

# Desktop Guerrillas

## GUERRILLA BRIEFS

# GETTING THE BEST TECHNOLOGY DEALS

The days of dot.com too-good-to-be-true bargains are past us, but that's not to say there aren't deals to be found on the web. Here's how to be a savvy Internet shopper.

### LET SOMEONE ELSE DO THE HARD WORK

Looking for that hot new Sony camera? Chances are someone else is, too, and they found it for cheap. Luckily, web sites and message boards have sprung up bragging about these deals, making it easy for you. Check out [www.gotapex.com](http://www.gotapex.com), [www.techbargains.com](http://www.techbargains.com), and [www.fatwallet.com](http://www.fatwallet.com) for the best of these deals.

Case in point: as of the writing of this article, the Sony DSC-T1 available for \$499 at your local Best Buy can be had from Dell for \$409 shipped.

### COUPONS=GOOD. REBATES=BAD.

Rebates have a funny way of getting lost in the mail, but coupons save us money right away – we like that. Before making a purchase from a company, do a search online for coupons. Fatwallet (above) may have some as well. Coupons for the office supply stores are fairly common – usually on the order of \$30 off a \$150 order. Feel free to get some reams of paper – the office supply shops have free shipping on most orders.

I'm not a fan on mailing lists, but it's worthwhile to sign up for Dell's. They often send

out coupons worth as much as 15% off computers and peripherals. There's an active trade of these on ebay as well. A coupon like this will run you about \$3, delivered instantly. They also exist for office supply shops, so check before you make your next trip to the store.

### KNOW YOUR RETAILER

It's not easy to tell the difference between a shady and reputable dealer online. Luckily, those who have had unpleasant experiences are often eager to tell their tale.

The place they go is [www.resellerratings.com](http://www.resellerratings.com). Before you buy from someone new, I urge you to investigate them on this site. You'll find a simple numeric score for each retailer, as well as personal experiences – good and bad.

### CREDIT CARDS

Besides offering extended warranties, there are a handful of credit cards that offer "best value guarantees" - or price matching up to 60 days after the purchase of a product. The Chase Platimum Mastercard, for instance, will pricematch any print or Internet ad up to \$250 per item. See an item you

just have to have at Circuit City? Go ahead and buy it, then check the Internet for the best price when you get home.

### WATCH OUT FOR PRICE DROPS

If you buy a computer, try calling the retailer before 30 days are up and ask for a price adjustment. If the price has changed, they will often refund you the difference.

I've had the best luck here with IBM: one of my laptops dropped \$200 in price which was happily refunded when I called.

### SHIPPING AND TAX

Always check the small print – shipping and tax may be added to your order. Some companies even vary in their terms from division to division: for instance, Dell Small Business charges tax in Connecticut, but Dell Home doesn't.

With these tips in mind, you can easily save hundreds on your technology purchases, and have a safer experience doing so.