

Sony shows wearable 3-D personal theater

August 31 2011, By YURI KAGEYAMA , AP Business Writer



A model wears a 60,000 yen (\$800) HMZ personal 3-D viewer during a news conference at Sony headquarters in Tokyo Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2011. Sony Corp. says it will start selling a head mounted display that provides a 3-D theater of music videos, movies and games, targeting people who prefer solitary entertainment rather than sitting in front of a TV with family or friends. (AP Photo/Itsuo Inouye)

Sony says it will start selling a head mounted display that provides a 3-D theater of music videos, movies and games, targeting people who prefer solitary entertainment rather than sitting in front of a TV with family or friends.

Sony Corp. said Wednesday that the 60,000 yen (\$800) "HMZ personal 3-D viewer" is set to go on sale Nov. 11 in Japan, and is planned for the U.S. and Europe, perhaps in time for Christmas, although dates have not yet been set.

Resembling a futuristic visor, HMZ, which stands for "head mounted display," is worn like chunky goggles-and-earphones in one.

The footage before the viewer - a music video of a Japanese singer in the demonstration for reporters in Tokyo - is crystal-clear and feels like peering into a dolls house in which a real-life tiny singer is moving.

It seems unlikely that most people - or even technology enthusiasts - will want to buy a product that involves sitting alone and wearing a little helmet. The HMZ might not be Sony's long awaited answer to Apple's iPod or iPad but just another quirky device packed with cutting-edge technology that is headed for a limited niche following.

A 3-D wearable [gaming machine](#) Virtual Boy from Nintendo Co., which went on sale in the 1990s, bombed, partly because of the bulky headgear required as well as the image being all red.



A model displays the new Sony 3D head mount display (HMD) "HMZ-T1" during an unveiling ceremony in Tokyo. Sony unveiled what it calls the world's first three-dimensional head mounted display, a device that enables its wearer to experience cinema-like virtual screen viewing.

Sony's latest product is far more sophisticated. Sony officials said the gadget delivers the immersive experience of a home-theater, or the equivalent of sitting in one of the best seats of a movie theater.

The machine, which hooks up to Blu-ray disc players and [game machines](#), is targeting people who want to enjoy movies or games alone.

It is not recommended for people 15 years old and younger because some experts believe overly stimulating imagery is not good for teenagers whose brains are still developing, according to Shigeru Kato, a

Sony vice president.

On the plus side, consumers are growing more accustomed to 3-D these days, with the arrival of 3-D TVs and game machines. Kato noted the most popular movies last year, including "Avatar" and "Toy Story 3," were 3-D.

HMZ uses Sony's own OLED screen, a relatively new kind of display that relays superb image quality and color, compared to the more prevalent liquid crystal and plasma displays used in laptops and flat-panel TVs.

Kato said the major challenge had been making a very small display without compromising image quality.

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