

Sunday, March 14. 2004

Buying a new DVD player

Carl managed to break our old Sony DVD player which of course meant I got to buy a new toy. I was very tempted by the Gateway Networked DVD Player and the new LiteOn LVD-2010 which is also a networked player. Being able to stream things to the player skipping the middle step of having to burn to DVD first is attractive, and of course, why would you buy any powered device without a NIC? Every device should have an IP, no matter how inappropriate. However, I played a bit with the Gateway player and the menus seemed clunky and the number of formats it could play natively was limited. If the machine you are streaming from has enough juice you can transcode from a large number of formats on the fly, but for some reason I still wasn't sold on it. And the LiteOn doesn't seem readily available yet. I couldn't find it anywhere. So instead I picked up a Philips DVD727 for \$79 from Fry's. It is a slick little progressive scan player (not that I have a TV capable of that yet) with S-Video, component and optical outputs on the back. The menus are simple and making it region-free was trivial. Open tray, 9 9 9 9 0 (slowly), close tray. I tested it with a Danish region 2 PAL DVD and it played perfectly. Unlike many other players you can make region-free, this one you can set to any region, so if you have any region-locked dvds that won't play in region 0 you can set it explicitly to the appropriate region. The next test was to see how well it handled a DVD+R data disc. I grabbed some 3500 photos of Carl, 30 videos of various AVI, WMV and MPEG formats and a couple of hundred mp3s and stuck them in Photos/, Videos/ and Music/ directories on a regular data dvd and popped it into the player. It came up with a nice little directory of what was on the DVD. It was only able to show the first 650 jpegs in my Photos directory. The manual says there is a limit of 500 files per directory. So it looks like I will have to spread my 3500 pictures out over many sub-directories. Annoying, but not a big deal. The mp3 playback is nice. It has playlists and even a shuffle mode. You can also start the mp3s playing and switch over to the jpeg slideshow and have them both going at the same time. For the videos it was only able to play the mpeg files. No AVI nor WMV support apparently. But it still leaves our previous Sony player in the dust by not needing to do full DVD authoring which takes forever. Being able to browse your backup DVDs in your DVD player is very nice. This player also supports SVCD and regular CD-R of course.

Posted by Rasmus in Audio/Video at 23:15

The Philips DVP642 DVD Player plays back AVI files and DivX, MPEG-4 encoded Video. It is a nice player, I only wish that it could do ID3 tags and had a better file system viewer that displayed more than the first 8 characters of the filename
Anonymous on Jun 1 2004, 14:48

Were you also able to defeat the MacroVision on it? After you made it region-free, could you play RCE discs like Charlie's Angels and The Patriot?
Anonymous on Aug 18 2004, 13:54