

'Google TV': Sony unveils TVs with Google's Web-surfing system

October 12 2010, By MICHAEL LIEDTKE , AP Technology Writer



This product image provided by Sony Electronics Inc. shows the Sony Internet TV with the QWERTY remote, powered by Google TV. (AP Photo/Sony Electronics Inc.)

Sony Corp.'s lineup of sleek televisions boasting Google Inc.'s Web-surfing system will go on sale Saturday, testing how much consumers are willing to pay to combine access to the entire Internet with their regular TV programming.

The high-definition sets unveiled Tuesday evening in New York will have LCD screens ranging from 24 inches to 46 inches, with recommended retail prices from \$600 to \$1,400. [Sony](#) will begin selling the new sets in its online store Saturday, and they should be available in [Best Buy](#) Co.'s U.S. stores by early next week. Pre-orders are currently

being taken at both Sony's and Best Buy's websites.

Sony's price for its [Google](#) TV sets is \$200 to \$400 higher than comparable TVs without the highly touted software, a differential that threatens to dampen sales at a time the still-shaky economy is causing more households to pinch their pennies.

The strong sales of Apple Inc.'s [iPhone](#) and [iPad](#) have demonstrated that people are still willing to open their wallets to buy breakthrough gadgets, but persuading them usually requires a snazzy marketing campaign that shows why the products are worth the extra money.

Forrester Research analyst James McQuivey isn't convinced that Sony and Google will be able to make a compelling enough case to turn this new generation of TVs into a must-have item, even though he is impressed with the technology inside the sets.

"Price is going to be important," he said. "Google TV is a powerful experience, but most people aren't going to understand it unless they can see it in action. And Google isn't known for its consumer marketing experience. I think they have the right concept here, but I am not sure about the execution yet."

Sony is planning a marketing blitz to promote its Google TV sets through the [holiday shopping](#) season, although the company isn't saying how much it will spend on the campaign. Google traditionally has refrained from buying TV ads, relying instead on its ubiquity on the Internet and the marketing acumen of its partners.

Like millions of mobile phones that have been sold in the past two years, Sony's new TVs will be built on Google's Android operating system. It will navigate websites with Google's Chrome browser and rely on Intel Corp.'s Atom chips for its processing power. The system can comb

through the Internet, television programming guides and even DVRs from satellite operator Dish Network Corp. to find all video connected to a request entered into a search bar at the top of the screen.

"Finally, you can seamlessly search your favorite TV programs and websites on the same screen, at the same time," said Mike Abary, senior vice president of Sony's home division.

The remote control for Sony's Google TVs includes a standard, "QWERTY" keyboard to enter the search requests or make other comments on the Internet while retaining the ability to watch TV simultaneously.

Logitech International SA has bundled the same Google TV package into a set-top box that can be plugged into existing TVs with HDMI sets. The Logitech boxes, already available for pre-order, are selling for \$300, undercutting a similar box with a Blu-ray player that Sony is selling for \$400.

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