

# **Panasonic to Release New Blu-ray Disc Drives for PCs and Non-Cartridge Blu-ray Discs Next Spring**

October 6 2005

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Panasonic today announced that the company will introduce Blu-ray Disc drives for notebook and desktop computers that can write and read single- and dual-layer BDs as well as all types of recordable DVDs and CDs. The drives, the first of their kind in the world, will become available for personal computer manufacturers by spring 2006 along with the new non-cartridge BDs (bare disc) with storage capacities of 25 GB and 50 GB.

As one of the developers of the BD standard, Panasonic is leading the way to bring the next-generation optical disc format into widespread practical use.

The world's first BD drive for notebook PCs is only 12.7-mm high and can record and playback the three generations of optical discs. It supports single-layer 25 GB and single-sided, dual-layer 50 GB BDs. Panasonic plans to ship samples by the end of this year and commence commercial production by March 2006.

The multimedia drive uses Panasonic's own laminated glass plate prism technology that enables the reduction in size of the optical pickup to one-twelfth of the size of conventional pickups.

Prior to the introduction of the notebook-use disc drive, Panasonic will ship samples of the half-height (41.3-mm) desktop version in October

and start volume production by January 2006. The desktop-use disc drive also serves as a BD, Super-Multi DVD and CD drive. The device can write BDs at 2× speed.

For use in these thin-profile drives, Panasonic has developed a durable and reliable BD that does not use a cartridge. The newly-developed surface-treatment technology enables a significant boost in disc resistance to scratch, abrasion and dust. Starting in spring 2006, Panasonic plans to mass-produce four types of bare disc BDs: single-layer 25 GB and single-sided, dual-layer 50 GB BD-REs (rewritable) and BD-Rs (recordable), all at 2× speed.

Commenting on the development, Mr. Kazuhiro Tsuga, Executive Officer in charge of Digital Network and Software Technologies of Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., said, "Collaboration between HP and Panasonic has brought a super-multi media era to the recordable DVDs. As we announced at CES in Las Vegas last January, we agreed to incorporate in our respective products recordable DVD formats promoted by the other to eliminate customers' confusion about the right media to use. In addition to all the recordable DVD formats, the new BD drives support recording and playback of both single- and dual-layer BDs. Our customers can enjoy the best experience in the next-generation optical discs."

"HP shares a vision with Panasonic to provide the best user experience in using DVD formats and eliminate compatibility issues for our customers," said Mr. John Romano, Senior Vice President, Worldwide Consumer PC Business, HP. "Our goal is to make Blu-ray technology the de facto standard in both PCs and consumer electronic products in 2006, and we are pleased to demonstrate the interoperability and ease of use of an HP consumer desktop PC with a Panasonic Blu-ray drive in the Blu-ray Disc Association (BDA) booth of at CEATEC 2005."

"Dell is pleased that Panasonic has continued to show strong support for BD technology and has taken the lead in developing BD slim line drives. Panasonic's efforts have also shortened the traditional interval between desktop and notebook technology releases," said Mr. Kevin Kettler, Chief Technology Officer, Dell Inc., "Dell intends to promote BD products throughout our desktop and notebook product lines capitalizing on BD's large 50 GB capacity designed to enable customers to play high-definition content or backup and archive large amounts of data."

Product samples of the new drives and BDs are being demonstrated at the Panasonic and the BDA booths at CEATEC JAPAN 2005 from October 4 to 8 at the Makuhari Messe in Chiba Prefecture, east of Tokyo.

Source: Panasonic

Citation: Panasonic to Release New Blu-ray Disc Drives for PCs and Non-Cartridge Blu-ray Discs Next Spring (2005, October 6) retrieved 1 September 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-10-panasonic-blu-ray-disc-pcs-non-cartridge.html>

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