

SHOW ROOM | FREESAT PVR HUMAX FOXSAT-HDR



**NEXT ONE DOWN
HUMAX
FOXSAT-HD**

If you don't need the recording capability, then this freesat receiver can be yours for about £150, plus installation. It boasts the same user-friendliness as the PVR version, and also delivers HD channels for free.



**FOR THE SAME PRICE
PANASONIC
DMR-EX78**

The DMR-EX78 has one Freeview tuner and not freesat, but it does have a 2x0GB hard disk. It's easy to use and offers more flexible recording and editing options than the Humax, plus TV pictures can be upscaled to 1080p.



**STANDOUT FEATURE
USB PORTS**

The FOXSAT-HDR boasts not one but two USB ports, which allow you to transfer MP3 and JPEG files on to the unit's hard disk - effectively turning it into a jukebox - as well as back up hard disk recordings on an external hard disk or PC.

£300 THE UK'S FIRST FREESAT PVR

HUMAX FOXSAT-HDR

UNIT DETAILS

Manufacturer: Humax
 SRP: £300
 Unit type: Freesat PVR
 Format types: MPEG-2/MPEG-4 AVC/H.264
 Picture modes: 576i/p/720p/1080i
 Ports: HDMI out, composite out, 2 x SCART, optical digital audio out, Ethernet port, 2 x USB ports, 2 x LNB inputs
 Special features: 320GB hard disk, twin satellite tuners, freesat+, non-freesat manual channel tuning, Series/Split/Accurate recording, Schedule Tracking, Chase Play, Dolby Digital output, 7-day EPG, digital text, Audio Description, video upscaling, transfer MP3/JPEG to hard disk, copy recordings to external HDD, i-Plate

Unit dimensions: 380 x 55 x 252mm



FREESAT HAS BEEN a huge success since it launched last year.

but one vital factor has been missing - a freesat PVR. Digital TV and hard disk recording go hand in hand, and we've been crying out for a way of storing freesat's roster of free SD and HD content. Thankfully, Humax has answered our prayers by launching this 'freesat+' PVR, but is it a viable alternative to the Sky+HD box?

Well for starters the hard disk capacity is 320GB compared to Sky+HD's 160GB, which equates to 80 hours of HD programmes or 200 hours of SD content, and the unit itself is a lot more compact.

The gloss-black finish and blue-tinted fascia are instantly appealing, while the central display panel shows the name of the current channel in a clear, legible fashion.

The rear panel sports some interesting nuggets - there's an Ethernet port ready for IPTV services like BBC's iPlayer in the future, plus there's a USB port that allows you to move MP3 and JPEG files between a flash drive and the unit's hard disk, or even more impressively, archive TV recordings on an external hard disk.

The unit's recording functionality is comprehensive. The inclusion of two tuners lets you record one channel while watching another, or, record two channels while watching a third.



You can use series recording to make sure you never miss any of your favourite programmes, while accurate recording tracks the start and end times of each programme so that they still record if they get delayed.

There's a two-hour buffer memory that allows you to pause and rewind live TV, but you can't save anything in the buffer memory. Programmes can be watched from the start before they've finished recording.

Like the Humax's non-PVR freesat box, the HDR is an absolute joy to use. The EPG and other on-screen graphics are so slick and jazzy they make Sky+ look like a VCR, while the i-Plate display tells you every last detail about the current programme.

The FOXSAT-HDR's picture quality is also of the highest order, with decent SD channels looking clean, stable and packed with detail and radiant colours (although noise levels vary from channel to channel).

But tune into BBC HD and the picture will make your jaw drop - the sharpness, depth and vibrancy of the image is mesmerising, and is enough to make even the most apathetic viewer turn green with envy. It's just a shame there isn't more HD content to watch but the amount is sure to grow over the coming years.

Overall the FOXSAT-HDR is a fantastic PVR, with a big hard disk, faultless operating system and excellent picture quality. Sky should be very worried indeed.

DANNY PHILLIPS

PERFORMANCE *****
SPECS *****
AESTHETIC *****
EASE OF USE *****

With a capacious hard disk and a superb operating system, the FOXSAT-HDR is the product that finally makes freesat a force to be reckoned with.

VERDICT *****

THE TEST

BBC HD
 The BBC's high-def channel boasts some of the best-looking HD content anywhere, particularly its wildlife documentaries, costume dramas and live sport. The sharpness and clarity of this channel's images on the FOXSAT-HDR simply beggars belief and its inclusion on the platform's lineup is one of the most compelling reasons to choose freesat over Freeview.

**REMOTE PLAY
SIMPLICITY ITSELF**



KEEP IT SIMPLE
 Humax has mastered the art of making remotes that a five year old could use, and this is another great example - the button layout and labelling are excellent.

RECORD BUTTON
 This important key isn't given the prominence it deserves and gets lost among the playback controls.

A DASH OF ELEGANCE
 The gloss-black finish will look great on your coffee table, while the silver menu wheel gives it an extra touch of class.