

Moxi Tip #7: Moxi Vs ReplayTV

As a long-time ReplayTV DVR owner, comparisons are inevitable, so here are my rather lengthy impressions of Moxi in comaprison with ReplayTV. This comparison is an enhancement to a posting I made over on the AVS Forum. I have refined it a bit and added some more information, so read on for all you never wanted to knowâ?¦

jimstips.com

BACKGROUND
Before I get into the review and comparison, I want to provide a bit of background and perspective. I have been a long-time proponent of ReplayTV boxes and I have participated on AVS Forumâ??s ReplayTV forum for a number of years. I have owned three ReplayTV boxes over the past four years, and I run a personal hobby site, JimsTips.com, where I have been providing Tips & Tricks related to several topics that interest me (including ReplayTV), so to say that Iâ??ve had some experience and interest in DVRâ??s would be an understatement!

As for ReplayTV boxes, I currently own an â??upgradedâ?• model 2001, an â??upgradedâ?• model 2020, and a â??stockâ?• model 5040. For me, the 2xxx models are simply â??tanksâ?• that just work. They are solid, reliable, very responsive to the remote, and have proven to be exceptional in their reliability and function. The only downside of them is that they are not â??networkableâ?• and require a phone connection to retrieve Channel Guide data and software updates. The model 5040 on the other hand has more bells and whistles, but at the same time, it seems â??forcedâ?• in many of its design points. Its remote is less responsive, and it has an overall more sluggish feel when compared to the 2xxx series. For a while, it was more prone to lockups than the 2xxx series, but to ReplayTVâ??s credit, recent software updates have corrected this and a number of other issues.

The one real plus to the ReplayTV 5040 is its networkability: All program data can be received via broadband as opposed to dialup on the 2xxx boxes, and any show that is recorded can be â??offloadedâ?• to a PC for playback, editing, and burning to a DVD. This is excellent for building a personal library of favorite shows. You do have to jump through number of hoops to accommodate ReplayTVâ??s picky MPEG-2 format, but the results are quite good. (See my â??ReplayTV to DVD HOWTOâ?• on my Web site JimsTips.com for more details.)

Finally, please donâ??t think that I am ignoring TiVo here. I think TiVo is very innovative and an excellent product. Itâ??s just that several years ago, I chose ReplayTV, because at the time its interface was more familiar and solid, and it provided a logical and simple transition from DirecTVâ??s interface. TiVoâ??s interface was just too different to make an easy transition. Also, ReplayTV just had a â??feelâ?• about it that seemed less intrusive. Over the years, though, TiVo has significantly improved things, and they are certainly a fine choice. So much so that if I was starting from scratch, I would seriously consider a TiVo box. I just wonâ??t be covering TiVo here because I have no real experience with it like I do with ReplayTV.

OK, enough background. First off, Iâ??m going to give you my Pros and Cons list about Moxi. These are based on playing around with Moxi, reading data sheets, and my experience with ReplayTV. There may be some bias, and Iâ??m trying to be objective, but when youâ??ve used ReplayTV for over four yearsâ?¦ Also note that I am not focusing at all on the HDTV features of Moxi. While this aspect is huge for many, unfortunatly, I do not have an HDTV nor do I subscribe to any HD channels. Iâ??m focusing here primarily on the â??SDâ?• experience.

jimstips.com

MOXI PROS:

Low Cost
Charter Cable charges a monthly charge of $9.99, and there are no initial equipment costs. This cost varies from market to market and ranges a couple bucks more or less. Over the course of a few years, ReplayTV would be more cost-effective, but if a new model becomes available, typically Cable companies let you swap them out for little or no cost whereas ReplayTV would require a new purchase and sale of the old box.

Player Bar
AKA, a Status Bar. This is pretty cool. This is something that I wish ReplayTV optionally had that TiVo has had from day-one. It gives you a quick and easy visual cue to â??where you areâ?• in a show, live or recorded. Itâ??s clean and slick looking, and at-a-glance, I can really get a good sense of where I am in the show without having to do mental time calculations like I do with ReplayTV.

Buffer Recording
If you decide to record a show AFTER it started, Moxi can record the entire show back to the beginning as long as it is buffered. This is a very nice feature that I wish ReplayTV had.

â??Skipâ?• Button
Like ReplayTV, Moxi has a â??Skipâ?• button, but depending on the Cable companyâ??s settings (more on that later) how far ahead it skips may vary. Initially, Charter had this configured to skip ahead 30 seconds, similar to ReplayTV. However, they recently changed it to a 15-minute skip. While at first thought this seems like a joke, it means that all â??smallâ?• navigation forward is done by Fast Forwardin, and â??largeâ?• navigation can be done with the 15-minute skip. For example, say you record a four hour football game and want to go to halftime. Prior to the 15-minute skip, you woult either hit Skip a couple hundred times or you would have to Fast Forward all the way to the middle. With the 15-minute skip, just a few button presses takes you forward to where you want to be. My only complaint is that you cannot skip

back (reportedly, this will be addded in a future software release.

Flexible â??Findâ?• Capabilities
Like ReplayTV, you can search by keyword and category (ReplayTV â??Zonesâ?•), but Moxi has some additional â??advancedâ?• search functionality. The ability to search for a show is essential and a very often-used ReplayTV feature, and Moxi doesnâ??t disappoint here.

Cool User Interface
Moxiâ??s (award winning) UI is very slick and modern. It reminds me a bit of Media Center PCâ??s which have very slick UIâ??s. Navigation is a snap, the response is quick, and the animation is smooth and pleasing to the eye. Just about everything can be accessed with just the arrow and OK keys. I have always considered ReplayTVâ??s UI to be more â??functionalâ?• die to its unobtrusive design. Moxi seems to strike a nice balance. Iâ??m ery happy with it, partly because it is so intuitive.

Integrated Cable Box
This is an excellent feature and most welcome. Obviously, this eliminates the Satellite and OTA markets, but consideing that we switched to Cable, itâ??s an excellent silution *for us*. It completely eliminates the need for serial connections or IR blasters required of â??standaloneâ?• boxes resulting in almost instantaneous channel changes. In addition, Pay-per-view and Video On Demand channels are available.

jimstips.com

Dual Tuners
This is another huge feature! This virtually eliminates scheduling conflicts, and the ability to record one show while watching another is something ReplayTV could not do.

MOXI CONS:

No â??Gridâ?• Guide
I really like the ReplayTV Grid Guide because it really gives you an â??at-a-glanceâ?• view, especially when you want to visually look for shows. Moxiâ??s â??dual-axisâ?• navigation guide is novel, and I will no doubt get used to it, but I do wish it had an optional Grid Guide. Rumors indicate that an â??improvedâ?• method of displaying whatâ??s coming up is forthcoming, but it probably wonâ??t be a â??gridâ?• guide.

No â??Keywordâ?• Themes
ReplayTV lets you create recordings based on keywords, something Moxi doesnâ??t do. This is nice when you donâ??t remember the exact name of the show or you donâ??t know when the show will be on. If a show matches, it will record it. This has proven to be very useful in recording shows that we know get aired occasionally but are not currently in the current channel guide data. I havenâ??t found a way to do this in Moxi.

â??Cumbersomeâ?• Interface
While Moxiâ??s UI is very slick and modern, it is a bit kludgy here and there requireing extra button presses for certain tasks. ReplayTV has some â??extraâ?• buttons the let you bypass menus and jump right to specific key functions.

FEATURE-BY-FEATURE COMPARISON

OK, so how does the Moxi compare to the ReplayTV box on a feature-by-feature comparison? I will compare the Moxi to ReplayTV in general while pointing out any differences between the 2xxx and 5xxx series ReplayTV boxes. Note that 3xxx series boxes are similar to the 2xxx boxes and 4xxx boxes are similar to th 5xxx boxes. My intent is not to present a â??which is betterâ?• review, but more a list of side-by-side features from which you can choose a device based on your needs and wants. As of today, I am running version â??3â?• of Moxiâ??s software. Note that software revisions can change these features and specs in a heartbeat, so if things have changed let me know and Iâ??ll update this review.

Recording Buffer

A recording buffer is space allocated by the system where live TV is stored letting you pause, rewind, and resume watching paused TV.

MOXI

Originally, Moxi had a fixed 30 minute buffer, but it now appears that its buffer can grow much larger. The only real â??idiosyncracyâ?• to their implementation is that if you are paused for more than 30 minutes, Moxi will resume playback from where it is paused. Initiating a Recording of the current show will also record back to the beginning of the show assuming that the channel was tuned to that channel at the time of the start of the show. This is VERY handy if you missed the beginning of a show and want to retain it for later viewing.

jimstips.com

REPLAYTV

ReplayTVâ??s buffer has a minimum buffer allocation of 20 minutes, with the maximum being the amount of free hard disk space. I know of no real limitations save for the amount of free disk space. I have paused and succcessfully rewound back over 12 hours or more of buffer without issue (tedious, but without issue!) Initiating a Recording of the current show will flush the buffer and begin the recording at live TV. ReplayTV does not back up in the buffer to record the beginning of the show.

Recording Quality

This refers to the quality at which the show is recorded. If you are coming from the VCR world of video tape recording, you will be stunned by either system. No more tracking problems. No more video noise. Just decent to excellent digital quality. There are two types of DVRâ??s available today: Standalone and Integrated. Standalone boxes have inputs that accept signals from any video source. Integrated DVDâ??s have Cable or Satellite decodes integrated. These typically cannot record external video sources.

MOXI

Moxi is an Integrated box and records the raw bit stream right from the Digital Cable Box, so how you see it â??liveâ?• is how you see it recorded. For Digital channels, Moxi does not compress or convert between Digital and Analog because compression is done at the head-end, so the user has no control over recording quality. Overall picture quality is excellent and comparable to â??normalâ?• Digital Cable reception. Basically, what you view live is what you see recorded. For Analog cable signals are still received by Moxi and converted to Digital on-the-fly for storage and playback. Users have reported that HD viewing and recording is excellent, Digital Cable viewing and recording is very good, and analog viewing and recording is marginalâ??worse than ReplayTV or TiVo. Unlike ReplayTV and TiVo, Moxi has no

recording quality settings.

REPLAYTV
ReplayTV, unlike Moxi, are Standalone boxes that record any analog signal as input, for example, the analog output from raw Analog Cable or Digital Cable boxes. It records the analog source signal by converting it from analog to digital on-the-fly, compressing it based on one of three recording qualities: Standard, Medium, and High.

Standard Quality rivals VCR quality. I personally think it is better, but it is also somewhat prone to digital artifacting depending on the source content. The reality is that it could be better, but over time, you just donâ??t notice the artifacting.

Medium Quality is decent quality and is a great compromise between quality and disk capacity. It is, in my opinion, the most â??compatibleâ?• quality when offloading shows to a PC for burning to a DVD. (See my â??ReplayTV to DVD HOWTOâ?• on my Web site JimsTips.com I tend to record everything at Medium Quality for this reason.

jimstips.com

High Quality is excellent for sporting events and fast-action movies. If you have a larger TV (and can thus more easily see artifacting) then High Quality is almost essential.

Note that on series 2xxx ReplayTV boxes, audio records at varying levels directly related to the various video recording qualities resulting in better or worse audio quality. On 5xxx boxes, audio is always recorded at the same high quality regardless of video recording quality.

Recording Capacity
Recording capacity refers to the maximum number of hours of show content that you can record. This greatly varies depending on the model of the box and the recording quality used.

MOXI
Currently, Moxi only offers one capacity: 80GB. This lets you record about 50 hours of Standard Definition content and about 10-12 hours of High Definition content. These numbers are rough estimates, but should give you a ballpark idea of total capacity. There are rumored plans for expansion capabilities. As mentioned above, there is no recording quality setting.

REPLAYTV
ReplayTV storage capacity can be approximated by considering the size of the installed hard drive and the recording quality setting. For example, a ReplayTV box with a 60GB drive can record about 60 hours at Standard Quality, 30 hours at Medium Quality, and 20 hours at High quality. Other drive capacities have the same recording capacity ratios. Note that ReplayTV boxes cannot record High Definition recordings, only Standard Definition recordings.

Channel Guide
The Channel Guide is the method by which the system organizes and presents show information on channels over time. This is the way you typically select shows to watch and record.

MOXI
Moxi uses a novel â??dual-axisâ?• navigation system. Along the horizontal is a list of â??categoriesâ?• like Channels, HDTV, Favorites, Settings, etc. When you scroll left and right, the available options in each category appear in a vertical scrollable column. For example, if you bring â??Channelsâ?• into â??focusâ?•, all channels and the current show airing on those channels appear in a list running vertically. You just scroll or page up and down to the desired channel. The highlighted channel also displays additional information about the program and pressing the â??Infoâ?• button brings up yet more detailed information. It also displays the next three shows airing on that channel in an â??On Nextâ?• section. Pressing the right arrow moves you to that â??On Nextâ?• section where you can scroll through that sub-list out to 14 days ahead. On any highlighted show, you can record and search for upcoming shows.

If you are used to a typical Grid Guide, Moxi will disappoint. It definitely requires a change in mindset or perspective, BUT it does work well, and is quite effective. The more I use it, the more it works for me. Two quirks: First, the sort order of the channel list is â??descendingâ?• as opposed to the typical â??ascendingâ?• list. Not sure why they decided to break with tradition, but this seemed anti-intuitive to me. Second, there are no channel numbers listed in the channel listing, only network logo icons. The channel DOES display on the highlighted item, and I do realize that screen real estate is at a premium, but it seems strange that they would omit channel numbers. I guess a resonable explanation could be that you may be more likely to recognize an icon than a number. If the Cable company changes the lineup, you could still quickly â??recognizeâ?• the channel. Time will tell if these really are issues.

jimstips.com

Moxi provides two weeks of show data.

REPLAYTV
ReplayTV uses a â??classicâ?• Grid Guide. If you are used to looking at a paper TV listing, then you will be right at home with ReplayTV. Channels are listed on the left of the screen, half-hour time blocks are listed on the top, and corresponding shows fill the grid. You use the arrow keys to simply move around the grid to view and select available shows. The show that is currently highlighted displays brief information at the top of the screen.

ReplayTV 2xxx boxes store one week of programming data, and 5xxx boxes provide two weeks of programming data.

Info Display
While watching a show, you often want to more information about the show such as description, actors, etc. Both systems offer program information in various forms.

MOXI
When viewing the Channel Menu, a brief show description is displayed next to the highlighted show. Pressing the Info button brings up an extended description screen with full show description, and an extensive cast list. Depending on the amount of data, this can be a multi-page screen providing excellent information. Pressing the Clear button dismisses the screen. While watching live TV, pressing the Info button brings up this screen as well.

Moxi also has a â??Flip Barâ?• that is a small status bar that appears on the bottom of the screen when you press an arrow button. It displays information about the current show and also shows the next three shows airing next on that channel. Pressing the right arrow moves you to the â??On Nextâ?• section where you can scroll through 14 days of data. Selecting one of these shows brings up options to record. Scrolling up or down in the main part of the Flip Bar will also display the corresponding show information on other channels without actually changing the channel. â??On Nextâ?• information is also displayed as well. Pressing the Info buton will bring up the extended info screen as well. Pressing Clear or waiting a few seconds will dismiss the Flip Bar.

REPLAYTV
While scrolling around the Channel Guide, the highlighted showâ??s information displays in a banner at the top of the screen. The number of lines is is adequate, but it is limited, so if there is extended information, it gets cut off. There is no way to view any additional information.

While watching live TV, pressing the ReplayTvâ??s â??Infoâ?• button brings up a banner at the top of the screen containing information about the current show. Series 2xxx boxes have â??staticâ?• info banners while 5xxx boxes have arrow-navigable banners letting you see current and future show information on other channels without tuning to that channel.

jimstips.com

User Interface And System Responsiveness
How quickly a DVR responds to remote button presses, and how quickly it processes requests is very important to the overall user experience. If the system is too slow or sluggish, it will turn people off very quickly. Tech saavy people sometimes have more tolerance because they understand whatâ??s going on in the background, but to Joe Sixpack, these are appliances that should respond and operate quickly. You never had to watch an hourglass while programming a VCR, so they wonâ??t expect delays or lags in a DVR either.

MOXI
Version 3 of Moxiâ??s software improves the interface performance over past revisions. Moxi responds to remote button presses very quickly, and overall, the interface is smooth, nicely animated, and pleaseing to use. Rarely do you see a delay. The only real annoyance I had was that it is painfully S-L-O-W to add and remove channels in the Channel Listing section of Settings. (This is where you can optionally â??selectâ?• and â??unselectâ?• channels to be displayed, for example those channels to which you do not subscribe.) Fortunatly, this is a one-time deal, but unselecting literally a couple hundred channels was less than pleasant. It would be nice if Moxi either had an â??auto-unselectâ?• for known, unassigned channels, or at least a faster inerface.

In some cases, Moxie does require some extra button presses to get to â??coreâ?• functions, but itâ??s not too bad. Other than that, the overall interface is excellentâ??probably why it recently won an Emmy award.

REPLAYTV
As mentioned above, the 2xxx series is very snappy and quick to respond. The only time things slow down is during a long search, but there is screen feedback telling you how it is searching. The 5xxx series is

more sluggish, but recent software updates have improved the UI overall. It still has the occasional â??lagâ?• or â??squishyâ?• feel because things just donâ??t respond as snappy as the 2xxx series, but the added features and capabilities of the 5xxx box typically outweigh any response issues.

ReplayTV has several extra buttons that take you right to core functions with one button press, for example, â??Channel Guideâ?• and â??Replay Guideâ?• (recorded shows.) While not essential, this is a nice convenience.

Remote
DVRs typically require a remote to do even the most basic functions. Without one, you really canâ??t do anything, so the decent remote is essential.

MOXI
Moxiâ??s provides a number of controls on the front of the box itself that you can pretty much control most, if not all functions. This is pretty typical of most cable boxes. Should you lose or break your remote, you are not stuck.

jimstips.com

Moxiâ??s remote is solid, nicely weighted, and has a rubbery backing that gives a good grip. It feels good, and the layout of the buttons is pretty decent. And, because itâ??s a Cable Company product, if the remote breaks, the Cable Company typically will provide a replacement as needed. Iâ??ve grown to really like the remote.

REPLAYTV
ReplayTVâ??s boxes have one, yes, one button on the front: Power. All other functions are controlled by the remote. Lose the remote? You better get a new one, because nothing, and I mean NOTHING is controllable without the remote.

ReplayTV remotes have gone through three radical incarnations over the years. While all have their idiosyncracies, they are all are effective. I personally like the most recent version because it fits my hand well, it is compact, and the buttons are in a logical placement. My only issue with most ReplayTV remotes is that over time, the â??most often usedâ?• buttons do wear out, and I have had to buy several replacements over the yearsâ??an added cost I wasnâ??t anticipating.

Conflict And Space Management
So what happens when two shows you want to record air at the same time? What happens when the networks change the time slot or extend a show (like the â??Must Miss..er See TVâ?• shows where they start them 1 minute early or extend them 10 minutes later possibly overlapping another recording.) How a DVR handles these conflicts determines if your show gets recorded or not.

MOXI
Moxi has a huge advantage in that it includes two tuners, so conflicts should be GREATLY reduced. Most conflicts occur typically occur between two shows. Yes, because you now have two tuners, you may have other conflicts, but itâ??s much less likely with two tuners.

For those times when you have conflicts, particularly with Series recordings, Moxi provides a â??priorityâ?• method that lets you determine the priority order of selecting series to record. I donâ??t know how it prioritizes single-show recordings.

Moxi also provides the ability to extend the start or end times of recordings. In fact, once a show has started, you can extend the end time while it is recordingâ??something sports fans of overtime-prone games will like.

Additionally, Moxi provides not only a â??Sheduled to Recordâ?• listing, but a â??Deleted and Cancelledâ?• listing. The first displays everything that is scheduled to recordâ??individual shows and shows associated with a series recording. The nice thing about this is that you can selectively remove shows that you may not want to recordâ??shows that are not repeats (to Moxi) but shows for which you ahve no interest or have already seen.

The second list displays all shows that were deleted, or did not or will not record. More importantly, id shows *why* the show did or will not record. For future cancelld recordings, you can optionally record them or find upcoming shows. This is very handy and makes recording management a snap.

jimstips.com

REPLAYTV

ReplayTV has a single tuner meaning it can record only one show at a time, so conflict management is much more important. For â??Singleâ?• and â??Recurringâ?• show recordings, if the show moves more than two time slots from its originally scheduled time, it will not get recorded. If it is a â??Themeâ?• recording, it will still record because Themes are not limited to channels or time slots.

Further, ReplayTV uses a somewhat complex but effective system of â??Guaranteedâ?• and â??Non-Guaranteedâ?• recordings. Basically, if you flag a recording as Guaranteed, space is â??hard-allocatedâ?• on the disk. Non-Guaranteed recordings will record if disk space is available. Guaranteed recordings are great for those shows you â??canâ??t missâ?• and want high assurance that they will record. Non-Guaranteed recordings are great for setting up recurring â??fillerâ?• shows that you donâ??t care if you miss an episode or two.

If you want to record two shows that air at the same time, simply put, you are out of luck, but there are several functions to let you find other occurrences of the show. There are a number of other factors that I wonâ??t get into in this review, but ReplayTVâ??s conflict management isnâ??t too bad. And the 5xxx series has added several other features to help better manage conflicts. The only major downside is that there is no â??ToDo Listâ?• showing what ReplayTV actually has scheduled to record. Recordings are listed in the â??Replay Guideâ?• but because of the varied nature of different recording types (single-show, recurring, and Themes) Specifics may or may not be available. This is a long-time shortcoming of ReplayTV.

Connections

Like Neo said in *The Matrix*, â??Gunsâ?¦lots of gunsâ?• a DVR needs â??connectionsâ?¦lots of connectionsâ?• to be compatible with the myriad of TVâ??s and, if applicable, input sources. Both ReplayTV and Moxi offer very comprehensive connectivity options.

MOXI
Moxiâ??s input is simple. It has a single input: Coax. Given that it has an integrated digital cable decoder, this makes sense. It is not a â??standaloneâ?• box, so a single input is expected.

Outputs, on the other hand, are numerous. Video options include: Coax, RCA, S-video, Component (YPrPb), and DVI connections providing full SD and HDTV compatibility. For audio, there are standard stereo Left & Right RCA jacks as well as both coax and optical digital S/PDIF connectors. Depending on your cable companyâ??s deployment, some of these outputs may or may not be active, and some may not be active while others are active (for example, if Component or DVI video is active, composite and S-Video are not active.)

Moxi passes Dolby 5.1 through the Digital audio outputs if it is available on the channel.

REPLAYTV
Because ReplayTV is a standalone box, it needs to accommodate several input sources. It has standard coax, RCA, and S-video inputs. You can configure it to utilize all or any combination of these inputs.

jimstips.com

For output, all ReplaYTV boxes have multiple S-Video outputs and RCA outputs. The 5xxx series, adds coax output, progressive (YPrPb) video output, and an Optical audio connector. As a side note, though there is no digital audio INPUT, ReplayTV decided that providing optical audio OUTPUT would help provide the best available audio. You will not get Dolby 5.1 audio.

Playback Control
A signature feature of DVRâ??s is the ability to â??pause live TVâ?•. In addition, you can typically rewind back through the buffer, pause, and fast forward through the buffer back to live. Other controls may also be available.

MOXI
Moxi has basic playback functions: Pause, Play, Rewind, Fast Forward. You can also â??Replayâ?• which skips you back 7 seconds (useful for replaying a scene) and â??Skipâ?• which skips you ahead by a Cable company-determined amount of time. By that, I mean that the Cable COmpany can control the function of this button, and currently it is set to do nothing, skip ahead 30-seconds (useful for skipping past commerâ?¦umâ?¦I mean unwanted content), or skip ahead 15 minutes (useful to jump forward in large chunks, sat to quickly get to halftime in a football game recording.) You still have full Fast Forward and Rewind control, so how this is set really shouldnâ??t affect your viewing experience.

There is currently no (or very poor) â??Overshoot Correctionâ?• so if you hit Play while Fast Forwarding, it stops exactly when you press play, so you may have to rewind or hit Replay to correct if you overshoot. I suspect that this will be correctd in a later software revision.

Missing are â??specialtyâ?• features like stepping forward or backward one frame at a time and slow motion playback. I am not a sports fan, but I do find this useful with movies, especially the credits. Again, I suspect that these functions may surface in a later software revision.

REPLAYTV
Playback control is a real strength of ReplayTV. Like Moxi, it also has the basics as well as the Replay and Skip buttons. For recorded shows (and live shows on the 5xxx series) you can also skip forward or backward by number. For example pressing â??5â?• and then â??Skipâ?• jumps you forward 5 minutes. Pressing â??15â?• and â??Replayâ?• jumps you back 15 minutes. Pressing â??8â?• and the â??Jumpâ?• button jumps you the point 8 minutes into the show. This is very handy for handling long shows like the Olympic coverage.

ReplayTV also lets you step forward frame-by-frame after pressing Pause, and pressing the â??Playâ?• button during playback plays in slow motion in variable speeds. ReplayTVâ??s Fast Forward and Rewind have â??Overshoot Correctionâ?• where it jumps back (or forward if rewinding) a few seconds to compensate for your hand-eye coordination delay. It works very well.

Parental Control
I do not use Parental Controls, so I cannot speak to them, but suffice it to say both Moxie and ReplayTV provide fairly comprehensive channel and rating controls.

jimstips.com

Other Features
In addition, there are other features that are uniquie to each box. Here are some examples of some of these unique featuresâ?¦

MOXI
For an entertainment diversion, Moxi has the capability of providing Games like Blackjack, Solitaire, etc. using the remote. They look great and are quite fun.

For the you information addicts, Moxi has the capability to provide an optional â??tickerâ?•. This is a small, user-controllable scrolling banner at the bottom of the screen that can display things like news headlines, weather conditions, stock quote, and sports scores. The TV picture shrinks slightly so you do not miss any content.

If available, Moxi has the capability of providing access to Video On Demand content with full playback control.

Notice that I say, â??has the capability.â?• Moxi, in an effort to attract Cable Companies as customers, offers a very flexible feature set that can be tailored by each Cable company depending on their technical capabilities, economics, and market. For example, one market may enable Video On Demand while other markets may not. As I understand it, these features are typically consistent *within* a market, but can vary from market to market. However, I could see no real technical reason why specific features could not be offered as â??premiumâ?• services.

It is important to understand that this effectively means that if you read about a new Moxi feature, that doesnâ??t mean you will automatically get it. You may need to contact your Cable company to request those features. While thatâ??s a certainly a negative for the viewer, it also helps promote Cable company market share.

REPLAYTV
With some minor exceptions, the ReplayTV 5xxx series pretty much has all the features of the 2xxx series, but it does have some added features.

One significant feature is Networkability. Connect your ReplayTV 5xxx box to a broadband connection or an Internet-connected home LAN, and you can receive all Channel Guide content and software updates over a high-speed connection. In addition, by running some third-party software like DVArchive, you can transfer the shows you recorded on your ReplayTV box to a LAN-connected PC in all its full, digital glory. This is useful not only for archiving to DVD, but if you ahve a capable laptop, you can watch the shows on your commute or travels. Unfortunately, â??the industryâ?• doesnâ??t like this too much, so donâ??t expect to see this available on Moxi any time soon.

Another extra is â??Commercial Advanceâ?• that auto-skips commercials. This is technology pioneered on VCRâ??s except that instead of auto-fast forwarding through the commercials, ReplayTV can â??skipâ?• them completely. Again, itâ??s a controvercial feature that works surprisingly well.

jimstips.com

Internet Sharing is another feature that has brought ReplayTV under fire from â??the industryâ?•, so much so, that this feature was removed from newer 5xxx models. This feature lets you (in a very controlled and limited way) transfer recorded shows to other ReplayTV users over the Internet. This has proven useful on a number of occasions, but understand that due to current residential bandwidth limitations, it can take many hours, if not days to transfer a movie, so its usefulness is subjective.

The Future
In addition, there are other features that are uniquie to each box. Here are some examples of some of these unique featuresâ?¦

MOXI
Moxi, being a new kid on the block, has had the luxury of learning from the mistakes of its competition. Instead of going after the retail market, they are going after the Cable market. There is a staggering Cable customer base that is ripe for simple, inexpensive, and snazzy innovation, and Moxi may just be the ticket.

In addition to the current box, Digeo is working on a new â??remoteâ?• version called â??Moxi Mateâ?• that provides a second â??thin clientâ?• box that can be used to control viewing, recording, and playback of the main box from another room of the house. Say you are watching a movie in your living room and itâ??s getting late. Just pause it, go to the bedroom, and resume playback on your bedroomâ??s TVâ??while someone else watches a different program in the living room.

Digeo is also working on the â??Moxi Plusâ?• box which is a subscriber-installable box providing additional DVR Hard Disk storage space, and other optional features from card ports for importing photos to audio music streaming to CD and DVD playback and recording.

REPLAYTV
As for ReplayTVâ??s future, I believe that it is uncertain. ReplayTV has created some very innovative technology, but its financial struggles and failure to capture a larger market share of the DVR market has

hurt its innovation. Over the years, ReplayTV boxes end up on retailer shelves, get pulled from retailer shelves, and end up on them again. ReplayTV is currently on its third owner, and it looks like â??consumer gradeâ?• (read $200-$300 range) offerings will be either limited or non-existent. Dennon, ReplayTVâ??s current owner, has said that the Program Guide service will continue, but it looks like they are focusing on more higher-end (read $1,000+) offerings. Their technology is ambitious, but not much has surfaced. They are also trying to woo third parties to license their technology.

CONCLUSION
In my opinion, your choice of DVR is a very subjective one. Different people have different needs, so a simple feature list may or may not provide the information you need to make a choice. For example, we have been using ReplayTV boxes for years with DirecTV with excellent results. When we moved to South Carolina, we decided to go with Charter Digital Cable because of the cost savings, but because there is no serial port control capability on Charterâ??s Digital Cable box, we have to use an â??IR Blasterâ?• to control channel changing. Unfortunatly, while this has proven to be about 99% reliable on the 2xxx series, it is virtually useless on the 5xxx seriesâ??not something neither my wife or I like. So one of my goals of evaluating Moxi is to provide a less complex and more reliable solution. Having a DVR integrated into the cable box is certainly a step forward.

jimstips.com

My recommendation is to give the various boxes a â??test driveâ?• and see what features you like and what features â??feel goodâ?• to you. Be sure to take advantage of free trialsâ??Charter offers the first month for free, and both ReplayTV and TiVo offer 30-day money back guarantees, so you are free to compare as you see fit.

One thing is for sure: Once you get hooked on the DVR concept, the specific make model really becomes almost irrelventâ??you just have to have SOMETHING!

Category

1. Moxi Tips

Tags

1. case
2. find
3. import
4. Moxi
5. news
6. ReplayTV
7. review
8. status
9. status bar
10. tips

Date
11/10/2026
Date Created

12/02/2004

jimstips.com