

How Tweens, Teens And Parents Decide What To Buy

Contributed by eMarketer
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Teens more influential with parents and more reliant on web for information

Teens and tweens have very different approaches when deciding what electronics they want. For tweens, most just "know what they like," according to the "TeenFluence Survey" conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of ConsumerSearch.com.

Ads were the second most common factor affecting their decision-making. Just 10% cited online reviews and 17% checked out the product website.

Teens, meanwhile, were much more price-sensitive, likely starting to realize that money may not in fact grow on trees.

More importantly though, the internet was a much bigger factor in forming preferences. Two in five teens said online reviews influenced their computer product preferences, and 37% cited product websites.

A study by Mintel similarly found that the influence of online information becomes more important as kids get older.

"At the upper end of the age range, kids 9-11 are more likely to turn to more diverse resources for information, including online ads and social networking sites, while the younger kids, aged 6-8, have a stronger reliance on parents," said Fiona O'Donnell, senior analyst at Mintel, in a statement.

Parents surveyed by Harris gave responses very similar to teens. Online reviews and product websites were the biggest factors behind price when deciding on electronics to purchase.

And while the children themselves were not the biggest influencer overall, 18% of parents with teens said they asked for their opinion. Parents of tweens were not likely to do the same.

Electronics are an area where teens are particularly influential. A May 2010 survey from Ketchum found teens were more likely to recommend electronics to their friends than any other product category besides entertainment.

The Harris study also separately asked parents and their children who they thought knew more about different kinds of electronic devices. Unsurprisingly, it depended on who was asked.

Teens said they knew more about each kind of product than their parents, while parents said they knew more than their kids.

There were two exceptions, though: Parents admitted that their kids knew more about video games, and parents of teens reported that their kids knew more about smartphones. Neither tweens nor their parents said that tweens were particularly knowledgeable about anything other than video games.

The takeaway is that overall, the internet plays an outsized role for helping teens and parents decide what electronics to buy.

Teens are also particularly influential with smartphone purchases. Tweens are easy to market to, but they have little influence.

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