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## Sony invites Toshiba and Microsoft to join Blu-ray camp

Let's end the format war with hugs and kisses

by Stuart Miles published on 5 September 2007

Sony Pictures has openly invited Toshiba and Microsoft to join the Blu-ray Disc Association.

The comment above comes from Don Eklund, executive vice president of advanced technologies and Rich Marty, vice president, new business development, after Pocket-lint asked which companies they would most like to have in the Association, following the announcement from Acer that it would start to sell PCs with Blu-ray drives.

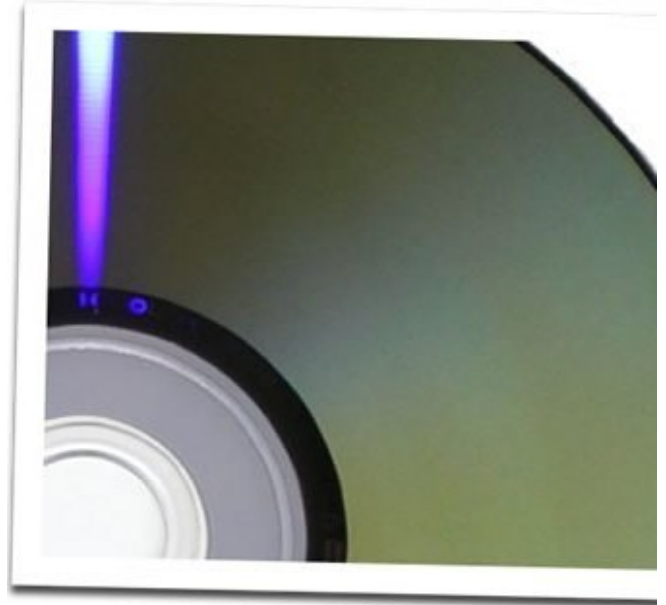
"We would love to have Toshiba and Microsoft on board", said Don Eklund in an interview with Pocket-lint at IFA in Berlin, Germany.

The IFA event saw an official announcement from Toshiba and the HD DVD Promotion Group about the lowering of prices for both HD DVD stand-alone players as well as for laptops with HD DVD drives, trying to fight the format war on price points.

Eklund and Marty questioned Toshiba's pricing strategy; "Tosh can't keep dropping prices much more", said Eklund. "It maybe a strategy for fighting a format war, but for us it has to be profitable."

According to the vice president of technologies he'd: "Never thought the price was an issue ... when it comes to investing in a state of the art entertainment system with HD-Ready television and surround sound system, having to spend a bit extra to get Blu-ray, we feel, isn't going to drive customers away. It's the bigger picture we are looking at".

That apparent naivety is why, according to the Blu-ray camp, players are considerably more



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expensive than their HD DVD counterparts, because they have to be profitable, and it seems that DVD no longer offered that kind of attractive bottom line.

"The DVD format was good, but profitability only lasted for a couple of years before there was no money to be had in the hardware market", said Marty. "We believe consumers are smart enough to realise the benefits and pay the extra accordingly."

When questioned on the Internet, and the potential for the format war to be eclipsed entirely by movie downloads, sounding like music execs from the turn of the last century, both Eklund and Marty dismissed the potential of the Internet:

"People aren't interested in downloading videos at the moment. The internet is a good way of delivering music but not video", said Eklund. "Blu-ray has a good 8 to 10 years before the Internet catches up."

And as for how consumers are supposed to get around the Dreamworks and Paramount shift to HD DVD? "Buy it on DVD", Marty suggested - before quickly adding that Blu-ray players have upscaling features so you can still get the most out of the picture quality.