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Sharp TU-R160H Freeview Personal Video Recorder

Can Sharp do Timeshift?

by Paul Lester published on 29 December 2006

This is Sharp's first stab at the PVR market to accompany a range of high performance LCD TVs. Following up on the recent success of rivals such as the Humax PVR9200T it offers similar features in the 160GB hard drive and built-in Freeview tuner, but is it up to scratch in terms of performance?



You're given a decent amount of hard drive space admittedly, enough for around 90 hours of recorded TV, along with rather standard Scart and composite outputs and an optical out for a digital amp if you have one. It's worth noting here that there is no card interface for PayTV channels if you wish to have any of these enabled.

Setting up the tuner is pretty easy, once hooked up an installation wizard will run to pick up the Freeview channels available in your area.

From here you can use the device as a conventional PVR to browse through a channel guide to watch, record or schedule programmes. Signal quality seemed a little poor here, and while perfectly watchable we expected better.

The channel guide itself is very straightforward, it includes an 8 day schedule that makes it easy to browse listings and set up programmes to add to your recordings library. There's also PIP view that works fairly well and on the whole the remote and panel controls make it quick and easy to get where you want to go.

Up until this point everything works fine, but it's the time shifting functions and general programme control that lets the T160H down.

To start with, setting a single programme to record drastically reduces the functionality of the device. If something is already recording, you

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can't record another channel or use the time shifting functions on another channel at the same time, something you can do flawlessly on both Humax's offering and standard Sky+.

Also the Sharp doesn't seem to automatically record what you're currently watching, which means you can't rewind live TV until you "enable" the time shifting functionality by pausing and then restarting live TV.

From here you're free to fast forward or back but it's not a particularly responsive process, and can be quite frustrating in practice.

Sharp does have Humax's number in terms of looks, it's a pretty slimline box that looks a little like an oversized car stereo, but like a car stereo the designers seem to have knocked off early after finishing the attractive front panel. The top and sides are finished in dull-grey air-vent laden metal.

If you're planning on slotting this into a shelf or underneath another A/V box you won't notice, but if you're keeping a tight ship in terms of the style amongst your home setup you might find the Sharp a little rough around the edges.

VERDICT

At around £230 you're paying about the standard price for a 160GB Freeview PVR with these sorts of specifications.

Unfortunately the issues surrounding Sharp's offering mean that there's nothing here that most rivals don't at least equal for around the same price or less.

At a glance

What is it?

Freeview PVR with 160GB capacity

Good

160GB hard drive for up to around 90 hours of TV, attractive front panel design, effective remote and panel controls

Bad

You can't record or time-shift two channels at once, below average picture quality, frustrating time-shifting functionality, no common interface for PayTV

Verdict

The performance of the Sharp PVR falls short in too many critical areas to encourage a recommendation

Price £230

Our score

6/10

Your score

9/10