
Subject: PVR hard disk recorders

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sun, 25 Jan 2004 14:38:24 GMT

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Anybody have a PVR hard disk recorder?What are your impressions?

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 transferring 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 anamorphic 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 "synchronized" 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.

Subject: Re: PVR hard disk recorders

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2004 04:20:17 GMT

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Excellent info. That's print and file material. Have you heard the buzz on when hi-res PVR's might be introduced? And what's the resolution of commercial digital camcorders? I followed this stuff pretty closely a few years back, but that was when "the" digital camera was the Betacam SP Digital, which is really a professional videocamera for use in the field. It was expensive enough initially that only networks used it and smaller stations stayed with the analog Betacam units. So I'm wondering what the commercial digital cameras are capable of these days, and at what price tag.

Subject: Re: PVR hard disk recorders

Posted by [footsurg](#) on Tue, 27 Jan 2004 21:00:50 GMT

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Wayne, As we speak there are several companies due to launch HD PVR's in the next couple of months. Direct TV showed a unit at CES this year with a 250 Gig hard drive and two tuners so that you can record one program while watching another. No price tag yet. They claim that you can record 30 hours of HDTV on the drive and 200 hours of SDTV. I suspect that these numbers are for the EP setting which will certainly sacrifice resolution for increased storage capacity. My Panny E100H has a 120 Gig drive and is rated for around 140 or so hours on the EP mode. That is the way that Panasonic advertises it because the numbers are impressive. The catch is that the picture quality suffers a lot on EP mode. SP mode is the best all around mode that delivers around 55 hours on the 120 Gig drive with a fantastic picture and sound. You can move up to XP mode which is the highest resolution mode and only get around 35 hours on a 120 Gig drive. I really can't tell that much of a difference between XP and SP, so I use SP almost all the time. The big point here is that the 250 Gig drive on Direct TV's HDTV PVR is not going to go very far when recording HD feeds with SP or higher resolutions. Why bother recording HD material if you are going to compress the hell out of it to increase storage space and degrade the picture? My guess

is that if you expect to record HDTV in 1080i at SP resolution you're going to need more than 250 Gigs. At SP I bet that 250 Gigs holds no more than 10-15 hours of native 1080i material max. The "real" HD PVR's are going to sport the new 500 Gig drives and do so in multiples. Expect to see dual 500 Gig drives (1 Terabyte) in upcoming PVR's. That is where I think we are headed. Regarding Digital Camcorders, the devices with 3 CCD's are definitely the best. JVC just introduced a 3 CCD recorder capable of HDTV (1080i) resolution. Its just \$3499.00.....I'll take 3 at that low price. Expect to see more HDTV digital camcorders using miniDV format for much lower prices coming up in the next year or two. Most commercial shooters use the Sony and Canon commercial DV cams. These suckers range in price from \$5000-\$12000 depending on setup and features. Both Sony and Canon have pseudo-commercial units with Leica lenses and 3CCD chips that cost in the \$3000-\$4000 range, but these are still just 480i units. Save your coin for the HD models that will be coming very soon and will blow the old ones away. However, to enjoy the capabilities of the new units you must be set up for HDTV at home. Its going to be a while before the masses get up to speed, so that means that the 480i units are not going away any time soon.

Subject: Re: PVR hard disk recorders
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 28 Jan 2004 05:34:53 GMT
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Hi Mark!You wrote:>> JVC just introduced a 3 CCD recorder capable of HDTV (1080i)>> resolution. Its just \$3499.00.....I'll take 3 at that low price.>> Expect to see more HDTV digital camcorders using miniDV format for>> much lower prices coming up in the next year or two. Most>> commercial shooters use the Sony and Canon commercial DV cams.>> These suckers range in price from \$5000-\$12000 depending on setup>> and features.Ha! Why stop at three? Take a dozen! Give 'em out next year as stocking stuffers!All jokes aside, that's actually good price considering pro digital cameras of just a decade ago were over \$50K a pop, and only capable of 480 line resolution.Long way from the early camcorders with a Saticon tube!Wayne

Subject: Re: PVR hard disk recorders
Posted by [Crystal](#) on Sun, 21 Oct 2007 04:09:01 GMT
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I agree with wayne about the price, being affordable. It's within my price range. I may purchase this item in the near future.Crystal
