

# Blu-ray could win high-def battle

---

## HD DVD backers could switch sides soon

By Diane Garrett and Ben Fritz from *Variety* -- TWICE, 1/11/2008 10:39:00 AM

*This article was updated on January 10, 2008.*

The two remaining studios backing HD DVD could switch sides soon, ending the high-def format war instantly.

*Daily Variety* has confirmed that Universal's commitment to backing HD DVD exclusively has ended. And Paramount has an escape clause in its HD DVD contract allowing it to release pics on Blu-ray after Warner Bros.' decision to back that format exclusively.

### More than one option

#### (Co) [Daily Variety](#)

Filmography, Year, Role

#### (Co) [Daily Variety](#)

Neither studio is ready to throw in the towel immediately, however. On Thursday, Universal broke its silence about the matter to say that it plans to keep supporting the format for the time being, a pledge Paramount made earlier in the week. And in any case, Universal is committed to a series of HD DVD promotions in coming months.

Should Toshiba concede defeat on the format, the decision to drop HD DVD would be made for both studios. But Toshiba doesn't appear ready to do that. At the Consumer Electronics Show, the manufacturer reaffirmed its commitment to the format, noting strong sales during the fourth quarter and indicating it would continue marketing its hardware through 2008.

But retailers may force the HD DVD camp's hand: They're unlikely to keep devoting premium shelf space to a dying format, and at this point, the odds are not in HD DVD's favor. With Warners' defection, only Paramount and Universal remain in the HD DVD camp; Sony, Disney, Fox, **Lionsgate** remain ardent Blu-ray backers. Warner sister companies New Line and HBO are also shifting allegiance to Blu-ray.

Last summer, Blockbuster also threw its weight behind Blu-ray, though some HD DVD discs remain in stores.

And Warner will continue to release HD DVD discs for the next few months to honor its previous commitment to Toshiba, which extends through May 31. Paramount's HD DVD deal, which covers DreamWorks releases, was to run through this year.