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Michael Giltz

Award-winning freelance writer

Posted January 9, 2009 | 03:54 PM (EST)



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DVDs: To BluRay Or Not To BluRay?



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Okay, so last week we had a lively discussion about BluRay DVDs. [Go here to read it](#) and the lengthy thread. Let me take another stab at laying out what I think about BluRay, how studios should approach it, who it's right for and a rundown of some recent titles and whether they make sense to buy on BluRay instead of regular DVD. After that, I'll run down some regular DVD releases just out.

of it as a Special Edition DVD. If your movie came out in a basic edition and in a Special Edition with loads of extras and cost about the same price, which would you buy? The Special Edition of course. That's how I feel about BluRay.

2. BluRay is a serious improvement in picture quality -- In all the hundreds of comments we had last week, there was one comment we didn't see: a comment from someone who had gone BluRay and thought it wasn't worth it. Doesn't mean it's right for you, but those who have seen the picture on an HD-ready plasma or LCD screen compare it to the difference between standard TV and hi-def. Even Grandpa can tell the difference.

3. The cost of going BluRay can be minimal -- If you've already got an HD-ready plasma or LCD TV, you probably spent thousands of dollars on it and a sound system. It's crazy not to spend an extra \$150 to get a major boost in picture quality. If you plan on buying an HD-ready TV in the next five years, why not buy a BluRay player that can play the regular DVDs you already own as well as BluRays? Sure, you won't get the boost in picture quality right away, but when you DO upgrade your TV, you'll have a library of BluRay titles ready to go. (I'm speaking as a guy who had about 30 CDs before I bought a CD player. I hate to have a new toy and not own the software to enjoy it.)

1. BluRay is not really a new format -- It's really just a spiffing up of standard DVDs. Think

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4. Don't buy BluRay titles unless they're the same price or just a few bucks more --

There is ABSOLUTELY NO NEED to upgrade all the DVDs in your library. Old TV shows, documentaries and movies? They look just fine. Maybe a handful of classics you really love might be worth the money (like *The Godfather* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*), but that's it. This isn't like the switch from cassettes to CDs where you bought every album you owned in a new format. Your current DVDs look great (and in fact, most BluRay players and some HD-ready plasma and LCD TVs can make them look even better, if not BluRay better).

5. Studios: make BluRay the same price as regular DVDs or the format upgrade will die --

BluRays should not be seen as an excuse to bump up the price of DVDs, the way they bumped up the cost of albums when going from cassette to CD. The DVD market is mature and studios should be thrilled that they can offer the improved quality of BluRay to keep people happily buying titles. If studios don't make BluRays the same price, I'm convinced the format will fade away in a few years.

6. The risk of going BluRay is nonexistent --

DVDs are not going anywhere. However fast downloads and streaming take over, DVDs will definitely be around and available worldwide for the next decade at least. And even if in 15 years they stopped making DVDs, that doesn't mean the catalog you built up would suddenly be useless. I'm going to be playing and enjoying my CDs and DVDs until the day I die, whether the kids are downloading MP3s, watching 3-D holograms of movies or whatever. Other people are enjoying their LPs. You may buy e-books and read them on the Kindle; I can still enjoy my hardcover novels. The worse case scenario is that they stop making BluRays in two years. But regular DVDs (an \$18 billion market) aren't going anywhere soon. And the BluRay player you buy will still be able to play regular DVDs. So you'll have some movies in BluRay that look great AND be able to watch all your classic DVDs and new titles for years to come. You'll be able to buy a BluRay-compatible DVD player for a low price (or just get the newest PlayStation) for many years to come. If you want a turntable or cassette deck, they're cheap and easy to get. The same will be true about DVD players.

7. You're on a budget -- If you only rent movies, Netflix offers BluRay rentals for just \$1 more. If you're a family of four on a tight budget, buying *Wall-E* or *The Dark Knight* for \$25 is a much better purchase than actually going to the movies. Of course, if you're on such a tight budget that a \$150 BluRay player seems like an extravagance (and they'll be \$100 by the end of the year), there's always the local library to borrow DVDs for free.

In short, I do NOT expect BluRay to last unless studios make them the same price as regular DVDs and pronto. But meanwhile they are pouring out titles on BluRay and those movies do look darn good. And when you compare the sales prices, they're increasingly the same price or just a few dollars more. You don't have to dump your library of DVDs and buy them all over again. I certainly won't. There's no new technology on the horizon that will make DVDs (either regular or BluRay) irrelevant or passe the way CDs made cassettes and LPs hopelessly inferior to most people. Downloadable hi-def and streaming could become the dominant way people buy or more likely rent movies in the next ten years. But neither of them is such a quantum leap above regular and BluRay DVDs that you'd find them gathering dust. They're just potentially more convenient, possibly, for some. Not better. The looming possibility of OLED or 3-D TV probably won't stop anyone from buying a really nice plasma or LCD TV and they shouldn't. New technology is always on the horizon but DVD has proven itself and BluRay is a great form of DVD. I've dished most new formats for enjoying entertainment over the years, including laser disc, Divx, cassettes, MP3s (I still don't understand why anyone would buy an album that way instead of the CD), the competing BluRay and HD-DVD battle (I hate format wars and said people should wait and neither seemed necessary) and so on. I've only embraced two formats: CDs and DVDs. I also embraced the iPod and the Tivo/DVR as well worth the investment. That's it and it's a pretty good track record. BluRay is not a whole new format and for people who regularly rent or buy DVDs, the flood of titles coming out in the next 18 months and the dropping prices make BluRay a safe adjunct to your DVD library.

Here are some new BluRay titles and my opinion as to whether they're worth buying:

BABYLON A.D. (\$39.98 on BluRay versus \$34.98 on regular Special Edition DVD; Fox) -- This is a good example of the shrinking price difference between regular and BluRay. Find it on sale and that \$5 difference can be \$4. The film is also available for \$29.99 on a single disc edition, though personally I don't know why they keep putting out stripped down editions like that. It seems a pain for stores to have to carry two (or now three, if you count BluRay) versions of the same movie.

"Washington Unplugged"

Arianna was on CBS' "Washington..."

Alex Leo The "Real Housewives Of New York City" Flowchart Of Hate

I'm a little embarrassed to love this show as much as...

"BRUNO" TRAILER! Calamity, African Babies, Chase Scenes And More (NSFW VIDEO)

IT'S HERE! The trailer for this July's Sacha Baron Cohen...

NATO Leaders Focus On Afghanistan, But Most Reject Obama's Plea For Troops (SLIDESHOW)

STRASBOURG, France — On the eve of the NATO...

First Lady Fashion At Friday's NATO Concert (PHOTOS)

Another night, another fashion opportunity for NATO leaders and their spouses! See...

Diana Palin, Sarah Palin's Sister-In-Law, Arrested For Breaking Into Home

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Police say Alaska Gov...

John Oliver Explains The Real Reason You Never Touch The Queen (VIDEO)

John Oliver was upset enough to drop his monocle when he...

Obama Teases Reporter From India During Press Conference (VIDEO)

Obama held a conference packed with press from around the world on Thursday. He called...

Jim Cramer Declares The Depression "Over" (VIDEO)

On Thursday's episode of "Mad Money" host Jim Cramer declared that the depression...

Scientists Find Rocket Fuel Chemical In Infant Formula

ATLANTA — Traces of a chemical used in rocket fuel were found in samples of...

Least Wasteful Cities In America (SLIDESHOW)

It's great to love the city you live in, and better to

Sales of DVDs are slowing down. If studios were smart, they'd realize that DVDs trumped VHS because they were CHEAPER and offered a lot more value, including better picture and sound and loads of extras VHS never could. They're spending the money on the extras already. Why not just sell the Special Edition for \$29.99 (on regular or BluRay) and if they're very lucky, sales won't continue to slide? The extras are exactly what make DVDs superior to streaming or downloading so they should stop seeing them as an excuse to charge a premium. The movie got lambasted by fans and critics (and the director), but if you do want a loaded DVD, since the BluRay is just a few dollars more and this is a sci-fi spectacle, it's worth it.

DEXTER THE FIRST SEASON (\$54.98 on BluRay versus \$39.98 on regular DVD) TV shows like *Dexter*, which is seen on Showtime, live for DVD since so many people don't have the chance to watch the show when it airs on pay cable. That's why it's a shame the BluRay version costs \$15 more on BluRay. Sure that's only \$5 per disc, the margin that doesn't seem so bad when you're buying just one movie. It has some extras unique to BluRay like a Michael C Hall podcast, but what really matters is the show. If you own the show already, there's absolutely no need to upgrade. If you're thinking of buying, I would recommend renting the BluRay instead. If you know you want to own, get the regular DVD. On sale, the BluRay is only \$8 more on Amazon, but I have a visceral reaction to the SRP especially since the price tends to go back up after it's been on sale for a week or two.

THE DUCHESS (\$39.99 on BluRay versus \$29.98 on regular DVD) -- Sci-fi extravaganzas aren't the only flicks that pop on BluRay. Costume epics like this one can look smashing too. The movie came and went but it has an excellent cast (including Ralph Fiennes, Charlotte Rampling, the too-handsome-for-his-own-good Dominic Cooper and Keira Knightley. Too bad the BluRay is \$10 more than the regular DVD. Rent it or wait.

GHOSTTOWN (\$39.99 on BluRay versus \$29.98 on regular DVD) -- A romantic comedy starring one of David Letterman's favorite guests, Ricky Gervais. (Not to mention the screwball comedy heroine Tea Leoni and Greg Kinnear.) Middling reviews, and the sort of film that isn't going to wow anyone in any format as far as picture or sound. Rent it. Hmm, now it seems like the introduction of BluRay has made me LESS likely to buy some questionable movies and more likely to rent them on Netflix, where I can enjoy them on BluRay for \$1 more. That's yet another reason studios need to drop the price of BluRays ASAP. They're telling people that something better is available but making it easy to resist with higher prices, which can slow down the acceptance of BluRay AND slow down sales of regular DVDs.

EAGLE EYE (\$39.99 on BluRay versus \$34.98 for the regular DVD Special Edition) -- Here's a technological thriller perfect for BluRay, thanks to a state-of-the-art sheen and enough quick cuts and camera angles to thrill the biggest geek. The movie is an uninspired spin on technology run amok, but it's diverting enough with Shia LaBeouf and Michelle Monaghan running around -- at least until the flat finale. The SRP difference is \$5 but when you check out the sale price on Amazon they are exactly the same price. That's good news, especially for a movie geared towards early adaptor fan boys. If you're gonna get it, why wouldn't you get it on BluRay?

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (\$34.99 on BluRay versus \$19.98 on regular DVD Special Edition) -- This is not the new Keanu Reeves remake but the classic (if stodgy) Robert Wise film from 1951. Unlike the Keanu flick, this is not a special effects-driven extravaganza but a talky little movie more akin to a very good *Twilight Zone* episode. The BluRay has exclusive extras, like the ability to create a theremin-driven score. But that hardly makes up for the \$15 price gap in a movie that's over 50 years old. Even when you check out the sale price, there's still a \$10 gap. That's just not acceptable. As with any title, if a particular film is one of your favorites of all time and you're determined to own a copy, I guess the BluRay is worth it. But only in those rare instances. In most cases, get the regular DVD or just wait for the price to drop.

THE WACKNESS (\$39.95 on BluRay versus \$28.96 on regular DVD) -- I don't want to continue the misperception that only action and sci-fi flicks need BluRay. But certainly a quiet indie film like this -- about a teen selling pot in 1994 NYC -- isn't going to make a huge improvement with a better picture. Yes, any good movie will look all the better on BluRay. But \$11 better? On sale, the price difference is still \$6 and hey, that used to buy you a nickel bag. Josh Peck is a genuine talent, but this Sundance drama was overpraised so unless you really want to see Sir Ben Kingsley kiss one of the Olsen twins in BluRay, this is a renter.



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A cabin of one's own: New England's MacDowell Colony celebrates 100 years of artistic utopia. And the gay and lesbian artists who prospered there celebrate ... (The national gay & lesbian newsmagazine)
by Michael Giltz

Affairs to remember: Farley Granger bedded Ava Gardner, Shelley Winters, and Leonard Bernstein. In his autobiography, *Include Me Out*, Hitchcock's muse ... (The national gay & lesbian newsmagazine)
by Michael Giltz

RIGHTEOUS KILL (\$39.98 on BluRay versus \$29.97 on regular DVD) -- The first time De Niro and Pacino met on camera (in *Heat*) it was a giant event. This time? Not so much. It'll probably gain some fans on DVD because a cast this good is watchable even if the movie ain't special. Let's face it, the demand for entertainment when you're at home isn't always as strict as it is in the theater. But there's nothing special about paying \$10 more for a cop movie. The \$6 difference on the sale price is just a smidgen too much for me as well. The more we reward movies that cost the same or less on BluRay (like *Into The Wild* and *Eagle Eye*), the sooner the studios will wise up and lower prices. Rent it or wait.

SUPERHERO MOVIE (\$29.95 on BluRay versus \$19.95 for the regular DVD or the Extended Version DVD) -- Okay, this gets a little complicated. I'm a big fan of Drake Bell but this spoof in the vein of *Airplane* is a modest goof on *SpiderMan*. The BluRay is priced at \$10 more than the other versions. However, the BluRay contains both the regular and extended cuts of the movie and if you look at the sale price, it's only \$2 more than the regular DVD version of the theatrical cut. (For some reason, the Extended Cut regular DVD is cheaper, meaning the BluRay costs \$5 more than that.) So if you wanted the theatrical version or just really, really like Drake Bell, an extra \$2 for the BluRay seems well worth it to me.

AND NOW, THE REST OF THE DVDS OUT THIS WEEK

CLASSIC AND NEW MOVIES -- The rather grandly named DVD *The Films Of Michael Powell* (\$24.96; Sony) collects all of two movies by the iconoclastic director. One of them is a late career curio with a lovely young Helen Mirren as the main draw. But the other is the classic *A Matter Of Life and Death aka Stairway To Heaven*, with David Niven as the fighter pilot who is crashing to his death, falls in love with the voice of the female radio operator he's talking to, fails to get picked up by an emissary from heaven and then argues he should be allowed to live. In other words, like so many Powell-Pressburger films, it's utterly unique and charming. This print captures its striking look quite well, with the color shots of earth looking even better than the black and white fantasy sequences in heaven. I put in the DVD just to check out the print and found myself drawn into the film almost against my will. It's that good and an excellent print of it is worth every penny of this DVD. *Blind Mountain* (\$29.95; Kino) is the story of slavery in China, the sort of film that makes you think, how did they ever get that made? *Bangkok Dangerous Special Edition* (\$34.98; Lionsgate) finds Nicolas Cage still stuck in a rut, but a pretty action-packed one that can be mildly diverting if you're not too demanding. *Ping Pong Playa* (\$27.98; Image) is a cute, modest comedy about a jive-talking Chinese-American kid who loves basketball but has to play in the big ping pong tournament in place of his brother. Matthew McConaughey never did like keeping his shirt on and his new comedy *Surfer, Dude* (\$29.98; Anchor Bay) gives him every excuse to avoid it. He's a surfing pro who hates the commercialization of the sport and fans of surfing will enjoy it. But with a cast that includes Woody Harrelson and Willie Nelson, however much you laugh I'll bet it was a lot more fun to make the movie than watch it. *Disaster Movie* (\$29.95; Lionsgate) is the latest in a seemingly endless stream of movie spoofs. If you keep watching them, they'll keep making them.

HORROR/THRILLER MOVIES -- Splatter flicks and women-in-danger movies are just not my cup of tea. But I do appreciate Clive Barker's imagination and sense of dread. *Hellbound: Hellraiser II* (\$19.97; Anchor Bay) is a 20th anniversary edition with some new features. *The Alphabet Killer* (\$26.97; Anchor Bay) is based on a true story about the brutal murder of a ten year old girl and features an above average cast that includes Timothy Hutton, Cary Elwes, Michael Ironside and Eliza Dushku of *Buffy*. *Ghost Writer* (\$19.95; Genius) is a tense thriller with a gay subtext (or is that text?) directed by and starring Alan Cumming as a landlord obsessed with his tenant David Boreanaz (quite naturally, of course; who wouldn't be?). It gets much nastier, of course. *Pulse 3* (\$19.98; Genius) continues the franchise where zombies come back to life via electronic devices. I knew I should have never bought that iPhone.

TV ON DVD -- Catch up with the smash hit *The Secret Life Of The American Teenager Season One* (\$39.99; ABC Family) and look for my interview with creator Brenda Hampton on Monday, the day episode two of the new season airs. Family programming from the past gets its due with *The Waltons Eighth Season* (\$39.98; Warner Bros.) with World War II dominating everything and a new actor as John Boy, though it's easier to swallow since he immediately goes MIA. *Duckman Seasons Three and Four* (\$49.98; Paramount) celebrates the most irascible duck since Howard -- and a much heavier drinker. Jason Alexander's best work outside of *Seinfeld*. *10 Items Or Less First and Second Seasons* (\$29.95; Sony) is the happily dumb workplace comedy set in a grocery store. I worked in a grocery store for six years so maybe that's why I've avoided it but my friend Liz says it's good, turn-off-your-brain comedy so I'll give it a shot. *Greek Chapter Two* (\$29.99; ABC Family) is my favorite soap at the moment with a fun, talented cast. All hail Cappie! *Secret Diary Of A Call Girl* (\$29.98; Lionsgate) is the first season of the Showtime series which launches its new

season January 18. Billie Piper is fun as the lead, though I still find it hard to believe an assistant to Dr. Who could be so naughty. *Tripping The Rift Third Season* (\$29.97; Anchor Bay) is the goofy sci-fi animated spoof starring Jenny McCarthy. *Kyle XY Second Season* (\$39.99; ABC Family) is the continuing saga of our belly button-less hero Kyle. I have to admit, the more complicated the plot gets, the less interested I become. I preferred Kyle as a strange perspective on life, not as the linchpin of some massive conspiracy. Finally, if Billie Piper aka Rose as a callgirl freaks you out, take refuge in a classic adventure of *Doctor Who: Four To Doomsday* (\$24.98; BBC Video) from the brief Peter Davison years. I really do find these endless Doctor Who releases exhausting. When oh when will they just release boxed sets devoted to each Doctor containing every episode they starred in? It's what everyone wants, isn't it?

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deckard70 [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of deckard70](#) [permalink](#)

"In short, I do NOT expect BluRay to last unless studios make them the same price as regular DVDs and pronto."

I just want to say I agree. Additionally, retailers who commonly accept a slim dollar or two in markup on DVDs seem to be enjoying a much higher markup for BluRays -- brick and mortar stores like Best Buy and Target are selling \$20 BluRays for \$30, and \$13 BluRays for \$20.

This has to stop. The BluRay Association needs to crack down on these retailers, and pressure them to have the same slim profit margin on Blu's that they have for DVDs.

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 **blastocyst** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of blastocyst](#) [permalink](#)

Just thinking back to when the blush was still upon the DVD 'rose'. Around mid 2001. Titles such as "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid", "Groundhog Day" and "Bullitt" were commanding \$24. Now those are mostly in the 2 for \$6 throw-bin at most stores. Had nothing to do with currency. It was the novelty of it. "Fight Club" (deluxe edition) \$50 back in 2001 or 2002.

I remember when store personnel at Best Buy were stocking brand-new shelving units with the brand-new media. I was a big CD aficionado then. My girlfriend gifted me with Metallica's "Cunning Stunts" 2-DVD set for my birthday in '01. That retailed for \$50 at that time.

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 **deckard70** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of deckard70](#) [permalink](#)

Prices can fall as a product becomes popular -- but it doesn't always happen that way if the sellers take the opportunity to make higher prices common.

A fair example would be the compact disc. When the CD was introduced, almost all of the domestic titles cost \$12.99. A year or two later, when the compact disc became truly popular, the \$12.99 price rose to about \$16 until a couple years ago when labels started experimenting with lower prices. Basically, the labels found that they could hold a high price and people would still pay it. Of course, the record industry is now nearly dead because eventually people tired of paying that kind of sum for a freaking album.

We just have to hope that greed won't blind the labels to the fact that they need to lower prices to compete.

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 **blastocyst** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of blastocyst](#) [permalink](#)

Blu-Ray's hideously over-priced and for as long as it remains so costly in an environment where everything linked to entertainment is over-hyped and where every damn thing loses value daily this will only invite piracy.

Face it, there are no "Gone With the Wind"s, "The Wizard of Oz"s "The Godfather"s nor "Casablanca"s being lensed these days. Films come and go so swiftly and are of such limited substance.

Except for "Step Up 2: The Streets". A keeper.

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 **ChicagoMolly** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of ChicagoMolly](#) [permalink](#)

>When oh when will they just release boxed sets devoted to each Doctor containing every episode they starred in? <

Not any time soon. They're not just lying around waiting to be bundled up. Bringing old stories back to life is a labor of love by a crew of volunteers who work on it when they're not at their day jobs. Visit The Doctor Who Restoration Team Website to get an idea of the amount of prep the old programs need. Especially the black-and-white episodes of the first two Doctors. BBC's b&w system was a low res format anyway, and to make matters worse Management started wiping old tapes when they converted to color, figuring to reuse the tape to save money. So there aren't many complete serials from the early years, and those that exist are pieced together from the archive tapes and 16mm export prints that were sent overseas for broadcast and accidentally discovered years later in office basements in Nairobi. It takes a lot of work to make them usable. The most creative solution to the problem was with The Invasion, a Second Doctor story that was missing two chapters. Luckily, some fans still had audio cassettes of the soundtracks they had made back in 1965 by holding the mics up to the tv speakers! The Restoration Team remastered the audio and hired an animation house to replace the missing video in anime style. Fans. Gotta love 'em.

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 **Michael Giltz** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)

Thanks for the Dr Who info and the website recommendation. But surely they could work their way backwards and make the most recent Doctors available properly. The 80s and 70s obviously aren't in such dire straits - they keep releasing those individual DVDs with single storyline arcs.

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 **tmay** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of tmay](#) [permalink](#)

My direct experience watching Blu-Ray is limited, but just having upgraded my parents, I would note the following:

(Samsung 1080P LN32A650 w/HDMI 1.3; Panasonic DMP-BD55K V2.0 w/HDMI 1.3)

- 1) I buy Blu-Ray only of well reviewed films in genres that benefit from the resolution and color: The Duchess, WALL.E, Galopogos, Edward Scissorshand, Blade Runner, Castaway as examples.
- 2) Netflix for stuff you won't necessarily want to keep or watch in the future (get a ROKU for streaming movies, or an LG Blu-Ray which includes the capability)
- 3) DVD's for stuff you want to watch on occasion, but Blu-Ray would be overkill

I would also note that I have an AVC-HD 1080P 24 camera from Panasonic (though the newest Canon's support the full data rate of 24 mbps AVC-HD challenging tape based HDV) using SDHC media which is directly supported by the Panasonic Blu-Ray player.

Slide shows of photos at 1080P generated via a computer look great and most new televisions support USB 2.0 input. Keep the big picture of all of your media in mind when you are putting your system together.

I'm looking at building a system for myself centered around a Mac and the same Samsung LN32A650 , but that will have to wait until Blu-Ray burning and AVC-HD editing support arrive, possibly this spring.

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 **Michael Giltz** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)

Thanks for the info. YOur advice about BluRay is good for DVDs in general -- only buy the most important stuff you'll want to watch again and again. Renting is good enough for the rest.

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 **InsideTheFrame** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of InsideTheFrame](#) [permalink](#)

The Dark Knight on Blu-Ray should be on the list of must buys. Filmed in IMAX is just amazing on big fat LCD. The blu-ray players even make the regular DVD's look better also.
<http://insidetherockposterframe.blogspot.com>

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 **YesWeCanada** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of YesWeCanada](#) [permalink](#)

I'll stick to downloading DVDRIP's. I can burn 6 movies to an 18 cent blank DVD. That's 3 cents per movie and they get uploaded long before they come out on DVD. And it's still legal to do so in Canada.

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 **Michael Giltz** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)

"Legal" doesn't mean right. If you lived in parts of Asia, you'd "legally" be able to access all sorts of stuff. But why should you be able to get a free copy of a movie any more than you should be able to walk into a store and steal a CD, a book, a shirt, a steak or anything else? I've never understood why something creative (like music), something that people really love and moves them emotionally would also be something they would gladly rip off the countless artists who benefit from legal sales. (And high paid actors and rockers are a tiny, tiny minority. Even most successful songwriters and working actors are hardly rolling in dough.

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 **dnddays** [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of dnddays](#) [permalink](#)

Mr. Giltz forgets to have you consider the added cost of high speed internet which is required to periodically update the firmware. You may not have had to update the firmware yet, but you will because pirates (Slysoft) will force Hollywood to update BluRay's encryption. Without a firmware update, your movies won't play. Then, there's the secret risk of having your player turned into a brick. If for whatever reason you begin watching a photo DVD, your wedding video or some other disc the player doesn't recognize or flags as pirated, your player will become inert, unable to play any discs, at which point you will spend a considerable amount of time with customer service.

BluRay is for suckers. The future isn't discs, it's downloads. Why invest in a BluRay player when I can

just download a high def movie?

Terabytes of space + high speed internet = I win. And it didn't cost me a cent.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 11:38 PM on 01/10/2009

Michael Giltz See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

Thx for reading. There is always the possibility of any DVD or CD player or computer DVD or CD slot becoming a "brick" because of a malfunction. That's hardly germane. Also, there are BluRay players that do NOT have online access. I don't believe the studios will make all of them inoperable out of a fear of piracy. Massive class action lawsuits would ensue. Never underestimate the stupidity of a studio Fair enough. But it would be an unprecedented occurrence that would mean mountains of bad publicity for a struggling format, just like Sony got blasted for putting copyright protection and peaking into people's computers with a handful of CDs like Neil Diamond's 12 Songs. The likely result of any such attempt would be a tsunami of bad news stories, led by me. Finally, downloads are not future-proof any more than BluRay or any other format. Phone companies and cable companies et al are all pushing for legislation that would tax you for the amount of pipeline you use (ie, those downloading movies would pay a lot more monthly than Grandma who sends out the occasional email). I actively write against such changes, but the possibility looms. High speed downloads are fine (especially for renting in my view). But why wouldn't they cost you a cent? If you're stealing movies (and if you are, shame on you -- you'd never walk into a GAP and steal some pants,would you?). But they're not better than BluRay, just different.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 02:26 PM on 01/12/2009

dnddays See Profile I'm a Fan of dnddays permalink

It won't be a malfunction that causes your BR player to brick, it'll be a database your player connects to before playing the disc. BluRay players without online access won't play discs with outdated firmware. Class action lawsuits never stopped any company from trying to cheat or harm their customers (see Big Tobacco and Big Pharma for examples). Sony got blasted and sued, yes, but settled and admitted no wrongdoing. Downloads may not be future-proof, but they are the immediate future. ISPs may be moving to tax the internet, but you can't grow a market if you tax people out of it, so it'll fail just like throttling did.

". . . you'd never walk into a GAP and steal some pants,would you?"

If you were charging me full price for virtual pants made of binary digits shackled with DRM, I would.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 09:26 PM on 01/13/2009

cylindar See Profile I'm a Fan of cylindar permalink

Well that's all very interesting but it is not that important of an issue. I hear that a lot of people are leaving their blue rays behind when they skip out on their homes and over inflated mortgages. They may be able to be had for a lot cheaper sooner than you think.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 11:03 PM on 01/10/2009

Michael Giltz See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

Good God, why are you wasting your time reading a DVD review column and then commenting on it if you think it's absurd to talk about anything but the Depression, two wars, etc. Yes, major issues face us all the time and these are very hard times economically (Believe me, I know). It doesn't mean people stop reading books, going to the movies, buying DVDs and CD etc. In fact, entertainment becomes often more important to people in hard times. And a \$20 DVD is a much better bargain for a family than actually going to the movies. Plus you can borrow them from your local library, etc. Unless you leave this comment on literally every single, entertainment, sports, gossip, food, home decorating, and every other non-economic article printed (and that would be a full time job), I really don't understand your point. Discussing DVDs is hardly a callous disregard for the poor, Recession of no recession.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 02:29 PM on 01/12/2009

Agentlady007 See Profile I'm a Fan of Agentlady007 permalink

Personally I don't think the Panavision 35 mil. camera can be replaced, but what do I know?

I do know I must get a Blueray play for my TV to work DVD's unless you have an XBOX connected, which I do, but forget videos. So there you have it, sooner or later, we all were told we would be in the Jetson Age and own a flat screen TV, and now it's fact not fiction.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 08:09 PM on 01/10/2009

— **josephbua** See Profile I'm a Fan of josephbua permalink

"When oh when will they just release boxed sets devoted to each Doctor containing every episode they starred in? It's what everyone wants, isn't it?"

Sure, the Tom Baker set would sell out in a heartbeat, but what of Sylvester McCoy or Paul McGann?

They would be crushed.

I own everything from 2005 on, and that's really all I need, because the new Doctor Who isn't as much a SciFi series as it is an drama with adventure with a slight tilt toward the kids.

And certainly you could see the possibilities of Rose Tyler growing up and getting up to no good, couldn't you, Michael?

I just wrote about the new series of Secret Diary premiering on Showtime next weekend, the link is below.

http://iamatvjunkie.typepad.com/i_am_a_tv_junkie_a_blog_f/2009/01/video-secret-diary-of-a-call-girl-series-two-your-stateside-first-look.html

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— **Michael Giltz** See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

Thanks for the info and the link. Yes, of course the more popular Doctors would do much better. And I'm not really clamoring for Sylvester McCoy. But its the Tom Baker and other popular Drs that are getting this tiresome release schedule of individual adventures, not so much Paul McGann. And yes, Billie Piper, I must admit, always had a sexy appeal.

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— **Maxiesid** See Profile I'm a Fan of Maxiesid permalink

You are right about the problem with the price. I like BluRay and absolutely agree that the picture quality is much better-but really, the difference between VHS and DVD was not just that the picture was better, it was also that disks take up much less storage space, they last longer than the average vhs, (who never had a player eat the tape?) and the convenience of not having to wind and rewind made it a no brainer. For example, my friend bought the Firefly series on BluRay. I watched it with him and found that the picture was outstanding - it was almost like being there it was so clear - but the price tag was \$57, my regular DVD set cost 19.99. For that \$37 extra, he got a clearer picture? As you said, if the price is comparable then bluray will certainly be the way to go. Until that happens, though, my regular dvds-especially played on a bluray player, work very nicely.

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— **goodgravy** See Profile I'm a Fan of goodgravy permalink

amazon is having a buy 2 get one free blue ray sale right now.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 11:47 PM on 01/09/2009

— **Michael Giltz** See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

Thx. Didn't know that.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 02:45 AM on 01/10/2009

— **LincolnSpector** See Profile I'm a Fan of LincolnSpector permalink

Part II

4. Don't buy BluRay titles unless they're the same price or just a few bucks more: You replaced all of your cassettes with CDs? Okay, I don't think I ever bought cassettes. No random access, and the sound quality on commercially-mastered cassettes were horrible. I bought LPs, and recorded my own cassettes from them. I still have some LPs I haven't replaced. But more to the point, the better product often cost more. I used to buy LaserDiscs, which cost more than VHS. Quality costs money.

5. Studios: make BluRay the same price as regular DVDs or the format upgrade will die. Don't hold your breath. VHS used to cost less than DVD, but DVD prevailed and eventually cost less.

6. The risk of going BluRay is nonexistent. If Blu-Ray dies (which you admit is possible), you will feel cheated, even if you can still play your DVDs. Just as an HD-DVD owner.

7. You're on a budget: Just to clarify, Netflix charges \$1 a MONTH more; you didn't make that clear. And while buying a disk may be cheaper than going to a movie theater, no home technology can ever replace the experience of watching a movie on a 40-foot screen, in the dark, surrounded by hundreds of strangers.

Lincoln

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 08:54 PM on 01/09/2009

Michael Giltz See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

Part II: If you chose a format when there was a format war (such as HD-DVD or Betamax), yes you could feel cheated. But the format war is over and every studio is pouring out BluRay titles. They'll do so for at least the next 18 months. Even if it collapses, you can still watch them and regular DVDs (which absolutely will NOT disappear in the next 5-10 years no matter how fast people start streaming or downloading movies) on a BuRay player. So why feel cheated? Kids may buy songs and albums in MP3 format on iTunes but that doesn't detract from my CD library does it? The quality is even better than their MP3s and plays great. Thanks for clarifying about Netflix which makes it even more of a bargain. And you're absolutely right: no home format is a substitute for watching a movie in a darkened theater with hundreds of strangers. That's why I go to movies all the time. It's great to watch movies over and over again and have great classics at your fingertips, but I'd prefer seeing almost anything in a theater.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 02:54 AM on 01/10/2009

Michael Giltz See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

Thx for reading. I happened to begin buying music when cassettes were dominant and yes they sucked. But many many people like me replaced most of their cassette/LP/eight track library with CDs. I never committed to laser discs because of the cost, bulkiness, having to use multiple discs to see one movie, etc. In fact, VHS typically cost the same or more expensive. Movies would come out on VHS at rental prices of \$99.98 and then maybe six months or a year later they would be discounted or you could buy them used. Some movies like Top Gun did come out at sell through prices, but the vast majority of movies did not. When DVDs arrived, they often cost the same as sell-through VHS or more often were significantly cheaper than the rental VHS price. Plus you didn't have to wait an extra year for them to be available at a sell-through price. They were consistently priced at sell-through, had vastly superior picture and sound and of course extras, all at a comparable or lower price to the VHS version of the same movie. They cost less by and large and were much much better in every way. That's why they have proven such an astounding success. Better doesn't HAVE to be more expensive.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 02:52 AM on 01/10/2009

LincolnSpector See Profile I'm a Fan of LincolnSpector permalink

I review HDTVs and Blu-Ray players for PC World. I also just got a Blu-Ray player myself. In other words, I'm a big enthusiast.

But I have problems with several of your arguments. I refer to your numbers:

1. BluRay is not really a new format: Of course it's a new format! If the special edition doesn't play on your old player, it's not a special edition. It's a new format.
2. BluRay is a serious improvement in picture quality: "those who have seen the picture on an HD-ready plasma or LCD screen compare it to the difference between standard TV and hi-def." And there's a good reason for that comparison. DVDs ARE standard def, and Blu-Rays ARE hi-def. In fact, they're higher def than broadcast hi-def.
3. The cost of going BluRay can be minimal: I'm sorry, but the idea of buying a Blu-Ray player when it might be five years before you buy an HDTV is ridiculous. If you're that worried about being stuck of DVDs, stop buying them.

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 08:54 PM on 01/09/2009

Michael Giltz See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

3. I was just making a very extreme argument -- People yelled at me for discussing Bluray discs during a recession for heaven's sake, which is pretty silly. Not everyone has a plasma or LCD screen yet but I'm pretty sure most people (and certainly most DVD enthusiasts) want one and hope to get one in the next year or so. When they KNOW they're gonna upgrade, why buy a regular DVD when the BluRay costs just about the same? You can watch it right

away on your old TV (another reason it's not such a radical new format but sort of an upgrade) along with your regular DVDs and when you do upgrade you'll have a library of BluRays ready to go. Why buy a regular DVD during the next year? If the cost is the same, it just makes sense to me to get the BluRay, especially since you'll be so glad you did once you get the new TV. I just made the crazily extreme example of five years to shut up anyone who would say, "How can you talk about buying a TV in the next two years when we're in a recession." It's not a fear of buying DVDs, so much as economic realities I was trying to placate. And I don't think anyone will be stuck with DVDs no matter what the home entertainment system looks like in 20 years. They'll still be solid entertainment, just like CDs are 25+ years after they started.

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Michael Giltz [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)

Thx for reading. As a reviewer, do you think Bluray is worth the investment, whatever my particular arguments may be? As for those arguments, they're geared towards the general public, not those in the know like yourself.

1. BluRay is not really a new format -- Again, I'm just suggesting it's not a wholesale change like going from LP or cassette to CD or laser disc to DVD. The same player can play regular and BluRay DVDs, which is not true for those other formats. Switching to a new format often means to people a wholesale dumping of one library for another. People may have thought they'd keep playing their old LPs or cassettes/laser discs and VHS tapes, but those all gathered dust as soon as CDs/DVDs took over because they were su superior for most people. The same is NOT true if you upgrade to a BluRay player. I don't feel the need to diss all my regular DVDs. They still look great and are very watchable.

2. Glad to hear BluRay looks great.

con't

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Stefano [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Stefano](#) [permalink](#)

The problem with Blue Ray is they'er marketing. I agree with all your points, if you have a 1080P TV and a blue ray, the difference is huge. My blue ray is connected to the internet, so I get updates through the web along with some extras on the BD disks. I imagine we're not too far from when I can download the movies straight to the player. But what they fail to market, it plays your old DVD's and even cleans them up (read upgrades their resolution) How many people ask me what I'm going to do with all my old DVD's now that I have Blue ray - keep them and enjoy them.

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ramblingjohnny [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of ramblingjohnny](#) [permalink](#)

This is why I love my PS3 it might not be the cheapest Blueray player anymore but it sure is an all around device. It a UPNP media server that connect to your home network to transfer or stream media from the net or your computer. You can upgrade the internal hard drive with any laptop hard drive or use a larger USB external hard drive to contain all you digital media. The ps3 also upscale video file not only regular DVD and did I mention it a pretty damn great gaming console.

Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 10:55 PM on 01/10/2009

Michael Giltz [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)

Thx for reading. I agree with you about the marketing. I keep emphasizing again and again that getting a BluRay player doesn't mean your library of DVDs is suddenly outmoded. Far from it. That's why it's different from switching from laser disc to DVD or cassette/LP to CD and why I don't think of it as a whole new format. The player can play all your regular DVds and even make them look better (though not BluRay quality). Thx for pointing that out.

Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 03:06 AM on 01/10/2009

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