

# LG puts hopes on 'next generation' 3-D TV

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Havis Kwon, president and CEO of LG Home Entertainment Company, right, and South Korean actor Won Bin pose by a Cinema 3-D TV by LG Electronics during a press unveiling in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2011. LG Electronics says competition is heating up in the global battle to win over customers to 3-D televisions and the South Korean company thinks it has gained a key edge.(AP Photo/Ahn oung-joon)

(AP) -- LG Electronics says competition is heating up in the global battle to woo viewers to 3-D TVs and the South Korean company thinks it has an edge.

Seoul-based LG showed off its Cinema 3-D TV, which it called the "next generation" in the sector as it went on sale Wednesday in the domestic market. LG enlisted the help of popular South Korean movie star Won Bin, who attracted a gaggle of female fans awaiting his arrival for a media event. A global release for the TV is set to start next month.

LG Electronics Inc. and other manufacturers including South Korean rival Samsung Electronics Co. and Japan's Sony Corp. are making a big push into 3-D TV, though sales last year were considered disappointing.

The need for bulky and expensive battery-powered glasses has been seen as a drawback for 3-D TV. Among other negatives have been a lack of content and consumer complaints about eyestrain, headaches and even queasiness.

Still, makers are rushing to improve the viewing experience and come up with cheaper and lighter versions of 3-D glasses.

LG is touting film patterned retarder, or FPR, technology in which lighter glasses like those worn at 3-D movie theaters match up images optimized for each eye to result in a smoother picture. For people who wear eyeglasses, there is a clip-on version.

Havis Kwon, president and CEO of LG's home entertainment business, said that the FPR technology was developed within the broader LG conglomerate by LG Electronics, LG Display Co. and LG Chem Ltd.

Kwon acknowledged that since all manufacturers are introducing 3-D TVs and so-called smart TVs, the stage is set for a tough fight in the developing global market.

"There will be competition between the Korean manufacturers and, of course, there will be another competition between the Korean and the Japanese manufacturers in these areas," he told reporters. "And we believe that there will be a fierce competition ahead of us."

LG Electronics is the world's second-largest manufacturer of flat screen televisions behind Samsung. LG trails global No. 1 Nokia Corp. of Finland and Samsung to rank No. 3 in mobile phones.

The company is coming off a disappointing 2010. It reported its first quarterly loss in nearly two years in the fourth quarter as prices for flat screen televisions fell and its mobile phone business suffered amid intense competition from sophisticated smartphone devices such as Apple Inc.'s iPhone.

S.R. Kwon, an electronics industry analyst at Dongbu Securities in Seoul, said that the global market for 3-D TVs is expected to grow sharply this year to about 18 million sets from 2010's 3.2 million.

LG would not release its 3-D TV sales figure for 2010, but said it expects to sell 5 million this year.

"I think it is very competitive," Dongbu's Kwon said of the FPR technology, calling it superior to what LG's competitors are so far offering.

Shares in [LG Electronics](#) fell 1.2 percent to close Wednesday at 122,500 won (\$110).

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