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Wednesday, Jul 27, 2005

Business XML

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Posted on Sat, Jul. 16, 2005

Transfer video from your TiVo to your PSP

By Victor Godinez
The Dallas Morning News

Sony's handheld video game system -- the PSP -- is also a remarkably versatile video and music player.

But Sony has focused on the PSP as game machine since it was released earlier this year, leaving hackers to take advantage of the device's multimedia capabilities.

One of the coolest amateur applications is the ability to transfer video from your TiVo digital video recorder to your PSP so you can watch your favorite TV shows on the go.

It's not a simple procedure, but the available free software does work and adequate documentation is available online from various sources.

You'll need:

- A PSP.
- A Memory Stick Pro Duo (the bigger the better, since a 30-minute show recorded at the highest quality takes up about 100 megabytes of space).
- A Series2 TiVo with the TiVoToGo software downloaded and installed, and connected to your home network (Go to www.tivo.com/4.9.19.1.asp for information on how to do this).
- A PC or laptop with TiVoToGo software installed.
- A USB cable to connect your PSP to your PC or laptop.

Once you've got all your hardware assembled, it's time to download the necessary software.

First, you need to format your Memory Stick to be able to store and play back video on your

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PSP.

Sony has a video tutorial on how to do this at <http://psp.connect.com>.

Then, use the TivoToGo software on your PC or laptop to copy a show from your TiVo.

It took me about two hours to transfer a 30-minute episode of Futurama to my laptop, which I recorded on the highest quality setting on my Humax Series2 TiVo.

At that setting, the show takes up about 1.3 gigabytes of storage space on my TiVo.

Once I had the show on my laptop, I downloaded the free PSP Video 9 program (www.pspvideo9.com).

The software can supposedly convert TiVo files -- which are stored in the .tivo format -- directly into the MP4 format required for the PSP.

But when I selected the Futurama episode from the My Tivo directory on my laptop and started the conversion process, I got an error message.

I had to download a separate program to first convert the .tivo file to the standard MPEG4 video format, and then use PSP Video 9 to convert the MPEG4 to MP4 and copy the file to the Memory Stick in my PSP.

Don't panic.

It may sound like the digital equivalent of juggling flaming knives while riding a unicycle through a minefield, but if you know how to copy music from a CD onto your PC and convert it to an MP3, you can handle this.

So, if you get that error message when using PSP Video 9, go to <http://prish.com/etivo/tbr.htm> and download DirectShow Dump.

Then drop your TiVo file into DirectShow Dump to convert it to the MPEG4 format.

Then open the MPEG4 file in PSP Video 9.

After it's converted the file to MP4, select 'Copy' to send the file to your PSP via the USB cable (make sure you've activated USB mode through your PSP's menu).

That should only take a few minutes.

Once that's done, fire up your PSP and your show should be saved in the Video directory.

It took me about three hours (including transferring the show from my TiVo to my laptop) to do all this, but the end result was worth it.

The video quality is excellent, if not quite as good as the initial TV broadcast, and the sound was superb when I listened through my earphones.

It would be nice if Sony, TiVo and all the other various video creators out there could agree on a single format for digital video that could seamlessly transfer from one device to the next.

Until that day, when lambs and lions share a sleeping bag, some good, old-fashioned geek gumption should get you through.

Pros: The razor-sharp screen on the PSP makes it ideal for watching movies and TV shows. Do-it-yourself fans will be rewarded for their efforts.

Cons: The process takes several hours, and there is some trial and error involved. You can only transfer TiVo shows if you have the correct model TiVo, a home network, a PC and a PSP. So while all the software is free, you have to spend at least several hundred dollars on hardware.

Bottom line: The final result is satisfying, and well worth it if you have any desire to watch your favorite TV shows in a portable format.



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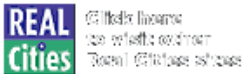
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