

GADGETS, GIZMOS & GIVEAWAYS



\$2,000 SAVED: Ms Pris Yap got a 46-inch Sharp LCD TV set at Comex 2008 for \$2,000 less than its usual price, with a three-year warranty thrown in. (PHOTO: JAMIE KOH)

TECHNOLOGY FAIRS' SWEET OFFERS

Regular visitors to IT shows praise deals which net vendors as much as \$50m per show

KENNY CHEE

A PORTABLE hard drive, a 20-inch LCD monitor, a digital camera and ink cartridges are the latest gadgets and accessories undergraduate Lester Chan bought at information-technology fairs held this year.

A self-professed gadget lover, Mr Chan, 24, a computing student at the National University of Singapore, said that he attends all the IT fairs because he can find a wide spread of products under one roof.

He was also at the four-day Comex 2008 fair that started yesterday. There are over 800 exhibitors and at least 2,000 products, from cameras to computers. Comex is in its 18th year and recorded 700,000 visitors last year.

Mr Chan is one of a growing number of people who find themselves scouring booths at IT fairs looking for good deals. The other three major IT fairs have also drawn large crowds.

The PC Show in June saw 1.1 million visitors, up from 750,000 last year. At the IT show in March, 735,000 shoppers attended, an increase from the previous year's 700,000. Last year's Sitex show also recorded 750,000 visitors.

These numbers are up from an average of around 100,000 visitors per fair around the year 2000.



FAIR VETERAN: You'll find Mr Lester Chan at all the IT fairs here, thanks to the good promotions and wide range of gadgets on offer under one roof. (PHOTO: NEO XIAOBIN)

It is perhaps a sign that not only are people getting more reliant on technology, but that they are also getting savvier about deals.

▣ BIG BARGAINS

"IT fairs have better promotions at times, compared to stores, and they tend to bundle more gifts," said Mr Chan, who has also worked as a web developer.

Consultant executive Pris Yap, 27, who frequents IT fairs, goes for household products.

"I can get good bargains for home electronic goods and gadgets," she said.

She turned up at Comex 2008 as the doors opened at 12pm yesterday. She bought a 46-inch Sharp LCD TV for \$2,999 with a three-year war-

ranty. In stores, it would have cost \$4,999, with just a one-year warranty.

"I spent a lot of time doing my research on prices for TV sets," she said. "I waited a month for Comex to open as I knew there would be a good deal. The three-year warranty was what hooked me."

She spent over three hours at the fair sussing out other deals as she was hunting for a Bluetooth earpiece as well.

Mr Chan also decided to go to Comex early, and bought a D-Link network storage drive for \$199 – cheaper than the usual price of \$235.

Then there are others who go just to window-shop.

Communications executive

Benjamin Loh, 30, is a cautious buyer. He frequents IT shows, going to three or four fairs a year. He said that while freebies from IT fair buys appeal to most visitors, he makes purchases only if his budget permits it and if it is a really good deal.

"I attend IT fairs mainly to see the latest releases," he said.

▣ BIG CROWDS

Fair organisers said they have seen sales increase by 10 per cent or more, and that vendors rake in \$40 million to \$50 million per show.

To cope with the increasing number of visitors and to expand its product range, Comex has increased its exhibition space by 30,000 sq ft this year.

The number of female visi-

tors is also increasing for some fairs.

According to Mr Keith Oliver, general manager of Singex Exhibitions – which organises Sitex – female visitors to Sitex jumped from 23 per cent in 2005 to 32 per cent last year.

While the number of visitors to IT fairs here is overwhelming, this has not put off IT-fair regulars.

IT-show veteran Mr Chan has one piece of advice: Go early to beat the crowds. That is when booths are well-stocked, and there is still room to manoeuvre around the aisles at your own leisure.

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Comex 2008 is on from today till Sunday at Suntec City Convention Centre, levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6, from 12pm to 9pm daily. Entry is free. Get online at www.comexshow.com.sg for more details.

For every \$100 paid or deposited at the show, you will also stand a chance to win between \$2,000 to \$20,000 in cash in a lucky draw. Redeem your lucky-draw coupons at Hall 602.

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▣ **Reliant:**
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▣ **Warranty:**
保证 bǎo zhèng