

Uk Tivo Compared against a Humax Foxtat PVR.

I used to have a Uk Series 1 Thompson built Tivo with Sky subscription and now I have a Humax Freedsat-HDR.

Lets compare some features.

	Tivo	Humax Foxtat PVR HD
Pictures in reversed scale the Tivo is about twice as big as the Humax.		
Hardware	1 Satellite cable, 3 Scart inter-connects, IR blaster to drive set top box. Phone line or Ethernet for EPG.	Needs two satellite cables. Twin tuners built in. Has 2 Scart and 1 HDMI output and S/PDIF audio..
Size Matters	Dimensions: w,h,d 430 x 110 x 330 mm	Dimensions: w,h,d 380 x 55 x 252 mm
Software install	Software by Guided set up. Needs Postcode	Guided configuration and manual tune available. Needs Postcode
Running Costs	EPG subscription per month GBP10 or Lifetime tied to box GBP200	Free from satellite.
Official Website	http://www.uk.tivo.com	http://www.humaxdigital.com/freesat/default.asp
Media Extraction	Via 3 rd party web access programs, needs Ethernet upgrade and extra software.	Supports a plug in external "FAT32" or "Ext3" format USB F for programs with "ENC" flags. Files can be copied to/from e drive using built in menu.
Hard disk size	30-40 GB standard may be 1 or 2 drives. Easy upgrade to 2 * 120 GB. Needs kernel mod for over 120 GB per drive. Ready to go upgrade drives available on web. http://tivoheaven.com/ . Two drive bays available.	1 drive 320 GB. Copy programs and files to/from using media menu "change c Media can be played from external device.
Behaviour when	Deletes oldest recording unless "Keep" flag has been set.	Will not record new programs when HD is full.

drive full		
Remote access	Tivo Web interface and TyTools available after installation of Ethernet port and extra software. Telnet access to command line in box is also available via Ethernet or serial port.	Plug into USB port to view as Hard drive, Ethernet port installed but not active yet
Music and .jpg pictures	No as standard. Channel logos can be added using 3 rd party software.	Yes – upload from an attached USB drive
Program guide	Downloaded daily via Modem or Ethernet (if connected)	Over the air. Multiple views, list, table, find.
Record EPG info	Visible in Now playing menu.	Yes – you can push “i” when a recorded program is playing at original program guide info.
Progress Bar	Program context sensitive IE the total length of the bar is the length of the program being recorded or played. The portion that is recorded is shown in bold. For a program being played that is partly recorded looks like [***V**-----]0:30	The Progress bar shows the length of the current recording even if recording is not finished. For a 30 minute program being played that is partly recorded looks like [***V**]0:17 The size of this bar will change as the recording grows.
Access All Menus	Press Tivo button and Navigate through this single menu access point..	Press “Menu” or “Media” or “Guide” or “opt-i”. There is no access point to all the menus.
Series Link	Yes – and intelligent about previous broadcasts, comes down to quality of the epg data and how it is used.	Yes – indicated by logo on recording and in “Media” view. Not clever tends towards a time and channel approach.
Best Picture Quality	Normal SD tv and be upreved to “Mode 0” which is 720*576	High Definition on suitable channels 1080i works with Resolution format: 1080i, 720p, 576p, 576i
Accessing Recordings	Found in “Now playing” Listed by time of recording only.	Found in Media Guide. Can be listed alphabetically, by time or by channel. Has folders for series.
Record time adjustments if program if broadcast time moves	No has padding as a record option. Time may be set adrift from broadcast time so some channels drift to up to 3 minutes out.	Yes if EPG data is correct also has hard padding.
Surround Sound Output	Stereo only.	Optical S/PDIF output available.

Search EPG	Yes and feature rich search by genre, name of actor , director, title.	Very basic keyword in title. Shows multiple entries when same is on at same time on parallel regional channels.
Navigate with EPG on display	Yes, EPG transparent 1 listing mode.	Yes transparency of EPG adjustable and multi listing modes.
Forum	http://www.tivocommunity.com/	http://www.hummy.org.uk/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=45 http://humaxdisk.wikispaces.com/ http://foxsat-hdr.wikispaces.com/
Cute logo		
Hackability	Yes and widely understood.	HD replacement so far use of external access to hard drive.
Remote Control (use in the dark)	Peanut. No backlight	Multi function, has modes for TV, DVD, PVR and Audio
Subtitle Recording	No	Yes
Schedule Conflict Resolution	At time of setting to record.	Has two tuners so less likely. Can sometimes record two and third. http://www.hummy.org.uk/forums/showthread.php?t=1
View What is Scheduled to Record (micro manage)	Yes Via To Do list	Has Schedule list.
Review link		http://foxsat-hdr.wikispaces.com/Review+Links

Conclusions

The series 1 Tivo developed over the years since its release in 2001; the vibrant user community and speciality dealers helped modify the box with new hard drives up from twin drive 40GB to single 320GB, Ethernet, Cache card for faster EPG searching, Web browsing, Mode 0, remote access etc, all helped keep interest alive.

The Humax is a great box and wins on its HD capability and ease access via USB port and slim light form factor. The Humax could still learn a trick or two from the community evolved Tivo. The most pressing areas for improvement for the Foxsat is the way the menus are accessed, a single menu access point and ability to play, delete, rename and examine from the same list of files. Tivo has a single menu access and far, far better search the EPG functionality. The Freestat service needs more channels of course but Pound for pound for me the Humax is now the way forward.

Gannett