

Technology Talk

What is Hi-Def?

Hi-def is becoming less of a mystery to most people. The availability of hi-def television broadcasts and falling prices of hi-def consumer electronics components have combined to give the medium more momentum. But what is hi-def exactly?

Hi-def is essentially a video standard. The current standard calls for a minimum resolution of 1920 pixels by 1080 pixels (pixels are the tiny dots that make up a video or computer image). In order for a program to be truly hi-def, both the camera that records it and the system on which it is displayed must be able to generate that minimum number of pixels. The hi-def standard also calls for an image that is almost twice as wide as it is tall. This is known as widescreen or 16:9 format.

What is digital video?

As the demand for hi-def grows, so does a certain level of confusion about this new technology. A common misconception is that digital video and hi-def are synonymous.

First, what is digital video? It's a video signal that has been converted and stored as a pattern of 0s and 1s. Digital video is fast replacing its predecessor, analog video, which is a signal stored on tape as a subtly changing magnetic field. The advantage of digital video is that it can be moved and copied between different devices without any loss of quality, which makes the production process much easier.

With these definitions in mind, it is be easy to understand why not all digital video is hi-def and not all hi-def is digital video. Today, most digital video is not hi-def because it has less than the minimum resolution of 1920x1080. The most common form of digital video is on DVD. But programs on DVD have a maximum resolution of 720x480. So they're not hi-def (not even close). On the other hand, hi-def programs like those in the CineMuse library can be delivered in both digital and analog tape formats (DVHS and WVHS respectively). Both formats produce the hi-def experience – an engrossingly beautiful and clear image.

Coming in our April issue: Hi-def playback systems explained!

Member Happenings

Member Spotlight

Canadian Museum of Nature

The CMN launched its second annual Hi-Def Festival on January 29. The festival grew this year to include many programs contributed by independent producers from the US and Canada. Many of these are being considered for inclusion in the CineMuse Library. The *Arctic Mission* series from the National Film Board of Canada and the *Great Museums* series from Echo Pictures have already been added to the catalogue.

Network Business

New Acquisitions

GREAT MUSEUMS

Like a virtual traveling exhibit, *GREAT MUSEUMS* conveys the stories told by some of America's premiere museums. Each episode delivers a rare glimpse behind the scenes of a different institution. Featured museums include the Library of Congress, National D-Day Museum, California State Railroad Museum, National Music Museum, George Eastman House, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the Whale Museum.

National Film Board of Canada

The NFB's first high-definition series *Arctic Mission* is now available to CineMuse member sites. This series follows a voyage through the legendary Northwest Passage, examining how climate change is affecting the Arctic and the people and animals that live there. The five 52-minute episodes are: *The Great Adventure*; *Lords of the Arctic*; *People of the Ice*; *Climate on the Edge*, and *Washed Away*. The Canadian Museum of Nature has produced a traveling exhibition, *Sila: Clue in to Climate Change*, that complements the themes of the NFB series.

More New Shows from BBC Worldwide

We continue to add new BBC shows to the CineMuse catalogue:

- *Animal Tales: The Dog's Tale*
- *Canine Conspiracy*
- *Polar Bears on Thin Ice*
- *The Octopus Challenge*
- *Weird Nature*
- *Wild Africa*
- *Wild Weather*

Check out the CineMuse Library online at www.cinemuse.com for program descriptions. You may also contact CineMuse to request review copies.

Contact CineMuse

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