



# Blu-ray Disc News

News and Views from the Blu-ray Disc Association

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## Contents in this issue

- Blu-ray Disc Association calls for unity in promoting HD home entertainment
- Oscar's Best Picture set to become Blu-ray Disc classic
- Sony introduces next generation Blu-ray Disc players in US
- Acer plans Blu-ray Disc sales boost through notebooks
- Primera Technology backs Blu-ray Disc across product range
- MPO Group grows independent Blu-ray Disc production in Europe

## Blu-ray Disc Association calls for unity in promoting HD home entertainment

*"Now that the format war has been put aside, it is great to be able to focus on the challenge of taking Blu-ray Disc to the heart of the home entertainment industry."*

*Victor Matsuda  
Chairman  
Blu-ray Disc Association  
Global Promotions  
Committee.*

The Blu-ray Disc Association has reacted with pleasure at the news that Toshiba has decided to cease development of the HD DVD format. However, any celebrations were short-lived since the association sees a considerable challenge in terms of moving Blu-ray Disc into the mainstream as a High Definition successor to the globally successful DVD-Video format.

"Now that the format war has been put aside, it is great to be able to focus on the challenge of taking Blu-ray Disc to the heart of the home entertainment industry," commented Victor Matsuda, Chairman of the Blu-ray Disc Association Global Promotions Committee. "So far, early adopting consumers have reacted strongly in favour of Blu-ray Disc and our challenge is to convert our success in this relatively small market into a mass market phenomena. This will need the active participation of the whole industry, including CE manufacturers, movie studios and other content providers, software developers, replicators and retailers, and this is where the Blu-ray Disc Association is such a strong asset with over 170 member companies."



**Victor Matsuda**

The ability for consumers to watch their favourite movies on a new format has always been a critical must-have for any new format's introduction. With this in mind, Matsuda welcomed news that the two remaining Hollywood studios – Universal and Paramount – have both announced plans to start releasing BD titles. "Paramount and Universal are both great creative movie studios with fantastic cinematographic heritages," stated Victor Matsuda. "We welcome any new

company into the BDA, especially ones that will leverage their resources and help to promote Blu-ray Disc into homes around the world.”

*“Paramount and Universal are both great creative movie studios with fantastic cinematographic heritages. We welcome any new company into the BDA, especially ones that will leverage their resources and help to promote Blu-ray Disc into homes around the world.”*

Commenting on speculation that Blu-ray Disc will face renewed competition from internet-based movie downloads Matsuda was pragmatic. “We do not live in a vacuum and technology does not stand still, so I would never say that HD movie downloads won’t ever play some role in the home entertainment market. However, I believe this is a long-term future scenario. What is clear today is that undeniably, the most compelling consumer hi-def experience is Blu-ray. As an industry, we need to team up and promote Blu-ray Disc to consumers worldwide.

“When we set out with Blu-ray Disc we knew that we had a man-sized task ahead. This task has moved onto another level and within the BDA we are looking forward to a very exciting period ahead,” Matsuda concluded.

## Oscar’s Best Picture set to become a Blu-ray Disc classic

At this week’s Oscar’s ceremony in Hollywood, the Cohen brothers’ *No Country for Old Men* won four Oscars including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Supporting Actor. But the film that won big with the academy is also going to win big with home theatre lovers when it’s finally released in March.

*No Country for Old Men* is slated for US release on Blu-ray disc and DVD on March 11, so it won’t be long out of movie theaters before it can make screenings at home theaters. But high-def home theater enthusiasts should pay special attention to what might be the best film ever transferred to a high-def disc.

The blood soaked thriller will feature an AVC MPEG-4 video transfer to 1080P. It’s widely considered one of the best graphic transfers ever performed. It was done by Buena Vista / Disney, which has plenty of experience with the Blu-ray Disc format and it’s starting to show.

The audio treatment should be just as stunning as the video when HD ready home theaters get the new Cohen brothers epic into their disc trays. With a BD-50 release, that’s Blu-ray disc at dual density or 50 GB, studios have plenty of extra space to take up with uncompressed audio. And that’s exactly what Buena Vista did for this film. It boasts a PCM 5.1 audio track sampled at a deep 24bit at 48kHz. The presentation is compelling and a credit to the Blu-ray Disc format just when it needs most to win over the mainstream.



The Oscar wins have propelled interest in the film to staggering heights. *Planet Earth: The Complete Series* has been a staple at the top of Amazon.com’s Blu-ray Disc best sellers list almost the entire time its been available since mid-last year.



But now, *No Country for Old Men* holds the #1 top selling spot for Blu-ray at Amazon, forcing *Planet Earth: The Complete Series* down to #2.

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## Sony introduces next generation Blu-ray Disc players in US



**Sony BDP-S550**

*Sony's next-generation Blu-ray Disc models bring exciting interactive features to life and offer consumers a ground-breaking experience. These new devices bring home movie experience beyond the cinema and into a whole new realm of entertainment."*

*Chris Fawcett  
Vice president of marketing  
Sony Electronics' Home  
Product Division*



**HT-SS2300**

In the US, Sony has updated its Blu-ray Disc player line with two new models that will be capable of accessing advanced interactive features such as BonusView and BD-Live.

The BDP-S350 and BDP-S550 models both support BonusView (Picture-in-Picture) featured on some of the new Blu-ray Disc theatrical releases. The BDP-S350 model is BD-Live ready featuring an Ethernet port for an easy firmware update and access to Internet-based interactive content features. The BDP-S550 is BonusView and BD-Live capable when it ships.

Both models also feature an external port for local storage, so users can add optional storage device. The BDP-S550 ships with a 1GB storage device.

"Building on the exceptional picture and sound quality of previous players, Sony's next-generation Blu-ray Disc models bring exciting interactive features to life and offer consumers a ground-breaking experience," said Chris Fawcett, vice president of marketing for Sony Electronics' Home Product Division. "These new devices bring home movie experience beyond the cinema and into a whole new realm of entertainment."

The players feature 1080/60p and 24p True Cinema output. They are compatible with most standard DVDs and feature 1080p upscaling through an HDMI connection to capable HDTV sets, improving the picture performance of existing DVD libraries.

The models offer 7.1 channel Dolby TrueHD and Dolby Digital Plus decoding and bit-stream output, as well as dts-HD High Resolution Audio and Master Audio bit-stream output. The BDP-S550 adds dts-HD High Resolution Audio and dts-HD Master Audio decoding as well as 7.1 channel analogue audio output.

The players support AVCHD discs encoded with x.v.Color (xvYCC) technology, an international standard for wide color space reproduction. The standard expands the current data range of video by about 1.8 times, allowing the players to output more natural and vivid colors similar to what the human eye can actually see. The players also feature compatibility with an array of video formats, including BD-R/RE (BDMV and BDAV modes), DVD+R/+RW, DVD-R/-RW, CD, CD-R/RW (CD-DA format), and JPEG on DVD//CD recordable media.

The new models feature a slim design with reduced depth and height compared to previous models matching Sony's new home-theater-in-a-box systems, the HT-SS2300 and HT-CT100 T-SS2300, also announced today. Optimized for Blu-ray Disc, the new component systems feature three 1080p compatible HDMI inputs making them the perfect match for a Full high-definition home theater when connected to a new Sony BRAVIA 1080p HDTV.

## Acer plans Blu-ray Disc sales boost through notebooks

Following the demise of the HD DVD format, PC manufacturer Acer has announced that it will "push" Blu-ray Disc-based notebooks this year. Acer, who was signed up to both next-gen formats, has predicted that the sales boost of Blu-ray Disc drives will first be seen in notebooks rather than standalone players.

Scott Lin, president of Acer, has revealed the company is planning to launch BD-capable notebooks in the second quarter of this year.

The reasoning behind the notebook push is since most homes do not yet have Full HD (1080p) ready TVs, a notebook with a Blu-ray disc drive and full HD panel will have more advantages over a stand-alone player, said Lin.



One of the two new notebooks will apparently boast an 18.4-inch screen and the other will be a 16-inch offering, both will support HD quality images.

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## Primera Technology backs Blu-ray Disc across product range

Primera Technology, one of the world's leading developers and manufacturers of automated CD, DVD and Blu-ray Disc duplication and printing equipment, has announced its full and complete support of Blu-ray Disc technology across its entire product line.

During the past several weeks, the "format war" between HD-DVD and Blu-ray Disc has come to a swift and decisive end. HD-DVD has been withdrawn from the market and Blu-ray Disc has become the new worldwide standard for High-Definition video, so says Primera in its press statement. Video production professionals and others who may need High Definition disc burning and printing in the future can now confidently make the decision to upgrade their CD/DVD disc publishers to include Blu-ray Disc capabilities without the worry of obsolescence.

"A large percentage of our customers have anxiously awaited the end of the format wars," said Mark D. Strobel, Primera's vice president of sales and marketing. "Consumers will now be buying large numbers of Blu-ray Disc players and movies. This will create demand for recordable Blu-ray Discs in many other applications such as wedding and event videography, corporate videos, independent films and much more."

Primera's automated disc publishers burn and print up to 100 CDs, DVDs and Blu-ray Discs per batch. The devices are used by a wide range of companies and organizations, including schools and



**Primera's Bravo SE Blu**

universities, video and music production studios, government and military and businesses of all types including more than eighty-five percent of the Fortune 500.

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## MPO Group grows independent Blu- ray Disc production in Europe



**Loïc de Poix**

The MPO group, a leader in media duplication and publisher services in Europe, is continuing with its High Definition program, opting to invest in the development of Blu-ray Disc.

The MPO group has announced that it has selected Singulus as its supplier in its Blu-ray Disc investment programme. This makes MPO the one and only independent manufacturer in Europe to have a complete Blu-ray Disc manufacturing chain from mastering to replication.

“Blu-ray represents a genuine challenge for the future of MPO and video publishing. The MPO group wishes to be involved in establishing the new High Definition format and contributing to the growth of the HD video market. Our teams’ involvement in the manufacture of High Definition products started over two years ago and the investments made in Blu-ray make the MPO group an essential High Definition player in Europe,” says Loïc de Poix, Chairman of the MPO group Board.

“We would like to thank Mr. Baustert, the CEO of SINGULUS, for supporting us in this new adventure with quality services and production lines already set up in MPO’s plants in Europe, Asia and North America, with over a hundred CD and DVD production lines.”

“The combination of the unique CrystalLine mastering system with the BLU-LINE II brings MPO in an excellent position in order to become one of the leading BD manufacturers of Europe. We value the continued relationship we have with MPO, which started in the early days of Compact Disc.” adds Guido Dalessi, CEO of Singulus Mastering.

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## We are here to help

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