

3D GAMING

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The fact that to get any kind of 3D image from a 2D screen means wearing a pair of sunglasses or worse means that three dimensional gaming isn't quite as convincing as multitouch and natural user interfaces, even though the two have been commoditised at almost the same time

An Acer Aspire 5738 laptop with a 3D display costs about £550 at the moment, not bad for something with cutting edge technology that adds depth to any DirectX 9 game. The screen is of the polarised filter type, which is the new norm for extra dimensions.

Instead of using coloured filters splitting an image into two – one for each eye – the vertical pixel columns are alternated between left image and right image and shone through a piece of polarised glass. A pair of dark glasses with oppositely polarised lenses ensures that only one image is seen by each eye. The difference to a game is tangible too, something like WoW runs and looks incredible on the low-end graphics hardware.

It's over in TV land that the real push for 3D is happening, though, as LCD suppliers ask us to upgrade again to watch hyper-real cinema in the lounge. Compared to the other technologies we've talked about here, though, 3D requires a lot of effort on behalf of the watcher (those pesky glasses) and most of us are very lazy; hence the ubiquity of MP3 and standard definition movies, while Blu-ray and higher resolution sound standards continue to flounder. We value ease of use over quality every time.

In its favour, 3D doesn't actually require any work on behalf of games developers or publishers, as the stereoscopic image is created at the driver level. On the other hand, that means there's no massive push by the people who make and sell games to encourage us to adopt it.