

Microsoft, Toshiba to jointly develop HD DVD players

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TOKYO, June 27 (AFP) - US computer software giant Microsoft and leading Japanese high-tech maker Toshiba on Monday said they will jointly develop high definition DVD players.

The two said in a statement they would combine Microsoft Windows CE technology and Toshiba's expertise in consumer electronics and computers for the project.

"The companies also plan to strengthen their collaboration on iHD, the DVD Forum's latest interactivity format," they said.

HD DVD is a newly developed high-definition digital video disc standard. It is competing with the Blu-ray disc technology to become the global standard for next-generation audio-visual products. Computer and electronics makers backing the Blu-ray technology include Sony, Matsushita Electric, Apple Computer, Dell and Hewlett-Packard.

Among the Hollywood studios, Walt Disney and Sony Pictures Entertainment have pledged to back Blu-ray, while HD DVD supporters include Paramount Pictures, Universal Pictures and Warner Bros Studios.

After three years of disagreement, the two blocs agreed in April to study a mutual standard that would prevent a scenario in which Sony discs do not work on Toshiba players or vice versa.

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