

For Release 6 a.m. PST  
Dec. 13, 2007

## **Microsoft Releases Xbox 360 HD DVD Emulator to Help Speed Content Production and Lower Development Costs**

*New tool streamlines development and testing process for HD DVD content, accelerates advancement of next-generation interactivity, including experiences powered by Microsoft HDi technology.*

**REDMOND, Wash. — Dec. 13, 2007** — Microsoft Corp. today announced the release of the Xbox 360 HD DVD Emulator, enabling film studios and disc authoring companies to model the behavior of HD DVD disc content, including encoded video and HDi interactivity, in a virtual environment before committing to burning a single HD DVD disc. This comprehensive tool is among the first commercially available, software-based solution of its kind, eliminating the need for expensive hardware or time-consuming and costly trial-and-error processes for testing HD DVD titles, helping to ensure that titles ship error-free.

The enhanced content and rich interactive capabilities of HD DVD increase the need for an efficient way to troubleshoot coding to maintain the highest-quality consumer experiences. The emulator uses a combination of available hardware (the Xbox 360 video game and entertainment system and the Xbox 360 HD DVD Player) and specialized emulation software to ultimately enable playback of near-final assets from a network storage share, portable hard drive or optical disc. This allows focused testing of the layout, the menus, and the behavior of the interactivity functionality of a title. Detailed log reports from the Xbox 360 HD DVD Emulator deliver valuable tracing information to help quickly and easily pinpoint problems with advanced interactivity code that otherwise could take hours of manual debugging.

“We are committed to supporting and advancing the HD DVD ecosystem, and the new Xbox 360 HD DVD Emulator reflects these efforts by providing developers with the software-based tools they need to efficiently deliver the highest-quality content,” said Jordi Ribas, general manager of HD DVD at Microsoft. “Microsoft developed the Emulator to help save studios and postproduction houses time, resources and costs involved with the creation of HD DVD content, and let them focus on what really matters — pushing the envelope with the format.”

Sessions using the Xbox 360 HD DVD Emulator are designed to complement existing workflows so that tests can be run at various stages. The tool offers several choices for how to run a session: directly from a network storage share, from a USB drive connected directly to the Xbox 360 console, or from an optical disc in the Xbox 360 HD DVD Player. While the tool enables the testing of content playback on the Xbox 360 HD DVD Player specifically, it effectively eliminates layers in the testing process for other HD DVD players as well.

### **Validated by the Industry’s Leading HD DVD Production Houses**

As part of the development process, Microsoft implemented a beta program from July through November of this year, involving more than 40 participants, including Deluxe Digital Studios, Enteractive GmbH, Imagination AG, Memory-Tech Corporation and NetBlender Inc. Participants found that the tool significantly decreased the number of hours and reduced the costs associated with the production process, freeing up time to refine and improve content.

“The authoring process for HD DVD is more complex and expensive than the process for standard DVD, and as with any new technology, it can require a lot of time and resources,” said John Harrington, CEO of NetBlender. “In the process of working with the new Xbox 360 HD DVD Player Emulator, we were able to cut the number of test discs needed per month from roughly 200 down to 50, saving more than 100 work hours per month. This positively impacted

our business essentially overnight. We estimate we will recoup the low cost of the tool in less than one month's time."

Setting up the Xbox 360 HD DVD Emulator simply requires establishing a connection to Xbox LIVE, navigating to the Download Games menu, and adding the Emulator software to the hard drive of the Xbox 360 console. The one-time licensing fee is \$2,999.

As scenarios for next-generation interactivity continue to expand and evolve, streamlining the production process for HD DVD titles frees up resources that licensees can use to focus on refining and improving content — maximizing the potential of HDi to create compelling user scenarios. The Xbox 360 HD DVD Emulator is available for sale immediately at <http://www.thisishddvd.com/emulator>.

More information on the Xbox 360 HD DVD Emulator and HDi License Program, as well as a downloadable case study of NetBlender's use of the emulator, is available at <http://www.thisishdvd.com/emulator>.

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

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