

# power shopping

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## NEW TELEVISIONS ARE **SKINNIER AND SMARTER**

Get ready to be impressed when shopping for a new flat-panel television. Rather than just showing off mega-size screens, manufacturers are touting televisions that are slimmer, lighter, more energy-efficient, and capable of tapping into the internet.

### 2 Internet on the big(ger) screen

For a while now, we've been able to watch on a computer content that was originally intended for TV viewing. Now, companies have reversed that path as downloadable content comes to the TV. The coming year will bring widgets to the TV screen. (Panasonic with Viera Cast interface, right.) Widgets are those icons on the bottom of a computer screen you click to launch a program or application. Remote controls offer easy navigation of onscreen menus, but this is not a workspace desktop. The icons and content are specifically geared toward entertainment and customized content. TVs and computers are far from interchangeable, and none of these new



screens are true open platforms. All depend on partnerships with companies like Yahoo! for customized weather reports and news feeds. Even better, Netflix, Cinema Now, and Blockbuster are pairing up with TV manufacturers to deliver movies directly to your TV.

### 3 Smart and green

Just about every electronics company has some kind of eco message. Most are touting TVs that consume less power, based largely on smarter technology. Others have features that let the TV sense the lighting in a room and adjust accordingly so colors are truer, contrast better, and the TV doesn't have to work as hard, drawing less power. Sony's Bravia Eco TV (shown here) goes one step further: A motion detector senses if there's been no movement in a room for more than 30 minutes and turns off the TV. According to the company, it's so sensitive that there's little chance that even a true couch potato will ever be inert enough to risk shutting off the television.

Companies are pledging to reduce emissions, make better use of sustainable resources, and expand recycling programs. New battery technology holds promise for greener power sources, too, with solar cells popping up on portable devices.



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### 1 Slim profiles

There's no such thing as too thin. Really. Today's flat panels just keep getting thinner, with many new models of LCD TVs measuring just one-half inch thick. (Sharp Aquos is shown here.) Lighter weight and easier to mount on a wall, these beauties have the added benefit of being better for the environment. Using fewer raw materials and packaging products helps streamline production and shipping, reducing the overall carbon footprint of the product. Even the bulkier plasma TVs are getting trimmer, with Panasonic introducing a model that's just 1 inch thick.

These newest TVs offer even sharper pictures, too. Companies have increased what they call the "refresh rate" on LCD TVs, meaning the images are clearer, brighter, and truer than ever.

