SageTV Tip #5: Alternate STVâ??s

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The default SageTV User Interface is called an â??STVâ?•. This is simply a file that defines the overall look-and-feel of the user interface (such as how menus are displayed, what graphic elements and colors the user sees, etc.) and the general functionality of that interface (such what menu choices are available, and what specific functionality is available to the user.) Probably the most ambitious SageTV customization is the â??Alternate STVâ?•. Read on to learn more about how some dedicated developers have dramatically changed the overall SageTV experienceâ?¦.

The default STV is very complete, and provides simple navigation using just a remote. Its layout and features are presented fairly logically, and it provides all of the â??coreâ?• functionality available to SageTV. Unfortunately, some consider the default STV to be somewhat dull and lacking in modern styling. Though it does look good, and itâ??s pretty intuitive to use, its overall design is somewhat dated. While this certainly doesnâ??t detract from SageTVâ??s great capabilities, it does provide a very average-looking interface.

Several very ambitious developers have created excellent â??alternateâ?• STVâ??s that transform your SageTV experience in amazing ways. Some retain the default user interface, while others completely change the visual design and layout. All of them provide extra features not found in the default STV.

Here is a list of the currently available alternate STVâ??s. I suggest that you follow the links to each STV page to learn more about what they can do for you. You may be surprised at the professional quality of some of these.

â??SageMC 16Ã?9â?• by mlbdude & updated by flachbar
This STV offers a rich user interface reminiscent of Windows Media Center. Its graphically-enhanced menus are animated, and there are several extra features included that enhance the overall SageTV experience. This looks great on a widescreen TV, and provides some very nice enhancements. It also includes several nicely designed alternate â??themesâ?• to choose from.

{image no longer available}

â??meekellâ?• by Crashless
This is a slick alternate interface suited especially for widescreen TVâ??s. It is a tight, pleasing interface that us very logically layed out, filling the screen on a widescreen display. It too adds some addtional features to the SageTV core, and makes navigation fun and easy.

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â??maloreâ??sâ?• by malore
Maloreâ??s STV builds on the default STV by retaining its look-and-feel while adding additional features and functions. Notable are the alternate Guide displays providing more information in a format suitable for larger TVâ??s.

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â??GermSageâ?• by greggerm
The GermSage STV ls less of a â??look-and-feeâ?• STV and more of a â??functionâ?• STV. Like Maloreâ??s STV, GermSage STV retains the default STVâ??s look-and-feel while adding additional features not found in the core.

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(No screenshot available.)

â??Unofficial Secret Extra UI Featuresâ?• by SageTV
Finally, SageTV even has its â??Unofficial Secret Extra UI Featuresâ?• that provide additional features and tweaks. Itâ??s invoked simply by entering a code in the System Information screen.

(No screenshot available.)

Mose of these alternate STVâ??s retain the functionality of SageTV while providing the user with a fresh, and often innovative way of looking at and using SageTV. And the great thing about these alternate STVâ??s is that if they donâ??t suit you, you can always revert back to the default STV.

Itâ??s important to note that some of these STVâ??s are not yet compatible with the latest release of SageTV, so be sure to understand the prerequisites before installing them.

The best place to learn about alternate STVâ??s and other SageTV customizations is to visit â??SageTV Customizationsâ?• forum, and notably, the â??List of available customizationsâ?• page in that forum.

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Date

11/12/2026
Date Created
01/03/2007

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