



Blu-ray Disc News

News and Views from the Blu-ray Disc Association

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US market moves decisively in favour of Blu-ray Disc

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*Victor Matsuda
Chairman
BDA Global Promotions
Committee*

The dust is settling on one of the most dramatic CES tradeshow in recent years and now the market's response to the significant announcements in Las Vegas is becoming clear. The Warner Bros. announcement that they will release their High Definition DVD titles exclusively in the Blu-ray Disc format resonated around the exhibition halls at CES.

Throughout 2007, Blu-ray Disc sales have consistently outsold HD DVD by a factor of two-to-one; but during the week of CES 2008, up to January 13, those numbers shifted significantly in favour of Blu-ray Disc.

According to numbers from Nielsen, reported by *Home Media Magazine*, Blu-ray Disc sales were 85 per cent of the High Definition split. The 85/15 split between the two rival formats represented the largest gulf yet, according historical data charted in the High-Def Digest forums.

Of the top ten best-selling High Definition movies for the week, all were Blu-ray Disc. For the major new releases on each format, *3:10 To Yuma* on Blu-ray Disc and *The Kingdom* on HD DVD, the former outsold the later by ten-fold.

Comparative sales figures for CE players during the week ending 01.12.08 show a similarly strong skew towards Blu-ray Disc. The HV NPD Next Gen weekly report data shows that Blu-ray Disc achieved 92.53 per cent market share in terms of units sold compared with HD DVD, which achieved 7.47 per cent of units sold.



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Victor Matsuda

"This is great news! Coming on the heels of a very successful CES, I think that this is clearly another very positive momentum indicator," commented Victor Matsuda, Chairman, BDA Global Promotions Committee. "All key parameters of this most recent data have decidedly moved Blu, whether it be overall format shares, number of titles of each format in the Top 10, or sales comparison for both formats of the same titles.

"And, while the weekly sales of movies are very dependent upon the actual titles being released that week, I certainly think that this is also a clear indicator of an inevitable trend that we will see rapidly building throughout the year. This is a trend that is also being closely monitored in other regions of the world, and I am certain that our Blu-ray efforts in those regions will also benefit greatly from this latest U.S. news," he continued.

Although Warner will continue to release HD DVD product through May, they have announced the Blu-ray Disc release schedule for some titles.

The Blu-ray Disc version of *The Invasion* (Nicole Kidman, Daniel Craig) retains the original January 29 date.

The Assassination of Jesse James (Brad Pitt, Casey Affleck) will release on Blu-ray Disc on February 5.

Twister (Helen Hunt, Bill Paxton) will touch down on Blu-ray Disc on May 6.

BDA appoints new European vice chairman

In the wake of CES, the BDA is aware of significantly increased momentum behind the format and an increased speed in the format's adoption worldwide. The association believes that 2008 is the year when consumers will focus on the benefits offered by Blu-ray Disc and will bring this cutting edge technology into the mainstream.

Gearing up for a year of major cross industry collaboration, the BDA European promotions committee has announced a new senior level appointment. With immediate effect, Steve Foulser, Vice President, European Marketing, Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment has been appointed as Joint Vice Chairman, BDA European Promotions Committee.

"This is a key strategic appointment and we are delighted that Steve has accepted the challenge," commented Frank Simonis, Chairman, BDA European Promotions Committee. "For a long time Steve has been working hard for the BDA, coordinating the collaborative efforts of a great many companies in Europe.

"His appointment brings a major Hollywood studio right to the heart of the BDA in Europe, plus it brings the talents of one of the industry's most creative minds in Europe," Simonis continued.



Foulser identifies that Europe currently suffers from a drought of HD content and believes that a large part of the BDA's task is to open European consumers' hearts and minds to the potential offered by High Definition home entertainment.

"Events at CES have given Blu-ray Disc fresh impetus and I believe we will see significant acceleration in BD's speed of adoption. Today in Europe, the entertainment potential of HDTVs can only be achieved by hooking them up to a Hi-Def source such as a Blu-ray Disc player. We need to convince consumers that this is the case."

*Steve Foulser
Vice Chairman
BDA European Promotions
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"Events at CES have given Blu-ray Disc fresh impetus and I believe we will see significant acceleration in BD's speed of adoption," remarked Steve Foulser. "Today in Europe, the entertainment potential of HDTVs can only be achieved by hooking them up to a Hi-Def source such as a Blu-ray Disc player. We need to convince consumers that this is the case.

"This will be achieved using every element of the marketing mix from advertising to in-store demos and pr. We need all the interested parties working together to communicate in consistent and motivational ways to the consumer.

"The next 12 months will demonstrate that there a robust and sustainable market for High Definition Blu-ray content. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the BDA on what will be an exciting and, hopefully, awe-inspiring campaign."

Foulser's appointment comes after previous Vice Chairman Jean-Paul Eekhout stood down from the BDA European Promotions Committee because of a job change. Frank Simonis took the opportunity to thank Jean-Paul for his pioneering work in Blu-ray Disc's early days. "I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jean-Paul Eekhout for his outstanding work and commitment to the Blu-ray Disc format over the last three years – particularly his work in coordinating three successful IFA exhibitions.

"Jean-Paul will be sorely missed for his no nonsense direct approach and also his great sense of humour. We wish Jean-Paul well in his new job – his are not easy shoes to fill, but in Steve we have a talented and experienced person."

Panasonic introduces BD-Live equipped player

In the U.S., Panasonic Corporation of North America has introduced the DMP-BD50, its latest Blu-ray disc player. Blu-ray Disc media offers a wide range of



DMP-BD50

functions that foster

the transition to HD - including 1080p image quality, lossless Dolby TrueHD and DTS-HD Master Audio and versatile Picture-in-Picture applications. The BD50 adds the new BD-Live function, which uses the internet to further enhance the consumer's entertainment experience and employs VIERA Link, a technology that allows the consumer to operate VIERA Link equipped home theater components with a single remote.

Panasonic
ideas for life

“The beauty of the Blu-ray player is that we can now see movies the way the film maker intended, in glorious HD video and audio.”

*Gene Kelsey
Vice President
Panasonic
Entertainment Group*

BD-Live opens up a myriad of interactive possibilities for the consumer. In the future BD-Live will allow users to connect the DMP-BD50 to the internet to download such data as images and subtitles, and to join in multi-player interactive games that are linked to bonus movie content contained on Blu-ray discs.

For optimum image quality the DMP-BD50 features the PHL Reference Chroma processor and P⁴HD i/p conversion processor, which combine to create Uniphier, a precise digital video processor that produces sharp, crisp, natural colors that are extremely faithful to the original movie. Uniphier reflects the advance encoding and authoring technologies developed by Panasonic Hollywood Laboratory.

The true to the original source images are complimented by an exceptionally pure, accurate sound achieved through Audio Re-master and integrated decoders for the lossless Dolby True HD and DTS-HD Master Audio formats. Furthermore, the DMP-BD50 can be combined with a 7.1 channel amplifier and speakers for full 7.1 channel surround sound.

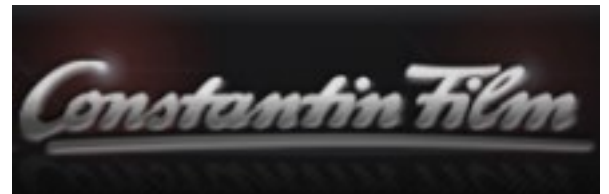
Networking is an essential product of the DMP-BD50. With an SD Memory Card slot for easily transferring images from an HD camcorder or digital still camera via an SD Memory card. The consumer simply inserts the SD card into the BD50 and then can view the images on a large screen HD flat panel television with AVCHD format video images or JPEG stills in full 1920 x 1080 resolution.

“Panasonic was the first to bring a Blu-ray player with BonusView to market and now with the DMP-BD50 we are again leading the industry with the inclusion of BD-Live,” said Gene Kelsey, Panasonic Vice President Entertainment Group. “The beauty of the Blu-ray player is that we can now see movies the way the film maker intended, in glorious HD video and audio. The consumer can now combine the new generation DMP-BD50 with a VIERA flat screen television to create a true living in High Definition experience.”

Constantin Film
& Senator
Entertainment go
Blu-ray Disc
exclusive

German film production and rental company Constantin Film AG has decided to offer High Definition movies on Blu-ray Disc only in the future. The company announced March 1, 2008 as its cut-off date.

Constantin had clearly modeled its decision on international developments, emphasized Constantin executive Franz Woodtli. “The on-going disagreement about the succession of DVD technology had caused considerable consumer insecurity in 2007 and had thus delayed the introduction of High Definition technology into the mainstream,” said Woodtli.



Simultaneously, Senator Entertainment will follow Constantin Film and will cease releasing HD DVD titles later this year. While this has no direct impact on the US market, it was often touted that distributors like Senator offered region free HD DVDs of titles that were not available on the format in the USA.

Blu-ray Disc extends dominance in Japan



New market intelligence shows that in Japan, sales of next generation discs have picked up momentum, and that Blu-ray Disc is pulling away in sales over its rival HD DVD.

The figures, which comprise data sources from over 2300 consumer electronics stores found that Japanese consumers are buying the next generation discs and players at a higher rate than had been seen earlier in 2007.

The study, released by Japan's *Business Computer News* also stated that HD players sold in proportion to standard DVD players rose from 6 percent in October to 20 percent in December.

Blu-ray Disc and HD DVD players made up a hefty 35 percent of the total value of DVD player sales in the last two months of 2007. Blu-ray Disc accounted for 90 percent of those sales for the three month period ending January 1st 2008

Sony launches Blu-ray Disc-based HD media hub

In the U.S., Sony has introduced a new High Definition version of its spherical digital living system—the VAIO TP Home Theater PC. A unique approach to the home PC design, the new model's round chassis serves as an entire entertainment center, where you can watch and record analog, digital and cable TV, including premium HD channels (CableCARD required). It can also access the Internet so you can play back online TV programming on a compatible big-screen television.

The VAIO HTPC comes in both a standard and a premium configuration. Both versions feature a Blu-ray Disc optical drive to enjoy High Definition movies. The premium model comes with two external CableCARD compatible TV tuners so you can view and record two HD television programs simultaneously.

With built-in DVR functionality, each unit can record up to 50 hours of HD television programming and pause and rewind live TV for on-demand playback. Engineered to be easy to use, the models connect to compatible High Definition televisions via an included HDMI cable for playback in full HD 1080 resolution through a single cable. And with integrated BRAVIA Sync technology, based on HDMI-CEC functionality, you can power on connected devices, at the touch of a button, eliminating the need for multiple remote controls (on certain BRAVIA HDTV models only).

"We're defining the digital home by integrating the latest HD technologies into a one-of-a-kind showpiece," said Mike Abary, senior vice president of VAIO product



VAIO TP

“We’re defining the digital home by integrating the latest HD technologies into a one-of-a-kind showpiece. This new unit will revolutionize the way you watch TV, allowing you to turn your entertainment center into an eye-popping, High Definition media hub.”

*Mike Abary
Senior vice president
VAIO product marketing
Sony Electronics*

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The console’s small, circular shape is engineered to fit into areas of the house not typically known for having a PC, such as the living room, without the added network cables. With its built-in wireless LAN technology and a wireless router, it can be positioned virtually anywhere in the house and still access your home network.

The model also comes with a remote control and a matching, wireless keyboard ergonomically designed to fit on your lap so you can surf the Web from the comfort of your couch without the restraint of tangled cords. The unit is equipped with a powerful Intel Core 2 Duo processor T8100, allowing for high performance while maintaining a smaller, cooler form factor— making it ideal for a living room setting. It also employs the Windows Vista Home Premium operating system, discrete graphics and a half-terabyte hard drive.

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