

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

SHOPPING



Here's how to beat the holiday rush

"Shop 'til you drop" is a phrase that takes on added significance this time of year. There are, however, efficient and hassle-free ways to do holiday shopping — even at the last minute.

Experts estimate that at-home shopping will total more than \$65 billion this year. The term "at home" encompasses everything from traditional mall-order and catalog shopping to high-tech television shopping.

Though the methods of at-home shopping have changed dramatically, shoppers still want safe delivery of a quality gift. Florist's Transworld Delivery, for example, pioneered the flowers-by-wire industry in 1910 when a handful of florists experimented with sending their out-of-town orders by telegraph. Today, the FTD computerized order-transmission system helps ensure timely, accurate orders.

More holiday shoppers are now using mail-order catalogs. Such direct marketing accounts for 14 percent of all retail transactions. And, to the delight of mail-order shoppers, as many as 500 leading consumer catalogs will be available for purchase at magazine stands and bookstores for the first time this season. Shoppers pay \$1 to \$3 for each catalog, recouping outlays by using discount stickers on order forms.

One of the hottest concepts to hit the telewaves since the music video is television shopping. Over 20 shopping programs and networks feature announcers promoting a wide array of products. Viewers are asked to order



HOLIDAY TABLES can be brightened with an FTD bouquet delivered in hammered-brass fireside basket. It's easy to order and send this gift and many others by telephone.

(right now!) by calling toll-free numbers. A number of department-store chains have moved into this market with television-displayed catalogs that can be accessed and manipulated by a touch-tone phone.

Even more sophisticated systems let computer buffs shop at home with their personal computers. By telephoning special services, they can scan lists of merchandise and then

punch in codes to place an order. The goods are charged to the purchaser's credit card and sent promptly by mail.

Others prefer personal-shopping services. Many department stores offer their own, but "surrogate shoppers" can be hired independently to shop every store in town.

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Microwave oven is a hot gift idea

New homeowner Keith Jacobson wondered what to give his wife for Christmas; there were so many things that the newlywed couple needed.

Mary Thomas was worried about her college-age son cooking for himself at his off-campus apartment.

Bill Winter wanted to give his 68-year-old mother something that she would really be able to use, not just another Christmas gift that would gather dust in her closet.

John and Susan Campbell, a two-career couple with school-age children, were looking for a mutual gift that would help them better organize their limited time.

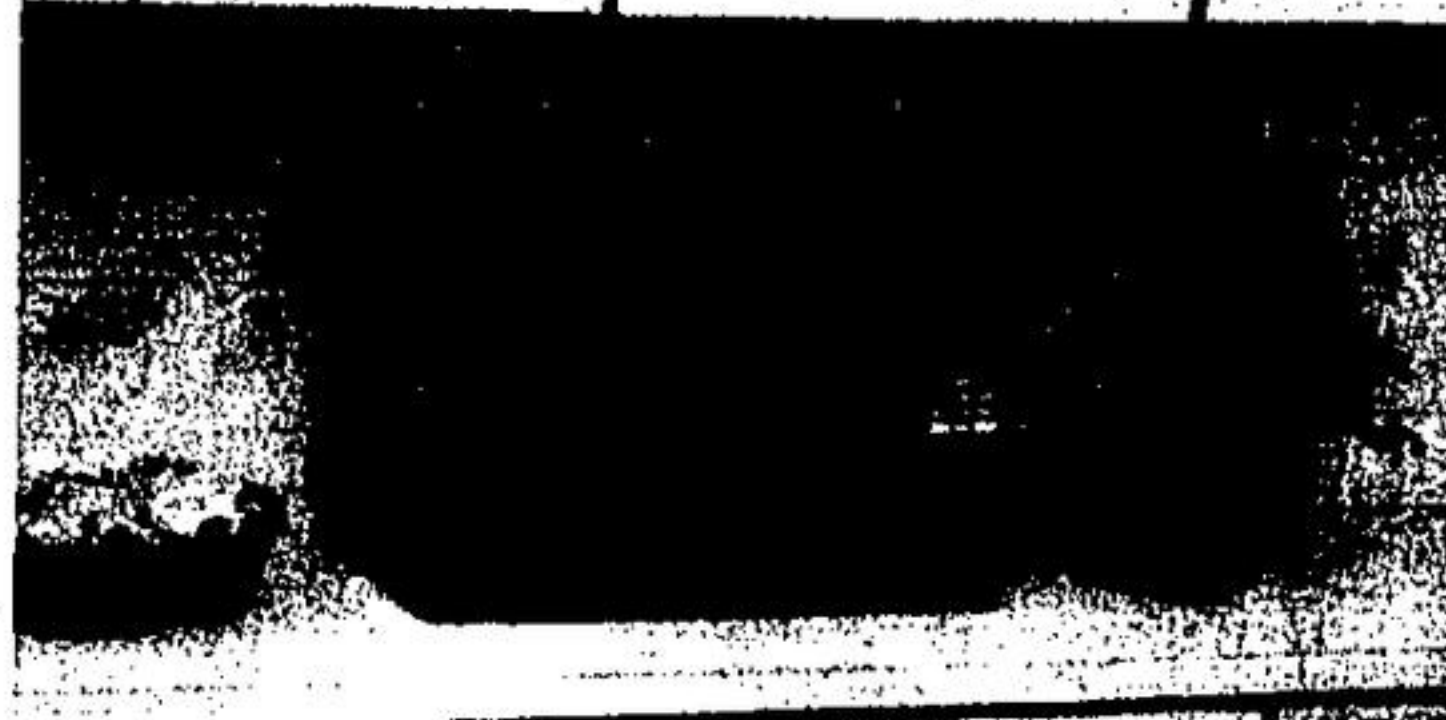
What do these people have in common? They're among the many gift-givers who will purchase a new microwave oven this holiday season.

More than 12 million microwaves were sold in the United States last year, according to the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers. AHAM predicts that 60 percent of America's 88 million households will be equipped with microwave ovens by the end of 1987.

"The gift of a microwave is extremely practical," says Janet Felmeth, director of home economics for the WCI Major Appliance Group, manufacturers of Frigidaire, White-Westinghouse and Tappan microwave ovens. "It's something that will be used virtually every day."

"Everyone from single students to retired grandparents can benefit from the labor-, energy- and time-saving advantages of microwave cooking."

The holidays are an excellent time to give a microwave; anyone who entertains will instantly appreciate its versatility. Whether it's heating up a frozen entree for a quick meal, help-



GIFT FOR all seasons is a microwave oven. Frigidaire 1.3-cubic-foot-capacity model features Browning element to enhance roasted and baked foods, automatic temperature probe and three cooking stages.

ing to cook baked potatoes, defrosting vegetables or preparing a complete holiday dinner, a microwave oven is fast becoming one of the busiest appliances in the kitchen.

Today's microwave ovens do more than just heat meals. Some models feature a 1,000-watt Browning element to enhance the appearance of roasted or baked foods.

"A microwave is perceived as a 'fun' home appliance for giving — not a necessity, but a luxury item," says Felmeth. "The gift recipient soon moves from simple tasks like boiling water and baking potatoes to more advanced cooking techniques and freezer/microwave planned menus. That's when the true benefits of owning and using a microwave oven become readily apparent."

Today's models range from basic to sophisticated, and from compact, low-powered units ideal for reheating

single servings to high-powered, full-size models for full-scale cooking and meal preparation.

Before selecting a microwave oven, consider these questions:

- Who will use it? Rarely is the female household head the exclusive user of the appliance. In 91.3 percent of homes, other household members also use the microwave, including 74 percent of husbands; 36.7 percent of children age 10 to 17; 29 percent of other adults at home; and 16.3 percent of children under 10, reports AHAM.

- How will it be used? Sometimes planned usage underestimates actual usage, as is the case with 12.4 percent of current owners, who admit to using the appliance more often than originally planned. On the average, the microwave is used four times per day, but at least 25 percent of owners use it six or more times daily.

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Choosing a VCR as a holiday gift

A VCR can be an ideal gift — but because technology is moving at a rapid pace, choices can be bewildering.

Marino Andriani, senior vice president of Emerson Radio Corp., offers these tips to help you choose the right VCR:

There are two types of models: top-loading and front-loading. The latter prevents dust from getting into the unit. The choice of VCR tape format is either VHS or Beta. Neither type of VCR can play the other's tape. VHS is by far the most common format, and, in the videotape-rental store, there are far more VHS titles to choose from than Beta.

The VCR comes with two or more "heads." A video head records and reads the videotape. Both the two- and four-head systems provide the same quality reception in the regular viewing mode. The four-head system only differs in the "special effects modes," such as freeze frame and slow

motion. In many cases, VCR tuners are cable-TV compatible. A subscriber to a basic-cable service will receive most unscrambled channels without the need of a converter box. Check this



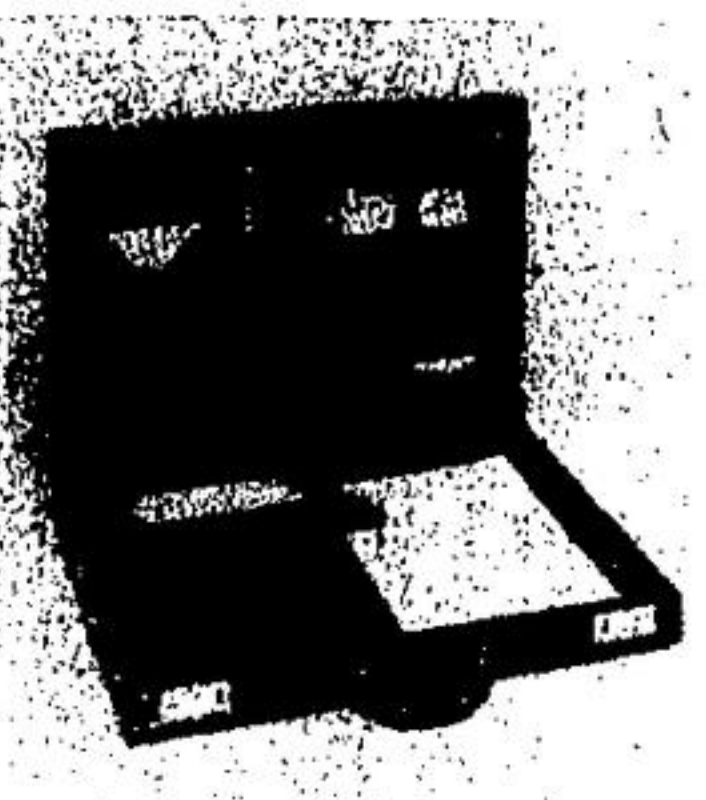
with each cable company you subscribe to; if specific modes of scrambling are applied, you may need an unscrambler box for certain programming.

A wireless infra-red remote control transmits a signal at the push of a button to perform several VCR functions. The VCR itself requires only a remote sensor to pick up the signal. This type of remote is used most commonly with electronic tuners.

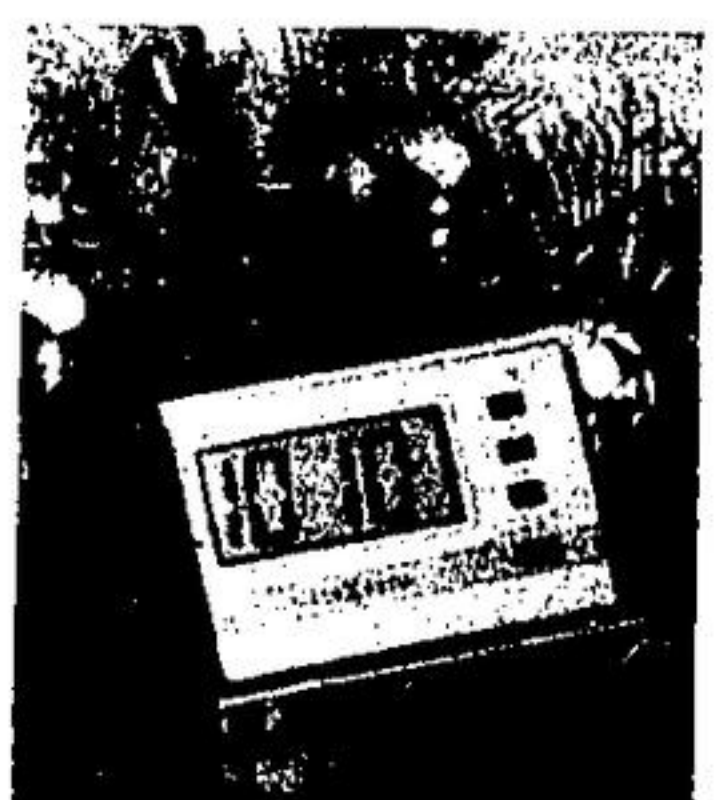
VHS hi-fi represents a phenomenal increase in sound quality over standard audio- and videocassettes. Stereo sound has increased frequency response and dynamic range. Varying configurations of VCRs employing hi-fi and/or stereo are available; although these VCRs record in stereo, they must still be hooked up to a stereo system or stereo TV in order to achieve full stereo sound.



CASSETTE recorder-player with variable speech control is a practical gift. It's a GE Fastrac.



HANDMADE deluxe attache case by Davidoff of Geneva comes with removable humidifier for cigar smokers. And a hefty price: \$6,100.



STUFF a stocking with a Howard Miller pocket-size alarm clock.

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