End of an era: Sony to stop making Betamax tapes

November 10 2015

Sony announced on Tuesday the company will stop making Betamax video tapes, ending the storied four-decade history of the product that had been ousted years ago by the more popular VHS format.

"Sony will stop the shipment of Betamax video cassettes and micro MV cassettes in March 2016," the company said in a Japanese-language statement.

"With this step, all of our firm's shipment will end for recording media using the Betamax [format](#) and the micro MV cassette format," which is also a Sony-produced video standard, it said.

Sony first launched its Betamax products in 1975 as a household, magnetic video format for consumers to record analogue television shows. The popularity of Betamax tapes peaked in 1984 when some 50 million cassettes were shipped, according to Sony.

However, the format, initially supported by Toshiba and other electronics makers, is most remembered as the loser of the tense corporate battle in the 1970s and 1980s over setting the de facto household [video](#) standard, which was won heartily by the VHS format that was developed by another Japanese electronics maker that now is a part of JVC Kenwood.

VHS gave way to digital formats, such as DVDs, that have largely been replaced by online streaming technology.

Sony stopped making Betamax recorders in 2002, but it kept making tapes for die-hard fans.

Sony said it has sold more than 18 million units of Betamax devices worldwide since its launch.

Sony added it could stop shipping Betamax tapes earlier than the scheduled March end, "depending on the demand conditions".

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Citation: End of an era: Sony to stop making Betamax tapes (2015, November 10) retrieved 27 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2015-11-era-sony-betamax-tapes.html