



# Blu-ray Disc News

News and Views from the Blu-ray Disc Association

27 September 2007

## Contents in this issue

- HTSA confirms Blu-ray Disc support
- Sony launches four new Blu-ray Disc recorders in Japan
- Blu-ray Disc smashes growth forecasts in Europe
- Singulus receives European Blu-Line order
- BD underscores superior HD performance with new levels of interactivity

## HTSA confirms Blu-ray Disc support

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*Richard Glikes  
Executive Director  
HTSA*

Home Theater Specialists of America (HTSA), the \$500 million buying group for A/V specialty dealers and installers, has formally confirmed that it is backing Blu-ray Disc technology based on sales trends among its 62 members.

The group announced during the recent CEDIA Expo that it will make Blu-ray Disc its exclusive format choice for High Definition disc players. According to the results of an internal study released today, 92 percent of category sales by HTSA members were in Blu-ray Disc players, with the balance comprised mostly of dual-format players that combine BD and HD-DVD playback capability.

HTSA said it expects its exclusive support of Blu-ray to “strengthen retailer commitment to providing more BD-based devices to meet growing consumer demand.”



HOME THEATER SPECIALISTS of AMERICA

“The industry looks to HTSA as an expert for custom home theater, built upon a foundation of the top consumer electronic retailers across the country,” said executive director Richard Glikes. “Based on our member research and observations in the field, it is clear that HTSA customers have made Blu-ray Disc their preferred HD format for movies and other packaged video content.”

Glikes cited greater device capacity, better resolution, larger manufacturer adoption and content availability as deciding factors for consumers in choosing one High Definition disc camp over the other.

In a statement, Jay Vandenbree, president of consumer sales for Sony Electronics, lauded HTSA’s move. “At a time when ever-changing technology tests just how much one can know about everything, HTSA has chosen Blu-Ray Disc as the

format they support. I think it speaks volumes when support comes from those who specialize in home theater, and are closest to the consumer.”

## Sony launches four new Blu-ray Disc recorders in Japan

*By launching four new BD models simultaneously Sony sent a strong message to the market. In particular the lower cost models address Toshiba pricing strategies by offering an equivalently priced but significantly superior option in terms of features and functions – especially the ability to record High Definition programmes.*

Sony has announced the introduction in the Japanese market of four new Blu-ray Disc recorders designed to broaden functionality and choice in the dynamic standalone player market. The announcement comes at the same time as many commentators are questioning the lack of HD DVD recorders available on the market.

As a part of this announcement, Sony also stated that it would not launch any new DVD recorders, instead focussing all its research and development resources on Blu-ray Disc recorders. Considering that the average price of BD recorders today is approximately three times the price of a DVD recorder this is a key strategic statement from such a major player as Sony.



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Toshiba pricing strategies by offering an equivalently priced but significantly superior option in terms of features and functions – especially the ability to record High Definition programmes. The new models also offer the ability to record up to 50GB of data onto a single disc.

The new Sony Blu-ray Disc recorders offer up to 16 hours High Definition recording capacity on a single Blu-ray Disc. The new models will be released in Japan on 8 November.

In a news announcement Sony stated that it envisages that the Blu-ray Disc recorder will be a key strategic product, positioned at the centre of the HD era. The four new recorder models target three styles of home entertainment – HD broadcast recording (BDZ-T50 / -T70), personal/home video recording (BDZ-L70) and replay and high picture and sound quality home theatre entertainment (BDZ-X90).



Sony believes that by offering a range of different models with different

features and functions that it will accelerate the establishment of the Blu-ray Disc format.

## Blu-ray Disc smashes growth forecasts in Europe

The Blu-ray Disc Association European Promotions Committee has released market statistics that show the format to be establishing itself in Europe more rapidly than predicted. Importantly, the latest market intelligence shows BD to be increasing in popularity relative to its rival HD DVD format in key European markets and industry sectors.

Earlier this month at IFA Berlin some 14 CE brands showcased Blu-ray Disc players and collectively offer significantly wider choice in both functionality and price when compared with HD DVD. Importantly, a number of CE manufacturers announced plans to introduce BD recorders into the European market in the near future.

At the same time the Blu-ray Disc Association (BDA) has announced that Blu-ray Disc movie sales across European territories are continuing to move ahead of HD DVD. For example, in the UK market figures show BD to be outselling HD DVD by a margin of 4 to 1.

In response to this dynamic growth in BD sales volumes, the content industry is responding by seeking to create more BD titles. More and more European independent distributors are embracing Blu-ray Disc – key influencers such as Universum Film in Germany, StudioCanal in France and EiV in the UK have announced BD release slates for the critical run-up to the Christmas holiday season.

In the replication market, major companies such as Sony DADC and Sonopress are being joined by independent companies including Infodisc and QOL in offering Blu-ray Disc replication services.

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*Frank Simonis  
Chairman  
Blu-ray Disc Association  
European Promotions  
Committee*

“According to market analyst, GfK, the gap between Blu-ray Disc and HD DVD players is closing despite the earlier introduction of the HD DVD format,” commented Frank Simonis, Chairman, Blu-ray Disc Association European Promotions Committee. “This is following the trend in the USA where BD has already overtaken HD DVD despite their US\$ 299 price tag. Clearly, consumers are voting with their wallets.”



**Frank Simonis (left) with David Walstra**

The committee’s deputy chairman, David Walstra highlights the recorder market as being critical in the development of the CE player market in Europe. “Both at IFA and in conventions in Japan we have seen a wide range of BD recorders and IT products introduced,” affirmed Walstra. “These real life product introductions confirm the massive lead Blu-ray Disc has built over HD DVD in the area of recording functionality.”

## Singulus receives European Blu-Line order

Singulus Technologies has announced a new order from the French disc manufacturer Quantum Optical Laboratories (QOL), Vernouillet, for a fully automated production system BLU-LINE for Blu-ray Discs.

This order is another positive signal for the launch of Blu-ray Discs in Europe and represents the second order received from a European customer. Company sources say that these orders in combination with an additional order from an Asian customer prove that Blu-ray Disc is starting to establish itself outside of the US.

"Undoubtedly we want to become a market leader in Europe in the field of High Definition," commented Laurent Villaume, President of QOL. "Our involvement until now in DVD & HD DVD – already recognized internationally – in the development, research and implementation of the new Blu-ray Discs technology, will be further established with this order for a Blu-ray production machine. QOL will contribute to the penetration of next-generation discs and the growth of the market itself. We decided for Singulus because of the proven Blu-ray Single layer technology and have also chosen the Dual Layer upgrade which will be delivered in a few months time. We run many SPACELINE machines for our DVD and HD DVD production. Their support and service is unmatched!"

Singulus has many years of experience working with the Blu-ray Disc format due to an early, exclusive cooperation with the format developer Sony in 2005. Already, the company has installed several Blu-ray production machines at the largest, independent disc producers in the US.

For the further development of the Blu-ray Disc production machine capable of manufacturing of dual layer Blu-ray disc with 50 GB storage capacity Singulus continues to work closely together with Sony. Singulus sources report that the company will introduce its new production equipment for dual layer Blu-ray Discs shortly.



**Singulus Blu-Line**

## BD underscores superior HD performance with enhanced interactivity

The Blu-ray Disc Association (BDA) has updated the market on the latest developments in BD-J based interactivity for the rapidly expanding range of Blu-ray Disc players.

The BDA highlights the fact that existing Blu-ray Disc players are highly functional devices that support the full range of fundamental capabilities that the Blu-ray Disc format was designed for, including the delivery of the best quality High Definition

*“While these new interactive features - picture-in-picture, secondary audio, and online connectivity - will undoubtedly enable many new content capabilities, the heart of any Blu-ray Disc player is the reproduction of the very best quality high definition video and audio, since we believe that enjoying the packaged content in High Definition is the primary reason consumers are excited about this product category.”*

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



**Andy Parsons**

video and audio, as well as new features such as pop-up menus and BD-J interactivity.

In addition to existing player features, any new Blu-ray Disc player model introduced after October 31 will include PiP (Picture in Picture), secondary audio mixing, and a defined minimum amount of persistent memory. These features will enable interesting and valuable content, but existing players will continue to provide the same high quality home theater experience they have all along.

BD Live players will offer all of the above while adding an Internet connection to allow online functions enabled by content supporting this feature. This type of player will allow viewers to download additional content, conduct transactions, and, if supported, even update player functions.

By offering two player types - one that can connect to the Internet and one that does not - the Blu-ray Disc format ensures that consumers have the option to decide which is best for them. BD Live players and titles can enable viewers to supplement their High Definition viewing experience with online activities. At the same time, other viewers may be fully satisfied with the entertainment experiences that are contained only on the disc, perhaps because they do not have access to a broadband Internet connection near their player, or because they simply have no interest in using online features. In either case, the Blu-ray Disc format enables viewers to make the appropriate choice when they purchase their player.

“While these new interactive features - picture-in-picture, secondary audio, and online connectivity - will undoubtedly enable many new content capabilities, the heart of any Blu-ray Disc player is the reproduction of the very best quality High Definition video and audio, since we believe that enjoying the packaged content in High Definition is the primary reason consumers are excited about this product category,” commented Andy Parsons, Chairman Blu-ray Disc Association US Promotions Committee. “Indeed, Blu-ray Disc has consistently outsold HD DVD by approximately 2:1, suggesting that early adopter buyers are clearly selecting Blu-ray Disc for its superior content and hardware support as their first priority.”

“I have always believed that “it's all about the high def”, as this is what motivates consumers to go experience Blu-ray in a store somewhere,” added Parsons. “Interactivity will gradually play a more important role, but first and foremost is the excitement of being immersed in a great story with the very best picture and sound quality ever produced in the home. That's what we've all been working for, which is why BD can provide both more audio/video bits per second and a lot more capacity to store it all on than HD DVD.”

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