A 3-D headache or family fun?

May 13 2011

Terrence Masson is the director of Northeastern's Creative Industries program.
Credit: Lauren McFalls

With the recent release of Nintendo's new 3DS, a handheld gaming system, and the popularity of movies like "Thor" and "Avatar," the use of 3-D technology has increased over the past few years. Terrence Masson, director of Northeastern's Creative Industries program, weighs in on 3-D's revival and where the technology is headed.

Movies began using 3-D technology in the 1950s, so why the revival in the past few years?

I think it's pretty simple: revenue. The studios have had to compete with the increased usage of high-end home theater, flat screens, plasma screens, DVDs, on- demand movies and Netflix, and it has been really challenging to get people back into the theaters. You really have to motivate a family of three or four to spend 50 or 60 bucks on a movie

and popcorn these days, and 3-D technology might make it worthwhile for them. So it all comes down to the bottom line.

Today, 3-D technology is not only proliferating in movies, but in video games and in home televisions, too. Do you foresee it being integrated into other media?

That remains to be seen. Right now, the [Nintendo 3DS](#) is, as far as I know, exclusive; there are no other portable platforms that do that. If it becomes popular and proves viable, I guess we'll see. It would be interesting on a larger format screen such as tablets.

The home 3-D stereo market is similarly profit-driven, and sports are leading the way. Companies are banking on the high-end sports enthusiasts to upgrade and spend a lot of money on a stereo and a 3-D set at home.

Nintendo issued a warning with the 3DS, and some 3-D television manufacturers have issued warnings, that extensive use of the devices can cause fatigue and even impair eye development in young children. What's the extent of the problem, and are there other health hazards associated with 3-D?

There is definitely a health hazard in standard 3-D, in the sense that there is a known percentage of people who are randomly disturbed by watching 3-D. I've read some reports that one in 30 people can't actually see in 3-D at all. So between those extremes and the average person, are people who may experience headaches or migraines. What minimizes

that or exacerbates it is the quality of the 3-D experience, and that really depends on whether or not the content has been shot and recorded natively in 3-D to begin with, or if it's converted after the fact. That can make a huge difference.

Provided by Northeastern University

Citation: A 3-D headache or family fun? (2011, May 13) retrieved 28 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2011-05-d-headache-family-fun.html