

LG 50PS7000 television

The first truly digital TV?

by Jamie Carter published on 23 June 2009

We may be in the midst of the long-awaited "digital" switchover, but the word itself is quickly ceasing to mean much in the world of video and high definition.

This 50-inch plasma from LG has a Freeview TV tuner inside for fetching digital TV pics, of course, but it also gives us another digital option. All hail the humble USB port, which on the 50PS7000 is capable of a fast transmission speed of 480Mbps. Is that really a big deal? Yes, because it allows the 50PS7000 to play video straight from a memory stick, and not just low quality fare - we're talking 720p high-definition video in the new DivX HD format. (For samples go to the new DivX HD showcase pages on their website, link below.)

Simply download and transfer to a memory stick for direct playback on the 50PS7000 - and in excellent quality (though don't expect the fine detail and cinematic feel of a Blu-ray disc). It's the ultimate in digital future-proofing - and no other TV manufacturer has thought of it yet.

True, some TV brands have been offering streaming from a PC for a while - something that's conspicuous by its absence on the 50PS7000 - but these complicated systems usually fall over and fail to play at least half the media file formats stored on a PC.

Not so the 50PS7000, whose media player can play, direct from the USB port, video files as unusual as MKV and MOV, the latter direct from iTunes, as well as MPG, AVI and DivX.

What the 50PS7000 can't play is anything from Windows, so WMV video and WMA music files are off the menu. Music is restricted to MP3 and photos to JPG, but that shouldn't cause too many problems.

Although if the transfer of music and photos is more your thing, the 50PS7000 offers you



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something genuinely unique in the shape of Bluetooth connectivity.

Accessed via the TV's excellent idiot-proof onscreen menu system, the system works much the same as it does on mobile phones; simply enter a passcode on your phone to send photos and MP3 files to the TV for immediate display or playback. Saved in the TV's built-in memory, it's then possible to start a slideshow.

For all the 50PS7000's innovations (check out its "one-pane" design that sees a sheet of glass cover both screen and frame), at its centre lies a reasonably good Full HD resolution plasma panel that does a good job across most sources. Blu-ray discs do lack the ultimate in clarity while Freeview can look noisy, but with no sign of blur, this smooth operator outguns all but high-end LCD TVs when it comes to cinematic punch.

A good dollop of contrast enables pictures to look reasonably accurate and colour is rich enough to keep things lively, though we've seen better - on both counts - on more expensive plasmas. It's impossible to criticise the audio too much; a meaty sound that contains just enough bass makes this one of the few screens around that can be relied upon to deliver movie soundtracks.

VERDICT

While not up there with the finest plasmas around when it comes to pictures, its digital media goodies and dependable audio make this 50-incher worth every penny of its £1000 list price as a whole package. And with that price tag bound to drop, the 50PS7000 is worth keeping an eye out for.

At a glance

What is it?

50-inch plasma TV

Good

Classy styling, connectivity galore, Bluetooth file transfer from phones, DivX HD playback from USB

Bad

Freeview looks ropey, Blu-ray not razor-sharp, colour can be too ripe

Verdict

While not up there with the finest plasmas around when it comes to pictures, its digital media goodies and dependable audio make this 50-incher worth every penny

Price £1000

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10