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3D GOES TO COLLEGE

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By John Rice

As 3D (stereoscopic) entertainment explores the potentials of cinema, broadcasting, and advertising, the Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) at USC is opening new doors to explore, define, and "help accelerate the identification of what it will take to move the 3D experience into the consumer space," says Philip Lelyveld, advisor to ETC.

On March 26, ETC will launch its Consumer 3D Experience Lab on the USC Campus. Intended to provide a showcase of products and services oriented to the consumer 3D market, the lab will also be a place where broadcasters, film studios, and manufacturers can demonstrate and test their offering and plans for 3D.

"The questions we have to answer are, How deep can the depth of 3D be for a comfortable consumer experience?, How do you cut from something really close to something really far away?, and What are the rules for creating the viewing experience and what types of responses does the equipment have to have in order to reproduce the original intent of what the event is that's being captured?" explains Lelyveld.

The Consumer 3D Experience Lab breaks down into three distinct areas, or rooms. One offers a home environment for 3D viewing with an 8-ft. screen and consumer 3D projector. The second showcases a variety of consumer 3D products, including the variety of glasses being offered for 3D viewing.

"It shows that there is a need for some standardization or some convergence," Lelyveld says. "Otherwise, the market won't take off. You can't author for all those things economically." Offering side-by-side comparisons will allow people to "make their own judgments about what they like and what they don't like. We hope this will lead to better understanding of what makes a really good, long-duration 3D viewing experience. We're talking about multiple hours as opposed to five minutes."

The third area is a market-research lab, where groups of USC students will be shown "some aspect of the 3D experience, and [we'll] do empirical research," says Lelyveld.

"Sports is one type of content that we definitely need to cover as we move forward," he adds. "It has unique issues. For example, football is very horizontal. Basketball, surprisingly, is vertical."

He says that different 3D systems and glasses being demonstrated and tested in lab perform at varying levels for different sports. "You see some effects work better on one [system] than on another. That's something we want to smooth out. We don't want that differentiation down the road."

Founded in 1993, the Entertainment Technology Center is supported by most of the major Hollywood studios, broadcast networks, and manufacturers in the broadcast and consumer-electronics arenas. The ETC has a history of

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Kurt Heitmann and the good people at CP Communications have established a memorial trust fund in honor of ESPN and sports industry audio legend Ron Scalise that will be used for the college education of his three children: Rosario, 16, RJ, 11, and his daughter Brenna, 10. At the request of the family this will be the only fund established to limit confusion. For more information on donating to the fund please click on this story.

All donations should be made out to the fund and should be sent to:

Kurt G. Heitmann
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200 Clearbrook Road
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The Sports Video Group and the Consumer Electronics Association has released the third-annual "Sports & Technology Research Survey, highlighting the power that sports content has as both a driver of HD set sales as well as other new technologies. The survey includes our exclusive 2008 Super Bowl Briefing as well as new data about consumer online sports viewing behavior.

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working on developing technologies and playing a role in adoption of those entertainment technologies.

"Its biggest development to date," Lelyveld notes, "has been helping drive the deployment of digital cinema into movie theaters."

He sees the role of the Consumer 3D Experience Lab as "broadening the markets for motion-picture companies and networks — the content industry — as well as creating whole new markets for electronic devices and service devices. Our focus is not just in the home but also personal devices and public spaces, including advertising," he says, adding, "We're still learning what makes a really good 3D experience."

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