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How To Choose The Right Television For You

By Duane Smith

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Watching television has progressed from a luxury that only few had in their homes in the middle of the last century to the point where most consumers not only have one television, but often they may have several. And television programming has expanded greatly from just the three big networks to a whole host of other channels as well.

And along with this growth of interest in television programming the technology of televisions has been steadily improving too. Today we have lots of choices to make when we are deciding to buy another television. Should it be an analog or digital TV? HDTV enabled or ready? Plasma or LCD screen? All of these decisions can seem to be confusing, but if you just understand a few basics about TVs you should be able to make the right choice for what will suit you best.

Let's start by discussing whether you should buy an analog or digital capable TV. Analog TV is simply TV you have been used to in past years. The signals are sent and received in analog format and it has worked fine for a long time. It has it's drawbacks though because analog TV signals can only hold so much data for the screen and sound, and an analog signal can degrade easily. Never fear though, analog TV will be fine for use for many years to come even after other technologies dominate. The good news is that analog TV sets are very cheap and you can get a lot for your dollar.

Digital TV signals allow the data sent by the TV station to be much more dense and include more information without very much degradation of signal. So digital TV usually makes for a much better picture and sound, especially on DVDs. Plus digital TV has made it possible for the newer standards of high definition programming. For the absolute best picture and sound the TV station should be broadcasting in high definition (or HDTV), and your TV should also be able to receive and process that HDTV signal and display it on on a high definition enabled screen. If all of this criteria is met the effects are just stunning.

But many TV stations are not yet broadcasting in HDTV format because it requires them to invest lots of money in new equipment to do so. They have to have enough of a market to make it worth their while. So in the meantime, we have some stations who do broadcast in HDTV and many who still just

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send out analog signals. However, all TV stations will have to comply with federal guidelines to be HDTV compliant within the next couple of years, so high definition TV is here to stay and will only grow in importance.

In the meantime, you have your choice of buying an HDTV "capable" "enabled" TV if you choose to buy a digital TV. An HDTV capable TV means that it can process digital signals (like DVDs) but in order to display the high definition signal it will require you to purchase an additional tuner which you can buy later at any time. On the other hand, HDTV enabled simply means that the TV is fully capable of displaying high definition picture and sound right out of the box. The choice is yours. Either bite the bullet and get the whole HDTV enabled enchilada now, or defer it a while longer until HDTV programming is more standard.

You also hear a lot about plasma and LCD screens these days. The screens we have been used to for years are called CRTs, and they have worked just fine, but the main advantage of plasma and LCD screens are that they can be very thin to produce, usually they are only 2–3 inches wide and that makes them able to be mounted in many places that CRT screens just can't go. If you need that kind of screen, just bear in mind that plasma and LCD screens are still very expensive. There is nothing wrong with just getting a good CRT screen or a rear projection screen in the meantime as they can be had for not a lot of money and can still produce a great picture depending on the manufacturer.

There is more to all of this television technology, but what we have covered should give you a good idea of what the different TV terms mean and arm you with enough information that you can now confidently choose the television that will work best for you.

Duane Smith –

is a site that provides free information, resources and tips on

HDTV, plasma tvs, high definition television, LCD tvs, projection televisions, digital video recorders and much more.

Aspect Ratio: Full Screen Vs. Wide Screen

By Lawrence Roth

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Movies on DVD and VHS are often available in two screen formats: full screen and wide screen. The full screen is where a movie is modified to fit a television screen. If you have watched a video release, you have probably seen the message: "This film has been modified from its original version."

The wide screen version maintains the same size and shape of the original theatrical version. The reason for the different versions is aspect ratio. Motion picture screens have a different aspect ratio than a television screen.

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The aspect ratio (a ratio of width to height) of a television screen is 1.33:1. This means the screen is 1.33 times wide as it is tall. The most common aspect ratio for movie screens is 1.85:1 to 2.35:1. While a television screen is almost square a movie screen is rectangle.

Therefore, a video release must fit the rectangle movie screen onto the square television screen. The wide screen version displays an image with black bars at the top and bottom of the screen. Some people find this disturbing. Movie buffs and die hard artists prefer the wide screen because it captures the essence of the filmmakers' vision.

The full screen actually removes the far left and right side of the movie image in order to fit the movie within the television screen aspect ratio. So the full screen, although appearing to be the whole movie, is actually missing information.

Knowing the difference can help you choose the format you prefer. Remember that the wide screen version contains the aspect ratio of the original theatrical release and that the full screen version is where only the middle part of the original theatrical is used to fill the television screen.

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