



In the run-up to the Lunar New Year, most major shopping centers are running promotion campaigns on TV sets

TRANSLATED FROM THE LIBERTY TIMES' WEEKENDER BY JENS KASTNER

Idiot boxes: a smart buyer's guide

HOW TO CHOOSE THE IDEAL TV SET: CHEN CHING-HUA (陳清華), TATUNG BC'S (大同) 3C YONGHE BRANCH MANAGER, OFFERS HIS ADVICE



THE TEST

Comparing different brands by their specs alone can be a difficult task, so test viewing is highly recommended. Chen says that shops generally use very high quality video for display purposes. Ask the shop assistant to switch to cable TV because its signal quality is far from perfect. This will more readily show up the differences between TV brands. Most stores sell off their display units towards the end of the year. While the price might be right, buyers shouldn't forget that those TVs have been running 24-7, for many months.



1. How do I get the best price? Take advantage of the year-end home appliance buying frenzy, when there is a flurry of promotional campaigns. Brands like Sony and LG offer substantial discounts
2. LCD or plasma, which is better? A couple of years ago, when LCD technology wasn't advanced enough for larger screens, plasma screens were the only option if you wanted a huge TV set. But times have changed. Sony sells 70-inch LCD TVs for about NT\$99,000. LCD TVs use less energy, don't emit radiation and last longer
3. What about the myriad functions? It all comes down to the price. The more functions there are, the more expensive the TV
4. What about all the technical jargon? When confronted with statistics, abbreviations and TV sets that all look alike, it's best to take your time in the store and compare picture quality

TV TERMINOLOGY

Resolution (解析度)

The minuscule dots that the human eye sees when looking at a TV are called pixels. Resolution simply means the number of pixels a screen can display. The higher the resolution, the more detailed the picture. However, to enjoy high resolution, your TV signal has to be good. Since Taiwan's cable signals aren't the best, even full HD TV sets aren't necessarily better than conventional ones

Contrast (對比)

Put simply, contrast makes objects stand out against their background. If there were no contrast, the eye would only recognize silhouettes. In theory, the higher the contrast, the better

Brightness (亮度)

As with resolution and contrast, the higher the better. When you take your new TV home, however, moderation is best. Too little brightness and the screen looks dull, but too much leads to distortion and blurring. Adjust the brightness setting accordingly

Response time (反應時間)

The response time defines how fast pixels change color. The quicker the pixels react, the better. This is especially important for watching sports or documentaries about cheetahs and gazelles

- Before settling down in front of your brand spanking new ogle box, take the remote control and switch the set to AV. Check for bright and dark spots. If there are a lot of spots, the TV set should be returned. Check the warranty
- Adjust the settings to your personal preferences
- Be very careful when hanging a TV from your wall. Give a thought to where all those dangling cables will go. If in doubt, get a professional to do it for you
- Never wipe the screen with a wet rag



GET CONNECTED

TVs are not only good for watching soap operas. A multitude of devices can be connected to the set. New TVs usually come with AV cables, but video and HDMI cables normally have to be purchased separately. Some new sets include USB ports, Internet connectivity, and even Bluetooth



HDMI cable:
For games consoles, computers and karaoke machines



D-sub cable:
Connects to computers



Component video cables:
For karaoke or DVD players



AV cables:
For karaoke and DVD players and cameras

SIZE MATTERS

It's important to choose the right screen size. If your living room is longer than 3m, then the screen should be at least 42 inches. A 20-inch screen would suffice for a small studio apartment. Most people mistakenly believe the bigger the screen the better. Actually, a big screen does more harm than good if viewers sit too close to the TV

20-inch screens



Tatung V20EAKA (NT\$5,900)
Resolution 1,366 x 768, three-year warranty, equipped with one HDMI port



BenQ MK2432 (24 inch) (NT\$9,988)
Resolution 1,366 x 768, auto contrast enhancement, one-year warranty, one HDMI port

30-inch screens



Toshiba Regza 32AV600G (32 inch) (NT\$24,900)
Reinforced cable signal, dual HDMI terminal, energy-efficient, 1,366 x 768 resolution



Sony Bravia KDL-32V5500 (32 inch) (NT\$24,900)
Tired of black TV casing? This red Sony LCD TV boasts 1,920 x 1,080 resolution, a built-in HD high-definition digital receiver, and four HDMI ports

40-inch screens



Sony Bravia KDL-52Z5500 (52 inch) (NT\$109,000)
Full HD 1,920 x 1,080 resolution, comes with Sony's HD picture enhancement technology and a built-in HD digital receiver



LG SL90 Borderless HDTV (42 inch) (NT\$67,900)
Only 2.9cm thin. Its edge-to-edge design gives it an uninterrupted, frameless look. The LED screen provides enhanced color saturation