

by Paul Gray, Director of European research, NPD DisplaySearch



One word summed up IFA 2014: curved. We asked NPD DisplaySearch's director of European research, Paul Gray, what his take was on this trend...

Samsung provided massive promotion of its curved TV range, as it sought to defend and even extend its lead in the European TV market. Its booth provided demonstrations to prove that curved TVs were brighter, offered better viewing angles and richer colours. Scientific claims were made that 4300mm was the optimum curvature and a massive 105-inch 5K 21:9 wowed visitors. All other brands had curved sets on display and generally offered them as premium models, extending the trend seen at CES where curved product concepts were displayed by all the big Chinese brands. We suspect that these are largely defensive products as little effort was being made to build a value proposition around the curvature. Retailers appear to be very split on curved sets; some love them, others do not. However, tactically most retailers will be looking to develop alternative sources to Samsung simply to apply pressure.

How do you think this trend will affect the market?

We remain unconvinced by the claimed advantages of curved TV and see it as a fashion in the high end. The feature costs around 20% more due to extra processes, more mechanical components and additional shipping costs from a larger box size. It is not a case that process innovation can bring it below a flat panel. We expect that Samsung (and imitators) will use it successfully in the high-end but ultimately the market will bring on a different feature to replace it. We have seen similar fashions in the past, such as picture-in-picture video a decade ago.

IFA 2014's Key TV Trend Without A Doubt...

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07. 10. 2014



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