

Making a decision to purchase your first metal detector or even your second or third can be a significant financial decision. The following five steps may be helpful in coming to the right conclusion for that detector.

Many potentially new detectorist can spend hours finding information, reading field reports and getting input on specific detector models before making a decision to purchase a detector. This is no easy task since there are well over 100 different detector models to choose from and an ever increasing number of manufacturers. Plus the cost of the purchase can be a very large sum of money so taking one's time is financially important.

Decision Steps.

- 1) Field of Interest. First you must determine what your metal detecting interest is going to be: such as coin shooting, jewelry, relics, gold prospecting or beach metal detecting.
- 2) Research. Once you have chosen a specific metal detecting field of interest you must be willing to do some research on what are the best detectors for that chosen field of interest.
- 3) Detector Decision. Make two detector selections from your investigation: your primary choice and then a secondary choice as a backup.
- 4) Money Decision. The next step is to determine how much money you are willing to spend and match this amount with the detectors you have found to fit your field of interest.
- 5) Where to Purchase. The final step is to determine where you are going to purchase the metal detector.

Once the decision has been made as to how much to spend and what detector to purchase the very next issue is where does one make the purchase and why? This short article will try to provide some insight into where a metal detector can be purchased and some of the associated benefits and downside risk.

Manufacturers of metal detectors usually do not sell direct to the end consumer, rather manufactures work though distributors. The distributors in turn provide detectors and accessories to retailers where the end user can find the detector that best fit their requirements.

Metal detector retailers can take a number of forms; they can be a brick and mortar type of retailer in your local community, a retail hobbyist working out of their home or a detector retail business that is only found on the internet.

Metal detectors can be purchased new from a retailer but another avenue may be to purchase a good used metal detector. Used detectors can be found on metal detecting forum classifieds, some retailers, Craigslist and from members of a metal detecting club. Occasionally, a metal detector can be purchased though the local newspaper classifies.

Where to Find Retailers. One of the easiest ways is to perform a search on the internet for a local metal detector retailer; this can be done with little effort. Most retailers have a website and they usually list the brand and model of detectors that they stock and sell.

Joining a local metal detecting club is another good way to learn about local retailers and the manufacture brand of choice purchased by many of the club members. Another source of metal detector retailers can be found in hobby related magazine advertisements. Some examples of these hobbyist magazines are:

American Digger <http://americandigger.com/>

GPAA Gold Prospecting <http://www.goldprospectors.org/>

IMCJ Prospecting and Mining <http://www.icmj.com/>

Western and Eastern <http://www.wetreasures.com/>

Next let's explore the various retail or classified detector sources one can use to purchase a metal detector.

Retailers.

Brick and Mortar. This type of retailer is usually found in your local community. The retailer may support just one manufacture brand or occasionally several manufacture brands.

Benefits.

- Purchasing a detector though a local retail store provides you the opportunity to handle the detector, turn it on and potentially use it in a test garden.
- The local retailer may also provide a training session to the purchaser under actual operating condition in the field.
- The detector will be available to the purchaser as soon as it is paid for.
- After the detector purchase the purchaser can ask follow-up questions of the retailer when he is not clear on the detector's operation or the detector's setup.

Downside.

- A brick and mortar retailer has high fixed costs therefore may not be able to offer the lowest price.
- A local retailer may also need to charge for any local tax that is required with the detector purchase.

Hobbyist Retailers

A hobbyist retailer that operates out of their home has very low fixed cost and may be able to offer a lower overall price. All other Brick and Mortar benefits and downside issues apply to this type of retailer with the exception of potentially getting a lower price.

Internet Sources.

Retailers and Occasionally Distributors

Retailers that offer their metal detectors and accessories for sale though their website may provide the purchaser access to a larger number of manufacture brands. These internet retailers can be anywhere in the U.S. or in the world so doing some background investigation and independent analysis of the retailer's trust worthiness is essential before making a purchase.

Benefits.

- May provide the lowest price plus offer some free accessories with the purchase.
- May not need to charge for local and state taxes.
- The internet retailer's fixed cost is much lower.

Downside.

- The opportunity to have detector "hands on" before you purchase does not exist.
- There will be no local training available.
- Follow-up questions on the detector's operation may be much harder to accomplish if at all.
- The purchaser may need to pay for shipping.
- The detector is not instantly available to the purchaser.
- The creditability of the seller must be carefully checked out by the purchaser.

Forum Classifies

There is a wealth of information on the internet about metal detecting; with metal detecting forums being an important part of this information. Forums that deal with metal detecting usually have a sub-category forum which offers detectorist a place to sell their excess detectors and accessories. This can be a good place to pick up a nice used detector.

Benefits.

- A used metal detector can usually be purchase for 30 - 40% below retail value.
- In these transactions everything is negotiable.

Downside.

- The creditability of the seller must be carefully checked out by the purchaser.
- The opportunity to have detector “hands on” before you purchase does not exist.
- There will be no local training available.
- Follow-up questions on the detector’s operation may be much harder to accomplish or not at all.
- The detector will need to be paid for before shipment takes place.
- The purchaser may need to pay for shipping cost.
- The detector is not instantly available to the purchaser.

Here are a few forums that offer metal detector classified sections:

Find’s Treasure <http://www.findmall.com/>

Friendly Metal Detecting <http://metaldetectingforum.com/index.php>

Treasure Net <http://www.treasurenet.com/>

Treasure Quest <http://www.treasurequestxlt.com/community/index.php>

Craigslist <http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites/>

Used and new metal detectors for sale can be found on Craigslist from across the country. All of the benefits and downside issues of *Forum Classifies* apply to Craigslist detector purchases. **I would put a much higher emphasis on checking the creditability of the seller. It is much harder on Craigslist to determine whether a seller is being honest with you about the detector’s condition and functionality or if even a detector exists.**

Hobby Related Clubs

Individual Members

Belonging to a hobby related club provides a great avenue for acquiring a detector from an individual club member. A Club Member’s creditability is usually very high and all the benefits of purchasing from a local retailer apply to this type of purchasing situation. Detectors purchased from club members are usually used but can also be new if the club member operates out of their home as a *Hobbyist Retailer*.

Club Classifies.

Many metal detecting clubs have a website and post their club newsletter on the site. Frequently in club newsletters you will find metal detectors for sale at very reasonable prices. This can be a very good way to find a detector at low cost and from a creditable source. In these transactions everything is negotiable. The same benefits and downside are similar to purchasing a detector from someone on one of the *Forum Classifies*.

Summary. Where to purchase your detector can be a difficult question to answer since there are different benefits and downside risk associated with the various purchasing sources. If this is your very first detector purchase the recommendation is to choose your detector source wisely with the least downside risk. A face to face retail transaction is usually the safest and offers the greatest benefit to the purchaser. Good Luck.