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Be Careful of Buying Old Versions

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

www.compukiss.com

sandy (at) compukiss.com

Don't be fooled by a cheap price on a product. It may be last year's model. While sometimes this is okay, for others it is a real rip-off. Here are some examples that you may want to read. Remember being a savvy consumer is essential in today's high tech world.

In the recent past, when a new version of a product was introduced, the old versions were removed from the retailer's shelves. So when you went into the store, you were sure of getting the latest and greatest version of each product.

But times have changed. Now the manufacturers are keeping their old versions available right alongside the newest models. In some cases, the product names have changed enough that the average person can easily tell the new from the old. For example, the iPad Air is Apple's newest full-sized iPad. You will see that Apple is also still selling the older iPad 2 model. In this case, the name actually changed and the marketing will usually indicate which is new and which is old.

In many cases, however, the name of the product doesn't change. There are often several versions of the same product with the same name or similar names selling at different prices.

Take the iPad mini, for example. Apple recently introduced a new, improved version of that product. The cheapest current version is selling for \$399. So when Walmart advertised the iPad mini for \$299 and it offered a \$100 gift card with that purchase, it seemed like a fantastic deal. However, Walmart was selling last year's model in that ad. They didn't have to stipulate anything other than "iPad mini" because both last year's model and the latest version are both simply called "iPad mini". The same is true for devices from other manufacturers, as well. The Microsoft Surface tablet has an original version and a newer updated version. If you purchase a Nexus tablet, you will find a version from last year right alongside the newest 2013 version that was just released.

The newer versions almost always have improved functionality and new features, but buying last year's model is not necessarily bad. To be a smart consumer, however, you need to know exactly what you are buying. It is always wise to ask if you are purchasing the latest version. Even better, take the time to research the older version and compare it spec-by-spec with the newest version. That is the only way to know if the price difference is worthwhile for you.

Luckily, the Internet make such research easy. Right on the Apple website you can find a comparison for the two versions of the iPad mini. The newer iPad mini has a much

improved screen resolution and a faster processor but the main specifications of the device remain the same. If you don't care that much about the screen clarity or the speed, the savings may be worthwhile.

You may not always need to purchase the latest and greatest version of each product. Only you can determine exactly what you need and which features you will use, and which you can do without. Doing research on the products can be time-consuming, but it is a worthwhile endeavor that will help you find the perfect device at the right price.

When it comes to high tech gadgets, being a savvy consumer is essential. You need to be "in the know" so you can make an informed decision on whether you would rather have the best device currently on the market or a little extra money in your pocket.