

Sony's BVM-X300: A New Standard for the HDR Era

4K OLED Master Monitor Opens Door for BT.2020 Color Space

Customer:

- COMPANY 3

Industry:

- Post-production filmmaking

Challenges:

- Replace outdated CRT monitor technology
- Find a reference monitor with consistency across viewing angles and excellent uniformity

Solution:

- Sony BVM-X300 30-inch* master monitor

*Viewable area, measured diagonally

Benefits:

- Enabled 4K and HDR production as well as opening the door to BT.2020 color space
- Delivered increased contrast, revealing detail, vivid realism
- Provided calibration and uniformity in all offices, enabling an increasingly distributed workflow



By **Mike Chiado**

SVP, Engineering/Imaging Science, COMPANY 3

The past decade has been a nightmare if, like me, your work revolves around reference monitor technology. Now, the long search for a replacement to CRT reference monitors has come to an end with the arrival of Sony's BVM-X300 30-inch master monitor.

The BVM-X300 is now set to replace our fleet of beloved BVM-D24s. It looks like the BVM OLED technology will play an important role in production in the years ahead, which we expect will involve HDR, 4K, and BT.2020 color space.

At COMPANY 3, we've built our reputation as a post shop on our mastery of color science. We're best known for our commercial advertising and feature film

work on big-name movies and franchises, in addition to episodic series for broadcast and over-the-top clients. We're forward-thinking, pioneering workflows across time zones with offices all over the globe. So to have the heart of our work depend on keeping our aging fleet of CRT reference monitors alive seems highly impractical.

Over the years, we've remained vigilant, testing the new technologies—LCD, plasma, and OLED—and waiting impatiently for something that can truly take the CRT's place. The BVM-X300 is the first non-CRT that has gained the confidence of our color professionals. We have spent months rigorously testing it and are preparing to move forward with it as our standard.

Beyond Definition



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To see what’s so impressive about it, let me put it in the context of these other technologies. First, LCDs have been useless for us, mostly because of viewing angle deficiencies. In theory, having a single colorist looking dead-on while working in isolation might work. In reality, we have several people looking at the same monitor in a collaborative, creative effort. With even the best LCD, they all see a different image at a different angle. The last thing you want in a color grading bay is people arguing over what they’re seeing!

Plasma has proven to be of limited utility. However, clients like to see a bigger image on something color-matched with our 24-inch BVM-D24s. So the plasma monitors have had a place. But this technology, too, is now fading from the market.

For some time, OLED has been the promise. Now the BVM-X300 is ready for what are traditionally the most demanding applications for a reference monitor. Making this transition is a very serious proposition for us, so we have been thorough in our evaluation process. What we have found is that the monitor is consistent across viewing angles and has excellent uniformity overall. It is solid enough, robust enough, and stable enough to replace the CRT.

However, the monitor’s added capabilities make it much more than a replacement. It is an upgrade that enables 4K and HDR production as well as opens the door to the emerging BT.2020 color space.



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While 4K has been getting most of the attention lately, HDR is getting our clients most excited. The added perceived resolution due to increased contrast is amazing. With HDR, in addition to revealing detail in the highlights, we get the vivid realism many viewers associate with 4K resolution in a 2K environment. That’s why our clients are clamoring for it. The need for HDR capability is the final nail in the coffin for the CRT.

The BVM-X300 also enables our increasingly distributed workflow. We gather people in our offices around the globe for grading sessions. This only works if we’re confident in the calibration and uniformity of each monitor. With CRTs, we rely on rigorous and frequent calibration. Now Sony’s new OLED technology will ease that task since calibration is less involved and stable for a much longer period.

How the BVM-X300 clears the way for the BT.2020 color space is also important for those investing in a reference monitor. As far as I know, there’s nothing on the market now that covers the recently adopted BT.2020 color space in full. But this is a workable solution that covers most of it.

As much as we’ve loved them, reference-grade CRTs are fading. We’ve been running through a half-dozen CRTs a year for repair and replacement. The number available is shrinking fast. The industry is at a point of decision. Now, after our rigorous testing, we believe that the decision is clear.

TRIMASTER EL 4K