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Terratec Cingery Piranha TV Tuner

Do good things really come in such small packages?

by Davey Winder published on 26 September 2007

The Cingery Piranha is the smallest USB digital TV and radio receiver on the market as far as we are aware, and oh boy is it small.

At 80 x 30 x 15mm it is barely bigger than your thumb, unless you happen to be a gorilla that is. Of course, that is just the size of the basic unit itself. If you plug in the portable antenna it becomes a lot less pocketable than before, although not exactly huge.

Thankfully the reception is a lot bigger than the size of the mini-stick suggests, and we were really rather impressed by the quality of the picture even in areas where the signal wasn't that great.

It works better if you plug it into an external antenna, but what would be the point of such tiny technology if not meant to be used in a portable capacity?

The piranha should really have been called the Tardis because it is so big on the inside. Who would have thought that such a diminutive object would be a digital television (DTT) receiver, a digital radio receiver (DAB) and even a mobile phone TV receiver (T-DMB) all at the same time.

Although still something of an emerging technology, Terrestrial Digital Multimedia Broadcasting uses highly efficient compression routines to transmit digital video content to mobile phones. The piranha future-proofs itself by making the technology available now.

But it is for watching the telly on your laptop that most users will be buying this, and they will not be disappointed. The TerraTec Home Cinema software that is included in the box has a simplicity of interface that belies the power beneath.



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It provides a central control point for all the functionality, gives timeshifting of TV programs along with a perfectly serviceable electronic program guide, oh and a digital video recorder for good measure.

If you would rather use Windows Media Centre that's no problem, and Vista is supported as well. There is even the possibility of remote programming via the Internet or mobile phone courtesy of a trial subscription to the TVTV service that is in the box.

VERDICT

TV, radio and mobile phone video reception from such a small device is hugely impressive.

If the price could drop a little it would be a no-brainer.

At a glance

What is it?

DVD-T USB TV Stick

Good

Tiny and versatile, feature packed hardware and software combo

Bad

A little on the expensive side

Verdict

TV, radio and mobile phone video reception from such a small device is hugely impressive

Price £64.99

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10