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WE SHOULD BE BUSY!

There might not be a TV in every room in your house, but it wouldn't be surprising if there were.

As of November, according to media researcher Nielsen, 29.9 percent of TV-owning households in the U.S. have four or more televisions--that's very close to one-third of the 115 million domestic domiciles that have at least one television set.

Among the other, relatively impoverished TV households, 25.1 percent have three sets, 28.3 percent have two, and 16.7 percent have a measly single TV.

As you might expect, that many televisions translates to some lofty numbers in other TV-related sectors. Nielsen found that 103.6 million U.S. homes are cable- or satellite-ready. Approximately 51 million American homes have digital cable.

The market has also moved decidedly towards high definition. Nielsen said that 47.4 million homes in the U.S. are HD-capable.

Meanwhile, Americans are moving away from older tape technology. Nielsen found that there are 75.8 million VCRs in American homes today, down 10 percent since 2007. There are currently 101 million DVD players in households, which represents a slight (1 percent) increase since 2007. But it was the DVR that enjoyed the most growth over the past three years. Nielsen said that there are currently 36.7 million DVRs in homes across the U.S., a 12 percent increase since 2007.

Of all the video content consumed in the U.S., just about all of it--99 percent--is still delivered via the television, Nielsen reported. **The average American watches a whopping 31.5 hours of television per week**, while kids between the ages of six and 11 watch 28 hours of live TV every week. (Those findings jibe with figures released in December by the University of California at San Diego, which concluded that "a large chunk of the average American's day is spent watching television.")

FLO TV

The ways people use their iPhones are almost as diverse as the number of people using the device. Soon, you'll be able to add live TV to that list.

FLO TV and Mophie said at CES that they are partnering to develop a series of products that will bring live TV to the iPhone and iPod Touch. The products are expected to ship in the first half of 2010.

The FLO TV service allows users to tune into mobile broadcasts while on the go. The service boasts many of the largest networks including ABC, Fox, MTV, ESPN, NBC, TLC, CBS, CNBC, CNN, and many others.

The partnership with Mophie puts a FLO TV receiver into the company's iPhone and iPod Touch case products. That gives users protection for the device and built-in access to TV programs.

As mobile users know, video tends to drain the battery of devices much quicker than other uses like browsing the Web or checking e-mail. This is another advantage of the Mophie partnership. Mophie's juice pack extends the battery life of the iPhone, allowing you to watch video without draining the main power of the device.

The companies did not say how much the products would cost once released.

CNET

"E" COMMERCE

Traffic to consumer electronics e-commerce sites soared 32 percent from October to November, making it the second fastest-growing retail category after toys.

According to ComScore's Media Metrix ratings service, CE sites grew to 52.8 million visitors in November, led by BestBuy.com with nearly 25 million visitors, GameStop with more than 11 million visitors (up 93 percent from October) and Walmart.com's CE department with 9.9 million visitors (up 139 percent). RadioShack grabbed the No. 4 position with 5.1 million visitors, followed closely by eBay's U.S. electronics department with 4.8 million visitors (up 12 percent), and Buy.com with 4.4 million visitors (up 11 percent).

ComScore said the fastest-growing online destinations of the month were incentive sites, as shoppers scoured the Web for money-saving opportunities, followed by toy e-tailers, coupon sites and CE e-tailers.

CE sites ranked third in total unique visitors, led only by chain-store sites and personal finance sites.

Total online spending in November rose 10 percent year over year to nearly \$12.3 billion, boosted by an 11 percent increase on Black Friday, to \$595 million, and a 5 percent increase on "Cyber Monday," to \$887 million.

Much to the chagrin of employers, over 50 percent of all online purchases on Cyber Monday were made from work computers, ComScore said.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Dear friends in WESA,

Where did 2009 go! Fortunately, December was a pretty good month in sales & service. Hopefully this is a sign of better things to come in 2010. I have a message board at Peko TV which currently reads..."Pray for America, God be with us in 2010."

WESA's winter get away is only weeks away, and our State Convention is only 5 months away. This year we will be going "To The Dells." I have negotiated an excellent contract with "The Wilderness." They were very accommodating about our commitments for room nights, food purchase minimums, Hospitality room, and room rates. The Dates are June 11th-13th, 2010. We will have a hospitality room Fri the 11th & Sat the 12th. The rates are \$109 per night. This is a company paid vacation, use it!

This year's agenda will be a little different. I am proposing a Saturday AM Seminar, either technical or management. (We will discuss it at the Winter board meeting) This will allow people to arrive Fri eve, & partake in the Hospitality room, and then be there bright eyed (yeah right) and ready to go Sat. AM! The Annual meeting will be Sat. PM and the cocktails and banquet will be Sat. eve as usual. The Wilderness is an exceptional facility, family friendly with a water park and other amenities. The rooms have a very rustic appeal, large, comfortable and fully equipped for kitchen usage. This is a special place. You need to be there. You can check them out on their web site at www.wildernessresort.com.

Some people are acting like last year's 50th Anniversary Convention was a grand finale. I like to think of it as the beginning of the next 50. WESA is still a viable group, and there is still a future in electronics. It certainly has changed, but it ain't over yet. I'm not ready to give up, unless I win the lottery. Let's show some support for the people who are still working for you in WESA. You need to be at this year's convention. So "Escape to the Wilderness" in 2010. Talk it up and invite other people you may meet. See you in Manitowoc!

Peko Pete Kosovich,
WESA President

SURROUND AMPS

Prices on AV receivers range from as little as \$100 up to several thousand, but most home theater buyers focus in on the "sweet spot," where you get most of the important features and performance for the least amount of money. We tested the midrange models from nearly all the major AV receiver manufacturers to see how they stack up, and after completing our roundup we came away with some clear picks depending on what you need for your home theater.

The standout AV receiver is the Pioneer VSX-1019AH-K, which we awarded the Editors' Choice. The VSX-1019AH-K does just about everything right—it has four [HDMI](#) inputs, a graphical user interface, and outstanding sound quality. It can upconvert analog video signals to 1080p with average image quality, which is impressive because receivers at this price generally have poor image quality on upconverted sources. The most unique feature is the VSX-1019AH-K's iPod-compatible front panel USB port, which allows you to browse and play back songs from your iPod using the receiver's onscreen display. (Pioneer even throws in an iPod cable.) It's a little more expensive than some of the other receivers we looked at, but you'll feel like you got your money's worth.

The rest of the receivers have their perks, but aren't as well-rounded. The Onkyo receivers are loaded with HDMI connectivity and powerful sound, but have poor upconverted analog image quality. The Denon AVR-1910 has the best upconverted image quality by far, but its sound is just average and it's expensive. The Sony STR-DN1000 comes in cheaper than the other models and has impressive sonics for the price, but it lack some standard features and also has subpar analog video upconversion quality. Coming in at the bottom of the roundup is the Yamaha RX-V665BL; it's not necessarily bad, but we just couldn't find a good reason to choose it over the competing models.

For a more detailed discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of these models, check out our [in-depth comparison blog](#), as well as the individual reviews. **CNET**

USE MORE, PAY MORE

Cox Communications has increased the maximum data-usage limits for broadband customers, including more than doubling the limit for its popular Preferred package to 200 Gigabytes per month.

"We periodically review these bandwidth allowances to ensure customers have access to the bandwidth they need," Cox spokesman David Deliman said.

Cox's new limits for each package are: Economy, 30 Gbytes; Value, 50 Gbytes; Preferred, 200 Gbytes; Premier, 250 Gbytes; and Ultimate, the 50-Mbps downstream service available only in certain markets, at 400 Gbytes. (In some markets, the Economy tier is now called "Starter" and the Value package is now called "Essential.")

To reach the 250-Gbyte ceiling, for example, a subscriber would have to send the equivalent of **50 million e-mails or download 62,500 songs.**



BLU CHRISTMAS

I used to say just how perfect and fantastic a Disney pre-recorded movie was on VHS. What could possibly be better? Then along came DirectTV. No more analog noise in the picture, just pristine programming.

Again I changed my mind when DVD's came along. I was suddenly ready to compare a Disney video on DVD to anything else I'd ever seen. The TV business was once again fun when you could show this kind of quality picture to a client.

So you have already guessed that I changed my tune again with HD TV. I use to tell clients that the picture was even better than they thought because their eyes weren't that good.

I have once again fallen in love. **BLU-RAY!!!**

And guess what Santa brought me for Christmas! Now you haven't seen a good picture 'til you've seen the Starship Enterprise travel across the screen in 1080P.

Bring the popcorn over and watch the first six major Star Trek motions pictures. After 12 hours of previously released content and 2 1/2 hours of all new special features, we can open the original series of Star Trek from TV and watch both season one and two!

Did I mention that another great feature of Blu-ray is the most awesome surround sound ever? Really don't know how things could get any better when it comes to entertainment at home...

WHETHER OR NOT WEATHER

Seems as though most of the human race that lives in Wisconsin survived another storm. Really wish to figure out why the local channels have so much over kill when it comes to watches and warnings.

One of the main problems is that most stations don't have the equipment to post information during a HD program so we all get stuck watching a 4X3 picture with fill in borders and the "crawl" across the bottom.

Interrupting the programming to look at a live SD radar is also not necessary. I did notice that one station actually interrupted the commercial rather than the program. Does this also mean that the people at PBS aren't concerned about our well being? Don't remember seeing news about the fact that the lady's meeting at the Wauwatosa Town hall was cancelled on Channel 10.

They even ran a scroll in the morning to tell us that the Milwaukee Public schools were open! Guess folks can't figure out that if it doesn't say they're closed, then they're open.

Did the weather men get a raise when the stations built their "weather decks"? Now those poor folks need to stand outside in any type of weather to show us how it looks outside. Always seemed stupid to watch those guys down south outside during a hurricane too.

Nuff said.

LEN

CABLE BEATS THE BIG 4

The cable industry began the decade in the ratings shadow of the broadcast networks, but will end it towering above its Big Four competitors in record fashion.

Led by USA Network, which in 2009 repeated as the most-watched basic-cable network, the medium for the first time averaged a 60.7 primetime household share for the year. Cable's performance nearly doubled the combined 32 share garnered by ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox, according to a Turner Broadcasting System analysis of Nielsen data.

Cable's household share has increased every year since 2000 — the last time broadcast-network programming was watched in a majority of households. Back then, before cable networks began developing quality original scripted series and highly-rated reality programming fare, the four broadcast networks averaged a 46.8 household share compared to cable's 41.2.

In 2009, cable's 60.6 share was up 2% compared to 2008's 59.2, while broadcasters' 32.1 share was down 2% from last year's 32.7.

"Viewing shares migrate to cable nets that fulfill strong brand promises with compelling TV programs," Jack Wakshlag, chief research officer at TBS Inc., said. "Broadcast networks seeking cost savings over audience growth inevitably lose market share to cable networks that invest and execute."

On the individual network front, USA Network notched its second straight basic cable ratings title, averaging 3.2 million viewers — a 14% increase over last year's 2.8 million watchers, according to a Disney-ABC Television Group analysis of Nielsen data.

USA's powerhouse lineup of original scripted series — led by veteran spy series *Burn Notice* and freshman shows *Royal Pains* and *White Collar* — carried the network to its third ratings win in four years.

Disney Channel, the last network to beat USA back in 2007, finished a distant second with an average of 2.5 million viewers, up 7% from last year.

ESPN rode the coattails of a strong *Monday Night Football* season to land at No. 3 with 2.3 million viewers, up 8% from last year, while TNT increased 2% to 2.2 million viewers to notch fourth place.

Fox News Channel drew a network-record 2.1 million viewers in 2009 — an increase of 7% over its 2008 average of 2 million — good enough to finish in fifth place for the year.

TBS averaged 1.8 million viewers for No. 6, but was the only top-10 network to experience a year-to-year decline. The "very funny" channel fell 7% from 1.9 million viewers last year.

Nick at Nite (1.73 million, up 2%); A&E Network (1.4 million, up 9%); FX (1.3 million, up 10%) and ABC Family (1.3 million, up 4%) rounded out the top 10.

Nickelodeon remained the most watched network over a 24-hour basis for the 15th straight year, averaging 2.2 million viewers, a decrease of 1% compared to 2008.

Multichannel News

WIRELESS BLU-RAY

LG Electronics has unveiled a wireless Blu-ray Disc set-top player that holds an unusually large 250GB harddrive, capitalizing on the growing options for consumers to download content through Web connections.

Expected to launch this year, the BD590 integrates online movie download service Vudu, as well as allows for storage of photos, music and other media.

People also will be able to copy and archive their CDs onto the player's drive using the new feature 'MusicID.' Powered by Sony-owned Gracenote technology, 'MusicID' will allow people to hear an entire song playing within a movie or TV show using the BD590's remote control.

The player also offers Web access to LG's suite of online partners, including Netflix, CinemaNow, YouTube and Pandora. New LG online partners for its 2010 Blu-ray line are the Picasa photo service and AccuWeather forecasts.

"LG is committed to offering consumers easier access to more content on demand, which is reflected in our 2010 line of Blu-ray products with new content partners, advanced technology and unique design," said Peter Reiner, senior VP of marketing at LG Electronics USA.

At the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January, LG also will tout its rollout of its first 3D-ready LED TVs, the LE9500 series in 55-inch and 47-inch models. The TVs, and most of LG's new TV displays, also include newly integrated partner Skype. With the addition of a separate camera and other equipment, people will be able to make free video and voice calls over the Web via participating TVs. Vizio has unveiled an ultra widescreen 58-inch HDTV that's intended to mirror the widescreen of a movie theater.

WIDESCREEN VIZIO

Unlike most high-def sets that provide a 16:9 ratio, the Vizio 58-inch XVTPRO580CD will have a 21:9 ratio which is close to the 2.35 to 1 ratio of theatrical films.

Vizio introduced the new model the Consumer Electronics Show. However, the company did not say when the set would be launched other than to say "later this year." Vizio also did not say how much the set would cost.

LESS AT CES

The Consumer Electronics Association expects 2,500 exhibitors the next [CES](#) in Las Vegas -- down from approximately 2,700 in 2009 -- although the 2010 confab will feature a record number of more than 330 new exhibiting companies, the trade group said Monday.

CEA expects around 110,00 attendees for the 2010 International CES, its same estimate as last year although the final tally for 2009 beat expectations with 113,085.

The event, held Jan. 7-10, 2010, featured keynote addresses from Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, Ford president and CEO Alan Mulally, Intel president and CEO Paul Otellini and Qualcomm chairman and CEO Paul Jacobs.



THE BUSINESS PAGE



MAGIC LAMPS

Consumers will be able to install their own two-source, two-zone multiroom-audio systems by screwing a combination wireless-speaker/LED light into existing recessed-light fixtures in the ceiling, Klipsch promises.

The system supports up to eight speakers for four rooms of synchronized stereo playback.

The system, called LightSpeaker, was developed by Kadence Designs and will be co-branded with both companies' names.

The centerpiece is a light/speaker that screws into a standard-size Edison-type light-bulb socket in almost all round 5-inch R30 and 6-inch R40 recessed ceiling cans, the companies said. The single-piece housing incorporates 2.4GHz wireless receiver, 20-watt digital amp, 2.5-inch driver, active EQ circuitry, and LED light that delivers the light output of a 65-watt incandescent bulb. Switches on each fixture select the speaker for left- or right-channel playback and zone one or two operation.

Music is delivered wirelessly up to 50 feet from a tabletop transmitter that connects to one or two audio sources. The base's controls consist of zone and source selection, volume, mute, light turn-on, and light dimming. Light dimming is controlled separately from audio volume. The functions are duplicated on a handheld RF remote.

Neither the remote nor the base controls the functions of connected sources, which connect via RCA and minijack inputs.

At the end of January, Klipsch will offer the speakers on its web site in a \$599 package consisting of two speakers, a transmitter, remote and other accessories. Additional LightSpeakers will cost \$249 each. Broader distribution is planned in March.

In some cases, consumers will have to remove the existing light fixture's trim ring, reflector, and other socket plates or clips until the Edison socket is hanging from its wires. Consumers then screw the light fixture into the socket and use an included trim ring and tabs to hold the fixture in the light can.

The light speakers will install in many pendant lights, and with an accessory bracket, it will install in most lamps.

ESPN 3-D

With the television industry buzzing over the possibilities of bringing 3D HD pictures to the living room as it heads to the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, cable sports giant ESPN has gotten a jump on the field by announcing that it will launch a 3D television network, ESPN 3D, this year.

The 3D network, which ESPN calls the industry's first (there may be a European satellite operator that claims otherwise), will feature a minimum of 85 live sporting events in its first year, starting with the first 2010 FIFA World Cup match

on June 11 featuring South Africa vs. Mexico. Other events to be produced in 3D include up to 25 2010 FIFA World Cup matches, Summer X Games, college basketball, and college football, which will include the BCS National Championship game in Glendale, Ariz., January 10, 2011. ESPN, which did not provide any details over which pay-TV operators would carry the service, said additional events will be announced at a later date.

ESPN's 3D push should boost the prospects for new 3D HD TV sets that consumer electronics manufacturers will be showing at CES this week and selling at retail later this year. There has already been speculation that DirecTV will use a new satellite to launch a 3D network, though DirecTV hasn't announced any such plans.

"ESPN's commitment to 3D is a win for fans and our business partners," said George Bodenheimer, in a statement. "ESPN 3D marries great content with new technology to enhance the fan's viewing experience and puts ESPN at the forefront of the next big advance for TV viewing."

"This will be a meaningful step to drive adoption of 3D television sets and afford opportunities for our affiliates to create value through new product offerings, and our advertisers, who want fresh sponsorship opportunities," added Sean Bratches, ESPN executive vice president of sales and marketing.

ESPN has been testing 3D for more than two years, and produced the USC vs. OSU college football game last fall using a new 3D production truck from NEP Supershooters. ESPN says it has developed best practices for utilizing the technology in live game applications which have provided it the ability to streamline workflow operations, adjust 3D camera positioning, test transmission and gauge fan reaction to a 3D telecast versus a traditional telecast.

BROADCASTING & CABLE

BLU-RAY SALES

Walmart is now running neck and neck with giant CE retailer Best Buy in overall Blu-ray disc sales, according to The NPD Group, as reported by Video Business.

The discount retailer has taken a 30 percent market share in Blu-ray sales over the last three months, NPD reports, about the same as Best Buy.

In previous months, Walmart badly trailed Best Buy in Blu-ray sales, pulling just 20 percent of the market compared to Best Buy's 40-50 percent share.

The company made headlines during Black Friday when it dropped the price on a Magnavox Blu-ray player to \$78, the lowest on the market. Two weeks ago, Walmart again lowered the price to \$78.

NPD says the discount retailer has also been successful in targeting females buyers of Blu-ray movies.

Amazon.com and Target have also shown increase in Blu-ray sales with 15 percent and 10 percent market share respectively in the September-November time period, Video Business reports.

DISCOVERY 3-D

Discovery, Sony and IMAX will team to launch a 24-hour 3-D HD network in 2011, the companies announced.

The announcement came hours after ESPN said it would launch a 3-D HD network in June of this year.

The three companies said their 3-D channel, which would be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, would include programming on subjects such as space, adventure, children's issues and history.

"Discovery's business strategy has always focused on delivering groundbreaking content through new platforms, including the first suite of digital channels launched in 1996 and the first 24/7 basic cable HD channel in 2002," Discovery Chairman John Hendricks said in a press release. "Now, as Discovery celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2010 as the world leader in satisfying curiosity and bringing audiences the most realistic viewing experience, we continue to change the face of television with the launch of the first-ever 24/7 dedicated 3D television network."

Both Discovery and DIRECTV hinted as early as last summer that they would likely become involved in 3-D projects. The satcaster was expected to announce at the Consumer Electronics Show that it will also launch a new 3-D channel, probably this year.

DIRECTV could offer the Discovery/Sony/IMAX 3-D broadcasts on the special channel or as a standalone channel.

GAMERS

As the game console wars rage on, new findings from Nielsen may give Xbox 360 fans a little more fodder for their bragging rights.

According to the market researcher, Microsoft's Xbox 360 is the most-used console when measured by its share of total usage minutes, capturing 23.1 percent of gaming time. It is followed by the PlayStation 2 with 20.4 percent of usage time and the Nintendo Wii with 19 percent. Surprisingly, the PlayStation 3 didn't make the list top-three list.

But Nielsen didn't stop there. The company said that 54 percent of American homes own a game console or handheld system. And so far, 41 percent of homes have at least one current-gen console.

Perhaps one of Nielsen's most important findings relates to gamers themselves. The research firm found that active female gamers (those who play at least one hour per week) represent 45 percent of the entire gamer market.

The rise in the number of female gamers was buoyed by both the Nintendo Wii and Sony's PlayStation Portable, which have high female-gamer populations. According to Nielsen, 49 percent of Wii players and 52 percent of Sony PSP gamers are female.

THE DIGITAL HOME

Mount Baker in Washington state is the world record holder for the most snowfall in one season. In the winter of 1998-1999, the ski resort recorded 1,140 inches (29 meters) of snow.

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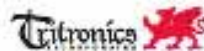
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MORE 3-D

Do you want to watch Avatar in eye-popping 3D in your living room?

3D television is the Next Big Thing at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas right now, with several big-name set makers due to release their first 3D-capable televisions this year. Sony has been talking it up for months and, by 2013, the consumer electronics giant hopes that somewhere between 30 and 50 per cent of all new Sony televisions sold will include 3D features. Even the PlayStation 3 will get a firmware upgrade to 3D, although you'll still require a 3D television.

Thankfully 3D glasses have come a long way since the red and blue cellophane jobs you got with Pizza Hut boxes back in the 80s. When the IMAX 3D theatres first opened in the 90s you had to wear bulky LCD shutter glasses which quickly covered each eye - they were heavy and they tended to give people headaches. Today at IMAX you just wear a set of over-sized sun glasses with different polarization in each lens, which are lighter and a lot more comfortable because they don't contain any electronics.

Another format war already seems to be brewing, with some TV manufacturers showing off cheap passive polarized glasses at CES while others are opting for slim-line active shutter glasses that run on batteries and link to the television wirelessly. You can bet the active glasses will be expensive, making them a nice little money-spinner for TV makers as people won't be able to watch movies in 3D unless they've got enough glasses for everyone in the room. I wouldn't put it past each vendor to use a slightly different format so your friends can't bring around their own glasses unless they own the same brand television. If anyone loves an expensive proprietary format, it's Sony.

So what about the latest 3D movies? I've seen Avatar in 3D at IMAX and it is amazing. It was the first 3D movie I've seen that wasn't merely designed to show off 3D effects, so it wasn't full of people swinging punches at the camera just to give audiences a thrill. In many parts the 3D was far more subtle.

I doubt movie-makers have decided to resurrect 3D just to help with story-telling, it's about finding ways to keep people paying for content - such as going to the cinemas. I suspect that even people who tend to illegally download most movies will still pay to see Avatar in 3D at the cinemas. Of course releasing 3D televisions would seem to negate this, but you can bet 3D televisions and content will come with yet another layer of Digital Rights Management. I'm sure that's one of the reasons why Sony opted for active shutter glasses, to give it another layer of control over the viewing experience.

3D might be great for visual feasts like Avatar but, apart from blockbuster action movies, I don't think people will be rushing to embrace 3D for movies. When it comes to dramas, for example, people want to become engrossed in the plot rather than be distracted by the special effects. Perhaps games consoles might offer the best platform for 3D to win acceptance in living rooms.

Smh.com

BETTER GLASSES



Gunnar Optiks, which makes a line of "digital" glasses that are designed to reduce eyestrain, has announced that it will be offering a collection of 3D glasses enabled with components of its i-AMP lens technology. The company says it will make versions available for the most widely used 3D platforms in gaming and video.

"There have been amazing advances in the delivery of the media, but we see a massive need for someone to address the optics of the eyewear," said Rob Aarnes, Gunnar's president. "Currently most eyewear used in 3D systems is either disposable or of low-quality construction. With our expertise in optics and our commitment to the digital world, we see the opportunity as a natural fit."

The company says it's relying on components of its i-AMP technology to provide the optics. It notes that while typical 3D eyewear is stamped from a flat sheet of plastic, Gunnar lenses are shaped, formed and cut to provide distortion-free optics."

There's some debate over whether Gunnar glasses truly reduce eyestrain. Some people, including a couple of our video editors here at CNET, swear by them, while others say they don't think they make a real difference. Gunnar eyewear with i-AMP 3D is slated to be available in Q2 of 2010 in configurations that are compatible with iZ3D gaming systems and RealD video. Ready to wear versions will be priced from \$89 to 149. Prescription eyewear in both configurations will be available in Q3.

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CABLE BOXES

CableLabs announced it has set aside a portion of its Colorado facility to informally test 3DTV sets for compatibility with a range of cable set-top boxes.

The cable research and development consortium has been performing ad-hoc testing of 3DTVs with set-tops since last summer and is now expanding the program, said David Broberg, CableLabs vice president of consumer video technology.

CableLabs isn't granting 3D certification per se; rather, the testing is intended to provide feedback to manufacturers on complying with existing specs. "We're looking at what happens when you try different TVs and set-tops," Broberg said. "We want to eliminate the opportunity for surprises in the field."