

Gift Ideas

Media Center PCs Provide The Ultimate Entertainment Experience For Dads And Grads TM

(NAPSA)—For digital entertainment enthusiasts like Greg Meythaler, the past decade has seen an exciting leap in how people can capture and enjoy their family's memories. He loves that his digital camera has allowed him to amass thousands of photos of his wife and children but is disappointed that all these great shots are stored on the PC in the den where nobody can see them. His passion for old home movies led him to digitize and store them on his PC, but to watch them in his living room, he has to take the additional step of burning them to DVD.

"It would be nice if all these devices worked together, and everything could run on one system in the living room," Meythaler said.

Computer hardware and software-makers have developed a solution for Meythaler and others in search of an all-in-one entertainment hub: Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005-based PCs. In addition to word processing, e-mail and other standard computer functions, these PCs can record and pause live TV broadcasts, and can be attached to a standard television, as well as a computer monitor, for better viewing. They play and record DVDs and CDs and can pump music and movie soundtracks to surround sound speakers. They also can stockpile home movies and family photos and then display them directly on any television in the home. What's even better is that a single remote can control it all.

In addition to gadget-loving dads, college students have become quick converts to Media Center PCs because these devices can be used for both schoolwork and entertainment. Kellie Jacobson hopes to get a Media Center PC before she heads to college for the first time this fall. "An all-in-

one package is always best," Jacobson said. "I wouldn't need to bring my giant stereo or buy a TV or DVD player. I'd have less to worry about, and all my friends would think it was the coolest thing ever."

When choosing a Media Center PC, consider the following:

- **Ease of use.** Look for PCs loaded with Microsoft Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005, which is designed to manage a large number of diverse computing tasks and different types of digital media and can be operated with a remote control.

- **Price.** Most Media Center PCs cost between \$800 and \$2,000. High-end versions such as the Sony Vaio RA834G top \$2,000 and offer the largest amount of storage and other features. Versions such as the Dell Dimension 4700 and HP Pavilion a850y offer many of the same features for less than \$1,000.

- **Style.** Just because it's a PC doesn't mean it has to look like one. The Niveus Rainier Edition Media Center and Alienware DHS 2 series both look like home-theater components and fit into most entertainment cabinets.

- **Mobility.** To enjoy entertainment at home or on the road, there are laptop Media Center PCs such as the Toshiba Qosmio E15-AV101.

- **Connections.** Media Center Extender products, including Media Center Extender for Xbox gaming consoles, allow users to view TV programs, DVDs and other digital entertainment from their Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005-based PC on any television in the house via a wired or wireless connection.

For more information about Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005: Visit <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/mediacenter>.