

Is Buying Old Tech a Bargain or a Bad Idea?

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This weekend, on a whim, I decided to see if I could find a deal on HD-DVDs on eBay. Boy was I pleasantly surprised! For those of you who aren't familiar with HD-DVD – I recommend you read my previous article entitled *HD-DVD vs. Blu-ray Welcome to the Format Wars!* (March 2007). But as a quick synopsis, HD-DVD was another format of high definition that lost to Blu-ray and is now for all intents and purposes, dead.

As you might recall, I was a fan of HD-DVD for a lot of reasons, not the least being cost – they were simply the same quality to Blu-ray but significantly cheaper. HD-DVDs out of the box had internet interactivity, something Blu-ray would not have for a while. Because it was very similar technology to DVD, you could even buy movies with HD on one side and a regular DVD on the other – something impossible for Blu-ray. But I digress. Blu-ray won the war in March 2008 and HD-DVD was relegated to the junk heap. Or was it?

I still have my HD-DVD player for my Xbox 360 and have about 10 or so movies. So I decided to take a look on eBay to see what kind of deals there were for any HD-DVDs still kicking around. They are HD movies after all –the same quality as Blu-ray or HD movies you download from various online services like Netflix.

I was surprised to find not only individual movies selling for \$1, but different bundles as well – in lots of 10, 20, 35, 52 and even 77! These are brand new, sealed movies being cleared out at incredible prices! So I decided to bid on a package of 77 – including movies such as 40-Year Virgin, 300, Season 1 of Heroes, and Battle Star Galactica, The Skeleton Key, Transformers and 71 other titles! I will admit, about half of the movies I would never even consider buying on their own, but what the hell – for a buck or two a movie, wouldn't it be worth it?

So I put in a bid, and even stayed up until 2AM to see the results. I won, and for about a \$1 each! There are still plenty of bundles for sale on eBay.

But what about those of you who can't even watch HD-DVDs because you never bought a player way back when? There are still some options. By far the cheapest is still the Xbox 360 add-on player, if you own the Xbox already. I found these on eBay for \$40-60 (although the bids start much lower). There are also dedicated HD-DVD players from Toshiba which at the time were getting great reviews – not only as HD players, but up-scaling DVD players as well. These players, I was very surprised to see, were selling for much higher! Probably averaging \$60-90, and I saw one go for over \$150! I guess there is still some demand out there. But if you are patient you can still find a better deal.

So do I recommend you go out and purchase a dead technology? Well, not exactly...but if you can get a great deal on a player, I know you can get a steal on the HD-DVDs. So I'll leave it up to you. But I know that I will enjoy watching HD versions of many of the 77 movies I have won, for a long time to come!

What do you think?