

What's So Smart about a Smart TV War?

Written by Bob Snyder
01. 11. 2011

You are cruising on the high seas in a ship stuffed with 3D TVs... Suddenly, a shout goes up, "Connected TV off the starboard bow..."

..and everyone aboard rushes to starboard and the entire ship starts to tilt dangerously towards the water line, endangering all...



Welcome to the Smart TV Wars.

It's the Age of Disruption. And all the traditional forms of content delivery have been sunk. The web disrupted the news business by firing a broadside volley against newspaper publishers. iTunes fired a shot from the good ship Apple's armoury, blasting the traditional music business model out of the water. The App Store and the humble app torpedoed the packaged software business for everyone. PC gaming is now under siege from disruption.

Everyone in the Age of Disruption suffers from Apple envy. CE companies like Samsung, Sony, LG and others would like to claw back market share, with each introducing app stores that mirror Apple's tried and tested model.

Incumbent TV makers have watched apps...the next-generation of software...already alter the mobile phone business forever (henceforth... the smartphone business.)

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That's why LG joining the Net TV consortium is so important.

Years ago, even before the well-remembered Betamax vs VHS vs C2000 camps, the CE industry has built standards by battle. Companies marched into battle standards and came out victorious or bloodied. Losers envied the winners and crawled away to fight the next battle: in business, the war never ends (although sometimes individual combatants do die)...and battles pop up constantly like some sick version of [Whac-A-Mole](#)



The problem with the SmartTV Wars is that...well, it just isn't "smart." It's dumb business. The current battleground of the SmartTV Wars is filled with fragmented, walled-in and proprietary technologies. Certain DRM technology works on one platform and not another, while one service identifies content in one way, while another identifies in a completely different and incompatible manner. Content streams more smoothly on one device than another and is available on one set-top box but not the other.

It's not smart to confuse customers. It's not smart if the industry doesn't quickly agree on standards, agree on definitions and then each maker goes away to build its own competitive flavour-- after the industry has worked together to build a customer attraction.

When the customer is confused, nobody wins...because the customer hesitates to buy.

So when LG joins the Net TV consortium, you can hear peacemakers rejoice. By joining the Net TV consortium, LG takes the industry takes a step towards common technical standards in SmartTV-- and potentially makes Net TV the largest platform. The announcement was made at IFA 2011 by Philips TV group CEO Robert Smits, who said the common platform would be based on open standards such as HTML5, CE-HTML and HbbTV.

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Rumours have Apple to launch in TV next year, a launch that everyone expects will shoot incumbents out of the water and disrupt TV in the same way Apple has shown PC makers, tablet makers, MP3 makers, music companies, and phone makers that their petty, internecine arguments hold entire industries back...and leave them open markets for a Great Disruptor.

The internet changes everything. And Apple is the richest player in CE today by selling simplicity and clarity of offering.

Maybe it's time, after all these years, to give peace a chance.

Watch [...Is it our imagination or does Sony position two different "Smart TVs" standards, and then push the Blu-ray as an easier solution to giving TV an internet connection?](#)