

COMPRENSIONE SCRITTA B2

Argomento: 3-D Televisions, the Pros and Cons

Words: 462

(Sources: TIME, Dec. 13, 2010, "To 3-D or Not to 3-D?" by Harry McCracken, and nytimes.com/2011-01-18/business/global, "Leading in 3-D TV, by Hiriko Tabuchi)

3-D TVs are arriving in the stores, but it is not as wondrous as the electronics industry proclaims. You cannot just sit comfortably, as at the cinema, and put on a pair of funny glasses. First of all, you need to select and acquire the right hardware. Then you need to seek out 3-D content. And you need to be prepared for some disappointment, both in the quality of the images on-screen, and the selection of DVDs available.

3-D televisions have been quite costly--\$1,500 dollars and up--principally because the manufacturers are adding the new technology to their top-of-the-line models. Although prices have started to come down, there are some key accessories which are rather expensive and which you will most likely need to buy, such as a 3-D Blu-Ray player and replacement cables.

Then there is the eyewear ! Nearly all 3-D sets currently on the market use something called active-shutter technology: LCDs in the glasses flash on and off so each eye sees a different image, and your brain fuses them into one three-dimensional picture. Most glasses are pricey--especially for big families--and are designed to work only with the TVs from the same manufacturer. Industry standards to create greater compatibility and to lower costs are being discussed; meanwhile one company has come out with a pair of universal glasses. Rieko Fukushima, a researcher at Toshiba, has actually developed a way to do away with the glasses, utilizing a new algorithm that displays nine angled images for each frame so that the right eye sees only images meant for the right eye, while the left eye sees only images meant for the left eye. Not surprisingly, keeping costs down has posed great difficulties.

The biggest in-home TV drawback, however, is that there is not much to watch yet! For example, one channel, recently launched, has only eight broadcasts scheduled over the course of a month. Besides, only a handful of 3-D Blu-Ray discs are available—mostly computer-generated cartoons. Exclusive deals between studios and TV makers have made this scarcity problem even worse. It is also not a given that you will like what you see! Some broadcasts look very blurry and make one dizzy. Moreover, the so-called 'up-conversion' of 2-D movies makes people look like paper dolls trapped in a three-dimensional world.

For all of these reasons, it might be best to join the three-dimensional revolution in small steps. By the time you are fully equipped, there should be more to watch, with fewer technical obstacles. Simply resisting until the next generation of 3-D TVs comes out could be a solution, too. It will be better, cheaper, and more plentiful. That is one of the nice things about technology: the longer you wait, the more wondrous it gets.

A. In the first paragraph, it says that finding 3-D content is

1. easier than the industry claims.
2. the main thing that makes the activity more difficult than expected.
3. one of the things that you must do which complicates the activity.
4. as easy as sitting comfortably in a theatre.

B. In the second paragraph, it states that the televisions are expensive mainly because

1. the technology is so new.
2. the 3-D system is applied to very high-quality televisions.
3. you have to buy a 3-D Blue-Ray player.
4. the cost of the accessories.

C. Which statement is FALSE?

1. A new kind of visual system has been developed by Toshiba.
2. The manufacturers have especially taken large families into consideration.
3. The majority of glasses have to be used with equipment by the same maker.
4. Making available eyewear has been a challenge.

D. Which is NOT currently a problem listed in the fourth paragraph?

1. The quality of the programs can be quite disappointing.
2. The figures may look unreal.
3. The selection of programs is quite limited.
4. The production studios and TV makers cannot agree on deals.

E. The article concludes by suggesting that

1. it has been a slow revolution.
2. one should definitely wait for newer developments.
3. one should buy equipment a bit at a time.
4. it would be wisest to wait until there is more variety.

Soluzioni: A3; B2; C2;D4; E3