Blu-ray Disc News

News and Views from the Blu-ray Disc Association

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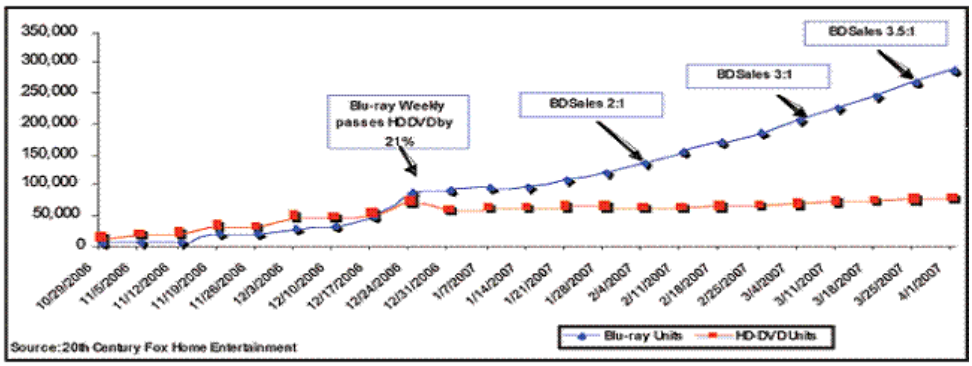
Twentieth Century Fox announces European releases in sync with PS3 Euro Launch

Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment announced its second wave of upcoming Blu-ray Disc titles to be released in Europe and Australia. This March, in time for the PLAYSTATION3 launch, Fox will release an exciting Blu-ray Disc line up that includes ***X-MEN THE LAST STAND, FROM HELL, FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX*** and BD-Java titles ***BEHIND ENEMY LINES, THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN*** and ***SPEED.*** This will be followed in April with ***NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM*** and ***ERAGON*** (day and date releases), ***THE SENTINEL, ALIEN VS PREDATOR, MEN OF HONOUR, COURAGE UNDER FIRE*** and ***RISING SUN***.

Mike Dunn

"We are looking forward to this pivotal year and the ultimate establishment of Blu-ray as the High Definition packaged media standard," noted Mike Dunn, Worldwide President, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment. "We remain extremely encouraged by the growth in sales and player penetration in the US and are optimistic the international market growth will follow a similar pattern. We are fully committed to creating the most compelling products possible and to the continued pioneering development of Blu-ray Disc with our partners."

Proprietary Fox Research incorporating US industry data shows Blu-ray Disc eclipsing HD DVD on a weekly sales basis as noted below:



Fox is one of the first studios to release titles with advanced BD-Java interactivity as well titles on dual-layer 50 GB Blu-ray Disc. The studio's upcoming international slate features a wide range of titles - that will benefit from the incredible audio and video elements of the Blu-ray format - and include:

Released on March 12th

***X MEN: THE LAST STAND* (RRP; £24.99):** Presented as a BD-25 single layer disc, the English audio will be 6.1 DTS HD Lossless master audio (not 5.1). All dubbed languages will be 5.1 DTS. The disc contains deleted scenes as well as an audio commentary by Brett Ratner, Zak Penn and Simon Kinberg as well as Avi Arad, Lauren Shuler Donner and Ralph Winter plus a trivia track.

FROM HELL* (RRP: £19.99)**: Presented as a dual-layer (50gb) BD release authored in BD-J with AVC (MPEG 4 compression) and DTS HD Lossless Master Audio, the BD release of ***FROM HELL boasts commentary by directors Albert Hughes and Allen Hughes, Screenwriter Rafael Yglesias, Cinematographer Peter Deming and Robbie Coltrane, a special trivia pop-up feature and 21 deleted scenes with optional commentary by Albert Hughes

FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX* (RRP: £19.99):** A BD-25 single layer disc, authored in HDMV with MPEG 2 compression with DTS HD Lossless master audio, ***FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX boasts commentaries by John Moore, John Davis, Wyck Godfrey and Patrick Lumb, and selectable trailers of upcoming BD releases.

"We are looking forward to this pivotal year and the ultimate establishment of Blu-ray as the High Definition packaged media standard."

Mike Dunn
Worldwide President
Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment.

***BEHIND ENEMY LINES* (RRP: £19.99):** Presented as a Java single layer BD-25 release authored in BD-J with DTS HD Lossless master audio, the release includes commentaries by Director John Moore and Editor Martin Smith as well as producers John Davis and Wyck Godfrey

***THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN* (RRP: £19.99):** Presented as a Java BD-25 single layer disc with DTS HD Lossless master audio. The disc includes commentaries by the costume designer Jacqueline West, Visual Effects, Supervisor John E Sullivan, Make Up Effects Supervisor, Steve Johnson and Miniatures Creator Matthew Gratzner. As well as a trivia track, there are also audio commentaries by producers Don Murphy and Trevor Albert as well as actors Shane West, Jason Flemyng and Tony Curran

***SPEED* (RRP: £19.99):** Presented as a Java BD-25 single layer disc with AVC (MPEG 4 compression) and DTS HD Lossless master audio, the disc includes a trivia track and audio commentaries by Director Jan de Bont as well as writer Graham Yost and Producer Mark Gordon plus trailers of forthcoming titles on BD.

Released on April 2nd (day and date release)

***NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM* (RRP: £24.99):** Presented as a BD-25 single layer disc with MPEG 2 compression with DTS HD Lossless master audio, the disc includes a commentary by Director Shawn Levy.

Released on April 9th

***THE SENTINEL SPECIAL EDITION* (£24.99):** Presented as a BD-25 single layer disc with MPEG-2 compression and DTS HD Lossless master audio, this exciting special edition will include an audio commentary by Clark Johnson and George Nolfi as well as deleted scenes with optional commentary by George Nolfi.

***ALIEN VS PREDATOR EXTENDED* (RRP: £19.99)**: Presented as a Java dual-layer (50gb) BD release authored in BD-J with AVC (MPEG 4 compression) and DTS HD Lossless master audio, the discs include commentaries by Paul W S Anderson, Lance Henriksen and Sanaa Lathan as well as Alec Gillis, Tom Woodruff Jnr and John Bruno and a trivia track

***COURAGE UNDER FIRE* (RRP: £19.99)**: Authored in HDMV with MPEG 2 compression with DTS HD Lossless Master Audio, this BD release includes an audio commentary by Director Edward Zwick and a trivia track.

***MEN OF HONOUR* (RRP: £19.99)**: Presented on a BD-25 single layer disc with MPEG 2 compression with DTS HD Lossless master audio, the disc includes an audio commentary as well as trivia track (pop up windows at various points in the feature) and forthcoming trailers on BD

Released on April 16th (day and date release)

***ERAGON* (RRP: £24.99):** This will be a BD-25 single layer disc authored in BD-MV MPEG-2 with DTS HD Lossless Master Audio; the movie will be accompanied by a selection of great trailers coming to BD.

Sony announces second Blu-ray Disc player for North America

In the United States, Sony has unveiled its second Blu-ray Disc player, bringing the movie theater experience home for videophiles and movie buffs alike. Following the success of the company's first player, the newest unit is expected to broaden the market with a price of around $600, a new design, advanced audio codecs, BRAVIA Theater Sync, and CD playback.

Sony BDP-S300

“We plan to continue leading the Blu-ray Disc charge with products for the home that exceed consumer expectations and fulfill Sony’s vision for an HD world.” said Jeff Goldstein, vice president of marketing for Sony Electronics’ Home Products Division.

The new BDP-S300 model can output 1920 x 1080p (progressive) High Definition video, currently the highest resolution high-definition signal available through an HDMI connection. The player supports various video formats, including MPEG2, MPEG4-AVC and VC1. For those who own an HDTV set without HDMI, an analog component output for 1080i (interlaced) is available as well.

“We plan to continue leading the Blu-ray Disc charge with products for the home that exceed consumer expectations and fulfill Sony’s vision for an HD world.”

Jeff Goldstein
Vice president of marketing
Sony Electronics’ Home Products Division

The new BD player is compatible with most standard DVDs and has the added feature of 1080p up-scaling through HDMI to 1080p capable HDTVs, improving the picture performance of existing DVD libraries.

Sony’s BD player outputs signals at 24 frames per second, reproducing a film-like image. The model also supports AVC-HD discs encoded with xvYCC technology, a new international standard for wide color space, which Sony has branded as x.v.Color. Goldstein said “the standard expands the current data range of video approximately 1.8 times, so the player can now output more natural and vivid colors similar to what the human eye can actually see.

The new BD unit incorporates BRAVIA Theater Sync utilizing HDMI connectivity, which integrates the operation of the player with a compatible BRAVIA flat-panel LCD television or audio/video receiver. With the touch of a button, you can automatically turn on and switch inputs matching connected devices.

Additionally, the player offers multi-channel linear PCM digital audio output via HDMI, and can decode Dolby Digital Plus, providing optimum surround sound to an appropriately equipped receiver. The unit has optical and coaxial digital audio out, along with 5.1 channel decoding capability for backward compatibility with existing receivers.

The player supports BD-ROM, BD-Java, AVC-HD and DVD playback from DVD/DVD±R/±RW encoded discs, CD playback, as well as MP3 audio files and JPEG images stored on DVD recordable media.

The player joins Sony’s family of full HD 1080 line of products, which spans from the original BDP-S1 BD player and extends to BRAVIA LCD televisions and Grand WEGA SXRD rear-projection sets, as well as the PLAYSTATION 3 game console, Blu-ray Disc-enabled VAIO computers, PC drives and recordable BD media.

The new BD player will be available in North America this summer for about $600 at Sony Style stores, online at sonystyle.com and at other retailers nationwide.

Imation introduces ink-jet printable, water-resistant Blu-ray disc media

Imation Corp has announced the world's first inkjet printable and water-resistant Blu-ray media. Optimized for professional disc duplication, users can record High Definition video, gaming, data and other content on Imation Inkjet Printable BD-R Media with AquaGuard technology, then print water- and smear-resistant graphics and text right on the disc's surface. The discs are compatible with Blu-ray disc players and recorders, including the Primera Bravo XR-Blu Disc Publisher and the Bravo SE Blu, the world's first automated burn and print devices to support high-capacity Blu-ray media. Imation Inkjet Printable Media with AquaGuard technology also is ideal for reliable business backup of high-capacity digital files.

"Imation's Blu-ray media with AquaGuard technology is the perfect disc," said James Milligan, General Manager, Commercial/OEM Division, Imation Corp. "We've designed each side of the disc for professional use. The data side features high capacity and scratch resistance. The inkjet printable side allows for creation of custom, water-resistant printed images and text. When used with Primera's industry-leading disc publishers, users can quickly and easily create high-quality, cutting-edge Blu-ray disc projects with ease."

Bravo SE Blu Disc Publisher

Imation's Inkjet Printable BD-R discs with AquaGuard surface are ideal for a variety of advanced applications such as the creation of high-definition video recordings, game development for systems like PlayStation 3, and the post production of digital movies. Capable of storing up to 25GB of digital files, the media's AquaGuard technology offers a brilliant white, smear- and water-resistant inkjet printable disc surface for professional disc prints. Featuring proprietary nanoparticle technology, the AquaGuard coating grips and holds ink to lock designs in place, unlike standard inkjet media that easily smears when exposed to moisture. Additionally, Imation's innovative AquaGuard technology is a 2007 CES Innovations Design and Engineering Awards Honoree.

"Adding Imation's AquaGuard surface to Blu-ray disc media is a technology breakthrough," said Mark Strobel, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Primera Technology. "Users who have been quick to adopt Blu-ray technology know that the media is ideal for a variety of high-capacity applications. A water-resistant, inkjet printable surface for the discs ensures that media produced with Primera's Bravo XR-Blu and Bravo SE Blu Disc Publishers will continue to have a high-quality, professional appearance even when exposed to the elements." Primera Technology, Inc. is the world's leading manufacturer of automated disc publishing equipment.

Blu-ray Disc and AACS remain secure from piracy threat

Copy protection systems are critical to the successful establishment of any new entertainment format since only when a platform is proved secure and robust will content owners have confidence to distribute their assets. Blu-ray Disc represents a totally secure publishing environment with stringent anti-piracy methods.

One of BD's core copy protection systems is AACS and recent press commentary has questioned this system's security. In a statement from the AACS organisation,

it has confirmed that AACS title keys have appeared on public web sites without authorization. Such unauthorized disclosures indicate an attack on one or more players sold by AACS licensees. This development is limited to the compromise of specific implementations, and does not represent an attack on the AACS system itself, nor is it exclusive to any particular format. Instead it illustrates the need for all Adopters to follow the Compliance and Robustness rules set forth in the AACS license agreements to help ensure that product implementations are not compromised. AACS employs both technical and legal measures to deal with attacks such as this one, and AACS LA is using all appropriate remedies at its disposal to address the attack.

"The most important message is that AACS has not been fundamentally compromised. Blu-ray Disc remains the most secure format available for High Definition content distribution."

Andy Parsons
Chairman
Blu-ray Disc Association US Promotions Committee.

Regarding the reported attacks on 2/13/2007, AACS has confirmed that an additional key (called a "processing key") has been published on public websites without authorization. This is a variation of the previously reported attack (a compromise of a specific implementation) on one or more players sold by AACS licensees. Although a different key was extracted, this represents no adverse impact on the ability of the AACS ecosystem to address the attack. All technical and legal measures applicable to the previously reported attack will be applicable against this attack as well.

"The most important message is that AACS has not been fundamentally compromised," commented Andy Parsons, Chairman, Blu-ray Disc Association US Promotions Committee. "Blu-ray Disc remains the most secure format available for High Definition content distribution."

We are here to help

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