

Hollywood Studios Selected Toshiba-Led HD DVD Format

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Toshiba Corporation disclosed today that the company has received separate commitments of support from Paramount Pictures, Universal Pictures, New Line Cinema, and Warner Bros. Studios, respectively for the next-generation, high-definition DVD disc format, HD DVD.

HD DVD is the newly developed high definition DVD disc standard being developed at the DVD Forum, which represents over 230 consumer electronics, information technology, and content companies. HD DVD innovations include higher resolution video and audio available on a suite of disc capacities adaptable for longer or shorter programs – along with advanced navigation, web connectivity, and new consumer options. HD DVD supports such essential features as advanced content access and robust content security technology, which are critical to the studios. A single, dual-layer HD DVD ROM disc, which has a 30-gigabyte capacity, can hold as much as eight hours of high-quality, high definition movie content. HD DVD is based on the same physical disc structure as DVD, which secures easy backward compatibility with today's DVD, and enables manufacture of highly reliable hardware and discs at a reasonable cost.

In contrast recorders based on the competing Blu-ray Disc are already on the market. One single-layer Blu-ray disc can hold about 25GB or almost four hours of HDTV audio+video, and the dual-layer disc can hold approximately 50GB. The data transfer rate is 36Mbps, but 2x speed prototypes with a 72Mbps transfer rate are now in development. There are two Blu-ray Disc recorders already available: the Sony BDZ-S77

(released in April 2003) and the Matsushita Electric Industrial (Panasonic) DMR-E700BD (released in July 2004). The HD-DVD group, which is mainly led by Toshiba and NEC, is using the technological differences between the two formats as the basis for its argument that HD-DVD makes more sense than Blu-ray Disc and hopes the entertainment industry, both in Japan and elsewhere, is listening.

Mr. Tadashi Okamura, President and CEO of Toshiba Corporation, said: "We are delighted that the HD DVD format has been independently endorsed by Paramount Pictures, Universal Pictures, New Line Cinema, and Warner Bros. Studios. We sought to contribute to development of the format through a close dialogue with Hollywood studios and extensive technical discussions within the DVD Forum, an approach that has been validated by these endorsements.

"HD DVD offers the necessary combination of picture quality, content security and advanced features, including interactivity, plus reasonable manufacturing costs. We believe this is why HD DVD is gaining broad acceptance and has won the support of each of these four leading studios," Mr. Okamura continued. "Endorsement of HD DVD by these leading Hollywood studios is a great impetus to assuring the timely launch of HD DVD and to assuring that consumers have a range of attractive choices in both hardware and software. Major Hollywood studios are expected to release a number of movie titles, including new releases, to support the smooth progress of HD DVD in its initial year. Hundreds of other titles will also be available from other international content holders."

The DVD Forum has been working on the fine details of the HD DVD specifications for almost two years, including physical, file format and application specifications for recordable and ROM discs. The DVD Forum approved the version 1.0 physical specifications for HD DVD-ROM in February 2004, followed by version 1.0 of the HD DVD-

Rewritable format in September 2004. Completion of the HD DVD-R, a one-time recordable format, is also expected by year end. "Every facet of HD DVD development is on track," said Yoshihide Fujii, President and CEO, Toshiba's Digital Media Network Company. "As we enter the age of high-definition broadcasting, consumers increasingly want HD content for their high definition, large-screen displays, and HD DVD naturally fits in with this trend. HD DVD will open up new horizons in visual entertainment."

"With the emergence of a wide range of advanced digital devices, assurance of robust content protection is of primary importance to the sound development of both the hardware and software industries." said Mr. Fujii. "We intend to reinforce close collaboration and dialogue with other hardware manufacturers, content holders and software distributors to meet this objective." The HD DVD format will enable the most advanced content protection technology; AACS (Advanced Access Content System), currently being developed by major international CE, IT companies and Hollywood studios, is expected to be selected.

HD DVD players are expected to become available in late 2005 and widely available in 2006. Toshiba plans to launch its first HD DVD products, a CE player and recorder, in the fourth quarter of 2005. The company also plans to release notebook PC with a built-in HD DVD drive at the end of 2005.

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