

Time's running out...

Last Minute Shopping for Geeks

"**Cyber Monday**," as the first day of the week following Thanksgiving is called after its online shopping binge, was quite a success this year. With \$1.25 billion in sales, up 22% from last year, it was the heaviest spending day on the Internet in history.

Don't panic if you missed out. There are still plenty of great deals on the Net, and though time is quickly running out, savvy shoppers can still save money in these tough times – and still not have to worry about beating the crowds to the mall.

Web-powered shopping

Smart consumers will let the Net do the hard work for them, but it still can be difficult to find the right gift, especially for the geek in your life. Even if you're clueless about what to give someone, an abundance of free advice from merchants is readily available.

Along with **Google** and **Yahoo's** popular shopping directories, Microsoft's **Bing**, which bills itself as a "decision engine", has a huge number of comparisons, product reviews, and links to retailers.

Here are a few specialized gift search engines:

1. **Find Gifts**, www.findgift.com, lists categories and types of gifts, recipients, occasions, etc. There's even a geeky "unique gift" category and links to merchants.
2. **TheFind**, www.thefind.com, looks up products and categories online and/or locally available too.
3. **Rolling Ideas**, www.rollingidea.com, just offers sound advice on presents based on various occasions and relationships, without merchant links.
4. **Consumer Search**, www.consumersearch.com, reviews and evaluate thousands of electronic and consumer products and services by categories.
5. **Dealio.com**, www.dealio.com, compares prices, finds the best deals and offers with coupons.

The ease of weighing prices and product features at home is one of the greatest consumer-empowering capabilities of Web shopping. Sites like **Comparison Shopping**, www.comparisonshopping.com, use specialized search engines for each product/service category from autos to travel – even dating.

You can even comparison shop comparison shopping sites – a webpage at eBiz rates the most popular www.ebizmba.com/articles/shopping-websites.

Keeping it local

Local shopping is convenient and quick, and there's great stuff you can't find in big box stores. Here are local merchants with websites, some of whom may be found in our **Epromenade Merchant Gallery** on our site, www.swcp.com/epromenade/.

1. **Theobroma Chocolatier**, carries gourmet treats, including holiday gift packages, www.theobromachocolatier.com.
2. **Fiery Foods**, www.fiery-foods.com, a chile and barbecue emporium with hot recipes, teaching videos, etc.
3. **Chile Traditions**, www.chilitraditions.com, everything chile, including ristras and chile-themed table settings.
4. **Mama's Home**, www.mamashome.com; cool contemporary tie-dye clothes for the whole family.
5. **Albuquerque Antique Connection Mall**, a bazaar with over 70 dealers, www.antiqueconnectionmall.com.
6. **Music and Videos**, www.musicandvideo.com, for truly serious collectors of music memorabilia.
7. **Xcentricities Corsets**, corset.net, locally made corsets and foundational garments for both women and men.
8. **Tanner Chaney Gallery**, high-quality Native American jewelry and art, <https://www.tannerchaney.com>.
9. **United Nuclear**, unitednuclear.com, for your magnets, meteorites, static electricity generators, etc.
10. **New Mexico Clay**, www.nmclay.com, pottery supplies equipment, tools, and classes.

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Other online merchants

Here are some of our staff's favorite shopping sites:

1. **Think Geek**, www.thinkgeek.com, a compendium of high-tech toys, gadgets, and caffeinated products.
2. **William Sonoma**, www.williams-sonoma.com, an awesome site for anyone who likes to cook.
3. **New Egg**, www.newegg.com, has good deals on all manner of consumer electronics.
4. **Woot**, www.woot.com, has cool daily specials on all kinds of electronics and other geeky things.
5. **Rejuvenation**, www.rejuvenation.com, elegant vintage and retro hardware and lighting fixtures.
6. **Lehman's**, www.lehmans.com, offers quality goods, tools, and products for simple, self-sufficient living.
7. **Nova Space Art**, www.novaspaceart.com, stellar prints and paintings by the best astronomical artists.
8. **The Nordic Needle**, www.nordicneedle.com, supplies, books, patterns for anyone into needlework.
9. **House on the Hill**, www.houseonthehill.net, specialty molds and other tools for baking and crafts.
10. **Byrd Designs**, www.byrdedesigns.com, lovely Victorian and art nouveau jewelry and hair accessories.
11. **Zazzle**, www.zazzle.com, custom and artsy T-shirts and other printing with your designs or others'.
12. **Geeks**, www.geeks.com, has all the electronic gizmos you'd expect for a computer or gadget geek.
13. **Cafepress**, www.cafepress.com, produces custom-printed T-shirts, hats, mugs, and other gifts.
14. **Uncommon Goods**, www.uncommongoods.com, interesting gifts with unusual twists with an idea finder set by relationships, occasions, prices, etc.
15. **Museum Replicas**, www.museumreplicas.com, for swords, armor, costumes, and lots of movie props.
16. **Xump**, www.xump.com, science toys and stuff.
17. **Evil Mad Science**, www.evilmadscience.com, DIY kits and parts for art, education, and accessibility.
18. **Maker Shed Store**, www.makershed.com, is an awesome source for DIY hobbyists with kits from holography to home brewing.
19. **Gadget 4 All**, www.gadget4all.com, unusual geeky gifts, many with a Japanese flavor.
20. **Kaidomain**, www.kaidomain.com, another geek-oriented personal electronics emporium.

Should you find yourself in a chain store, you can easily make sure that the item is offered at the lowest price available by using a **price-reading and comparison application** on your smartphone to identify bar codes and do a quick online product search for comparison with other nearby stores' prices.

Security Reminders

1. When typing in your credit card number always make sure it's an encrypted site (**https**). Look for the **closed lock icon** in the bottom corner of your browser pane to indicate this.
2. If a web site doesn't feel right to you, prices are too good, you're never heard of them before, or the URL looks like **192.168.10.7/gotcha.exe**, trust your instincts and leave ASAP.

Finally, relax! You can often find the perfect gift online for less, have it wrapped and shipped often quicker than it would have even taken you to get to the mall. And without having to change out of your bathrobe and slippers, either. Now that's a holiday!

Check the Net before you go

Whether you're off to Grandma's house or a tropical beach, there's online help available for the journey.

Albuquerque Sunport, www.cabq.gov/airport, check for flight delays, traveling restrictions, etc.

Weather, www.wunderground.com, for the latest forecast for wherever you're going.

Current Road Conditions, www.nmroads.com, courtesy of the NM Dept. of Transportation.

Maps and Directions, maps.google.com, to find the shortest or most scenic route there and back.

Gas Prices, www.gasbuddy.com, to locate the cheapest fuel prices anywhere in the US and Canada.

Internet Access for Travelers

Getaways can be wonderful, but most people don't want to be offline and isolated while away. You should be prepared before you leave in case you want to get online once there. General information on Internet access while traveling, including how to use other ISPs and Internet cafes can be found at <http://www.swcp.com/access-while-traveling/>.

Webmail, manage your email anywhere with one of our 3 webmail interfaces. Just log into your favorite on our homepage, www.swcp.com.

SWCP Long Distance Dial-up from any place in the contiguous US for \$10/hour. (800) 658-6793.

SWCP Long Distance Tech Support, (888) 792-7266.

iPass is a roaming service for ISPs that provides local dial-up and broadband cheaply from anywhere in the world. Note that rates vary by location (about \$3/hr. in the US), are charged by usage, and the software and global address book should be downloaded and tested previous to departure. More info is located at <http://www.swcp.com/ipass-global-roaming/>.

Vacation Messages, to let people know you're away, can be done with the **Setup Autoresponder** contact form at <https://members.swcp.com/>. The Members Portal also has contact forms to reach us, set up remote authentication for mail, etc.



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