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# tell

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### TELLING REVIEWS



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2D to 3D That Actually Works



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# 3D-Bee Makes 2D 3D

Let's get one thing out of the way first: you're never going to see a 3D effect on a 2D set. It ain't going to happen. With that said, those crying that there's not enough 3D content – and they're right – are not happy with the slim pickings that are available. And those who've turned to the 2D to 3D conversion built into their 3D TVs have been sorely disappointed because the implementation has been, to be charitable, lousy. So why spend more money on top of that which got you a 3D TV and a 3D-capable Blu-ray player just to get some device that purports to turn 2D to 3D? Because it actually does it.

I ran across VEFXi at E3 2011. They had their 3D-Bee hooked up to a 3D TV and were running a 2D DVD of an animated film. Now I'm all for understanding how a technology works, but even more important than the whole idea of algorithms separating foreground from background and edge detection and other tech-y stuff, is whether you're seeing 3D or not. And what was on the screen did appear to be 3D.

So I immediately requested a unit and now I'm looking at the paperback book-sized 3D-Bee trainer. This model adds a few dollars on top of the basic home model in that it has added "depth" modes and can also handle the top-to-bottom 3D mode of units typically found in corporate or school settings.

Setting up the trainer takes about 5 minutes: you put it next to your 3D TV and plug its power supply into an outlet. Then plug the HDMI cable connected to your 3D-capable Blu-ray player (or in my case, a



PS3) into one of the four inputs. Next, plug a HDMI cable from the trainer's output to an input on the 3D TV for a Full 1080p HD signal (if you're using a 3D-capable projector, it's only going to be up to 720p).

Pressing the "On" button on the trainer's front, you use its remote to select the Blu-ray player and turn the 3D effect on to sync with the TV's side-by-side 3D mode (if you are playing an actual 3D disc, you'd just disable everything with another button instead).

The "Depth" button gives you the choice of various "Z" modes: the "-" keeps the 3D behind the screen while the "+" makes the foreground appear to come out from in front of the screen (home only provides one each of "-" and "+"). VEFXi strongly suggests staying with one of the "-" modes because they say 2D film isn't well suited for "popping" out from the screen. We'll see. Fortunately an onscreen display shows up every time you press the remote so you know what is going on.

I crack open my Toy Story 3D Combo pack, grab the 3D Blu-ray disc and bring up a scene at random. I deactivate the trainer,

put on my active 3D glasses and sit back to watch a scene near the end which has smoke and explosions – these are NOT easy things to be faked in 3D, so I'm showing no mercy. When the scene ends, I lock in my mind how the characters, smoke and explosions interplayed with the background.

So out goes the 3D disc and in goes the one in 2D. I turn the trainer's 3D back on and cycle through the depth settings until "Z-" comes up onscreen. I play the same scene again. Hot damn – to my eye it seems like the same 3D effects are playing. How cool is that?

Okay, let's try it again, only this time with a live-action film that doesn't have a 3D counterpart: The Dirty Dozen. Watching the film from start to finish, I did fudge the Depth setting once to "+" but found it not to my liking – setting the depth to "-" actually looks better to me here. And not surprisingly, after a while, the whole 3D effect becomes sublimated to the onscreen action, which is exactly what it's supposed to do in the first place.

At the end of watching far too many films, I can say that

the 3D-Bee trainer does create an illusion of 3D, although it's often subtle. But compared to the alternative of no 3D or the technology used by some of the 3D TV manufacturers, this is like coming in runner-up to Miss Universe: maybe it's not first place, but it's damn close. Overall I'd have to say that 3D-Bee can help to mitigate the whole "lack of 3D content" issue, since it will also work with TV signals just as it does with prerecorded video. Add to that an easy setup that anyone can handle and an affordable price that's even less if you forego some features by getting the home model, and what's not to like? Good luck VEFXi in getting me to return this. **tell**

## FAST FACTS

**3D-BEE: TRAINER/\$499**  
**3D-BEE: HOME/\$399**

[www.vefxi.com](http://www.vefxi.com)

- Helps to mitigate the whole "lack of 3D content" issue
  - Easy setup that anyone can handle
  - An affordable price
- VideoEFX Intelligence