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1976: JVC HR-3300

Price: \$1,400

Weighing in at a chunky 30 pounds, JVC's hulk of a videocassette recorder was one of the first to work with VHS tapes, and helped sink the rival Betamax format. Movie producers at first fought the spread of taped movies, fearing home viewing would cut into box office receipts. Their fears proved unfounded and opened a whole new market of home entertainment profits for Hollywood, paving the way for DVDs and movie and TV downloads.

By Jeremy Caplan and Brendan Lowe

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