

School Smarts

Gearing Up For School Today

(NAPSA)—For millions of American families, back-to-school shopping has evolved from a quick dash for paper and pencils into a process that begins much earlier in the summer.

The U.S. Department of Education estimates that almost 18 million students will enroll in American colleges and universities this year. And a new national survey shows that families with college-bound students have been shopping for weeks for the electronic gear that students will rely on during their academic careers.

Responding to the survey, commissioned by electronics retailer Circuit City and conducted by independent research firm Decision Analyst, Inc., 53 percent of college students said they first started shopping for tech gear two months or more before classes began. The same consumer research revealed that nearly 62 percent of U.S. colleges and universities now require or recommend that students own computers.

“There’s no question that college students use their computers day in and day out, not only for academics and communications, but also for music and video games,” said Elliot Becker, vice president for technology at Circuit City. “But computers are only the tip of the iceberg. These days, students take a wide variety of gear to college. Whether it’s cell phones, MP3 players, digital cameras or dorm-sized TVs, today’s college students are more ‘plugged in’ than ever before.”

Better Grades

Nearly 90 percent of students surveyed said owning their own computers helped them earn better grades. Eight out of 10 students said they would choose a notebook computer over a desktop model.

It’s important to choose a computer model that fits the student’s



For today’s students, shopping for “tech gear” is a key part of the school year.

individual and academic needs. Many college Web sites post computer requirements for their various course offerings. Families should remember that a computer is a tool their students will use throughout their college careers, so they should make sure they buy a model with enough memory and computing power to accommodate student needs.

Different Usage Patterns

It’s not surprising that college students use their computers and cell phones on a daily basis. But the survey also revealed different usage patterns for male and female students. Male college students tend to use MP3 players and video game consoles more often than female students; female students use digital cameras more often than the guys.

The survey also hints at some subtle regional differences: Western college students watch slightly less TV and take more pictures than their counterparts elsewhere in the country. More students in the Northeast are likely to play video games than students elsewhere.

Helpful information about choosing the right tech gear for college-bound students, including unbiased customer ratings and reviews, can be found at www.circuitcity.com.