

End of the road for HD DVD?

The companies acted after Warner Bros., the No. 1 video distributor, announced that beginning in May it will drop HD DVD and sell its high-def movies and TV shows only on Blu-ray joining a group that includes Disney, Fox, Lionsgate and Sony's film studio.

Warner's jump was the last straw to break the camel's back, says Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment President Bob Chapek. The format war's over.

Well, maybe. The HD DVD camp which includes Universal, Paramount, DreamWorks Animation and Microsoft hasn't raised a white flag yet.

But it also isn't predicting victory.

There are a lot of other product areas where different formats coexist, says Jodi Sally, vice president of marketing for Toshiba's digital AV group. Look at gaming (where Nintendo and Microsoft compete with Sony). There are discs that won't play in each other's machines. Apparently that is the current scenario for high-def DVDs.

Her view chills executives and technophiles who say that most consumers won't buy two machines or a pricey combo player so they can enjoy HD versions of Disney's *Ratatouille* as well as DreamWorks' *Shrek the Third*, or Sony's *Spider-Man* and Paramount's *Mission: Impossible*.

We interview consumers, and over the last year 60% didn't want to buy either format until there was a clear winner, says Envisioneering Group director Richard Doherty.

With consumers reluctant to buy into the new technology, Hollywood studios are left selling conventional DVDs which have grown tired after 12 years in the market. Spending on sales and rentals last year fell 3.1% to \$22.9 billion in 2007, according to trade magazine *Video Business*.

That also opens the possibility that HDTV owners will wait until they can download the movies they want.

Comcast, CEO Brian Roberts demonstrated at last month's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas a cable Internet technology his company will begin rolling out this year that makes it possible to download a high-def movie in four minutes.

There's still time for high-def DVDs to take off.

There are an awful lot of pieces that have to come together before downloading becomes practical, says Stephen Baker, vice president of industry analysis at research firm NPD. This stuff takes a lot longer to get started than we think it should. But once it gets started, it catches on a lot faster than we think it will.

With the window of opportunity for high-def DVDs starting to close, though, analysts say that retailers may soon pick a winner.

If you're Best Buy, you want people to keep coming to your store for the packaged media not just the player, Doherty says. Same thing with Target. And there's no exit strategy for (the DVD format split) that is consumer-friendly. The one who'll be left holding the bag is the retailer.

Here's where things stand:

Blu-ray and content

The Blu-ray camp says consumers buy movies not formats and will go with whoever has the best selection.

If it's correct, then there's no contest: Now that Warner has signed on, studios backing Blu-ray accounted for more than 66% of last year's DVD rentals and sales.

Disney and Panasonic are making that point to consumers, and featuring Blu-ray's gee-whiz high-def pictures and bonus features, in a show-and-tell presentation at eight major shopping malls called Disney's Magical Blu-ray Tour. The studio also will promote the technology in October when it releases its first classic animated flick on Blu-ray: *Sleeping Beauty*.

Viewers less interested in family-friendly fare may be swayed by the leading distributor of porn DVDs an important, if often overlooked, force in home video.

We're going to be phasing out HD DVD and going straight to Blu-ray, says Ali Joone, founder of Digital Playground, which says it accounts for more than 80% of the adult videos sold in high-def.

It wasn't just because of Warner. The makers of the software that Digital Playground uses to prepare its DVDs and menus said last month that it will continue to develop enhancements for Blu-ray but not for HD DVD.

It's going to be much more painful to stay in the HD DVD arena than going into the Blu-ray arena, Joone says.

HD DVD and price

But the HD DVD camp says Blu-ray supporters pay too much attention to Tech Alley and not enough to Main Street.

The real competitor here is that consumers are satisfied with DVD, says Toshiba's Sally. It's really price that's the motivating factor for consumers to buy either high-def DVD format.

To address that, and to try to create a groundswell of consumer support for HD DVD that Hollywood and retailers can't ignore, Toshiba on Jan. 13 slashed the price of its high-def disc players.

The least expensive one costs \$120 about \$200 less than the cheapest Blu-ray model and comes with seven free HD DVDs; *The Bourne Identity* and *300* come with the unit, and consumers can pick five others from a list of 15.

I know for a fact that since we made our price move, our weekly sales are twice the rate of the weekly average that they were in 2007, Sally says.

Will consumers consider that money badly spent when they start to see more high-def movies released on Blu-ray?

Not to worry, she says.

The studios will continue to release all of their movies as conventional DVDs. And HD DVD players as well as Blu-ray ones use a technology that can convert them to what she says is almost high-def quality.

That may work just fine for people who don't have elaborate home-theater systems.

If you have a 37-inch TV, you probably wouldn't see a huge amount of difference because the screen size is so small, says Paul Erickson, director of DVD and high-def market research at research firm DisplaySearch. As you start getting to 46-inches, sure, you can tell a difference.

But Blu-ray supporters say that it's a dead-end strategy to sell a high-def DVD player as a jazzy conventional DVD player.

If we're trying to build a business, then it's going to be built primarily on people understanding the benefits of a high-def experience, says Sony Chief Marketing Officer Andrew House. We're focused on delivering the very best experience for the consumer.

They add that prices for Blu-ray players will fall as the market shifts from early adopters who pay top dollar for cutting-edge toys to ordinary consumers looking for value.

If people are price-sensitive about the player, they might want to wait a little while, says Pioneer Home Entertainment Group's Andy Parsons, who's also chairman of the Blu-ray Disc Association Promotions Committee.

Consumer confusion

Content and price won't matter if consumers are frozen by their inability to figure out each format's technological strengths and weaknesses.

Blu-ray supporters say their format wins in delivering no-compromises video and audio.

Discs can handle long movies and abundant bonus features; each disc holds 50 gigabytes of data vs. 30 GB for HD DVD and less than 10 GB for a conventional DVD. Since a two-hour high-def movie can use up 25 GB, that leaves more room on Blu-ray for bonus features and games.

It's the best-quality picture out there, and the boundless data capacity makes this a future-proof technology, House says. HD DVD is version 1.1, and Blu-ray is 2.0.

But Blu-ray's best customers are gamers: Sony's PlayStation 3 comes with a Blu-ray player built in. PlayStations account for more than 85% of the Blu-ray players sold.

Those looking for a stand-alone Blu-ray player have to decide what features they want.

Older models won't accommodate picture-in-picture, a new feature that Blu-ray calls BonusView. Discs and players that offer BonusView can, for example, show a movie director in the corner of the screen commenting on a particular scene.

Buyers also will have to wait until later this year if they want a player with an Internet connection capable of handling features Blu-ray calls BD Live.

Supporters say that's no big deal. All players handle the main event: movies.

Once we get to the mass market, which is where I think we'll be in the next couple of years, all of that (confusion) will be behind us, Chapek says. Then, the people who are less technophilic will not have to deal with it.

HD DVD backers say there's no need to wait. Their format has been a consistent specification since Day 1, Sally says. For example, all players have Internet ports. They enable users to download cellphone ring tones, send friends favorite scenes from a movie, play games or see material on a studio's website.

Unlike with Blu-ray, there's no region coding. Overseas travelers can buy and play any HD DVD they find.

Most HD DVD discs also have a conventional DVD on the flip side, making them playable on ordinary DVD players including on laptops and automobile backseat entertainment systems.

Despite the differences in the formats, and the complications with the launch of a new generation of DVDs, both sides agree that consumers are ready for a new video technology.

We're seeing a strong sea change, a generational shift, where people are embracing high definition, House says. Once you've seen that kind of picture, you can never go back.

Disney, Teeryi Gandarillas (Walter Elias Disney 1901.12.5.-1966.12.15)

Introduction

Walt Disney (and his brother Roy O. Disney), the Walt Disney Company founder. He is the world's most famous film producers, directors, writers, actors and animators dubbing one of his dreams for the courageous pursuit of excellence for commercial keen insight and vision made him a well-known entrepreneurs, He is also a philanthropist.

Walt Disney's father was Elias Disney (Elias Disney), the mother is a test Erdishini Fuluola (Flora Call Disney). Unique, three brothers and a sister, were brother Herbert Disney (Herbert Disney), two Geleimengde Disney (Raymond Disney), the three Geluoyi Oliver Disney (Roy Oliver Disney) and sister Lu Shifuluola Disney (Ruth Disney).

Walt Disney's many entries he became world-renowned people, including his creation of the Snow White

Miao mouse)

Oliver Company (1988, the translated as Friends Chuang distant)

Xiaomeirenyu (1989, the translated as fish cents)

Dear, I narrowed the child (in 1989, the translated as bean nail Xiaoling fine)

1990

Lion King of the wood-the rescuers Australian Adventure (1990) (mainland audio-visual products have been translated into: underground rescue)

Beauty and the Beast (1991)

Houston (1991)

No Mian heavenly kings (1992)

Honey, I enlarged the child (1992) (Hong Kong translated as bean nail Xiaoling fine II BB large drying)

Aladdin (1992)

Variable duck Phoenix (1992)

Christmas Song puppets A Christmas Carol (1992)

See what the dog (1993, remade in 1963, a three-cat Ergou)

The Lion King (1994)

Merry Christmas and Crazy (1994)

Pinocchio (1995)

Toy Story (1995) (Hong Kong translated as Fun Jones)

Zhonglouguairen (1996) (Hong Kong translated as camel-xia Clock Tower)

101 real dogs (1996, remade in 1961 List of Disney movies One Hundred and One Dalmatians)

Hercules (1997)

Forest Taishan (1997)

Mulan (1998)

Bugs crisis (1998) (Hong Kong Translation Chongchongtegongdui)

A born (1998, remade in 1961 small Matchmaker)

Taishan (1999) (translated mainland cinemas: Renyuantaishan)

Toy Story 2 (1999) (Hong Kong translated as Fun Jones 2)

Mr. Shicuite the story (1999) (Hong Kong Translation road straight road bends)

2000 Fantasia 2000 (2000, the mainland audio-visual products have been translated into: Fantasy 2000)

Diaodiaohu Adventure (2000)

Dinosaur (2000, the translated as dinosaurs Century)

The Emperor s New Groove (2000, the translated as riding is the Great)

Guanghuisuiru (2000, the Taiwan translated as rush , the translation blood strongman)

Princess Diaries (2001, the Taiwan Translation Sparrow Princess , the translation disappeared Qiao Princess 2)

Lost Empire: Atlantis (2001)

Monsters Power Company (2001, the translated as monsters)

Star Baby (2002, the translated as Ye play small devil Star)

Merry Christmas and crazy 2 (2002, the Taiwan translated as Merry Christmas to crazy , the translation this The Santa Clause 2: Christmas marry his wife)

Treasure Planet (2002, the translated as Star Indiana)

Journey Into Amazing Caves (2003)

Piglets big film (2003)

Finding Nemo (2003, the translated as submarine Jones)

Spicy mother Victoria (2003, remade in 1977, Grotosque Friday , the translation Cuigui Mummy)

Pirates of the Caribbean (2003, the Taiwan translated as Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of ghosts stolen boat , the translation Pirates Of The Caribbean bootlegging decisive ghost ships)

Brother Bear (2003, the translated as Bear Adventure)

Comedy mansion (2003, the Taiwan translated as ghost houses , the translation of Ghost

About the Author

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Flickr is almost certainly the best online photo management and sharing application in the world. Show off your favorite photos to the world, securely.

Freecovers is a large, fast and easy cd cover archive. It maintains a huge database of high quality.

Sleeping Beauty. Once upon a time there was a Queen who had a beautiful baby daughter. She asked all the fairies in the kingdom.

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