

TOP WEBSITES 10

- 1 Google Australia
- 2 NineMSN
- 3 YouTube
- 4 eBay Australia
- 5 Yahoo!7
- 6 Yahoo!7 - Mail
- 7 CBA NetBank
- 8 BigPond
- 9 Google Australia Image Search
- 10 MySpace

SOURCE: HITWISE. WEEK ENDING APRIL 24



Box seat for the WORLD CUP



Save the fare to South Africa and buy a big-screen TV to watch all the matches, writes **Jennifer Dudley-Nicholson**

AUSTRALIA'S twin obsessions, sport and television, are about to collide. The FIFA World Cup is less than a month away and supporters are preparing living rooms to host 64 soccer matches over four weeks. Australians splashed \$1.2 billion on more than 2.4 million big-screen TVs during 2009 and TV makers, including Samsung, Sony, Panasonic and Kogan, are predicting even more home-entertainment sales so fans don't miss a goal, save, shootout or dive. Some TV makers are releasing limited-edition TVs and packages specifically for the event, and others are launching features to make the most of fast-moving images, record late-night broadcasts and ac-

commodate group screenings. Sony Bravia product manager Jan Ergen says this World Cup will be broadcast in high definition for the first time. "History shows that large sporting events boost sales of large TVs in Australia and that will certainly be the case for this World Cup," Ergen says. Sony has released a new range of 40 to 55-inch TVs in its Bravia HX700 series. Ergen says the chief feature is 200Hz technology that delivers fast-moving images smoothly by artificially adding more frames to video. Samsung Electronics marketing manager Mark Leathan says soccer fans will be impressed by LED-backlit TVs that give better energy efficiency, brighter pictures and lighter forms, and he expects

they will want bigger screens. "It used to be that 40-inch was considered big but now 46-inch is becoming the standard size for TVs," he says. "It is partly an affordability issue. You'll be getting 46-inch TVs this year in the mid to low \$2000s, and that's a really good deal."

Kogan Technologies founder Ruslan Kogan plans to launch two full high-definition screens

Large sporting events boost sales of large TVs in Australia

with built-in recorders for less than \$1000. The larger, a 42-inch LCD screen, will have surround-sound speakers, 240Hz picture handling, a digital TV tuner and a recording feature that will save video to a USB stick — very important during the World Cup. "Based on the time zone in Australia, a lot of the games will play at all hours of the

night so not everyone will be able to watch them given they have jobs and need sleep," Kogan says.

Panasonic plans to add USB recorders to its TVs, including the V20 plasma series, two of which will launch this month.

The company has also added In Plane Switching or IPS technology to its LCD screens, which improves TV viewing from an angle.

SBS online technical director Matt Costain says the broadcaster will stream all matches live on the internet, and will offer highlights packages.

"We're expecting more than a million users ... probably more if Australia or England makes it through to the finals," he says.

The FIFA World Cup will also be available on mobile phones. Optus will stream matches live to 3G phones for no charge.

The World Cup, from June 11 to July 11, screens on SBS.

Round ball, square eyes: TV makers are expecting soccer fans to lift sales.



EXTRA SCREENS

TECHSPERT

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How to: use dual monitors

OUR computers can do so much that sometimes there's not enough space on the screen. Having extra screen space can help when organising files, sorting digital photos or arranging videos or music files.

It's a trick long used in professions such as graphic design and video-editing.

The good news is it's quite easy to add a second screen to your PC or Mac.

If you have a PC, check the back panel of the computer to see if there are two monitor connections: two VGA (video graphics array) ports or two DVI (digital visual interface) connections, or one of each. If none is available, adding two monitors is still possible with the addition of a video adaptor or by upgrading your computer's video card.

Mac users need look for the Mini Display port on the back of the computer and, with the right adaptor cable, connect to a VGA or DVI monitor. iMac users who already use a built-in LED display can sit a second monitor beside their all-in-one computer. With two screens connected, users can move files and open windows and internet browsers from one screen to the next.

STEPHEN FENECH

VHS VIDEO TRANSFER

HELPDESK

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Q. I wish to save my home VHS videotapes to a computer and edit them with Windows MovieMaker, but I understand videotapes must be converted to a digital format before they can be edited. Without access to a digital video camera, what do I need to do to transfer these tapes to my PC?

A. The least costly solution would be to buy a USB video capture device. This is a cord which connects your computer's USB slot to your VCR's RCA connections (yellow, red and white cords). You can then import your videos. Or buy a combined VCR/DVD recorder. You can then record videotapes directly to DVDs that can then be inserted into your computer.

FRESH GEAR

JENNIFER DUDLEY-NICHOLSON



TV ON THE CHEAP

Soniq, \$798
www.soniqav.com

IT'S comfortable to know you can get a 50-inch telly for less than \$800. Soniq's new plasma TV, the QSP550T, has a high-definition TV tuner, wall mount system and two HDMI connections. Trade-offs include less than full-HD resolution (768p) and a weight of 52kg. Available at JB Hi-Fi.



STYLISH CARRIAGE

Targus, \$64.95
1800 641 645, targus.com

LUGGING laptops can be an onerous task, and identifying your black bag from everyone else's black bag can be trickier still. Some computer carrybags stand out, however, including those in the Unofficial Laptop Messenger range. These can accommodate computers up to 16 inches in size, offer air-mesh padding and have plenty of compartments.



RUNNING BUDDY

Garmin, \$299
garmin.com.au

WHEN is a wristwatch more than a wristwatch? When it comes equipped with a GPS receiver, heart-rate monitor, calorie counter and timer. Garmin's entry-level exercise buddy, the Forerunner 110, is water-resistant and also has a rechargeable battery that will last for eight hours and will connect to a computer so you can track your progress.



CUT-PRICE CAMERA

Tasco, \$99.95
tasco.com.au

GENERAL Electric has launched its first camera in Australia and the Smart Series C1233 shooter costs only \$99.95. For that you get a 12.4-megapixel point-and-shoot camera designed to make photography simple. Features include scene detection, face recognition and image stabilisation, and a 3x optical zoom lens.



GREEN YET GEEKY

Sony, \$849
sony.com.au

IT CAN be easy to be a green gadget-loving geek. Sony's new VAIO W Series of laptops shuns typical packaging and arrives in a carrying case made from recycled plastic. Its cover, rear and palm rest are also made from recycled plastic. The 10.1-inch laptop runs Windows 7 on a 1.66GHz Intel Atom processor, 1GB RAM and 250GB hard drive.

RIPE GADGET PICKS YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST OWN