

Going



Consumers have plenty of choices when it comes to watching high-definition movies and TV shows.

By MIKE FUCHS
Staff Writer

Blu-ray or the highway?
No way.

When it comes to watching your favorite shows or movies in high-definition, we're talking choices, people. Lots of them.

Blu-ray, you may recall, was recently crowned king of the

next-generation DVD format war amid much fanfare.

But before you rush out and spend a big chunk of change on a Blu-ray DVD player, you might want to weigh your options regarding watching shows in hi-def.:



BLU-RAY PLAYER

Pros: Superior video quality compared to regular DVDs. Convenient format, too. Just pop the DVD into your player.

Cons: Hang onto your wallet. Costs anywhere from \$400 to \$600 to buy one.



UPCONVERTING PLAYERS

Pros: Lets you watch your DVD collection in near-HD quality by digitally enhancing the screen resolution. A lot cheaper than a Blu-ray player.

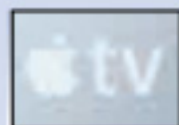
Cons: Quality still inferior compared to Blu-ray.



HD CONTENT VIEWED FROM YOUR COMPUTER

Pros: It's free, although you can buy devices such as Slingbox that let you stream TV programming to your computer. Don't need a high-definition TV.

Cons: Requires a speedy Internet connection and a computer that has a pretty fast processor. Smaller screen size compared to a TV. If you get a device such as Slingbox, you still need to pay \$130.



ONLINE SHOWS, MOVIES FROM YOUR TV

Pros: Using a device such as Apple TV means you don't have to be hunched over your computer to watch your favorite show.

Cons: Price. Apple TV, for example, costs \$229.



TIVO

Pros: Captures television programming onto a hard disk. All you need is an antenna, broadband connection or subscription to digital cable or satellite service.

Cons: Price. About \$299 for a TiVo HD DVR. That does not include a monthly service fee.



SATELLITE AND CABLE

Pros: Watch HD programming on your TV without having to download or stream it. Also have the option of being able to tape content onto a digital video recorder.

Cons: Your monthly bill will increase because HD programming and boxes with built-in DVRs are extra. Storage space is limited.



VIDEO-GAME SYSTEMS

Pros: The PlayStation 3 has a built-in Blu-ray player. The Xbox 360's online service also lets you rent hi-def movies.

Cons: Expect to pay at least \$400, which is on par with some of the cheaper Blu-ray players. But if you don't like video games, what's the point?



MORE ONLINE

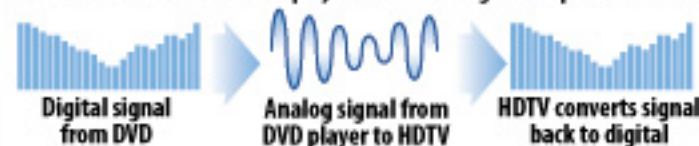
View a multimedia presentation at news-record.com



HOW UPCONVERSION WORKS

Older DVD players convert the digital content of DVDs into analog to play on old analog TV sets. If played on an HDTV, the digital content is converted first to analog by the DVD player, then back into a digital signal by the HDTV. These conversions can degrade image quality.

Content from a standard DVD player has to undergo multiple conversions



An upconverter sends digital data to the TV with no conversions.



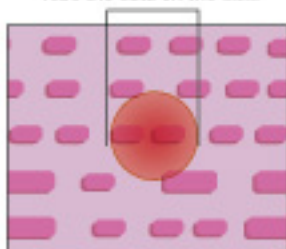
Most DVD players have the same 480 lines of resolution as older TVs. HDTVs have up to 1080 lines of resolution. An upconverter will increase the resolution to match your HDTV by expanding the 480 image to a high-def image. The result will appear much better than a standard DVD, but it won't match the quality of Blu-Ray which displays in actual 1080 lines of resolution.



HOW BLU-RAY WORKS

STANDARD DVD

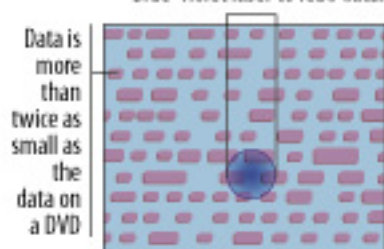
Uses 650 nanometer red laser to read the data on the disk.



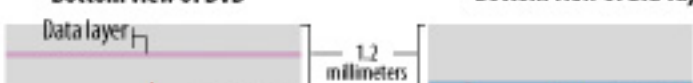
Bottom view of DVD

BLU-RAY

Uses smaller, 450 nanometer Blue-violet laser to read data.



Bottom view of Blu-ray



Side view of disc

Side view of disc



Red laser



Blue-violet laser

In a Blu-ray disc, the data layer is closer to the surface.

Tim Rickard/News & Record