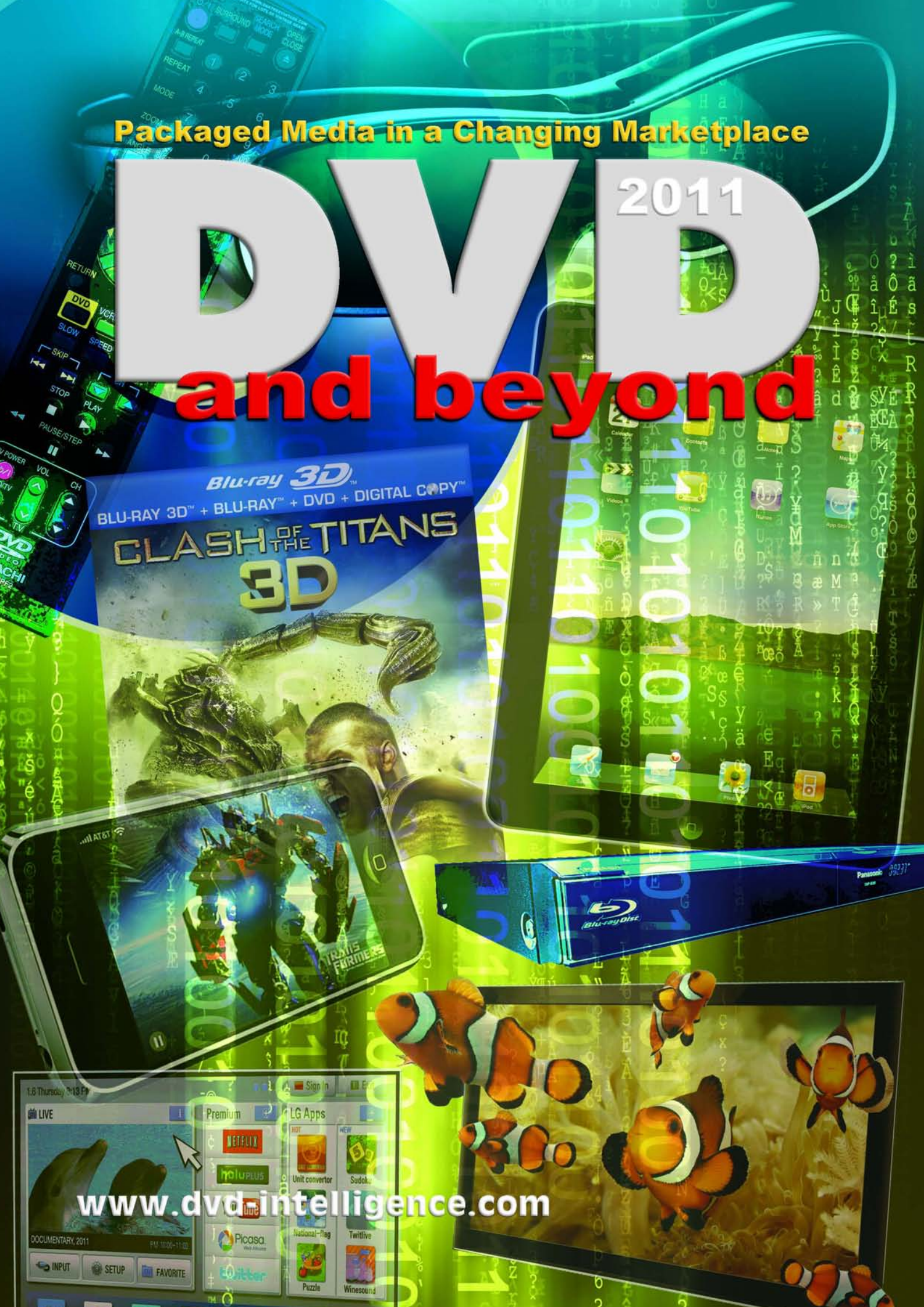


Packaged Media in a Changing Marketplace

DVD 2011 and beyond



www.dvdintelligence.com



Jean-Luc Renaud

Welcome to the 13th edition of our annual publication, the informative, inquisitive, and at times irreverent companion to www.dvd-intelligence.com, our industry website.

A magazine, launched at the dawn of DVD, that still offers today food for thought on the present and future of discs, surely is a reminder that, notwithstanding sagging DVD sales figures, packaged media is still a massive global business worth about \$50bn. And running on an installed base of nearly 1.5 billion DVD playback devices worldwide.

Emerging after a bloody battle in which combatants hemorrhaged marketing money, Blu-ray won only to face inauspicious economic circumstances, that worsen with each passing quarter. No surprise, then, that the growth of the hi-def format appears not to meet early expectations. Slow perhaps, but the march is inexorable, especially now that BD hardware and software can be had for the price of a night at a budget hotel! While this makes for happy consumers, authors and replicators suffer, and that's not good for the creative industry.

Beyond its unmatched video and audio quality, it is the potential for bridging the gap with the online world that attracted me to Blu-ray. I have seen BD-Live at work. It breaks new grounds. I thought it was a USP the industry would be keen to build on. That was not to be the case.

Perhaps because 3D erupted virtually unannounced onto the scene. The speed with which the industry is pushing 3D may also be a recognition – an admission? – that it is Blu-ray's ultimate saving grace. In truth, 3D does turn the migration from DVD to Blu-ray into a revolution, rather than a mere evolution, thus mirroring the VHS-to-DVD quantum leap.

That is the reason why the magazine, this year, offers a number of articles exploring 3D for home entertainment – and naturally 3D BD – from a variety of perspectives. Some of those contributions are based on the successful 2-day Blu-ray Disc Academy conference dedicated to all aspects of 3D which we organised at Hamburg in May of this year.

It brought together pioneers who are pushing the 3D envelope. Beside sharp-minded analysts from leading think-tanks and producers, authors and tool developers, delegates heard from researchers pushing the frontiers of stereoscopy, glasses-free autostereoscopy and even holography.

Videos of all the presentations are available at www.dvd-intelligence.com/video/index.php?id=2. For the price of the same night at the budget hotel above, more than nine hours of cutting-edge material on 3D are yours to keep!

Hard-working *DVD and Beyond* readers are forgiven for feeling despondent as they hear the online prophets repeat

ad nauseam that the days of packaged media are numbered. They shouldn't.

Surely, no condition is permanent, but what seems to be permanent is – unlike packaged media – the inability of most video online delivery services to make money, let alone sign up large numbers of customers!

Connected TVs are selling well, apparently. But once in the living room, few TVs are connected – linear television still rules the waves. Remember Google TV? Not Page & Brin, who just used their pocket money to purchase Motorola.

Online prophets are now looking up to the sky, for cloud formation. From Hollywood's UltraViolet to Apple's iCloud, we are invited to do away with reliance on discs in the knowledge that our assets are more easily accessible in the virtual world, secured behind so-called digital lockers.

Well, when one sees clouds in Britain, one reaches for an umbrella (a *broolly*, as we call it here), because rain is on the way! Don't expect telecom operators to let you clog the arteries of their Wi-Fi network by streaming *Harry Potters'* movies without wanting a slice of the action. Even 24/7 use of Spotify, be it the free ad-supported or the pay ad-free option, can badly hurt your financial health.

The 'all-you-can-eat' contracts are on the way out. Prepare to top up your audio/video content subscription with hefty delivery fees. Worse, in many cases you don't even keep what you pay for! Call it network operators' cloud control.

In this context, packaged media becomes an attractive alternative – if it ever ceased to be one. Reasonably-priced, collectable, provider of the highest quality in 2D or 3D, playable in places out of reach of Internet, and now featuring Digital Copy to transfer content on your other devices, the Blu-ray Disc has suddenly a lot going for it.

The magazine brings a unique blend of perceptive analyses. Also, nine industry movers and shakers answered our questions in an exclusive survey on DVD, Blu-ray, 3D and the future of packaged media.

The support we have received from the industry, especially in these times of economic hardship, has been once again most gratifying. It helped maintain this publication as the annual review that market-leading companies prefer to use in their efforts to reach customers in Europe.

After eight years in operation, our website attracts record numbers of visitors, now from over 100 countries. It is Europe's premier online source of news, analysis and data on packaged media and other delivery technologies vying for position. And now with a unique video section.

As always, I welcome your comments. Good read!

