

PVRs

An update on our Best Buys

BEST BUYS

All these personal video recorders (PVRs) are Best Buys – and all make recording from digital TV much easier than a VCR, thanks to on-screen electronic programme guides (EPGs). Recordings are stored on an internal hard drive. The two Sky+ models work with Sky's satellite digital TV; the others work with Freeview (digital TV via your aerial).

The **Sky+ 160 (1)**, £399 from Sky, has 80 hours' capacity – four times that of the original **Sky+ (2)**, £99 for new Sky customers. Both are easy to use, can record subtitles, and have two tuners so you can record from one digital channel while watching another. You can now restrict access to channels and remove listings to adult channels from the EPG.

For both boxes, you pay £10 a month on top of your Sky subscription (unless you subscribe to two premium channels). Existing subscribers pay more than new

customers for the Sky+ box and also have to pay £60 for installation of either box.

Of the four Freeview PVRs, the **Humax (3)** stores the most recordings (40 hours) and is the cheapest. It can also record digital subtitles. But – unlike all the other PVRs – it has just one tuner. So, unless you already have a Freeview set-top box or digital TV, you won't be able to watch one digital channel while recording another. It's £170 from Currys, Dixons, Comet, John Lewis and Miller Brothers.

The other PVRs can store 20 hours. The **Thomson (4)**, £200 from Comet and Miller Brothers, is fairly easy to use and can now record digital subtitles. The EPG on the **Bush (5)**, £200 from Index, is harder to read and navigate. And the EPG on the **DigiFusion (6)**, £230 from Maplin Electronics, has small text and doesn't show programme end times.



SCORE

This ignores price and is based on:

Picture quality	30%
Sound quality	30%
Ease of use	20%
Features	20%

KEY

★ ☆ ○ ●	
Best	Worst
■ Best Buy	

TABLE NOTES

We tested all available personal video recorders.

Specification

Price Lowest widely available high-street price.

Monthly fee Sky waives its fees if you subscribe to two premium channels.

Works with PVRs work with Sky (satellite) or Freeview (terrestrial).

Features

Capacity The typical maximum hours the disk can store. **Series link** You can set the PVR to record all episodes of a series.

Record/watch Twin tuners let you watch one digital channel while recording another. **Subtitles** Can record and play back digital subtitles.

Performance

Picture, Sound In standard play, quality is as good as live TV.

Ease of use How easy the PVR is to set up, program and use.

WHICH? EXTRA

To read more about PVRs, including more on features and how they work, plus frequently updated test results, go to www.which.co.uk/pvrs

PVRs

MODEL

	Specification			Features				Performance			Score
	Price (£)	Monthly fee (£)	Works with	Capacity (hours)	Series link	Record/watch	Subtitles	Picture	Sound	Ease of use	(%)
1 Sky+ 160	399 ^a	10	Sky	80	✓	✓	✓	★	★	★	94
2 Sky+	99 ^b	10	Sky	20	✓	✓	✓	★	★	★	93
3 Humax PVR8000T-80	170		Freeview	40			✓	★	★	☆	87
4 Thomson DHD4000	200		Freeview	20		✓	✓	★	★	○	85
5 Bush IDPVR02	200		Freeview	20		✓		★	★	●	81
6 DigiFusion FVRT100	230		Freeview	20		✓		★	★	●	81

^a Installation is free for new Sky subscribers, £60 for existing subscribers

^b New subscriber price (includes installation). Existing subscribers pay £199 plus £60 for installation