DWPC Technology Newsletter

Technology news from David W. Potts Consulting

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Welcome to the seventh edition of the David W. Potts Consulting ***DWPC Technology Newsletter***. I hope you find this information helpful. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please send me an email, indicating such. If you received this newsletter from a friend and wish to be added to the mailing list, please email me at the address above and indicate your desire to receive the newsletter.

3D or Not 3D . . . that is the question. And, if you choose to go with 3D video, should you use the active shutter or circular polarization technology? To answer the first question,let me share a story. My wife and I recently replaced the television in our front room. We auditioned a number of 2D and 3D sets, using plasma, LCD and LED technologies (and both 3D technologies). I explained to my wife that, if you purchase a 2D set, but want to later watch a 3D movie, you won't have that opportunity (well, there is a company working on a technology to present 3D content on a 2D TV . . . but we won't get into that, right now). Conversely, if you have a 3D TV, you can still watch 2D material. Although she was rather hesitant about the jump to 3D, once we brought the set home and she sat down and watched a few 3D movies, she agreed the purchase was a good idea--and we both love the set we chose. Now for the display technologies . . . plasma technology uses more power than the LCD or LED sets and may be better for some faster action scenes. The LCD technology uses a florescent "backlight" behind the LCD panel and takes more power than the LED sets. LED sets have LEDs (Light-Emitting Diodes) either behind or at the sides (the latter is "edge-lit") of the LCD panel. LEDs have a very long life and run cool, taking less power than plasma or LCD, and are some of the thinnest displays. We wanted to be "greener" and went with the edge-lit LED technology. And now for the 3D technologies . . . the "active shutter" technology uses glasses that use batteries and liquid crystal "shutters" that block each eye 50% of the time, very rapidly (and the picture on the screen changes for the appropriate eye). The other technology is called "circular polarization" and utilizes the same "passive" technology (the glasses use no power) used in theatres. I performed some research and auditioned sets using both technologies and decided I liked both technologies, equally. The advantage of the circular polarization technology is with the glasses, as the passive glasses are lighter, use no batteries, and are much less expensive than the active glasses (I purchased 5 pairs on eBay for $10, total).

Why does my new TV sound so bad? The slimmer cabinets of the new televisions don't allow for large enough "drivers" to produce much [volume] or high quality sound. There are options to resolve this . . . and help you better enjoy your home theatre experience. Although I do know a couple of people who don't much care about the audio of their audiovisual system, most people (me included) have a much more realistic experience when the video experience is augmented by quality audio. There are many options available to replace the substandard audio in the slim monitors. I love "surround sound". Some people simply want to make the TV sound better and louder, and stereo is adequate. If this is the case, there are many options, such as using "PC speakers" (many under $100, and some include subwoofers for better bass response) and "soundbars" (some have built-in subwoofers, some have wired or wireless subwoofers). There are some soundbars that claim to provide a 3D sound effect. My preference is at least a 5.1 channel "Surround" system. The "5" refers to the center, left and right front speakers and the left and right rear ("surround") speakers and the ".1" refers to a subwoofer (that usually includes an integrated amplifier). For larger rooms, there is the "7.1" Surround system that adds a left and right side speakers. If you really want to, there are systems available with over 20 channels (even I think that is overkill for a home theatre!). Unfortunately, most of the quality Surround systems require that wires are used to connect the amplifier to the speakers. Please allow David W. Potts Consulting to assist you with your audiovisual needs.

How do I . . . Please submit questions to me via email to the address at the top of page 1. Questions may be answered in future issues of this newsletter, or may be addressed individually. I often have clients who exclaim, after my correcting their issue, how they have been frustrated by working on an issue for weeks before calling me. Often the problem takes less than an hour to correct. Many mention how, next time, they will call me first to avoid the frustration! I have helped people do things from selecting and programming a high-tech remote control to setting up a company's network infrastructure.

David W. Potts Consulting will be happy to assist you with your hardware, software and network selection, purchase, integration, troubleshooting and training. We specialize in Microsoft Windows computers and networking and can also assist you with other electronics consulting.