

# LAST WORD

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THE WEEK OF JULY 7, 2008

## A hard way to grow

Just how much this industry is changing was clear at the Entertainment Merchants Assn.'s Home Media Expo show in Las Vegas last week.

The show is just a fraction as large as it used to be and the new Palms casino venue had its pluses and minuses—smaller (plus), but not easier to navigate due to scattered exhibits and events and long waits for an elevator (minus, minus).

People were mostly irritated at having to stay in one hotel and do business in another. Before the show even opened, the EMA board was discussing what to do to revamp the event next year. One suggestion: lose the big production value opening session and awards show. Everything just echoes in a theater filled to less than one-third capacity.

The neither-here-nor-there nature of the show, however, is

just a symptom of an industry that's in transition and becoming increasingly fragmented in search of growth.

I had many conversations about the ways both program suppliers and retailers are achieving growth in a flat market, and the common theme was customization. It seems there is no "business as usual" anymore.

Consider that:

Suppliers and wholesalers are looking to all sorts of non-traditional retailers for growth. Among the key accounts at Lionsgate's pre-Expo retailer meeting were Rite Aid and InMotion Entertainment, which runs DVD and accessory stores in airports. eBay resellers are emerging as a new retail channel for DVD.



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that it will then merchandise in non-DVD specialty retailers.

New indie label Cinevolve, which will release its first full slate of titles to DVD this fall, knows it will sell only the occasional title through the biggest chains but has an impressively developed plan for

### DATEBOOK

July 15-17

#### E3 Media & Business Summit 2008

Annual videogame conference. Details: [www.e3expo.com](http://www.e3expo.com)

July 24

#### Minnesota IDEA Chapter Winner's Circle

Held at the Canterbury Park Race Track in Shakopee, Minn. Free for IDEA members, \$25 for non-members. RSVP to Jean Soine at [payvideo@clearwire.net](mailto:payvideo@clearwire.net). Details: [www.idealink.org](http://www.idealink.org)

July 24-27

#### Comic-Con 2008

Held at the San Diego Convention Center in San

Diego. Details: [www.comic-con.org](http://www.comic-con.org)

Aug. 5-7

#### Building Blocks 2008

Held at the Marriot in San Jose, Calif. Details: [www.digitalhollywood.com/BuildingBlocks.html](http://www.digitalhollywood.com/BuildingBlocks.html)

Aug. 14-16

#### New Media Expo

Held at the Las Vegas Convention Center in Las Vegas. Details: [www.newmediaexpo.com](http://www.newmediaexpo.com)

Sept. 3-7

#### CEDIA Expo

Held at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver. Details: [www.cedia.org/expo](http://www.cedia.org/expo) **vb**

The industry is becoming increasingly fragmented in search of growth.

Wholesaler Wax Works VideoWorks and others are growing through specialty Internet fulfillment and providing customized product packages to such non-entertainment specialty outlets as Aéropostale, Harley-Davidson, Princess Cruises and Capezio.

One supplier talked about a pending distribution deal for special interest and instructional titles

specialty theatrical screenings and DVD campaigns.

It's easier to ship more product to Wal-Mart than it is to mine numerous specialty channels, but that is no longer an option for many industry players. Breaking new retail ground is a hard way to grow. But it is a way to grow. **vb**

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# VB

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