

BY LAURA HELLER

streaming media

SEND MOVIES AND
MORE FROM YOUR
**COMPUTER TO
YOUR TV** FOR BIG-
SCREEN VIEWING.

Tired of squinting at a computer monitor to view vacation photos, home movies, or that hilarious episode of *30 Rock* you missed Thursday night? Transferring all that video from a hard drive and onto the TV where it belongs has never been easier.

There are a number of options, starting with a simple box that acts as a bridge from a computer or the Internet to a TV. And it really is simple. Just connect it to the TV and a home network, and you're good to go. (You have a home network if you have two or more computers able to share files, a printer, or Internet access—with or without wires.)

Some of the best solutions for transferring content involve partnering with a service that allows access to entertainment with a mere click. It's no surprise that Apple has one of the top choices. Apple TV is an 8-inch-square white box that syncs to iTunes and streams content from the Internet or other hard drives in the house to a TV. You can download TV shows and movies, or pull other content from a hard drive to watch wherever you like.

TiVo makes a similar device. The HD DVR (High-Definition Digital Video Recorder) is designed for use as a cable box and has all the features of a TiVo—programming, storage, ▶



Fairy magic Owners of Blu-ray DVD players have their first opportunity this October to utilize the interactive BD Live function with the release of the classic Walt Disney animated movie *Sleeping Beauty*. Chat on the TV screen with other viewers, play a trivia challenge, or superimpose an image of yourself into a favorite scene and send it to other viewers.

pausing live TV—plus it uses the home network to connect to the Internet to transfer video from a computer or download content from TiVo’s service, which works much like iTunes.

Or try Amazon.com’s Unbox subscription service, designed to work with existing TiVo models. Just add the monthly subscription, register at TiVo’s Web site, and begin downloading content. Or, for \$100 plus a Netflix subscription, devotees can use a box from Roku. And this fall, Microsoft began offering a similar service, with Netflix content downloaded to its Xbox 360. Sony also plans to launch a video program for the PlayStation platform soon.

Sadly, no technology is without a few glitches. DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) connections that work over existing phone lines come in more than one speed, and even the faster connections are often prone to interruptions, according to Tom Stone of Stone-Glidden, a Philadelphia-area audio-video custom installation business. Cable providers offer more reliable data transfer, he says, and will keep the stuttering at bay.

Remember downloaded content is digital data, so most of

these solutions will only work with a digital TV, or they require additional cables to connect to an older analog set. Check specifications of the product under consideration.

Content from any of these hard drives isn’t as good as from a true high definition (HD) digital source, such as what you’d receive from playing one of the new Blu-ray discs on a Blu-ray DVD player. Movies and other content produced for Blu-ray are recorded in true HD, and when played on an HD TV offer the best home viewing experience possible.

Blu-ray players now have an interactive feature called BD Live. Movies connect to the Internet via links embedded on the disc, access additional content, or connect to other viewers. The bad news is that none of these will actually turn your TV into a true interactive experience. That’s still a ways off.

“We’re not at the place yet where the TV and PC are interchangeable with a central server,” says Washington, D.C.-based technology consultant Sean Wargo. “Those are still conceptual, but it’s theoretically possible.” And coming soon.

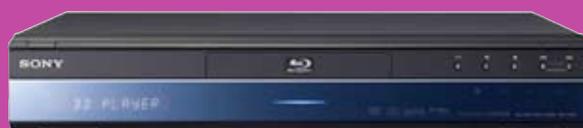


Feugue veliqui tat nos dolor ip enibh eugue modolobor secte molor ing enis et irit adiam zrrillandrem quat iril ipsuscilisl ullamco nulput

All together now

For the ultimate solution, hire a custom installation professional. Together, create a whole-house plan with a central storage area for all the devices. Behind-the-scenes wiring (some devices work wirelessly, but not all) feeds content from a variety of sources to the TVs and audio systems in every room.

Have one of each component tucked away in a closet—audio receiver, cable, hard drive recorder, Apple TV, Blu-ray player, satellite radio...the sky’s the limit. Then access music, movies, and digital content from every room. Late-night movie watchers can hit pause in the family room and resume watching in the bedroom. No need to transfer a disc or fast-forward to where you left off. Just relax and enjoy. (Visit Cedia.org to find an installation professional near you.)



PHOTOGRAPHS:

