

Death of the video recorder

The largest retailer in the UK has decided to stop selling video-recorders. Is this too soon for a product that is still being used by millions of consumers?

1 Which of the following do you own? Compare your answer with a partner.

a video recorder (VCR)	a DVD player	a DVD recorder
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2 Complete the dates in the 'product history' information box by scanning the article below.

Product history: the video recorder		(c)	Battle between VHS and Betamax formats
(a)	VHS tape format appeared	(d)	VCR sales start to fall dramatically
(b)	Dixons sells its first VCR	(e) 2004	Dixons announces it will stop selling VCRs

Will the DVD replace the VCR? The UK's largest chain of electrical shops, *Dixons*, has announced that it will stop selling video recorders. This is due to the boom in DVD players. Demand for VCRs has fallen dramatically since the 1990s. The price of DVD players has gone down and some machines now cost just £25. DVD players are outselling video recorders by 40 to 1 at *Dixons* stores.

The VHS tape format appeared in 1976 and the first video cassette recorder went on sale at *Dixons* in 1978. The product revolutionised home entertainment by allowing people to record from television and avoid missing their favourite programmes. The early 1980s saw a battle between the VHS

format and its main competitor, Betamax, from Sony. Although many believed Betamax was a better product, the VHS format won and became the worldwide standard.

No one disagrees that DVD is a better product, with higher picture and sound quality than VHS. Nevertheless, the decision by *Dixons* has caused different reactions among consumers. Many say it is 'a trick to increase the sales of DVDs'. Others are happy that other retailers, such as *Currys*, aim to continue selling the product. Despite the recent decline in sales, VHS is still being used in around 90% of homes.

3 Read the whole article. How do *you* feel about the fact that the video recorder may soon disappear?

4 Create sentences about your own company using the words and phrases in the box below.

a boom	demand for	to outsell	a competitor	decline in sales
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5 (a) There are many products that were once part of our everyday lives but have now been replaced with newer technologies. Work with a partner and make a list of three obsolete products – and what has replaced them.

Old product	Replaced by.....
Video	DVD

(b) Did you own / use any of the old products on your list at home or at work? Do you still use any of them? Do you think they will disappear completely in the near future? Present your list to the class.