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Technology to accelerate delivery of HDR images

BY STEPHEN HARRIS

Research at Warwick University could speed up delivery of the next generation of TV image quality.

Warwick researchers are working with IBM in Austin, Texas, to enable existing TV sets to display high-dynamic-range (HDR) images that display light and contrast in a way much closer to how the human eye sees them than ordinary photo or video.

Only TVs with LED backlighting can display true HDR footage, which can be up to 30 times brighter and 10 times darker than normal images, but few compatible models are on the market. The technology will allow non-LED sets to display an approximation of HDR imaging by decoding the large amount of data involved and displaying it using a technique called 'tone mapping'.

'The problem with [HDR video] is that it's huge—it's 42GB per minute of footage,' said project leader Prof Alan Chalmers. 'So, what we've developed and filed a patent for is the compression algorithm that compresses the content down to manageable sizes.'

Chalmers's team is now working on the decoding software that will allow people to view the compressed data on a normal screen.

