

FAQ

Q Can I download video files from YouTube to my hard disk?

A It's certainly possible to download videos from YouTube to play later. This could be useful if you want to watch videos while not connected to the internet – when travelling, for example. There are plenty of websites that let you do just this, and these are easy enough to find via Google.

YouTube has been upgrading its video-sharing service since late last year. Many videos are now available in MP4 format at a resolution of 448x336 – instead of the original 320x240 – and audio quality has also been improved. Because of this, it's more tempting than ever to download YouTube content to your PC.

However, downloading videos in this manner contravenes YouTube's usage policies. You're not allowed to "access content through any technology or means other than the video playback pages of the website itself". This means downloading video files could get you into trouble. To be safe, you should only watch YouTube content directly from the website itself.

Seth Barton

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MYHOME247

Starter Kit

★★★★★

COMPUTER SHOPPER
BEST BUY

£250 inc VAT

From www.myhome247.co.uk

If you worry about your home when you're out, a home-monitoring service could help you relax. Myhome247 combines hardware sensors and an internet account to keep you informed of events in your absence. The Starter Kit consists of an IP network camera, a door sensor and a central control unit.

It's easy to set up, and anyone who's configured a wireless network will have no trouble. You'll need two spare Ethernet ports on your router, and more if you want to add extra cameras. After plugging the hardware into your router, simply log into your account at the Myhome247 website. It quickly registers your devices, and you can rename them if desired. There's a wide range of optional extras, such as motion sensors and alarms. The sensors are wireless and communicate directly with the control unit. The cameras have wired network connections, so you'll need to use Powerline networking if you want them in different rooms.

You can access your account from any computer with an internet connection. The main interface is easy to use and gives you lots of options. You can create macros to link one device to another. For example, you can set the camera to start recording if the front door sensor is triggered. You can also program times when the system will automatically activate and deactivate, or control the activation of individual devices manually. Any report from a sensor or camera is logged on your account as an alert.

The service can email you alerts; you select which ones, and how often. Alternatively, you can buy SMS credits for 15p each and receive selected alerts directly to your mobile phone. You can view a camera's live feed on a Java-compatible mobile phone using a downloadable program. You'll



have to pay your operator's rates for the data received, and video played at about 1fps on our GPRS handset. The mobile program also lets you activate and deactivate individual devices remotely.

The supplied Panasonic BL-C1 camera can take photos or video when it detects movement. Alternatively, you can watch a live video stream via your account. Despite the camera being capable of a 640x480 resolution, pictures and video are limited to a resolution of 320x240. This keeps bandwidth down for those with slow connections and mobile phone users, but we would have liked the option to use the maximum resolution. The kit comes with 5MB of data storage for free. Additional storage is expensive, though, at £10 a month for 50MB, or £12 a month for 250MB.

Using this Starter Kit alone, you're likely to be bombarded with alerts from both the camera and door sensor, as they have no way of discerning family members from intruders. You could set up timers on your devices to avoid some of these alerts, but you're better off buying a Keypad Kit for £26 including VAT. This will let you disarm all devices before entering the property.

This home-monitoring service is easy to set up and keeps you well informed. The only downsides are the low image resolution and expensive storage upgrades. The kit price is reasonable, and it's useful to have a single support number to call should anything go wrong.

Seth Barton

SUMMARY

- ✓ Easy to set up and configure
- ✓ Wide range of available sensors
- ✗ Low-resolution images

HOME-MONITORING KIT VGA IP camera, door/window sensor and control unit. Requires a broadband internet connection and two free Ethernet ports on the router
PART CODE MH247S
DETAILS www.myhome247.co.uk

Also consider...

TERRATEC Cinergy DT USB XS Diversity

★★★★★

COMPUTER SHOPPER
BEST BUY

£58 inc VAT

From www.pixmania.co.uk

This USB TV tuner has a diversity mode that takes a signal from two tuners and aerials to improve reception in areas with weak signal strength. Alternatively, you can use the tuners independently to receive one programme while recording another.

The included software is easy to use, image quality is good, and the remote control is clearly labelled.

Terratec's XS Diversity is the best dual tuner we've seen.



USB TV TUNER USB2 interface, dual digital tuners, 2x RF inputs
PART CODE 10456 DETAILS <http://uk.terratec.net> FULL REVIEW Apr 2007

TOP UP TV TUTV Anytime DTR

★★★★★

COMPUTER SHOPPER
BEST BUY

£90 (160GB) or
£130 (250GB) inc VAT
From www.topup.tv

This hard disk Freeview recorder has twin tuners, so you can watch one programme while recording another. Two models are currently available, with a choice of a 160GB or 250GB hard disk, storing around 100 and 150 hours of TV respectively.

As well as the usual Freeview broadcasts, you can choose to subscribe to Top Up TV programming or Setanta Sports. It's a versatile and inexpensive way of improving your TV viewing.



HARD DISK RECORDER 2x digital tuners, 160GB hard disk, RF input, RF output, 2x SCART, S-video, composite, stereo phono and coaxial S/PDIF output PART CODE DT1 6300-16
DETAILS www.topuptv.com FULL REVIEW Jul 2007