

# As Prices For Flat-Panel TV Sets Fall, Consumers Need Help Sorting Out Options

(NAPSA)—With prices of flat-panel TVs expected to continue to drop even for sets boasting the most cutting-edge technology, consumers looking to leap at the buying opportunity still seem confused by all their choices.

Serious shoppers need to first understand that there are two types of those stylishly sleek flat-panel TVs that people have been gobbling up to the tune of what the Consumer Electronic Association says was \$2 billion in 2004 alone: Plasma Display panels and Liquid Crystal Display panels—the latter of which are increasingly popular for reasons you'll soon see.

For while they have their similarities, they also have some real differences.

Plasma TVs, while a good value in the large, home-theater sizes, have what experts say are two main drawbacks. First, they tend not to produce the best picture in real-life light, which means you have less flexibility in deciding where in a sun-drenched room to place them. If you agree with the about 40 percent of those in a recent study, conducted by the New York research firm Burke Inc., who cited picture quality as the most appealing characteristic when evaluating TV technology, that could give you pause.

And second—and this is especially important for anyone endlessly glued to ESPN—there's the risk of what's known as "burn in." That's what happens when prolonged static images from channel logos and video games become so stationary that they wind up producing what looks like a ghost-like outline of the image that doesn't fade after switching to a different channel or game.

"If the display is for static imagery, particularly if the customer is hooked on a particular game, an LCD helps avoid burn-in," says John Yacono, a reporter at *Digital Connect Magazine* and



**Liquid Crystal Display TVs have become almost like art in living rooms.**

former labs director at Computer Reseller News.

Flat-panel TVs based on Liquid Crystal (LCD) technology, on the other hand, in addition to not having any burn-in problems, offer very high-resolution pictures as a result of the fluorescent tubes and optics used to create images. One of the latest breakthroughs in LCD TVs, like Sharp's popular AQUOS line, is "Vikuiti Display Enhancement Technology." This advancement by 3M may not exactly trip off your tongue, but connoisseurs have been crowing about the bright, life-like picture it produces whether you're watching in a sunny or darkened room.

Other things to keep in mind when choosing between Plasma, LCD and even older "box" sets?

Plasma TVs are typically available in the size range of 40-inch to 50-inch formats; LCDs come in a range of sizes (15-inch to 46-inch formats) and are thinner and more durable, making them suitable for the smallest kitchen counter to the largest home theater.

And if screen size is what sets your heart atwitter, keep in mind that Liquid Crystal sets, thanks to even newer technology on the horizon, will soon be available in sizes as large as 55 inches—and eventually even larger.

For more information, visit the tech-savvy sites [www.CNet.com](http://www.CNet.com) or [www.Vikuiti.com](http://www.Vikuiti.com).