

Nintendo to launch 3D portable game console

TOKYO, JAPAN: Nintendo has unveiled plans to launch a handheld 3D video game console that does not require special glasses, seeking to harness surging interest in images that appear to jump out of the screen.

The Japanese electronics giant, which competes with Sony and Microsoft in the multi-billion dollar video game industry, said the new machine, tentatively called the Nintendo 3DS, would be introduced some time by March next year.

The device will succeed Nintendo's DS series, the best-selling portable video game console ever with sales of more than 125 million units since its launch in 2004, and will be compatible with DS games, the company said.

The announcement on Tuesday, 23 March 2010, comes as handheld game consoles face growing competition from games available on mobile telephones such as Apple's iPhone.

Nintendo, the maker of the hit Wii games console, did not say how much the 3DS would cost, promising more details in June at the annual E3 videogame convention in Los Angeles.

Consumer electronics makers are battling for a share of the market for 3D televisions and other gadgets, aiming to ride a new wave of interest in the technology thanks to recent movies such as sci-fi blockbuster "Avatar".

Sony is also aiming to make its PlayStation 3 compatible with 3D games but, unlike Nintendo's planned device, users are expected to have to buy a new television and special glasses to enjoy 3D images.

Many experts think consumers are unlikely to rush to buy the premium-priced 3D TVs due to the need for special glasses and because many people have already upgraded to high-definition sets in recent years.

Nintendo is striving to reverse a decline in sales of the DS as well as the Wii home console, which has been outsold by the PS3 and Microsoft's Xbox 360 since its launch in 2006 but has struggled recently due to a lack of new games.

Source: AFP