

Building your own Home Theater

By Mark Streitman

This column is more expensive than my whole theater



My system is more like this



← Fancy Theater Chairs →

My Kind of Theater Seating



TVs, Electronics, Computers, Software

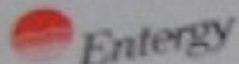


What I'm here to talk about

- Home Theater in General
- Digital TV
- TVs, Projectors and other electronics
- DVRs and PCs
- Software
- How to put it all together

My Guiding Principles for Home Theater

- I want the big movie theater experience**
- I want great sound**
- I want all my shows**
- I want comfy seats or a couch**
- I'm CHEAP!**



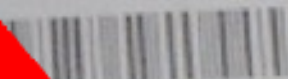
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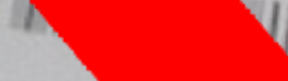
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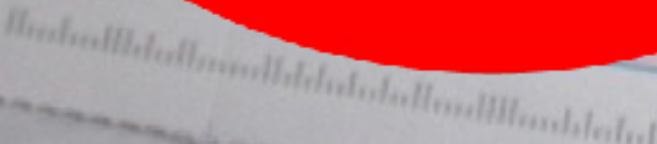
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FOR BILL AND HELP

My General Requirements

- Want to watch TV shows when I want
- Play DVDs
- Watch any video files, local or on the Internet
- Play local or Internet Music
- Surf web
- Show Home movies
- Show Photos
- Play Games

These can all be done as a family or with friends

My Specific Requirements

- Dedicated Computer System
- Big Screen - 72" or larger
- Comfortable seating – couch
- Remote control
- Good sound system, Dolby Digital 5.1
- Record the programs I want whenever they are on
- Have the choice to record new, old, watched, etc programs
- Have new shows pop up based on criteria, Ex. Sci-fi TV Series
- Movies, 3 stars and above
- On Screen Guide to view whats on TV

My Specific Requirements (cont.)

- Lots of storage for high def shows
- Play DVDs
- Record shows to DVD
- Play or Save programs as video files and be able to move them to anywhere (network)
- Access the Internet
- Access music and pictures
- Play any of the above on any other TV or computer in the house (Client - Server)
- Be able to hack and modify things if I need to
- Reliable system

DVR - Digital Video Recorder

Definition from Wikipedia

A digital video recorder (DVR) or personal video recorder (PVR) is a device that records video in a digital format to a disk drive or other memory medium within a device.

My definition

A computer with a TV/Video tuner and the right software.

There are two kinds

Security Systems



Home PVR, Ex. TIVO



TV, Digital TV and HDTV



480i



ANALOG



480i~480p



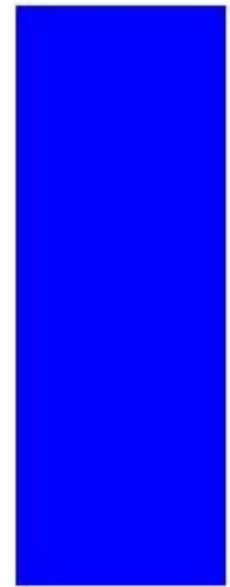
SDTV
STANDARD DEFINITION TELEVISION



720p~1080i



HDTV
HIGH-DEFINITION TELEVISION



1080p



Full HD
1920x1080

Stand Alone DVRs

Software – Ex. TIVO



Find Programs

Search by Title

WishList Search (Actor, Category, or Keyword)

TiVo Suggestions

Record by Time or Channel

Season Pass Manager

To Do List

Download TV & Movies

KidZone Recommendations & Guru Guides

Universal Swivel Search



Comcast Cable Box and PVR

Cable PVR

- PROS**

- Convenient
- Gets all cable channels
- Records any show you get (unless they don't want you to)

- CONS**

- Expensive, montly charge
- Not expandable
- Can't get your programs out of the box
- Limited software
- Usually just PVR and live TV functions

Sharp. Savvy. Sweet.



The new TiVo HD ▶



[WHAT IS TiVo?](#) | [BUY TiVo](#) | [SETUP & SUPPORT](#) | [MY TiVo](#) | [ABOUT TiVo INC.](#)

TIVO HD

- **20 – 150 hours of programming**
- **\$300 - \$600 to buy**
- **Not very expandable**
- **Access Netflix, other services**
- **Software is locked**
- **Can't access programs**
- **Monitor your data**
- **Extra charges ~\$13/ month or \$129 /year**

PC Based DVR

PC Based DVR

Hardware

- Standard or modified PC computer in some form
- Over the Air and or Cable tuner

Software

- Windows Based
- Microsoft Media Center
- Third Party products
- Linux Based
- Ubuntu
- MythTV
- Combined - Mythbuntu

Other Services on an HTPC

- YouTube – watch them on your big screen
- Web Videos
- Hulu and TV.com
- Not Highest Res, can be jerky if bad Internet connection, limited time to watch shows, but very cool and you can watch it on your big screen with an HTPC
- Streaming audio – listen on your stereo
- Games

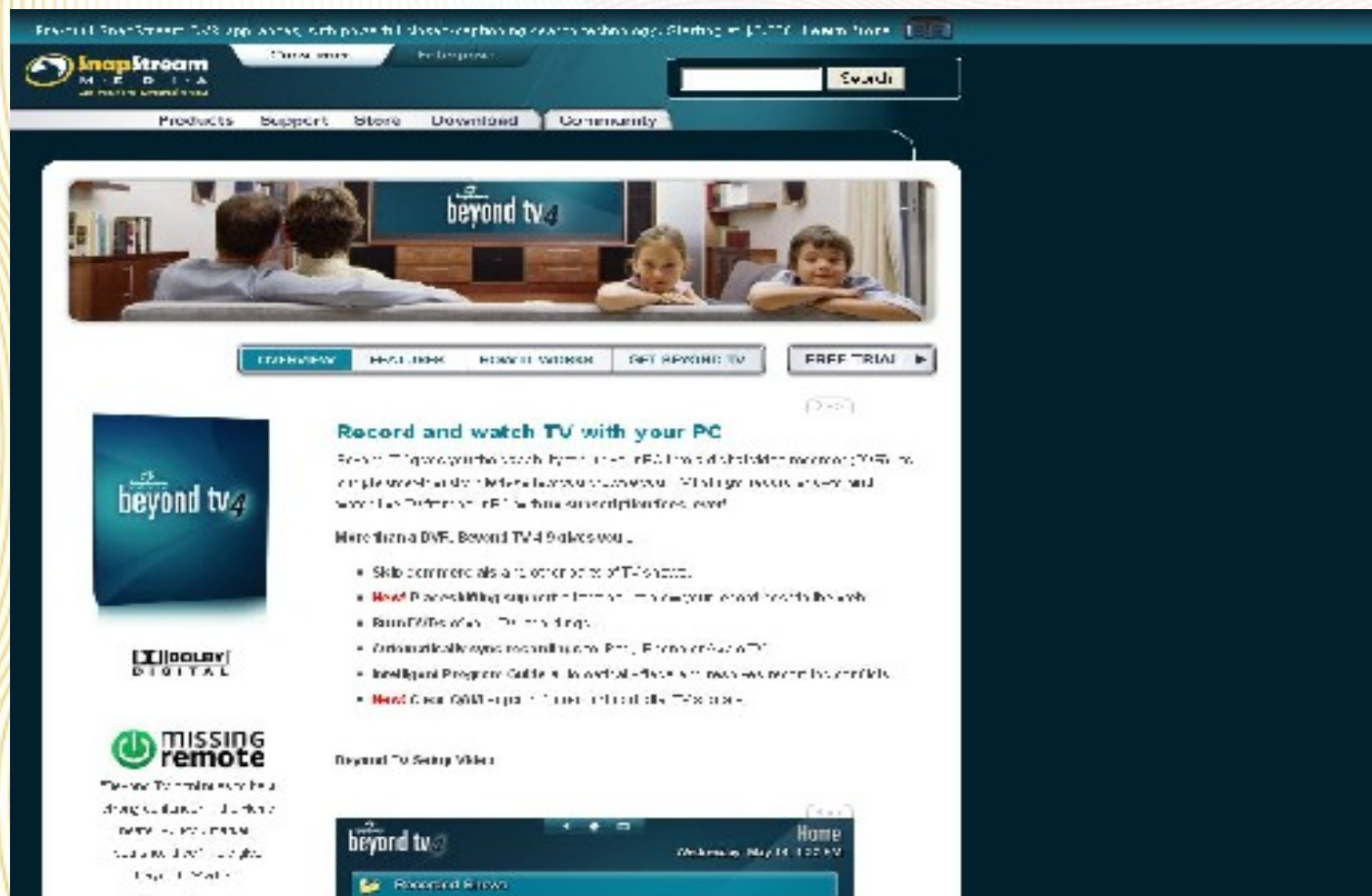
Other PC Based DVR

Microsoft Media Center, comes with most Vista systems, so it's free!



Other Third Party DVR

Beyond TV and other products for Windows



What's wrong with These?

A problem has been detected and windows has been shut down to prevent damage to your computer.

DRIVER_IRQL_NOT_LESS_OR_EQUAL

If this is the first time you've seen this stop error screen, restart your computer. If this screen appears again, follow these steps:

check to make sure any new hardware or software is properly installed. If this is a new installation, ask your hardware or software manufacturer for any windows updates you might need.

If problems continue, disable or remove any newly installed hardware or software. Disable BIOS memory options such as caching or shadowing. If you need to use Safe Mode to remove or disable components, restart your computer, press F8 to select Advanced startup options, and then select Safe Mode.

Technical information:

*** STOP: 0x000000D1 (0x0000000C,0x00000002,0x00000000,0xF86B5A89)

*** gv3.sys - Address F86B5A89 base at F86B5000, DateStamp 3dd991eb

Beginning dump of physical memory

Physical memory dump complete.

Contact your system administrator or technical support group for further assistance.

Can you say „Blue Screen of Death”?

Digital TV and HDTV

Say Goodbye to Analog TV

As of June 12th, no more analog TV broadcasts
But the cable companies will still deliver analog

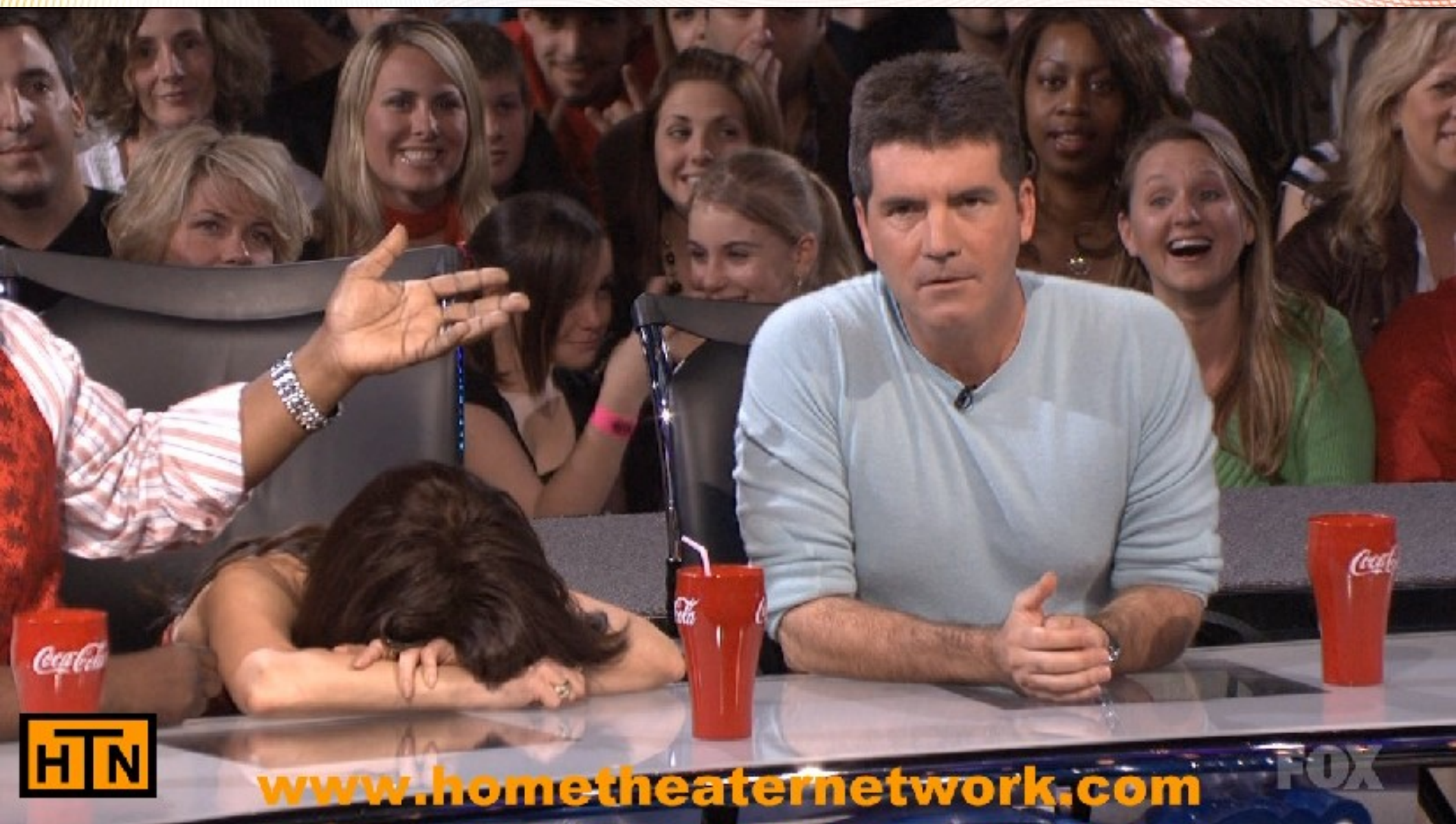


Digital TV - Standard Vs HDTV



www.hometheaternetwork.com

HDTV



www.hometheaternetwork.com

FOX

Comparative resolutions

SD (NTSC)
(525 x 700)

720 HD
(1280 x 720)

1080 HD
(1920 x 1080)

Different Digital Standards

480p 4:3 / 16:9

720p

1080p

Interlaced (i) vs Progressive (p)



HDTV Sources

Encrypted Cable can be decode by Windows Media Center (Cable Card) and by Cable boxes

For our Purposes No HBO, on Demand, etc

- Cable (unencrypted QAM-256) -depends on cable system, but is on very basic cable
- Over the Air (ATSC)

Displays

TVs

Plasma or LCD are about the same
Most people buy 50" or less for good buys





Original Price: \$2,099.99

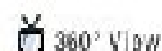
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Model

Brand: Panasonic

Series: VIERA

Model: TH-50PZ1000

Type: Consumer

Cabinet Color: Black

Display

Screen Size: 50"

Panel: 312 Progressive 1080p HD Plasma Display Panel

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Native Resolution: 1440 x 1080

Contrast Ratio: 20000:1

Pixel Pitch: 0.276mm

Connectivity

Input/Output Compatibility: NTSC / ATSC / QAM Tuner
1080i/p, 720p, 480i/p

HDTV Capability: HD V-Tuner, HD-CEC
SD Card Slot

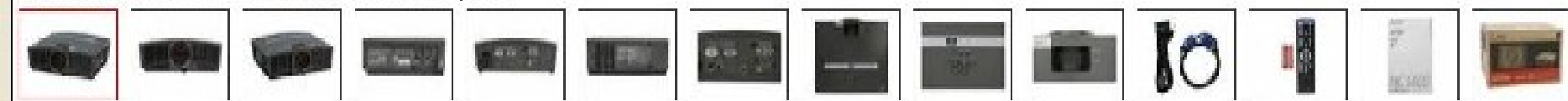
Digital Input: 1 (1 front)

Analog Audio Input (for HDMI): 2

Composite Video Input: 2 (1 front)

S-Video Input: 2 (1 front)

VIEWSONIC PJ1500 HD Home Theater DLP Projector



HDTV Projectors



Get 16:7 ratio projectors no 4:3

- LCD
- DLP
- Both are fine, I like DLP for the richer colors



MITSUBISHI HC1600 HD Home Theater 1280 x 720 DLP Projector 1700 ANSI Lumens 2500:1 - Retail

[CUSTOMER REVIEWS](#)
[SPECIFICATIONS](#)


Original Price: \$789.99

You Save: \$100.00

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Customers Also Bought



ULJUT-H WH PJ-EM Universal
Projector Flush Mount - Retail

\$50.00

\$39.99

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Model

Brand	MITSUBISHI
Model	HC 1600
Cabinet Color	Black
Type	DLP

Display

Lens	F=2.4-2.6, (142" in 1.5s @ 100") Throw Ratio: 1.50 - 1.07 Manual Focus & Zoom Lens
Lamp	Normal Mode: 200W (Shut Off Time: 2000 hrs) Low Mode: 160W (Shut Off Time: 3000 hrs)
Display Size	40" - 275"
Native Resolution	1280 x 720
Brightness	1700 ANSI Lumens
Contrast Ratio	2500:1
Horizontal Refresh Rate	15 - 80 kHz
Vertical Refresh Rate	50 - 60 Hz

Connectivity

Input/Video Compatibility	NTSC, PAL, SECAM 480i/p(525i/p), 576i/p(525i/p), 720i(750p 50/50Hz), 1080i (1125i 50/50Hz), 5040i (RGB - 2V sync)
Input/Video Connectors	Mini D-sub 15pin x 1 HDMI x 1 PCA x 1 - COMPOSITE, PCA (Y, PB/CB, P/B/CB) x 1

Power

Power Supply	100 - 240 VAC, 50/60Hz
Power Consumption	280W / 2.9A

Dimensions

Dimensions (W x H x D)	12.2" x 3.9" x 9.5" / 310 x 100 x 245mm
Weight	6.5 lbs. (2.9kg)

Convenience

Exclusive Mitsubishi BrilliantColor technology Filter-free design
Allows user to manually adjust for grayscale

PC Hardware

PC Hardware Requirements

Mythbuntu - Recommended System Requirements:

- * 2.0 Ghz x86 or x86_64 Processor (Single Core)
You can't have too fast a system
- * 1024 MB of system memory (RAM)
- * 10 GB disk space (Frontend Role)
- * 80 GB+ disk space (Backend Role)**
- * nVidia 128MB Graphics Card w/ HDMI, VGA or Component video
- * Supported TV Tuner Card (Backend Role)

PC Hardware

What PC should I get?

- Use an Old PC, if it's fast enough
- Buy a PC and modify it
- You're paying for things you aren't using, but it can be cheap
- Put together your own from components
- Not as hard as it sounds
- Get recommendations on the web
- Put together a bare bones system



Buying PC Hardware?

Where to buy?

- Newegg.com - look at buyers ratings
- Amazon.com - look at buyers ratings
- TCF, but know what you're getting



Buying Advice

- pcmag.com
- extremetech.com
- eggxpert.com
- Consumer Reports
- Books, but can be out of date



Full Home Theater PC The Easy Road


FREE 2-Day Shipping, No Minimum Purchases

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CybertronPC TMCFA200A Firebox Media Center PC - AMD Athlon X2 6000+, 2GB, 750GB, Blu-Ray Player/DVDRW, Tuner, Vista Home Premium

Other products by Cybertron

11 customer reviews (see [Buy the item](#)) | [More about this product](#)

Price: **\$1,099.99**

In stock.

Processing takes an additional 1 to 5 days for orders from this seller. Ships from and sold by [TigerDirect](#)

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Technical Details

- AMD Athlon 64 X2 6000+ 1.2GHz Dual Core Processor
- 2GB RAM (2x1GB) DDR2 800MHz PC14400 Memory
- 750GB Hard Drive
- Blu-ray/DVD Combo Drive

The Hard Road

Building your own HTPC will take some time
And it won't be easy, but it will satisfy your inner
Geek

What's a PC made of?

Most PC have same kinds of components

- Case
- Power Supply
- Motherboard
- Video Card*
- Sound Card*
- CPU
- Memory
- Hard Disk Drive
- DVD/CD and maybe Bluray

* A motherboard can have these included



Bare Bones Systems

- Bare bones will have a case, motherboard, video, sound and power supply all in one.
- You have to add the processor, memory and drives
- Easy way to build a system
- Examples:
- ASUS, Shuttle Systems



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Keyword

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[Search](#)

Price:

Any

Manufacturer:

Any

CPU Type:

Any

Memory slot:

Any

Memory Type Supported:

Any

PCI Express:

Any

PCI:

Any

Serial ATA:

Any

Channel:

Any

3.5" Internal bays:

Any

3.5" External bays:

Any

5.25" External bays:

Any

[Reset](#)
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[Home](#) > [Computer Hardware](#) > [Desktop / Mini Computers](#) > [Desktop Systems](#) > [Desktop Video](#) : GeForce 2 series (X) (1-2 of 2 Results)

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ASUS

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ASUS V2-M3N8200 AMD Socket AM2+ / AM2 NVIDIA GeForce B200 Black Barebone - Retail

- + CPU Type: AMD Phenom EX / Phenom / Athlon / Sempron
- + FSB: 2.0 GHz HyperTransport
- + Memory slot: 4 x 240Pin
- + Memory Type Supported: DDR2 1066(AM2+ only)/ECC
- + Max Memory Supported: 8GB
- + Dual Channel Memory Supported: Yes
- + PCI Express: 1 x PCI Express x16 + 1 x PCI Express x1
- + PCI: 2
- + Model #: V2-M3N8200
- + Item #: N3110000000000
- + Return Policy: 30 Day Return Policy

Your Price: \$149.99

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Shuttle

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Shuttle Primo XPC SN783H7 AMD Socket AM2+ / AM2 NVIDIA GeForce 8200 Black Barebone - Retail

- + CPU Type: AMD Phenom / Athlon 64 X2 / Sempron
- + FSB: 2600MHz HyperTransport
- + Memory slot: 2 x 240Pin
- + Memory Type Supported: DDR2 ECC/667
- + Max Memory Supported: 4GB
- + Dual Channel Memory Supported: Yes
- + PCI Express: 1 x PCI Express x16
- + PCI: 1
- + Model #: SN783H7
- + Item #: N31E16856_0_073
- + Return Policy: 30 Day Return Policy

Your Price: \$299.99

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Which PC Case?

Special Media System Cases

- Antec Fusion
- Silverstone
- Others
- Some have PS, some use different motherboards, etc, no standard



Inside a Silverstone Case



CPU Choice?

- Intel or AMD?



- Both are 64 bit chips

Motherboard choice?

- This is now a function of what case you choose and what CPU.
- Or vice-versa, if you choose a motherboard first then that will determine what kinds of cases and CPUs you can use.
- Motherboards are chosen by CPU type and size
- Sizes
- ATX-most popular -12" X 9.6"
- Most slots for extra cards
- Biggest space, bigger case
- Lots of choice



Motherboard choice? (cont.)

- Micro-ATX smaller size – 9.6” x 9.6”
- Smaller case
- Less slots
- Lots of choice
- Micro-ITX - 6.7” x 6.7”
- Nice small form factor – case
- Might have one slot – which can be enough
- Much less popular, less choices
- Harder to squeeze all the stuff into a case
- I like ASUS boards – it's one of the biggest
- Stay away from small brands
- Look at reviews and recommendations for boards

Micro-ATX board



Mini-itx board

Sound card and Memory



Video Card

Simple, get an NVIDIA card or motherboard with NVIDIA built in. Nvidia has real Linux drivers and they work great. They've been making them for years and has the best support for Linux



Tuners

Hardest to choose

This is an a DviCO FusionHDTV7 Dual Express DUAL HDTV – two tuners in one with a remote control

www.linuxtv.org says it works

You need a remote too

Look at www.linuxtv.org
for which tuners work with linux
and then price them.

I've been using the pcHDTV HD-5500

It's design for Linux only



Drives

- Hard drive need to be big a one hour hdtv program takes up 8 gigabytes
- Hard Disk – if you want to spend the money, a RAID system is nice
- But of the rest of us a 1Tbyte Drive will do



- A DVD/CD Burner is \$30
- No Bluray for Linux, at the moment

Human Interface

Buy a wireless keyboard/mouse, whichever one you like



Harmony Remotes
www.logitech.com
You can spend from \$60 - \$500
for a good universal remote.





Software

Software: Operating System



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Get Ubuntu

Welcome to Ubuntu 8.10 Desktop Edition

The latest release of Ubuntu brings the best open source technologies together to one platform, with the benefit of free updates for 10 months. Hundreds of improvements, including features like full 3D support, explain why Ubuntu wins more awards with every release. This Ubuntu will help you discover the millions of great applications only Ubuntu 8.10 can help get you.

Features

Productivity tools



Web browsing



Photos



Music and video



Office tools



Accessibility



Productivity tools: Ubuntu supports all of your favourite web-based email programs like iCloud (IM) or Gmail (GTM). But for the office, Evolution provides all the calendaring, contacts and full-function office email you need. Pidgin IM also puts you in instant touch with colleagues and integrates with your favourite IMs so you can chat and instantly

Music and video: Plug in your MP3, MP4, M4V playing; share playlists with your friends; buy in the creative commons online music stores; stream more live radio and content from the BBC and plug in more cool live with JFME.

Office applications: Word processing, spreadsheets and presentations can all be designed

What is Linux?

- An operating system
 - Runs the computer and talks to hardware
- You don't have to learn Linux, but it helps
- An Open Source program
 - The most important open source project
 - Many different programs
 - Many people all around the world
- Many different distributions
 - All use the Linux Kernel
- Linux Kernel written by Linus Torvalds in 1991

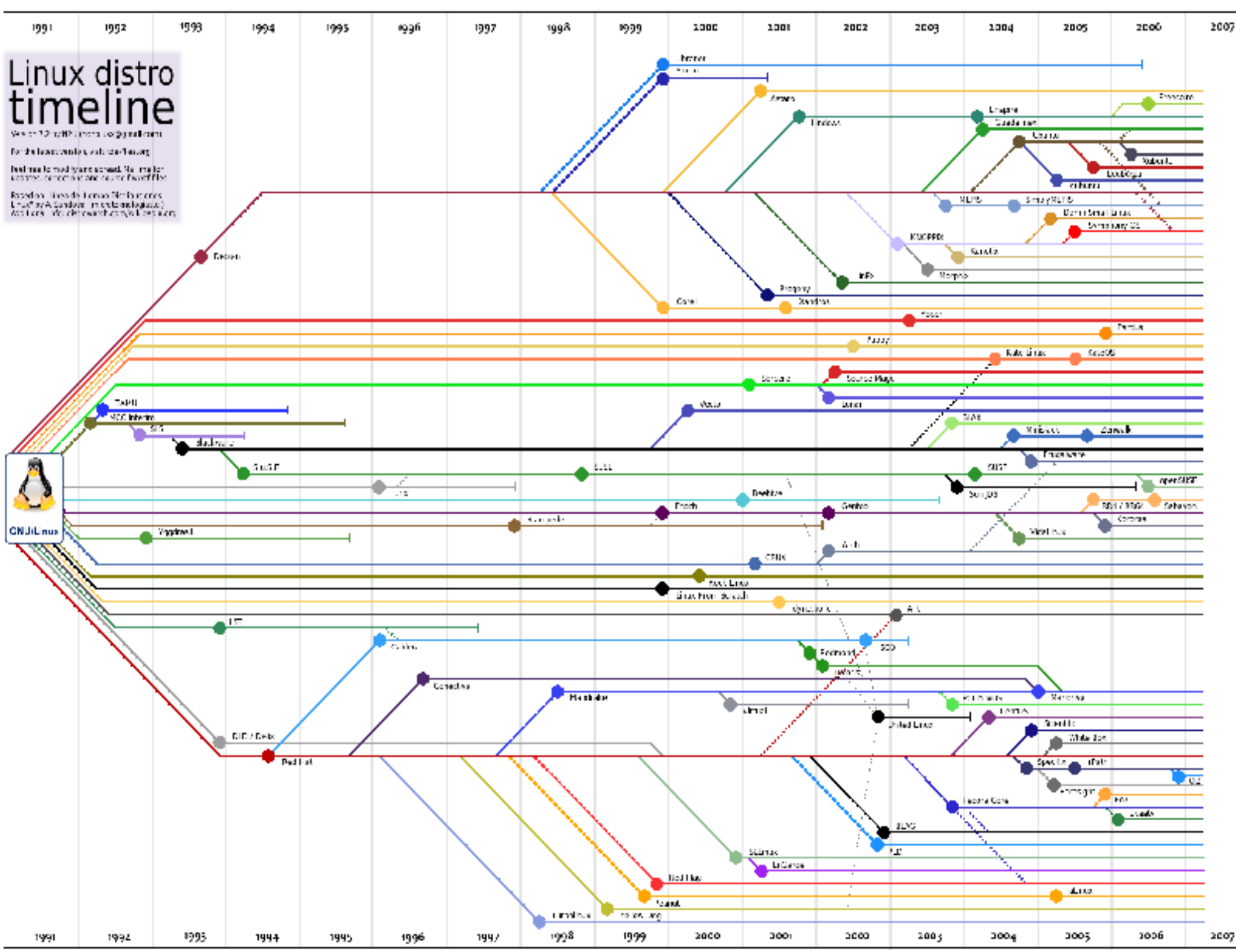
Linux distro timeline

Version 1.2 with 10 years of development

For the latest version, visit distro-timeline.org

Feel free to modify and extend the timeline to include new distributions and their derivatives

Redhat, Ubuntu, Debian, Fedora, CentOS, SUSE, Mandriva, OpenSUSE, Gentoo, Arch, Slackware, FreeBSD, NetBSD, OpenBSD, Solaris, and many others are not included in this timeline



What is Ubuntu

- Pronounced oo-boon- too
- The largest Distribution in the World
- First forked in 2004, a branch of Debian
- Started by Mark Shuttleworth in 2004
- Debian was first started in 1993 by Ian Murdock
- Has most open source software anyone would need
 - Open Office
 - Games
 - Internet: Email, Browser, IM, etc
 - Many many more



Ubuntu 8.10 (386)

Administration >

Preferences >

Help and Support

About GNOME

About Ubuntu

Quit..

Authorizations

Hardware Drivers

Hardware Testing

Language Support

Login Window

Network

Network Tools

Printing

Services

Software Sources

Synaptic Package Manager

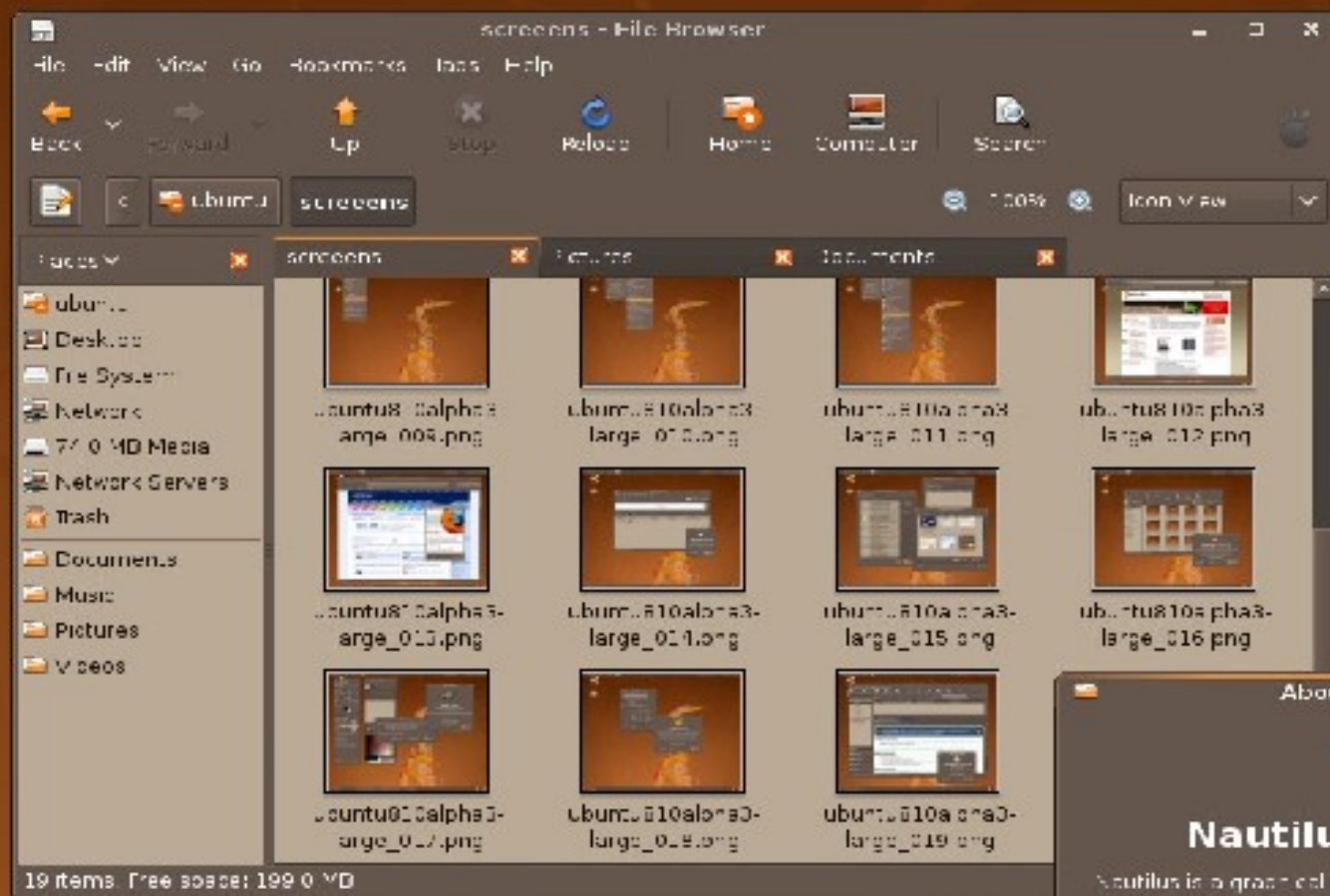
System Log

System Monitor

Time and Date

Update Manager

Users and Groups





mythTV

Tue Jan 13 11:14 PM



Watch TV



**Media
Library**



**Manage
Recordings**



**Information
Center**



**Optical
Disks**



**Utilities /
Setup**

Ubuntu+ Mythtv = Mythbuntu



mythbuntu

home entertainment just got entertaining again.

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[Installation Manual](#) | [Mythbuntu Wiki](#) | [MythTV Tips](#) | [Weekly MythTV builds](#) | [Calendar](#) | [In The News](#)

Latest News

- Mythbuntu 9.04 Alpha 6.1 Is Here!
- Mythbuntu 9.04 Alpha 5 Finally available
- Mythbuntu.org goes over 1,000,000 unique visitors!
- Mythbuntu 9.04 Alpha 3 Released!
- Mythbuntu 9.04 Alpha 2 now available

[more](#)

Mythbuntu 8.10 is now available!

Mythbuntu 9.04 alpha 3 is now available!



Mythbuntu is an community supported add-on of Ubuntu based upon setting up a standalone MythTV based HTPC system. It can be used to prepare a standalone system or for integration with an existing MythTV network. Unlike similar projects, Mythbuntu keeps close ties with Ubuntu and all development is given back to Ubuntu. This architecture allows simple conversions from a standard desktop to a Mythbuntu machine and vice versa. The development cycle of Mythbuntu closely follows that of Ubuntu, releasing every six months with Ubuntu releases.

Related Projects



Desktop

Mythbuntu comes with XCFE4 desktop. All our users enjoy a unique Ubuntu specific look and feel. OpenOffice, Firefox, and a full Gnome desktop are not available for Mythbuntu. If at any time you want to change your desktop all *ubuntu-desktop*, *kubuntu-desktop*, or *xubuntu-desktop* need to be reinstalled after the installation. This is for the Mythbuntu Custom Center.

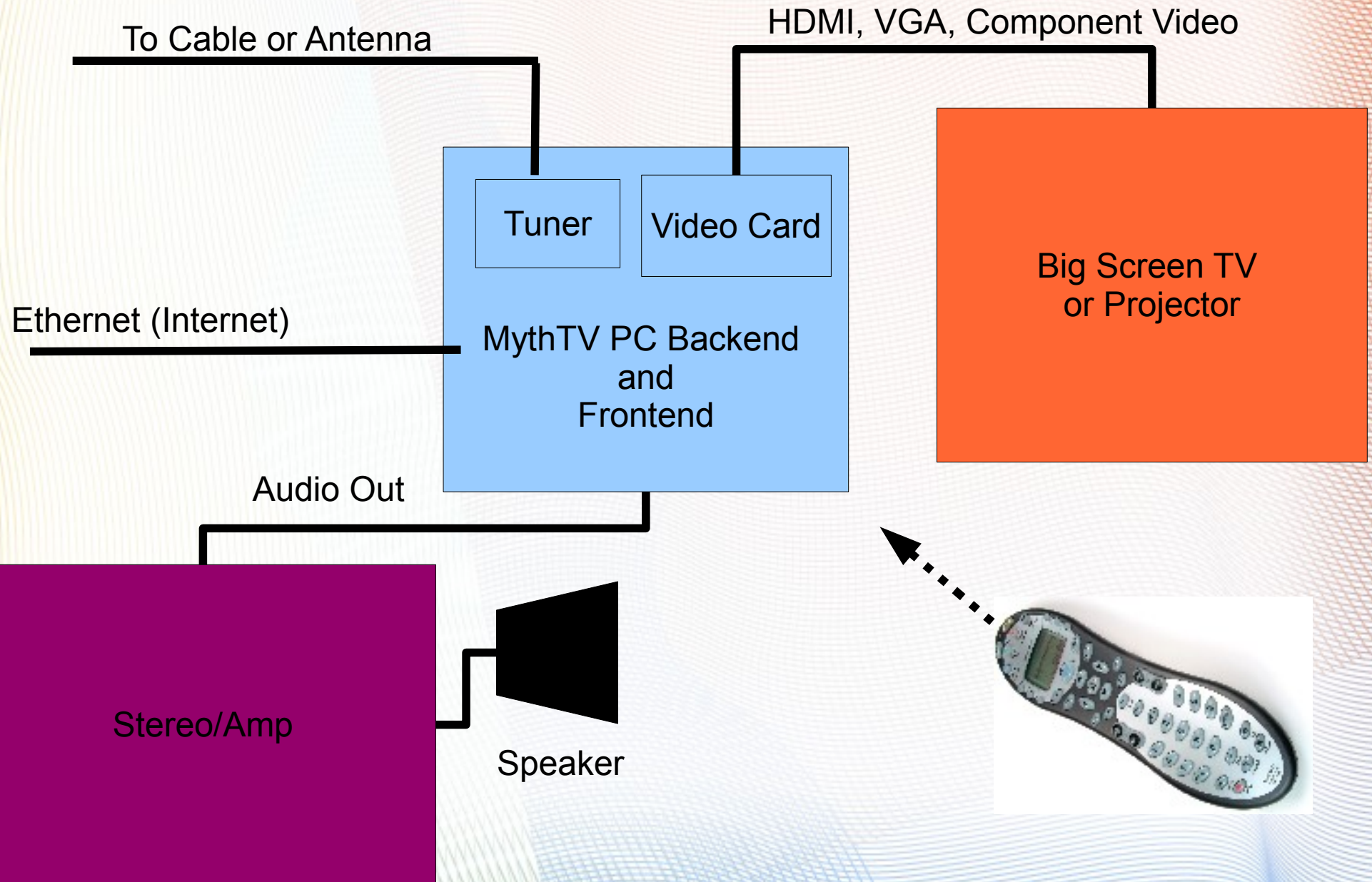


Mythbuntu-Control-Centre

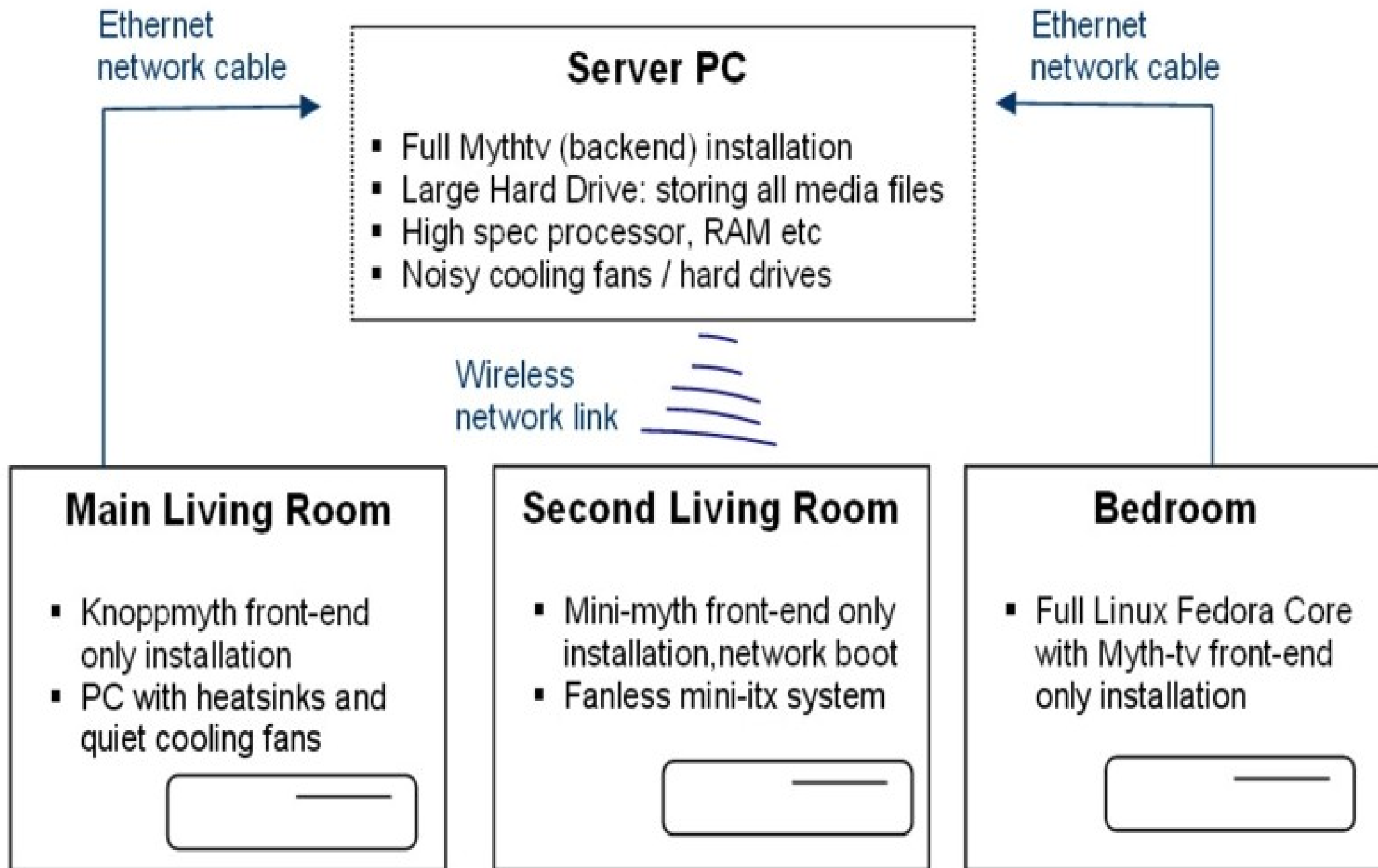


The Mythbuntu Control Centre is a custom GUI used to configure the system. From here you can select what kind of system (Backend, Frontend, Dot), you want. You can also install different desktops such as ubuntu desktop and kubuntu desktop. Install Plugins, configure

Single MythTV system




Multiple front-end only systems accessing Myth-tv server



Schedules Direct

www.schedulesdirect.org, One thing you need to pay for.



An Officer and a Gentleman

2:12 PM

Not Recording

(1982, 3 stars) A hardened loner (Richard Gere) shapes up for a military drill instructor (Louis Gossett Jr.) and a factory girl (D...

2/12	2:00 PM	2:30 PM	3:00 PM	3:30 PM
5 WMWB-LP	An Officer and a Gentleman (Drama)		Top Gun (Adventure)	
7 WBND-LP	NBA Basketball (Sports event)			NBA Basketball
8 WNDU	NASCAR Racing (Sports event)		XX Olympic Winter Games (Sports event)	
9 WSJV	Mr. Saturday Night (Comedy-drama)		See No Evil, Hear No Evil (Comedy)	
10 WNIT	McLaughlin Group (Talk)	Off the Record (Talk)	Politically Speaking With Jack Colwell (Interview)	

Hardware Configuration

Putting it all together

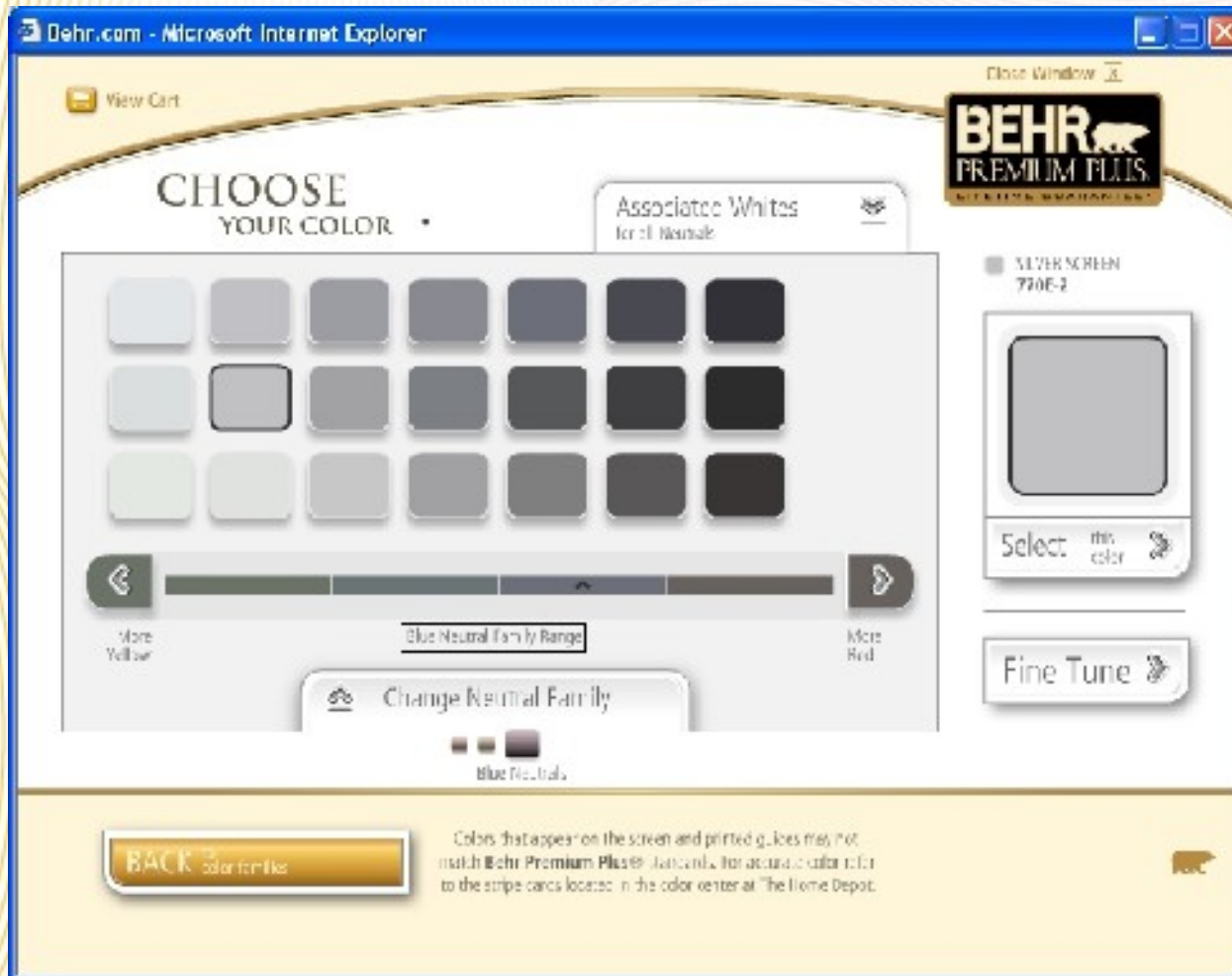
- TV signals
 - DTV Antenna
 - Cable - very basic works fine < \$20/month
- High speed Internet access
 - FIOS, cable or DSL

Screens

Buy or Build



Screen Cont.



Goo systems
A real screen that's
Painted on, it's a complete
System, but \$100 to \$300

Inexpensive way- Behr paint, silverscreen
The wall will need prep and primer

Software Installation

Mythbuntu Demo

Database and Maintenance

- Mythtv Database is MySQL
- Make sure the username and password match MythTVs
- All the data for what programs are available, have been and will be recorded are stored
- Also has all channel and configuration data
- It's good to Know SQL
- Database Repair
- CleanUp
- Database repair can be on through the web site

Support

- No one to call
- But, all the information you could want on-line

Web Sites

- Google
- mythbuntu.org
- Mythtv.org
- Ubuntu.com
- Ubuntuforums.org
- Linuxtv.org
- newegg.com
- pcmag.com
- extremetech.com
- www.eggxpert.com/

Questions

Thank You