Subject: Re: PVR hard disk recorders
Posted by footsurg on Mon, 26 Jan 2004 17:48:50 GMT
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Wayne, I have had extensive experience with 2 PVR's. The Panasonic DMR-E80H and the Panasonic DMR-E100H. I have to say that both machines are excellent in doing what they were designed to do. The E80 had an 80 gig HD and like the E100 is a progressive scan unit. The E100 has 120 gigs of HD space (enough for 55 hours in SP mode)and most important has a digital input for transfering digital video shot with a DV camcorder. This is a crucial feature. On the units like the E80 that lack this functionality, one has to input video through the composite inputs. This results in the digital video having to be changed to analog, imported and then having to be redigitized with noticable loss.The quality of the capture on the HD is stunning. I am currently recording my source material mostly for HBO and Shotime on the HDTV feeds. Keep in mind that none of the current PVR's out there can capture HDTV in Native 1080i resolution. If you try, it will record the movie, but only in 480p or 480i depending on your inputs. I am using S-Video to input the HDTV signals from my Samsung T-160 HDTV converter. To capture native HDTV you would need a digital input like a DVI and a hell of lot more hard drive space than 120 gigs. Anyway, what you end up with is an anamorhic wide screen 480p recording of the movie which equals the resolution of any commercial DVD recordings that I've seen. Currently HBO and Shotime are not flagging any of their feeds with Macrovision copy protection at this time. All PVR's produced will have the Macrovision copy protection in place to prevent copying commercial DVD's and VHS tapes. This Macrovision protection can easily be defeated with a "clarifier" device and is legal to do so under the "fair use" act which makes it legal for a consumer to copy their own commercial software for backup purposes.Back to the PVR's. The units can be "syncronized" with the program guide of any set top converter (Cable or DSS) to record whatever material you want. It works very much like a TIVO but without the monthly service fees. The difference is that you have program two machines instead of one to make the recordings. My machine (the E100H) is compatible with DVD-RAM and DVD-R discs. Other types out there include DVD-RW and DVD+R. DVD-RAM is not as popular as DVD-RW at this time. Both DVD-RAM and RW are rewritable discs. DVD-RAM is much better because it can be rewritten over 100,000 times and is more compatibe with desktop PC computers. The ability to edit is more enhanced with DVD-RAM than with DVD-RW because of its ability to be used in computers. A lot of people record the source material on the PVR then transfer it to a computer to do the editing. The E100H has pretty strong built in editing features and I have not felt the need to edit on the PC as of yet. The DVD-R and DVD+R are write once formats. Once you have edited your material you then have to "finalize" the recording to encode it in DVD-R format (on the E100H) This finalization makes it possible to view your DVD on almost any standard DVD player. Before it is finalized, it can only be read on the machine that performed the initial burn.These machines have really come of age. These devices will most certainly spell the final death call for the VHS format. It has become so easy and cheap (DVD-R blank media sells for about 70-80 cents per disc in bulk) to make your own DVDs. The quality of the recording is vastly superior to tape, much more versatile, and is quite easy to use. As the prices of recorders and media plummet, as they will certainly do, more folks will be getting rid of their VCR's and going to PVR's. This is going to happen in a hurry. It will almost be like when the compact disc first came out in 1982. In the beginning only a few had players and the software was not that easy to find and selection was poor. By 1984-85 it seemed that almost all the chain music stores had converted their stock to CD's. It almost seemed like it happened overnight. Now that you can record on the DVD cheaply, the same will happen to VHS.

Maybe one more year, perhaps two. You will not be able to even easily find a VHS tape or VCR.