Proudly Presents: FIRST LOOK – Optoma 3D-XL by Optoma

SatelliteGuys.US FIRST LOOK – Optoma 3D-XL 3D Converter By James Jarvis

The World of 3D seems to be on the verge of becoming mainstream. So for many of us, this will give us a lot more options when going TV shopping. For some of us who just upgraded our home theaters in the last two years it could mean kicking ourselves for not waiting just a little bit longer. But there is good news if you are one of the few lucky owners of projectors made by Optoma, Acer, BenQ and Vivitek. That good news comes in the form of a new converter box made by Optoma called the 3D-XL. I'd like to thank the folks at Optoma for working with me and keeping me informed during the launch of this product. Satelliteguys.us is proud to bring to you a first look of the Optoma 3D-XL converter.

Awhile back, Optoma agreed to let me do a review of the 3D-XL box for them. I couldn't wait for that box to arrive. The anticipation built until this past Monday that box finally arrived. I was eager to set it up and see what this box could do! I have to admit, it was well worth the wait for this converter to turn my HD66 3D ready projector into a true 3D projector.

The 3D-XL converter from Optoma takes a HDMI 1.4a 3D signal and converts it down to a readable 1.3 signal that is usable by the compatible projectors in the Optoma lineup and also many other projectors that can display a 120hz signal all the while acting as a pass-through for any 2D signal. This box originally scheduled for release in Dec. was delayed until a couple weeks ago, and even at this time there are still very few boxes out there for the mass public. The rumor I heard for the delay was the folk's at Optoma were making sure this thing is perfect, and so far in my tests Optoma truly has a one of a kind piece of hardware.

3D-XL Specifications

HD Ready	720p120 (HD Ready)
→	2 x HDMI 1.4a (HDCP) - audio supported
←	HDMI 1.3 (HDCP) - audio supported
	RS232 9-Pin D-Sub
2D	PAL SECAM 576i/p, NTSC 480i/p, HD 720p/1080i/1080p
3D	Side-by-Side:1080i50, 1080i60 Frame-pack:1080p24, 720p50, 720p60 Top&Bottom: 1080p24, 720p50, 720p60
⏻	100 - 240V, 50 - 60Hz
	1080g / 280mm x 190mm x 30mm

ZD201 3D Glasses Specifications

▶	120Hz (60Hz / eye)
	50g / 172 x 166 x 40 (mm)

SETUP YOUR 3D-XL ADAPTER

Once you have connected your devices together with HDMI cables, as shown in the diagram, you are ready to begin…

PlayStation®3 Games
- Make sure that you have updated your console to the latest software version

- Go to the Settings menu -> Display settings -> Video output -> HDMI. Select "Automatic" and follow the onscreen instructions

- Insert your 3D game disc. Alternatively you can download games (and 3D updates) via the PlayStation® network

- Launch the game. In the in-game menu, select "Play in 3D"

Blu-ray 3D™ Player
- Make sure that your player can support Blu-ray 3D™ discs and that 3D output is enabled

- Insert the Blu-ray 3D™ disc into the player, press play

3D TV (eg. SKY)
- Contact your TV service provider to enable any 3D channels on your channel package

- Once enabled, switch to the 3D channel - You should see two images side-by-side

- Press the "SBS" button on the front of the 3D-XL

When you see "3D" in the top right hand corner of the screen, enable your projector's 3D mode, pop on your Optoma 3D glasses, hit the power button and enjoy!

If necessary, use your projector's 3D Sync-invert option to optimise your 3D experience.

The 3D-XL itself has two HDMI 1.4a inputs coupled with a HDMI 1.3 output. It can use either DLP Link or IR for syncing with your 3d glasses. The box itself is about the width of a magazine (it fits perfect underneath my PS3) and has the height of about 3 magazines, maybe 3-4 inches. The nice thing about this box is that it can do a single 720p projector setup or a dual

1080p projector setup for those looking to setup a passive system. This box is a multi-wonder box that can interface with 3D Blu-ray's from any 3D Blu-ray player, Video Games and Broadcast signals from what should be all sources (DIRECTV was flawless for my tests). That is the one thing that sets this box apart from other adaptors I have seen because it can take about any 3D signal you throw at it and make it work with your 3D ready projector. When this first got announced there were a few people who were a little upset at the MSRP price of $399, but when you really sit down and compare it to what other solutions offer at this time, I think the price is justified and if you are looking for 3D on a budget this box and a 3D ready projector are HIGHLY recommended.

The system I used to test this converter consists of a Optoma HD66, an elite matte white 1.1 gain screen, a slim 120gig PS3, a DIRECTV HR23-100, and a PIONEER VSX-820k 3D ready receiver. Setup was very easy for me, I fed my existing HDMI cables (cheap cables, don't fall into the trap of needing expensive cables) from my DIRECTV box and my PS3 straight into the 3D-XL, and from there took the output straight to the projector, this setup was just for the initial part to make sure the PS3 and DIRECTV box knew I had a 3D TV. Once my box was recognized, I rerouted my DIRECTV and PS3 into my AVR and then ran the out from that to the 3D-XL and feed the projector from the 3D-XL(depending on what receiver you have (3D capable or not) will determine where you daisy chain in your 3D-XL), After all the wires were ran It was simple as turning everything on and getting ready to enjoy some 3D content. When the projector first syncs with the source, in the right hand corner of the screen, it will tell you if you are viewing it in 2D mode or 3D mode. My HD66 automatically turns on 3D mode and there was no setup needed after I started displaying 3D material. All I had to do was go to the media of my choice and and hit the play in 3D option and my screen was filled with a VERY immersive 3D picture. At this stage there is a downfall to DLP Link and that is because of the way it works there is a 50%

chance that you could be synced with the wrong eye, meaning your right eye is seeing what your left eye is meant to see and vice versa, referred to by some as pseudo 3D. There is a VERY easy fix for me as I have DLP Link employed at my house instead of IR for syncing to my glasses and that is on my Harmony One, I have set up a button to take me to the 3Dinversion option on my HD66, and from there it's either turned on or off with another button press depending on if I need it on or off. This is a very easy workaround, and some projectors even have a 3Dinversion built into their remote, sadly mine does not, nor do my glasses have an option to reverse it either. Once synced properly it should not come un-synced, and to be honest I have had to do the 3Dinversion once, so the 50% chance seems to be really swinging in my favor so far.

When you are in 3D mode, because of the way 3d works you will lose some lumens from your projector. Luckily my HD66 puts out a very bright picture, and it didn't really affect my viewing, the glasses I used (ZD201s from Optoma, and also ULTIMATE3DHEAVEN DLP Link glasses) were the same darkness wise, so I would believe that all glasses across the board will operate about the same and that is you will lose about 60% of your brightness. To counteract this it seems the projector throws out a very bright picture that I have to question how this will affect bulb life for me down the road. I have not researched how this does affect bulb life nor have I seen any one comment on it, so hopefully it doesn't have a major impact.

The first thing we watched was Under The Sea in 3D, and if you were on the fence before about buying a 3D setup you won't be after watching this. All I heard from other people in the room was "This is amazing", and even a couple jumps were felt at parts where fish would grab another fish quickly, and it felt like it was coming out after you. While this was a IMAX Production and I expected nothing but the best, the tize of the screen really helped with the 3D and made it that much better. Motorstorm was up next to make sure that the 3D-XL really does everything it says. If you have ever played Motorstorm then you will know why I was excited to play this game! The mud being thrown from the vehicles as they slide around the corner was amazing in 3D- and it did not disappoint. Again from the crowd at my house all I heard was this is awesome as they were ducking and diving from the mud being thrown at them.

Over the last week I have watched several programs from DIRECTV that have been kind of iffy on whether or not I enjoy it in 3D. March Madness is ramping up and I tuned in fully expecting to press the SBS (Side by Side mode) button on the box as per instructed. The box can auto detect anything from a HDMI 1.4a source, but when fed with a 1.3 source you have to manually tell it that it is a SBS format. The picture displayed right away and I felt like I was courtside at a basketball game, without ever having to press that button. I don't know if this was due to it being on 3NET and not ESPN3D, which is a 720p SBS channel or what, but there was no adjustment needed even though this was an ESPN3D broadcast. The basketball game itself was enjoyable but the camera angles really seemed like they needed adjustment and I am sure as the technology grows they will better learn how to display it so it's enjoyable for all. This is a fault with the actual programming, nothing with the box.

The 3D-XL box worked 100% to my expectations, but I have to wonder when will the media catch up to where the hardware is to make it worth it for majority of the people. 3D is a

wonderful thing and it will amaze anyone that sees it, but the question is, is the content available right now able to justify this purchase. I will say this, big screen (projector and screen setup) 3D is the way to go as it is very immersive and filling, I have had 10 people watch my 3D setup and all I heard was "oh wow", "wow this is awesome". So there is no doubt in my mind of the impact it will have if it can get some content behind it. If you have decided 3D is the way to go there is no better product in my mind at this point in time then the 3D-XL coupled with your favorite 3D ready projector. You will have a MUCH more immersive picture then anything you will see at your local theater, and this box can handle a lot of different formats. I have yet to see anything that can stand up to it.

Summary:
Pros-
1.   Price is a huge pro when you take into account all this box can handle.
2.   Pretty easy setup.
3.   Handles many formats, gives you peace of mind that whatever 3D you throw at this, it should handle it.
4.   Compatiable with many projectors.
5.   Stackable so that you can do a 1080p passive system.
6.   Solid Hardware that feels very well built.
7.   Cross talk and ghosting non-existent
Cons-
1.   Has to be on for video and audio passthrough, don't know if this is a hardware limitation, but if it is a true passthrough why would it have to be on?
2.   Pseudo 3D, but easily taken care of, still a negative
3.   No remote, what do you mean I have to move 5 feet to press the SBS button when I want to watch ESPN3D.

Note: My review pics show a Europe model box, please only buy your 3D-XL from American stores as OptomaUSA will not support anything from Optoma Europe, also the ZD201 glasses shown are not going to be bundled with the USA model as once planned, instead they will be using the ZD101's in their place.

Thanks To Optoma for working with me on this, and to Torin For all his help in answering my never- ending emails.

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