Subject: Roku
Posted by colinhester on Thu, 21 Jan 2010 03:14:32 GMT
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Wayne, Sorry for the cross reply, but this is so freaking cool. Where has it been all my life. Seriously, just ordered an HD capable unit. This is gonna be GREAT!!!!!!

http://www.roku.com

Subject: Re: Roku
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 21 Jan 2010 14:54:28 GMT
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I'm liking mine. I've only had it a couple days now, but have watched a couple recorded TV shows and a movie. It works pretty well. One nice thing is it caches large blocks of the show before it even starts as well as throughout the video, so it doesn't dropout like live streams do. Great idea, I love that part. However, there are a couple of things I don't like, but hopefully things that can be fixed in time with server-side updates and firmware changes.

For one thing, there doesn't appear to be much HD content out there. I bought the HD box, so when it's available I'll be able to view it. But I don't see many movies that are available as HD streams yet. So most stuff is still pretty low res although no more so than standard broadcast, and with less dropouts because of the large cache.

The second thing I don't like is the box doesn't appear to have any real internet browsing capability. In my opinion, that's a serious oversight. I probably wouldn't cruise the web looking for YouTube stuff to watch - I almost never watch videos from YouTube now. But I would like to be able to add things to my NetFlix queue from the Roku box. Right now, I have to use my laptop PC to access the NetFlix site, add a movie to my queue, then use the Roku box to find and select the movie I want to watch. That's a bloated and clunky process. You should be able to just select the movies you want with your Roku remote. I hope they fix that soon, because it's just too obvious an improvement in the user interface to overlook.

The only other thing I would have wished for is something I didn't expect, and can live without. But it still relegates the Roku box to the bedroom as a secondary source. I'm wondering how long before they fix this too though, and have streaming audio content that's as good as BluRay. The audio output of the Roku box doesn't sound nearly as good as a DVD. Also, while the Roku box is capable of 5.1 channel output through the HDMI port, none of the Netflix video streams are available with 5.1 audio content. Amazon has a few with 5.1 audio, I understand, but I'll bet they're far and few between. Overall, I'd say sound support is comparible to broadcast quality, not bad but definitely not high-fidelity. If they had high-resolution sound like BluRay and some DVDs do, that would be great. One day, I'm sure they'll start improving sound quality as well as video quality.

More discussion about Roku - in the Digital Video forum, here on AudioRoundTable.com