



# Blu-ray Disc News

News and Views from the Blu-ray Disc Association

14 November 2007

## Contents in this issue

- Blu-ray Disc increases lead as Hi-Def format of choice
- Blu-ray Disc playback for under €180
- Lionsgate brings *War* to market with PiP
- Sony Europe opens up market with two new Blu-ray Disc players

---

## Blu-ray Disc increases lead as Hi-Def format of choice

When Paramount Home Entertainment and DreamWorks Animation SKG Blu-ray Disc titles were taken out of the picture in August, the Blu-ray Disc format lost 29 titles in its repertoire.

However, HD DVD's stint as leader in terms of high-def releases proved short-lived as in the first week of November Blu-ray Disc regained its lead in terms of total titles available to consumers.

According to figures from *The DVD Release Report*, total Blu-ray Disc titles available at retail in the US passed HD DVD for the first time since the Paramount / DreamWorks decision, 332 to 328, the week ended Oct. 31. Also, companies that support Blu-ray Disc have 66 titles in the pipeline, compared to 42 for HD DVD backers, including four HD DVD and 11 Blu-ray Disc titles released Nov. 6.

Since the Paramount/DreamWorks HD DVD exclusive decision, Paramount Home Entertainment has released six HD DVD titles through Nov. 6. According to specialist website, *AllthingsHiDef.com*, a Paramount representative did not immediately return a request for comment, however a Paramount representative said at a DVD Forum event in early October that more than 30 HD DVD titles were being planned for 2008. For the rest of the year, Paramount and DreamWorks have another six HD DVD releases planned. The two companies have one more (*Zodiac*, Jan. 8) announced thus far for early 2008.

Representatives from both sides have stressed how important this fourth quarter is for high-def media. However, Jim Bottoms of the home entertainment research firm Understanding & Solutions said recently that the fourth quarter is no longer the determining period for either format. The Paramount/DreamWorks decision made sure of that, he said.

"There is growing concern throughout the industry that both High Definition disc

*"As we stand today, industry support for [Blu-ray Disc] across content and hardware remains the strongest grouping, and it is therefore the format with the greatest chance of market success."*

*Jim Bottoms  
Managing Director and  
Co-Founder  
Understanding &  
Solutions*



**Jim Bottoms**

formats could be lost completely in a world of competing delivery options and viewing platforms,” Bottoms said. “As we stand today, industry support for [Blu-ray Disc] across content and hardware remains the strongest grouping, and it is therefore the format with the greatest chance of market success.

“Whatever happens, continued competition between the two groups will lead to continuing confusion and uncertainty, and therefore delayed consumer purchase decisions.”

Barring any surprise announcements, Blu-ray Disc will have extended its lead in terms of total title count by the end of the year. Not including titles set for release after Dec. 31, the total title count will likely be 406 Blu-ray Discs versus 372 HD DVDs.

---

## Blu-ray Disc playback for under €180

*“People can now enjoy high definition playback on their PC. And instead of spending hundreds of euros on a standalone Blu-ray player, one can use an HDMI cable to connect the PC with a TV-set and enjoy High Definition using their BD-ROM drive as their Blu-ray playback device.”*

*Jelmer Veldman  
Marketing manager  
PLDS in Europe.*

Philips & Lite-On Digital Solutions (PLDS) have announced the introduction of the world’s first BD-ROM drive in the market. The Lite-On DH-401S is a read-only device for all popular media formats, including Blu-ray discs. Besides Blu-ray discs, the drive can read DVD+/-R(W) and CD-R(W) media.

The retail pack includes an extra silver bezel and a SATA cable to connect the drive to the motherboard of the PC. It also includes a Cyberlink Blu-ray Disc software package for playback Blu-ray Disc media in High Definition. The complete pack will be available from December for an estimated retail price of EUR 179,-.

“With this BD-ROM drive we make the Blu-ray Disc format available to a wider audience than ever before,” says Jelmer Veldman, marketing manager for PLDS in Europe. “Because it is a read-only device, we are able to reduce the price to a level that it becomes more interesting to make that step to the next generation format.



“People can now enjoy high definition playback on their PC. And instead of spending hundreds of euros on a standalone Blu-ray player, one can use an HDMI cable to connect the PC with a TV-set and enjoy High Definition using their BD-ROM drive as their Blu-ray playback device.”

The DH-401S has a Serial ATA interface and reads BD-R/RE/ROM/SL/DL media at a maximum of 4X. Single Layer DVD ±R can be read at 12X, while Double Layer DVD±R and Single Layer DVD-±RW can be read at 8X. CD-R(W) can be read at a maximum speed of 32X.

---

## Lionsgate brings *War* to market with PIP



Lionsgate recently announced a January 1, 2008 Blu-ray Disc arrival for its \$30 million-grossing *War*, day-and-date with standard-def DVD. Though few details beyond the date were known at the time, full specs are now in, with the studio confirming that *War* will boast an array of Blu-ray-exclusive content, including the studio's first-ever Profile 1.1-compliant picture-in-picture video commentary.

Although the studio has implemented the feature on such past Blu-ray Disc releases as *The Descent* and *Crank*, those titles had simply encoded a second full-length version of the film with the picture-in-picture content burned-in. That will change with *War*'s "Behind the Scenes FX Bonus" track, which will make full use of the secondary video decoding capabilities of Profile 1.1-compliant Blu-ray Disc hardware as it guides viewers through the intricacies of the film's special effects.

With *War*, Lionsgate is now the second Blu-ray Disc studio to announce a Profile 1.1-compatible Blu-ray title. (Late last month, Fox confirmed plans to issue *Sunshine* as its first Profile 1.1-compatible Blu-ray title on January 8.)

In addition to the PIP content on *War*, other Blu-ray Disc exclusives include the BD-Java-enhanced interactive game "*Yakuza Fighter*," a "Blu-Line Slider" interface that allows for enhanced scene access, a custom bookmarking function, and what Lionsgate is calling "dynamic resizing" menu navigation.

The Blu-ray Disc edition of *War* will also carry over all of the standard DVD's supplements, including two audio commentaries with director Philip Atwell and co-screenwriters Lee Anthony Smith & Gregory J. Bradley, a "War Chest" mode that allows for bonus making-of vignettes to be unlocked via seamless branching, a "War Zone" subtitle fact track, "Scoring 'War'" featurette, deleted scenes, a gag reel and the film's original theatrical trailer.

The Blu-ray Disc will boast 1080p/AVC MPEG-4 video, along with a full-blown uncompressed PCM 7.1 Surround track (at 48kHz/24-bit) and subtitles in both English and Spanish.

---

## Sony Europe opens up market with two new Blu-ray Disc players

This week's announcement by Sony Europe of the launch of two new Blu-ray Disc players marks the next stage in the development of the High Definition disc player market in Europe. With an estimated price of €599 and packed with new AV technologies, the BDP-S300 is set to bring Blu-ray Disc to a huge new audience. The BDP-S500 is a high-end alternative aimed at customers demanding a definitive high-definition viewing experience. The estimated price for the BDP-S500 is €899. Both are available immediately.

To demonstrate the ever-growing catalogue of Blu-ray Disc format movies available from Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, customers who purchase either

player in Europe will receive a copy of the Spider-Man High Definition Trilogy on Blu-ray Disc.



***BDP-S300 (top) and  
BDP-S500***

Sony Pictures Home Entertainment has already released more than 40 Blu-ray Disc format (BD) movies, with more than 30 titles scheduled for release between now and Christmas. The Spider-Man High Definition Trilogy is a three-pack release of all three films on Blu-ray Disc High-Def, allowing fans an exclusive opportunity to collect Spider-Man, Spider-Man 2 and Spider-Man 3 all in High Definition.

"Blu-ray Disc is taking off, and the BDP-S300 player is designed to give many more people a way of joining the party in style," says Hiro Shinohara, Director of Home Video Europe at Sony Europe. "Whether you opt for the BDP-S300 or the high-end BDP-S500, you will be able to appreciate the unique fidelity to the cinematic original offered by 24p True Cinema technology, something not currently available from all manufacturers. You will also get support for the new, wider x.v.Colour space used by the latest generation of HD camcorders, plus one-touch operation thanks to Sony BRAVIA Theatre Sync."

Both models can output 1080p Full HD via a single-cable HDMI™ interface, currently the highest possible HD format available for consumers. So everyone with a Full HD LCD TV can finally appreciate the true capabilities of their set. The ultimate HD resolution is partnered with 7.1 channel Linear PCM and Dolby® Digital Plus Surround Sound audio for home cinema of the highest standard. The BDP-S500 goes even further, with Dolby TrueHD decoding and Bit Stream Output for DTS-HD3, Dolby TrueHD audio signals via HDMI ver 1.3.

*"Blu-ray Disc is taking off, and the BDP-S300 player is designed to give many more people a way of joining the party in style."*

*Hiro Shinohara  
Director of Home Video  
Europe  
Sony Europe.*

---

We are here  
to help

The Blu-ray Disc Association supports the production of this electronic newsletter. For more information on the association visit the website – [www.blu-raydisc.com](http://www.blu-raydisc.com)  
To find out more about any of the topics reported here please email [info@blu-ray-news.net](mailto:info@blu-ray-news.net)

Images included within this newsletter have been minimised for ease of emailing. If you require hi-res versions for reproduction within magazines please contact [info@blu-ray-news.net](mailto:info@blu-ray-news.net)

To receive copies of Blu-ray Disc News free of charge, please email [info@blu-ray-news.net](mailto:info@blu-ray-news.net) stating your wish to subscribe. Likewise, if your colleagues want to receive the newsletter all we need is their email address.

---