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This means that I am always on the scout for sources of good technology, hardware and software at lower-than-you-could-expect rates. It is a difficult quest, because sites that cater to cheapskates like me tend to make less profit, and sometimes do not survive changes in the marketplace. Many of my favorite places have simply disappeared in the night.

Fortunately, I am not the only one out there looking. With the help of others, I've compiled a list of sites that I check frequently for new deals, and am seldom disappointed. There are a lot of them, some of which are very specialized. But in terms of technology, here is a list of my five favorites:

1. "The Cheapskate." Rick Broida's blog on CNET (<http://news.cnet.com/cheapskate>) is simply one of the best. On a regular basis, Rick tracks down bargains such as the recent Seagate 1.5-terabyte external hard drive for \$112.95 and a refurbished ASUS Netbook computer for \$180, including shipping. He updates the site daily.
2. Microsoft's Free Office Template Site. From business cards and flyers to employee handbooks and calendars, this site (<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/FX100595491033.aspx>) is a massive productivity tool that should not be overlooked. The templates are tested, work well, have good designs and save the time and effort of re-creating the wheel.
3. GovDeals.Com. As states and municipalities scramble to bring in more cash, they are turning to web sites such as this to help them get rid of used equipment and excess inventory. Anything from desk chairs to airplanes can be had at bargain rates. All the merchandise is auctioned off, and if some of it goes for nearly the full retail price the site is fun to look at. Where else can you window-shop for a personal fire engine?
4. eCost.com. This is a retail computing and technology site (www.ecost.com) that specializes in closeouts, refurbished items and specials, with some sports gear thrown in just for the heck of it. You may not find everything you are looking for, but

the prices are good and the merchandize is warranted by the manufacturer.

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In the meantime, these five are worth a visit at your earliest opportunity. And if you have other sites that may be added to the list, send me a link via email and post a comment here to share it with others.

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