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3 Electronic Devices that Owe You an Apology

Consumer electronics have proven to be a boon closely intertwined with our everyday lives, but every now and again a device surfaces that aims to take our money and sacrifice our patience. Well, now it’s time for an apology.

The Lost Format: HD DVD

HD DVD is the red-headed step son of the high-definition resolution movement. Launching side by side with Sony’s Blu-Ray format, [the HD DVD](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1898610_1898625_1898629,00.html), which was developed by Toshiba, never stood a chance. Why? Because it was utterly pointless. This isn’t the first time a war between two identical, albeit independently marketed formats caused one to implode prematurely. Back in the 70’s when people still watched movies off of film tapes (weird right?) there were two formats – VHS and Betamax. Since most folks have never even heard about Betamax, it’s clear that it was a niche format. I say “niche” because the Betamax tapes were still being produced from the mid-70s to the mid-80s. A ten-year run isn’t bad for a piece of technology destined to fail. HD DVDs were only produced from 2006 to 2008. Two years. Two ABYSMAL years. Give me my money back.

A Phone That Will Make You Flip (Out): Motorola Razr

At one point in your life, it’s very likely you owned a Razr. This unbelievably thin phone sold 100,000,000+ units and possessed tight metallic contours and exterior/interior screens making it the design wet-dream of an Orson Scott Card novel. However, beauty is only skin deep and [the truth about the Razr is all too apparent](http://gawker.com/218060/why-you-bought-the-razr-and-why-it-sucks-ass/all) – it was virtually identical to every other phone on the market from a technical standpoint, and the stiff, difficult-to-press buttons on the keypad made texting feel like the act of jamming your finger against a cold, flat surface over and over. People looked great talking on them, but signal reception and volume were so atrocious that most conversations quickly turned into shouting matches. I was hung up on too many times because of the Razr’s poor functionality, and now I want an apology.

Gameboy for the Troubled: PlayStation Portable (PSP)

The PlayStation Portable teaches us the valuable lesson that even if you have a super appealing product, if you don’t confidently market it and support it, it will ultimately fail. The PlayStation Portable should have, for all intents and purposes, crushed Nintendo’s competing handheld – the Nintendo DS. While the DS’s graphics and functionality were entrenched in the past, the PSP brought console-quality graphics to the handheld market as well as other functions like SD Card Support and a built-in MP3 player. Somewhere along the line Sony forgot that the PSP was primarily a handheld gaming device, and instead of pumping out quality games, opted for a bunch of mini DVD discs and the occasional average title. The DS went on to break sales records while the PSP turned into little more than an inconvenient way to bypass your high school’s internet firewalls. I’ve still got my receipt.  
  
  
  
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Who remembers the Microwave? That device that reheats the cold food left out for you by your girlfriend when you fall asleep on your friends couch the night of her birthday? Or the vacuum? The saintly device that allows you to pretend you’re helping clean the house, when in fact all you want is a reprieve from the constant chatter and gossip about floor layouts and wall color palettes?  
  
Fun Fact – An external HD DVD drive was sold on the market for the Xbox 360 around launch time. The drive, as well as the format, sold so poorly that Microsoft credited those who purchased the drive 5 free HD DVDs including the Last Samurai and the only watchable live-action Transformers movie.