

Tech gifts say 'iLove you' for men

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For many guys, nothing says "I love you" like an iPod. According to a survey by IOGEAR Inc., 61 percent of men said they would rather receive a tech gadget of some sort than the traditional candy or flowers for Valentine's Day.

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The top choices of gadgets were portable music players, GPS systems, Bluetooth cell-phone headsets and flat-screen TVs.

"Our poll shows that gadgets are now the way to a man's heart," said Miranda Su, vice president of sales and marketing for IOGEAR.

Andrew Blumberg, a 19-year-old college student in New York, said he understands why more men would prefer tech gear.

"A tech gadget is something useful that you will hopefully continue to use for a while," he said.

On the other hand, Blumberg noted, candy and flowers can be less than practical.

"Flowers wilt very quickly," he said, "and most guys are trying to stay healthy, especially after all the junk food over the holidays.

"I don't generally associate sugar and chocolate with maintaining good health," he added.

Brooklyn resident Jesse Miksic, a 23-year-old content developer, said that he would prefer gadgets to flowers or candy but would prefer other items like books or art to either of those.

"Candy, flowers and jewelry tap a classic traditionalist disposition that still lingers, but isn't all that important anymore," said Miksic.

The poll also found that 23 percent of females would rather get tech gear than candy or flowers.

"With affordable, convenient tech tools now available and in demand, gift-giving becomes a lot easier," Su said. "Males and females alike are

hoping to get an MP3 player over a dozen roses or heart-shaped chocolate."

Caitlin Murphy, a 21-year-old college student, said she wouldn't want a gadget unless it was something specific that had caught her eye and was inexpensive.

"Candy and flowers are fine, but I think a really good Valentine would be a little more creative and for me, knowing my own personal likes and dislikes," she said.

Miksic said that that personalization is the basis for good gifts.

"Each relationship has its own terms," he said. "Whether you shop for flowers, new cars, or sex toys, romance is built on a really personal foundation, and the best gift for Valentine's Day is a gift that says something to that foundation."

Miksic said a book can be a great versatile, meaningful gift.

"It seems meaningful simply as an object, like a flower is nice just to have one; it's either useful or entertaining, like a gadget; and getting a good one reflects an intimate knowledge of the recipient, as with buying the right clothing," he said.

Blumberg said that sometimes the best gift isn't even a tangible item.

"The simplest gift is just a nice dinner out to a restaurant of the girl's choosing," he said. "Valentine's Day isn't so much about the gifts as it is about the relationship, and so getting a chance to just sit and talk alone together can be the best present you can give."

Blumberg said the best Valentine's Day gift he's received before was a

framed collage of pictures of him and his girlfriend.

"The better presents are just little reminders like that," he said.

Murphy agreed, saying that just about anything can be appropriate for Valentine's Day depending on the couple.

"I think Valentine's Day presents should be more about catering towards the individual's personal preferences," she said.

"Knowing someone well enough to buy them something they like, and something they can experience with you, such as tickets to a show or museum, is far more romantic and far sexier than traditional expectations," she said.

Despite all the Valentine gift possibilities out there, some people will still screw their Valentine's Day up. For those people, there is a Web site to share Valentine horror stories.

The Dating Hall of Shame, found at DatingHallofShame.com, was founded by Heidi Heller Niehart as a way for disgruntled daters to share stories and recover from a date gone awry.

"I wanted to give people an outlet to share their worst dating stories," she said.

"My own personal list of dating horrors is long and distinguished," she said. "However, I've found that the best way to get over a bad date or break-up is to have a good laugh and then get right back out there."

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