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03/10/11 - 3DTV Format War Looming

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3dtv format-war Back on 3rd Jan we wrote a long blog post about the possibility of a 3D TV format war. It seems that the likelihood of a format war took several steps closer today with the news that LG is in talks to supply its new FPR passive 3DTV screens (which we wrote about in December) to Sony according to a Reuters report.

From what I understand, Sony doesn't actually manufacture its own screens, but buys them from the likes of Samsung. In fact, we wrote earlier that Sony had started to source some panels from LG again after a six-year switch to Samsung.

Of course, Samsung are the current dominant player in the 3DTV market, with around a 60% market share due to their "active shutter" display technology requiring the use of the heavier, more expensive glasses that require batteries. Panasonic and Sony also offer active-shutter 3DTV's and LG do too, although they've said they'll be migrating to the new FPR panels this year. LG's new system is based on the polarisation of light and uses the lighter, cheaper glasses as worn in the cinema to watch 3D films.

While LG are talking up their new FPR passive displays, having scented that the market isn't warming to the active-shutter version of 3D due to the bulk and heaviness of the glasses as well as crosstalk and flickering on some displays, Samsung are doing their best to downplay the passive technology.

Some of the recent spats between the top two TV manufacturers include a

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Samsung executive saying in a news conference that LG's engineers were, "stupid" and, separately, that LG's new FPR technology was outdated and based on 1935 technology. LG fanned the flames by saying that its new tech was the second generation of 3DTV and was the direction the market was heading in.

Interestingly, there are significant drawbacks to the new 3D TV passive technology, such as it not being able to do full HD (1080p), viewing angle issues and the fact that **you can't turn the 3D function off!** Here's a video review from CES 2011...

So it does seem like **neither format provides a complete solution** and they're going to be fighting it out for a while!

What does this impending format war mean to you? Please leave your thoughts. I'll close the comment box in a few days...

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