

Which? family hits the shops

Continuing our regular visits to the Joneses, we ease the pain of choosing and buying appliances and electronics, and show you how to do the same

Toni and Darren Jones wanted to buy a new cordless phone, laptop and freezer. So two of our experts put on their comfiest shoes and helped them to shop till they dropped.

Talking cable-free

There were several things the family knew they wanted from their new cordless phone – two handsets, a good battery life and an answering machine.

In the Joneses' nearest John Lewis – which was the top electrical retailer in our satisfaction survey (see *Which?*, February 2008, p34) – they most liked the look of a Panasonic KXTG7222ES.

We hadn't tested this model, but by looking at back issues of *Which?* the couple

knew that Panasonics usually perform well in our tests, and our phone expert checked that it had all of the features they needed.

'I can't believe we left it so long to replace our old phone,' Darren told us. 'The clarity is excellent.' They were particularly pleased that the two handsets can be used simultaneously. 'It's great for when both children want to talk to their grandparents at the same time,' Toni said.



Choosing a laptop

The first step in picking a new computer is establishing exactly what you're going to use it for. 'We want it for general computing and editing home video footage,' Toni told our experts.

We helped the couple choose a Dell XPS M1530 – the £729 model comes with a powerful graphics card for video editing (to find out what specs you need, go to www.which.co.uk/laptops). Dell got an average reliability rating in our last survey (*Which?*, September 2007, p38) and the Joneses felt it offered good value for money.

Focus on freezers

Buying a new freezer's usually easy – simply read the last *Which?* report (see July 2007,



Our expert shows Darren and Toni how to make the most of Which?. Choosing a laptop is easier than you might think, provided you use www.which.co.uk/laptops



p70) or go to www.which.co.uk/freezers to find the one that best suits you. However, the Joneses wanted a model that would be suitable for using in their unheated garage, where temperatures may fall below the range the appliance is designed to work in. During winter, this can make it difficult for the freezer to keep food at the right temperature. It may also invalidate the warranty.

Lots of you have told us that you want extra fridge and freezer storage in your garage, so we've given Toni a thermometer to monitor temperature changes in the family's garage. This will help us to establish which model works best in this type of environment.

Next month, we get the family to tell us whether having a Which?-recommended MP3 player, PVR, DVD recorder, digital radio, satnav and vacuum cleaner has made a big difference to their lives.

Buying a freezer's usually easy – simply read the last Which? report

FAMILY UPDATE

The latest news on what the family's been up to

- Dallas and Maureen, Darren's parents, used our advice to get a cavity wall and loft insulation grant from their local council. To see if you can do the same, visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home_improvements or call 0800 512012.
- Our car team helped Darren and Toni test-drive three new cars – find out which they preferred in our June issue.



How you can do it

You don't need a Which? expert with you whenever you shop. Here are some quick ways to make the most of your membership

- Head to www.which.co.uk for expert buying advice and use our online 'Compare products' tool to select the best products for you.
- Consult back copies of *Which?* and our Buying Guide, free with the February 2008 issue of *Which?*.
- Alternatively, phone our members' helpline on 01992 822800. Using Which? research, our team will be able to help you with all your shopping dilemmas – from discussing essential features to finding out about Best Buys.
- Our price comparison site at www.which.co.uk/shopping checks prices at major high-street and online retailers to get you a good deal.