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## Streaming emerges as 3D option

### CES Daily Spotlight: Future of 3D

By ROBYN WEISMAN

Most existing broadcasting and cable infrastructure can't handle 1080p, much less the two HD signals needed for 3D. But 3D streaming has begun to emerge as an alternative to buying Blu-ray discs or surfing the few 3D specialty channels available through cablers.

"Smart TV is a great enabler for 3D," says Sensio executive VP and chief marketing officer Richard LaBerge. "It's not something that will overshadow 3D, it's something that will move 3D to the next stage."

Sensio is betting big on 3D streaming. Last week it announced its own 3DGO! 3D streaming service for Web-connected TVs, set to bow within months (Variety, Jan. 5). TV makers including Sony and Vizio bake 3D streaming directly into their flatscreens. Meanwhile, tech companies including logear and HP are coming out with boxes capable of streaming high-bandwidth 3D content.

Available since last spring, Sony's free 3D Experience service supplies more than 100 different 3D clips, trailers and music videos designed to break down barriers to 3D adoption, says Nick Colsey, VP business planning for Sony's Home Entertainment of America.

"Customers can immediately enjoy great 3D content without having to buy additional equipment or media. They just need a broadband connection," Colsey says.

Providers are still sorting out quality and tech requirements for 3D streaming. Sensio claims their 3DGO! service will use lossless compression and require only a 2 Mbps broadband connection for full 1080p on both eyes. Walmart's Vudu is using side-by-side encoding and Vudu recommends a fast broadband connection, at least 9 Mbps for 3D.

Sony's Video Unlimited streaming service rents more than 50 3D movies and TV shows, ranging from kids fare such as "Bolt" and "Cars 2" to racier stuff like "Sports Illustrated Swimsuit 2011: The 3D Experience."

Other vendors are seeing the benefits of offering 3D streaming. Last November, logear started selling its Wireless 3D Digital Kit at Costco.com, with plans to roll it out to other retailers this year. This kit lets users wirelessly stream 3D content from any 3D source, be it Blu-ray, broadcast or set-top box.

"We are seeing more and more Tier-1 level competitors coming out with this type of solution, which

is confirmation to us that this is a viable market," says logear senior marketing manager Bill Nguyen. "We expect to see big money tied to devices like ours that will stream HD and 3D content from room to room."

Netflix has been hinting at a 3D streaming service for months but hasn't announced anything. A Netflix rep says the company wouldn't comment on 3D at this juncture.

But the shift to HD 3D streaming comes when broadband providers are ending unlimited plans in favor of capped or metered plans. 3D streaming is a bandwidth hog, so streaming 3D movies can eat up a monthly cap very quickly. But Sensio says a 3D movie on its service will be only about 2 Gb, which should make 3D streaming feasible even under capped plans.

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