

Consumer Information Assignment Answers

1. Compare digital camcorder reviews in *Consumer Reports* and *Consumer Search* (<http://www.consumersearch.com>). What is different? Which did you find more useful?
 - a. *Consumer Reports* reviews date from November 2004. Testing done by Consumer Union staff. The reviews are divided into categories of price range (bargain basement, mainstream, stratosphere). Handy graph with easy to see overall ratings and comments on special features. Repair records based on an annual questionnaire from Consumer Reports with ca. 32,000 responses. A short list of “quick picks” is provided.
 - b. Consumersearch.com article was updated in September 2004. Reviews come from a variety of sources, including Consumer Reports, computing magazines (PC World, etc.), and enthusiasts’ websites such as camcorderinfo.com. Links to all reviews and “fast answers”, as well as to sources for purchase, from the main page of camcorder reviews. A comparison chart shows ratings and comments for the best 9 camcorders of the 18 reviews found.

2. Go to kbb.com and look up the value of your vehicle (or a friend's). Note the different prices for trade-in, private party and retail values. Now go to nadaguides.com and look up the vehicle there. Do you see any difference in values provided at the different sites? Was there allowance made for where the vehicle was going to be sold? (Did they ask you for a zip code?) Were the descriptions for condition of the vehicle comparable? Was the list of options or add-ons the same?
 - a. Kelly Blue Book (kbb.com) is more detailed in how it assesses value; it prompts for a zip code, lists many more options, and asks for an evaluation of condition of the vehicle in 4 categories: excellent, good, fair and poor. It also gives an option for you to describe the condition by answering a series of questions, and then assigns one of the 4 categories to the vehicle. For the vehicle (a 1998 Toyota Tacoma) and zip code (94538) I tried, both the trade-in and retail values given were generally lower than the one from NADA. It did give a retail value (what you might pay at a dealer if you could find it), whereas NADA did not.
 - b. NADA (nadaguides.com) Values given were generally higher than at kbb.com. There was no prompt for a zip code, or other method of regionalizing value. The list of add-ons (“options”) was shorter. No allowance for condition was made; from the description, it appears as if the condition is assumed to be excellent or good as defined by Kelley.