

Farewell, VHS: Funai Electric Ceases VCR Production

Written by Marco Attard
26. 07. 2016

It's something of an end of an era-- Funai Electric, reportedly the last maker of videocassette recorders (VCRs), brings the production of VHS players to an end, 40 years after the launch of the format.



According to Japan's Nikkei the reason is a combination of declining market and difficulty in obtaining necessary parts. Funai made players in Chinese factories before sale under the Sanyo brand.

The company started making VCRs in 1983, 3 years after the launch of its own unsuccessful CVC format. At the peak the company used to sell 15 million VCRs per year, but Nikkei says 2015 sales of Funai VHS units total just 750000. Which is actually a bit of a surprise, since VHS has long been superseded by not only the disc-based DVD and Blu-ray formats, but also HDD-based personal video recorders.

Still, one has to admit VHS managed to beat rival Betamax on the longevity stakes-- Betamax player production ended in 2002, and [Sony stopped making Betamax tapes on November 2015](#). That said, Betamax still lives on in the shape of Betacam, the professional video format still in use by the broadcasting industry.

Like all near-extinct formats VHS still has fans in the shape of collectors willing to part with pretty large sums (as much as £1500) for rare titles. As one such collector tells The Independent, "these are movies that feel too cleaned-up on DVD and Blu-ray, as if they were never meant to look that good. You can see the mistakes they made and the bad makeup and everything. Watching them on VHS is closer to the old drive-in or grindhouse theatre, the way the director intended it to look."

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