

IN SEARCH OF THE LOWEST PRICE

New site helps Canadian shoppers find best deals being offered by retailers

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Jason Brown has been building websites for businesses since he was 16 years old. But October of this year marked his most ambitious project. As founder and CEO of GiftFind.ca, the 26-year-old unleashed his comprehensive price comparison site just in time for the busy holiday shopping season.

"I shop online a lot," says Brown. "But it can be a big headache. Many retailers sell the same products and it can take you hours and hours to find what you're looking for at the cheapest price."

Brown launched GiftFind.ca to fill a perceived hole in the Canadian market by helping consumers locate name-brand products at the lowest

possible cost. "I felt there wasn't anyone in the marketplace doing a good job at aggregating all the really good e-commerce sites and making the experience easy for Canadians," he says.

His website features more than 300 million products from 500-plus retailers such as Amazon, Best Buy, Home Depot and Walmart. "Every big name in shopping is represented," says Brown. GiftFind.ca doesn't sell any products, but rather directs users to the stores with the lowest prices selling the items they're seeking.

Shoppers can check out the site's product and video reviews to narrow down shopping choices. And if you're stuck on what to get a niece or nephew for a milestone birthday, you can type '21st birthday gifts' into the tool bar to get ideas. (Potential GiftFind options included a T-shirt emblazoned 'Made in 1994' and the *Big Bad Ass Book of Shots*.) "We have colour

and price filters as well, so you can customize your search," says Brown.

Brown expects a GiftFind mobile app to be released soon as well, but in the interim, he says, the website is mobile friendly.

GiftFind may be the newest shopping comparison site, but it certainly isn't the only one available in Canada. ShopBot.ca has been a player in the market since 2004 and offers a full range of shopping categories from computers to wine and gifts, as well as a collection of products and stores you may not find on other price comparison sites. It too directs you to the retailer with the lowest price. And fully two-thirds of its retailers are Canadian.

In addition, Shoptoit.ca, launched in 2005, boasts a comprehensive selection of stores and products and Pricegrabber.ca and PriceFinder.ca both offer a product selection more heavily weighted on the side of electronics.

The screenshot shows the GiftFind.ca website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with categories like Electronics, Clothing, Shoes & Watches, Books, Movies & Music, Kitchen & Home, Toys, Sports & Baby, and Health & Beauty. The main content area features a product listing for an Xbox One Wireless Controller. The product image is on the left, and the price is \$57.99. Below the product, there's a table with columns for 'Compare Prices', 'Product Specifications', 'Product Reviews', 'User Reviews', and 'Video Reviews'. The table lists three retailers: Amazon.com (price \$57.99 USD), Indigo (price \$59.95 CAD), and Microsoft (price \$59.99 USD). On the right side of the page, there's a promotional banner for Amazon Black Friday Deals Week, with the text 'New Deals Every Day' and a 'Shop Now' button.

GiftFind.ca hunts for the lowest price for an item sold by Canadian retailers.

For shoppers, the range of price comparison websites offers an opportunity to let your fingers do the walking, sussing out the best deal on just about anything.

The caveat: make sure you're comparing apples to apples. For instance, many price comparison tools direct you to U.S., as well as Canadian web-

sites. But, although prices may initially appear lower for the American retailers, when you shop Canadian e-commerce sites you won't be surprised by extra charges for taxes, duty and processing at the border. Look for a Canadian flag in the corner of the site, or .ca as opposed to .com on the website name.