



3-D TV: Already in your home Sets now in stores; content on the way

By THOMAS MCLEAN

The motion picture industry is making a big bet on 3-D, in part because it's supposed to promise an experience that can't be duplicated on television.

There's a problem with that logic, though: 3-D-capable televisions aren't just possible, they're already here.

Flat-panel TVs from Samsung and some other manufacturers can already display 3-D (with glasses required), though they're not yet touting the feature.

That's because, as with most new technologies, whether it was the advent of color TV or the switch to HD, 3-D at home requires both capability and content.

Steve Schklair, CEO of 3ality Digital Systems, who will demonstrate 3-D TV with a live transmission at NAB on Monday, says with companies like Samsung releasing 3-D-capable HDTVs, content and the awareness of the content are the next steps.

"Initially, you'll see theatrical releases being released in 3-D to the monitors, followed by or even led by some broadcasts tests of certain events," Schklair says.

Blu-ray discs are also capable of 3-D, and Schklair predicts 3-D Blu-ray releases will be coming by the end of the year, with a corresponding bump in promotion for 3-D-capable TVs.

What's more, several companies are already demonstrating 3-D displays that work without glasses.

"A 3-D display should be as convenient as a 2-D screen today," says Tibor Balogh, CEO of Budapest-based Holografika. The company makes the Holograzio 3-D display, which requires no glasses. "If you wear glasses, only two people can watch the set simultaneously, and it will not work in the long term."

[...] Advertising is a likely driver for the creation of 3-D content. Studies show consumers pay significantly more attention to 3-D commercials, giving advertisers a tangible incentive for investing in the technology, Schklair says.

3-D content also has to fit within the current infrastructure, whether it's broadcast over the air, through cable or satellite or over the Internet. Schklair says 3ality's technology meets current FCC bandwidth standards. Cameras capable of creating live 3-D signals are plentiful, and the number of 3-D-capable displays in homes could be dramatically increased with set-top boxes that upgrade current HDTVs to display the format.

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