

Consumer Electronic Show: 3D TVs and Content Predicted to Grow Dramatically in 2012

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The industry still faces a situation, though, in which 3D in the home is waiting for both displays and programming to take off.

LAS VEGAS— 3D for the home is caught in a "chicken or egg" type of scenario with 3D display penetration and available content being the two key factors.

That's the prevalent view among key stakeholders in the industry, assembled this week at the Consumer Electronics Show.

There were plenty of 3D capable displays in Las Vegas. Both Samsung and LG said that more than 50% of their 2012 displays will support the 3D format.

An industry forecast from the Consumer Electronics Association suggested sales of TV sets with 3D functionality would increase 101 percent in 2012 to at least 6.2 million units.

And the buzz among attendees was that there also could be a proliferation of 3D on mobile devices including smartphones.

Meanwhile, as for 3D production, the industry needs to both “maintain quality and get the cost of 3D production down to the cost of 2D production,” **Vince Pace**, co-chairman, Cameron | Pace Group, said. He was among the speakers on a panel about 3D content creation, which emphasized the need to create an economic model that works.

With that goal in mind, CPG has developed technologies including its Shadow system, designed to produce 2D and 3D from a single camera rig. ESPN 3D is among the broadcasters that have started to use the Shadow for live sports events.

Demonstrating its capabilities, ESPN 3D aired *SportsNation*—its first live 3D broadcast of a studio show—from the CES exhibition floor. The telecast used Sony HDC-P1 cameras with 3D rigs from CPG.

In terms of packaged media, the Blu-ray Disc Association reported during CES that there are now at least 89 available 3D Blu-ray titles on the market according to Futuresource Data. That research also projected that by 2013, virtually all BD players sold would be 3D capable, while by 2014, more than half of all TVs on the market would support 3D.

Barry Sandrew, founder of 2D-to-3D conversion company Legend3D, which was on hand at CES, said, “the interest (in conversion) has been increasing dramatically over the past year. I think next year we’ll see (the market open up) in terms of library titles. ... We could (additionally) do ‘Best of (content) for Blu-ray or for broadcasters.”

As to the future of 3D displays, several exhibitors at CES revealed some early autostereo prototypes, which offer 3D without the need for special glasses. LG, for example, showed a monitor, and Stream TV Networks previewed a glasses-free 3D display technology.

Bryan Burns, vp strategic business planning & development, ESPN, pointed out the consumer electronics industry is also moving toward higher resolution imagery, which could raise a production issue. He asked: “Where does the money come from to build that kind of infrastructure?”