The Short Life, Slow Death, and Broad Impact of Betamax
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November 20, 2008
Moving Image & Sound: Basic Issues and Training

Annotated Bibliography

Below are a series of works dealing with Betamax in some way, many of which were consulted for the attached paper. They have been sorted into categories which are ordered alphabetically.

Note that there have been no book-length works written specifically about Betamax. While many of the articles, websites and other shorter pieces listed below do focus completely on Betamax, most of the longer works are much broader, generally covering a variety of VCR/home video formats and topics. All of the works listed do have some relevance to Betamax, often devoting a section, a chapter, or even a page or two to the format.

Basic/Technical Histories: Video/VTRs/Betamax


Lyons, Nick. The Sony Vision. New York: Crown Publishers, 1976. Published not long after the release of Betamax in the US and before the release of VHS, this is a fascinating time capsule of the early days of home video.


A technical history of VTR development, written by the developer of VHS.


**The Betamax Case**


**Betamax Fansites**


Features a wide variety of information on buying, fixing, and cleaning Betamax decks.
Also features a helpful essay on the history of Betamax
(http://www.misterbetamax.com/TapeHistory.htm).

Business Topics

*Business history of Sony.*

*Discussions of technological breakthroughs, includes a section on Betamax and home video.*


*Covers format war and Betamax failure.*

Consumer/Professional Guides

The items in this section are all overviews of the current (at the time of writing) video landscape, for either consumer or professional purposes. Each features a section or a series of listings on Betamax equipment.

*An early look by Consumer Reports at the still-new video format.*


Miscellaneous


Newspaper & Magazine Articles – Betamax History

Presented chronologically


**Newspaper & Magazine Articles – Betamax Legacy**

*These are all recent articles demonstrating how Betamax lives on in the public consciousness.*


“Sony puts Betamax ‘out to pasture,’ but a handful of ‘betaphiles’ cling to technology.” *Charleston Daily Mail* 2 Sept. 2002: 2D.


**Social Histories/Usage Patterns**


*New history of pre-recorded videocassettes. Contains significant work on early Betamax fandom.*


*Anthology featuring articles about social impacts and importance of VCR technology.*

*Nothing Betamax-specific, but some articles, particularly the Klopfenstein offer valuable information about Betamax usage patterns.*

contains:

Boyd, Douglas A. “The Videocassette Recorder in the USSR and Soviet-Bloc Countries.”


Dobrow, Julia R. “Away from the Mainstream? VCRs and Ethnic Identity.”

Greenberg, Bardley S. and Carolyn Lin. “Adolescents and the VCR Boom: Old, New and Nonusers.”

Gunter, Barrie and Mallory Wober. “The Uses and Impact of Home Video in Great Britain.”

Klopfenstein, Bruce C. “The Diffusion of the VCR in the United States.”


Roe, Keith. “School Achievement, Self-Esteem and Adolescents’ Video Use.”

Rubin, Alan M. and Rebecca C. Rubin. “Social and Psychological Antecedents of VCR Use.”
Sapolsky, Barry S. and Edward Forrest. “Measuring VCR ‘Ad-Voidance’.”
Shatzer, Milton J. and Thomas R. Lindlof. “Subjective Differences in the Use and Evaluation of the VCR.”
Shinar, Dov. “VCR Narrowcasting in the Kibbutz.”

Lowe, Jim. The Videophile’s Newsletter. All issues. 
*The ultimate videophile guide – published by Jim Lowe beginning in September 1976. Extremely valuable chronicle of early Betamax/video fandom, focusing on time shifting, tape swapping, and other obsessive behaviors. Issues 1-6 are available online at [http://pages.prodigy.net/handel31/tvnpage.html](http://pages.prodigy.net/handel31/tvnpage.html).*

**Technical Descriptions/Guides**

*The technical description of Betamax, written by its developers.*


*A two-part guide to servicing Betamax VTRs – I was only able to locate Part 1 for use in the paper.*

*Maintenance guide for VCRs – contains a section covering Betamax-specific issues.*

*The technical description of VHS, written by its developers.*

**VHS vs. Betamax**

*A technical study showing VHS as superior in picture quality, Betamax in sound.*


*The four times Consumer Reports did head-to-head tests between Betamax and VHS decks.*