

Panasonic unveils 3D consumer camcorder

July 28 2010, By YURI KAGEYAMA , AP Business Writer



A model from Panasonic unveils the world's largest 3D camcorder, consisting of a digital high-definition camcorder and 3D conversion lens, in Tokyo on July 28, 2010. The new camcorder has 3 CMOS image sensors and built-in 96GB flash memory that can shoot 3D movies for high-definition 3D home televisions.

The problem of what to watch on a 3-D TV will be yours to solve with Panasonic's camcorder for families to film birthdays, baby's first walk and weddings, all in 3-D.

Numerous global electronics companies are racing 3-D televisions into the shops, hoping a revival of interest in the technology sparked by blockbuster movies such as the sci-fi epic "Avatar" will translate into the

public wanting the 3-D experience at home. But the relative scarcity of three dimensional content is a stumbling block for the products catching on.

The whole camcorder and lens setup, shown Wednesday, starts at about 170,000 yen (\$2,000), far more affordable than professional 3-D camcorders, which have been the only types available up to now for 3-D filming. The camera looks much like a regular digital camcorder but needs a slightly bigger 3-D "conversion" lens that's sold separately.

The 3-D camcorders go on sale in Japan Aug. 20, and will be available in overseas markets later this year, according to the Osaka-based maker of Viera TVs and Lumix digital cameras.

Executive Officer Shiro Nishiguchi said Panasonic sees this year as the opening year for "the 3-D era." Panasonic has led in introducing 3-D products this year, now offering eight 3-D TV models, three 3-D recorders and four designs in 3-D glasses.

"Content you create yourself is going to be what you want to watch, and so it's going to be a killer content," Nishiguchi told reporters at a Tokyo hall.

The 3-D camcorder is expected to help 3-D products for homes spread quickly, he said, adding that Panasonic will start selling a 3-D digital camera for still photos later this year.

Panasonic demonstrated how the camcorder can film a girl playing on swings, and had reporters check out the film through 3-D glasses.

The image was colorful, clear and 3-D but, as a homemade movie, not quite Avatar.

Panasonic said 3-D footage shot on its camcorder can be watched on 3-D TVs from rivals such as Sony Corp. and Samsung Electronics Co.

The technology behind 3-D works by sending a different image to the right eye and the left eye, just like the human brain constructs an illusion of depth and perspective with images that come in from the left eye and the right eye.

Although some 3-D technology doesn't require special glasses, the one shown Wednesday requires special 3-D glasses.

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