

Re: Blu-Ray or HD, who's gonna win the format war

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In article <QDtMh.15618\$267.8500@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, Temsonic <dim.sp@xxxxxxxxxxxx> writes

"RCE Defiant" <peterfcukthespimstones@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message news:56evjaF280u9hU1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I initially thought HD due to the monster that is MS being behind it but now it's looking more and more like Blu-Ray film media sales are outstripping HD by 3:1 which don't look good for the HD camp. I'm holding off buying any next gen media reader until HDMI 1.3 is out and the dust settles on the format scuffle. What are your thoughts on who's going to win? I've seen a few drives come out that will play both formats so it looks like manufacturers are edging their bets.

The real problem right now is that the non-AV enthusiast public (i.e. probably more than 90%) have never heard of or don't care about HD-DVD or Blu-ray, and it seems the majority of the rest of us are taking a wait-and-see approach, firstly because of the format war and secondly because of stupidly high pricing. Naturally the war will be decided by who sells the most units, and to sell large numbers the product needs mass market appeal.

Joe public only really got to grips with DVD and widescreen CRT TV's a few years ago and they're already being told it's all out of date, and from what I gather most of them can't see any particular benefit from HD other than the associated bigger screen sizes. I firmly believe that the main driving factor behind the public's willingness to jump from VHS to DVD wasn't solely about picture and sound quality. Yes, they were part of it, but it was mainly the move from tape to disc – which suddenly enabled menus, chapters, optional subtitles, different audio tracks, angles, non-linear extras, etc – which caught their imagination.

To the AV enthusiast, improved picture (including anamorphic widescreen) and sound (DD5.1 and DTS as standard) are the best features of DVD over VHS, and those features are improved again with the HD formats, but we're talking about mass market appeal here, not what the enthusiasts think. How many

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posts do you remember on this and other forums along the lines of "How do I get rid of the black bars?", and even now I know very few people with a 5.1 system to actually take advantage of what's available to them on the discs. Most people still don't appear to have learnt how to set up their widescreen TV's properly, HD is the least of their worries.

There's also the costs involved. It's only recently that the prices on HD panels have started to come down to more sensible levels. Even so you're still looking at almost £1000 for a really decent one and that's before you shell out another thousand for a Blu-ray player... Most people would never pay a grand for a media player no matter how all-singing and dancing it is, they live in the real world where even £100 is a lot of money to justify spending on a new toy, let alone one where they might struggle to appreciate the difference between that and something they can pick up for £20 in Tesco.

All valid points, but to be fair you can get a UK Blu Ray player for under £500 now, I believe some places are doing the Samsung for £450, even less if you don't mind importing.

By all accounts the PS3 is a pretty good Blu Ray player too, even if it does have it's limitations.

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Sean Black

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