, it can be a tough call to make when all that meets the eye are sleek screens and vibrant pictures – are Plasmas and LCDs really that different? The answer is yes, and in order to make your purchase a well-informed one, consider this feature summary for both screen types:

• **LCD:** Known longhand as liquid crystal display, LCD is the same technology used in your flat-screen computer monitor – just on a larger scale. Light streams through liquid crystal-filled cells to form images that have good color saturation levels and can be easily viewed even in rooms with high levels of ambient light. Great for gamers, LCD screens are wall-mountable, and available in sizes up to 46″.

• **Plasma:** Plasma display technology uses charged neon and xenon-filled gas cells to form bright, color-saturated images with excellent black levels. Excellent for home theater buffs who want to get the most out of their TV or movie-viewing experience, Plasma screens can be on the pricier side, but are available in screen sizes of up to 60″.

Even if you know what size HD screen you're looking for and you've narrowed your choice down to Plasma or LCD, the decision process isn't over yet as there is still screen resolution to consider. Resolution describes the sharpness and clarity of a TV's picture, and while you're shopping for a high definition television, you'll come across three different formats: 720p, 1080i, and 1080p. Here's how each resolution format can contribute to your HD experience.

• **720p:** Even though 720p is the lowest resolution within the HDTV standard, it delivers impressive pictures on screens that are less than 40″ in size. The "p" stands for progressive scan, a format that's ideal for viewing fast-action movies, sporting events and video games.

• **1080i:** It may not have as fast a frame rate, but since 1080i offers more lines and pixels than 720p, it's a terrific option for people who enjoy watching slower-moving programming with lots of close-ups – think documentaries, non-action movies, and prime-time dramas.

• **1080p:** Otherwise known as "True HD," 1080p combines a rapid frame rate with high pixel density for the best high-definition pictures available. Even though 1080p is the hottest thing going in HD resolutions, it's important for you to keep in mind that with the exception of Blu-ray, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360™ and a relatively small amount of satellite TV programming, there's not much true 1080p content out there. Although they're backward-compatible with the lower resolutions, 1080p screens can't live up to their full potential unless they're displaying true high definition content.

While some will try to convince you that investing in an HDTV justifies shelling out for the best HDMI cable that money can buy, the truth is that a steep price tag isn't always a reliable indicator of a high-quality HDMI connection. For example, a price comparison among five cables certified for HDMI 1.3 from leading A/V retailers uncovered a price difference of up to $129 (from CableOrganizer's $6.99 to Circuit City's $135.99), even though all were approximately six-foot long cables with gold-plated connectors.

Provided by www.CableOrganizer.com