

Women are major electronics consumers

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Women are major electronics consumers

By Alison White

Women are taking a greater interest in, and have a more sophisticated understanding of electronics than ever before.

Women actually spent more on technology last year than men, according to the Consumer Electronics Association. It says women accounted for \$55 billion of the \$96 billion spent on electronics gear (statistic from a January 6 CEA press release).

Women are increasingly interested in gadgets, from DVD players to digital cameras, for themselves or

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Almost a third of women consider themselves early adopters willing to buy cutting-edge consumer technology.

CEA reported that women in the United States are becoming more likely to use consumer electronics. CEA's study provides detailed information about the attitudes, purchase considerations, decision influences, purchase channels, current product ownership, and future purchase intent. Here are some of the findings:

• Women are involved in 89 percent of all consumer electronics purchase decisions.

• 84% of women believe that new technologies can improve their lives.

• 48% of women age 18-34 own a digital camera.

The CEA survey noted that women have very positive reactions to specific technology areas, like HDTV, cell phones, and digital photography.

Women have more buying power and they increasingly use technology to manage their busy schedules. Women's comfort level with technology is at an all-time high.

Women want products that make it easy to connect and make it easy to operate; limited wiring or no wires at all; slim, well-designed products; making electronics available in different colors is not very important; low on setup and high on usability. Usability often is an important factor to women when

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they buy technology;

At CES, organizers hung big pink banners saying "Technology is a Girl's Best Friend," even though the group's own research found a third of women surveyed don't like products with girly colors.

Nearly three-quarters of women surveyed complained about being ignored or patronized by sales people when shopping for electronics.

A growing number of companies are starting to target their wares toward female buyers.

Sony is outfitting its electronics with features that many women seek and is designing Sony Style retail stores to appeal to women's preferences by creating an environment where women feel comfortable. Many of Sony's efforts are focused on functionality.

Women are becoming informed and involved in technology areas where they once had little or no presence.

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Branding Versus SEO

By Kevin Kantola

Branding versus search engine optimization is a marketing dilemma that larger companies will need to come to grips with on the Internet. Often companies will need to decide whether to promote their own brand name as their main keyword phrase or optimize for a more generic keyword phrase.

For instance, one search engine report states that 1.3 million visitors per month search for the term "Best Buy." This same report states that the term "electronics" is searched for by 1.1 visitors per month. The obvious choice in this scenario is for Best Buy to optimize for their own brand name first and the word "electronics" second.

But, take a competitor such as Fry's Electronics. Approximately 95,000 visitors search for the term "Fry's" every month, far short of those who search for "electronics". Does this mean Fry's Electronics (a partner with

Outpost.com

) should optimize for "electronics" first and Fry's (and/or

Outpost.com

)

second?

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At this writing (August 2004), a search on Google for "electronics" will show that Best Buy does not show up in the first two pages. Fry's (

Outpost.com

) is on the third page. But let's take a further look to

see who is in the number 1 position: Sony. And Samsung is a close second.

Sony, with 450,000 searches per month for the word "sony", has managed to grab the number one spot for its brand name and the generic word "electronics". A search of the Sony homepage source code will reveal that this page is optimized for both words, "Sony" and "electronics." By optimizing for both words Sony has grabbed a lot of traffic neglected by Best Buy and perhaps even exceeds Best Buys traffic in doing this.

Another issue in branding is trademark infringement. Courts have upheld that websites using another company's branded name in its meta tags is engaging in trademark infringement. For instance, a site about cats would be infringing if it put the name Best Buy in its meta tags in hopes of gaining traffic from this trademarked word. Large companies have to protect themselves from others stealing traffic that is rightfully theirs. These companies cannot however protect a generic term such as "electronics" as that is fair game for all electronics companies.

So in order to create the largest return on investment, large companies need to optimize their websites both for their own brand names and for the generic, high-traffic keywords and keyword phrases relevant to their sites. Otherwise, they are letting tons of online business just slip away.

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Kevin Kantola is the CEO of SEO Resource and has published many articles over the past 20 years.

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