Subject: Re: Roku
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 22 Jan 2010 19:55:35 GMT
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I've had the Roku box long enough now to learn a couple things I'd like to pass on. For one thing, I watched a few minutes of several movies, sort of a preview to get an idea about quality of various videos. I found a few that were HD, and the picture quality was quite good. I was impressed. Most are medium quality, about the same as broadcast but I think the Roku HD streams are better than the HD video on Cox cable or U-Verse. Then again, I'm sure this is largely dependent on the source quality, not just the connection method. But I will say that the Roku box was more free of anomalies - It really just won't glitch. If it's having problems with the connection, it appears to sort of step back and punt. So no bloicky glitchy stuff, and I like that.

I tied up my internet link with multiple downloads to simulate a poor link and I learned that the Roku box tries to take over. It actually shut down the link to one of my wireless computers, making it unable to connect. Pretty selfish little box, but it did keep the video quality good. So then I took the wireless router and placed it very far away, right on the edge of where it would even work. This was a more effective test of how the device deals with a bad connection.

What it did was to start to play a stream at high quality mode (shown as quality level 4, with four dots) and then later kick back to quality level 2. It appears that there are two different streams, a good one and a low-speed one, although I'm not sure that's how they do it. Could be done on the fly too. But when a video comes across in the lower level, you can see a difference in video quality. The biggest thing I noticed is color dithering isn't as good. Instead of getting a nice smooth true color version, some things seemed to be rendered in a low number of colors so you could see some banding. But that's only when the link was almost non-functional. When the connection is good, quality is good. And when the stream is HD, some were really good.