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Studios team for U.K. Blu-ray ad push

As Blu-ray sales fail to lift DVD market woes

By Stuart Kemp

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LONDON -- Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Universal Pictures (U.K.), Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment U.K. and Warner Home Video are all backing a big pre-Christmas push here to boost Blu-ray format sales.

The quintet of studio home entertainment arms are behind the British Video Association-led ad campaign to air across all major TV channels, including ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky from Nov. 23 here.

The push comes as a report published Thursday says Blu-ray is not making up for the ongoing decline in DVD consumption.

The extensive report from research specialist Screen Digest claims the global economic downturn has meant a slow uptake of the fresh format.

The Blu-ray market globally coined £1.6 billion (\$2.66 billion) in 2008 while a declining DVD market attracted £27.9 billion (\$46.41 billion) from consumer wallets in the same year, down 4% from 2007.

But the report expects Blu-ray to account for 8.5% of total video spending globally this year, "setting the scene for further expansion."

And overall the report expects worldwide spending on video to show a slight dip in 2009 before stabilizing in 2010.

Screen Digest head of video Helen Davis Jayalath said: "Screen Digest's research shows that the hi-def Blu-ray format has the potential to return the physical video market to growth in 2010 and to ensure that packaged media can still compete in today's increasingly competitive entertainment world."

The planned 30-second spot hopes to hit an estimated 40 million consumers, including 74% of High Definition TV owners, the key audience for the campaign, the BVA said.

The ad makers claim it is the first dedicated specifically to promoting the Blu-ray format here and focuses on the superior sound, enhanced picture quality and interactivity of the extras offered by the Blu-ray format.

The spot features footage from a slew of Blu-ray holiday season releases including "Terminator Salvation," from Sony, "Ice Age 3" from Fox, "Inglourious Basterds" from Universal, "Snow White Platinum Edition" from Disney and "Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince" from Warner.



BVA director general Lavinia Carey noted that 11 million British households now own a HiDef television.

"The best way to enjoy films at home is in High Definition and on Blu-ray discs and our goal is to boost understanding of the benefits of Blu-ray in the run up to Christmas," Carey said.



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