



Review done by James Jarvis

5/11/2020

Cord Cutting has grown by leaps and bounds in the last year, and with all the Coronavirus shutdowns and shelter in place orders, it has absolutely caught on fire. Some recent stats suggest streaming during this pandemic has gone up more than 40% in areas as people search for news and media through nontraditional routes. Companies are scrambling in both media and other business sectors to find and settle into a new normal. People are scrambling to find a new normal and ways to consume both news and media at home. One prime example of this is Trolls world tour and its straight to home release, it sold 100 million in sales in the first 5 weeks (which was as much as the original moves total theater release if I read that correctly). Universal put a news release out about how well it did and AMC fired back with threats of not carrying universal movies in any of their theaters anymore, and so the fight for a new normal was on. Streaming has been a normal for many, and I think we have seen versions 1-2 of streaming with Roku, Firesticks and Apple tv leading the way. In the last year everyone has wanted a share of the streaming pie and this is evident in the number of streaming apps and studios holding their content on their app alone. What use to be 89.99 cable charges has turned into 5-10-dollar subscription prices and 100's of apps in the wild. Some reports I have read say the average person subscribes to 4+ subscriptions for media content (think Hulu, Disney, apple etc.) and probably uses more free apps then they care to count. I myself as of this writing subscribe to At&t tv, Hulu, Netflix, Prime video, CBS all access, channels DVR service for OTA locals, Disney+. With 7 apps that I subscribe to and many more free ones, it all becomes app jumping and hard to keep track of where I am on what show and what I have watched on what service. My OTA antenna flakes out sometimes so we must switch between channels DVR and Hulu for the shows we watch so keeping track without starting the show becomes a little bit of a pain. Also, if your wife is like mine where she is a creature of habit so app jumping and finding new things is not a comfort spot for her. Enter our hopeful hero, the TiVo Stream 4k.

The name TiVo brings up some really good feels for the wife and I. We were married in 2003 and when we moved into our first house in April of that year, we had Directv installed. It was the thing

to do back then. Directv was the hot ticket and my brother and I went to I believe circuit city or sears and took home a Directv install kit, yes you could do it yourself back then! The first receiver I ever had was a HDVR2 made by Hughes. The combining of Satellite and TiVo service (lets be honest if you had TiVo, you said you had TiVo service not DVR service you were in a class of your own!) was perfect for my wife and I who had crazy work schedules that would never sync and loved to spend time together watching shows when we could spend time together and relax from our days. TiVo with its little Bee-Boops and dancing TiVo guy filled many nights and days with good memories and reliable DVR service and great reliability for us. We went through many models, from the r10-to the HR 10-250. But something happened and no longer were the service partnerships as Good as Directv and Cable channels did their own DVR service with On- Demand now a thing, and whole home video that TiVo couldn't tap into as the providers wanted in house solutions. Sure TiVo still had their DVRs but things changed, and so did TiVo owners and back end solutions. They still released great products to try and keep with the times. TiVo bolts were released with trying to appeal to the cord cutting crowds, and while they worked it just wasn't the same. TiVo had fallen behind due to what I believe was different paths taken by different owners, and their goal just wasn't clear. But now with new owners Xperi they are trying to become Much more focused and clear path Forward, dare I say they are finding a new normal for them and want to be the leader in the new streaming world, as they were in the past with Dvr service.

The release of the TiVo stream 4k is a new way forward for them, one way to rebrand themselves a bit, and finish the work they started in the TiVo bolt and edge series. Their goal is a simple one, Browse shows and media content and not apps. Bring all your favorite series into one manageable app that stops the endless search process and keeps it all neat and tidy in one place. They have left behind the DVR world to venture out into the streaming oasis of a new world normal. There are others in here that have done things before them, but TiVo sees them as version 1, and themselves as version 2. I have been following the news since this little guy was announced and have been watching for release day. TiVo stream 4k was announced at CES 2020, with a introductory rate of 50 dollars and a release date in the near future. May 6th The device was launched and I ordered 3. With free shipping my order arrived

on Saturday and I was excited to see what TiVo could do.



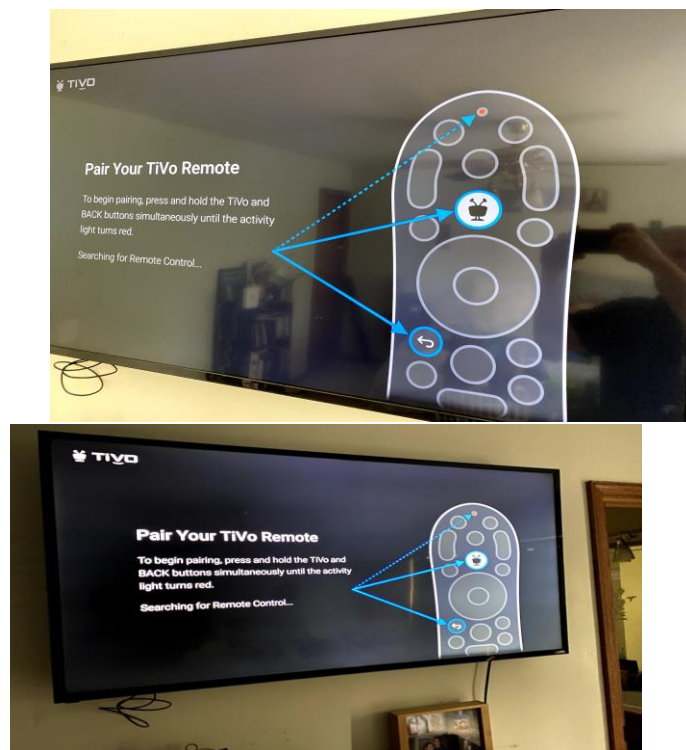
Inside the package you will find the TiVo stream 4k dongle Powered by android tv. It measures 3 inches wide by 2 inches deep by just over half a inch high. It plugs into your HDMI port with a HDMI 2.0a built in cable end. The Box itself has a micro Usb 2.0 cable for power and also a USB-C cable port for future use (some users of tivocommunity have gotten network adapters to work for gigabit ethernet). It connects to the internet via a 802.11 b/g/n/ac connection. The remote that comes with the Tivo stream is in my use and needs one of the better ones to be released with a streamer. I have spent more then I care to admit time recently trying to find a lost remote from firesticks and apple tvs that the little ones have let slip in the couch. This remote is one TiVo users will find oddly familiar, it's a mini sized version of the TiVo remote. While its not backlit, I have a feeling you will be able to buy backlit remotes at some point. Remember there is a balance between keeping initial costs down and releasing a product with your best foot forward. The remote feels great in hand and should be a little

harder to lose but not impossible. There is all the familiar TiVo buttons plus a new google assistant and home button.

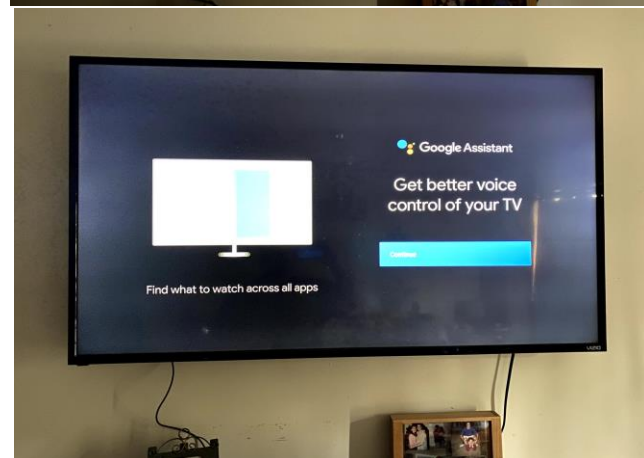
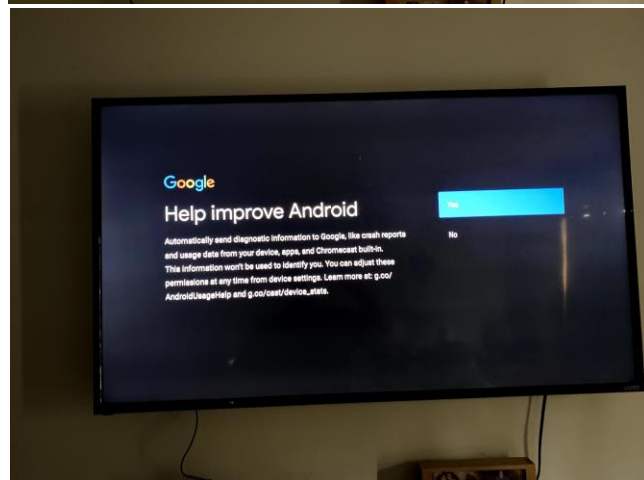
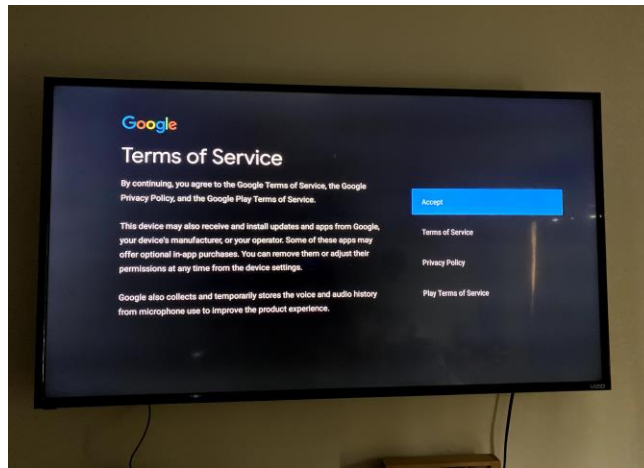


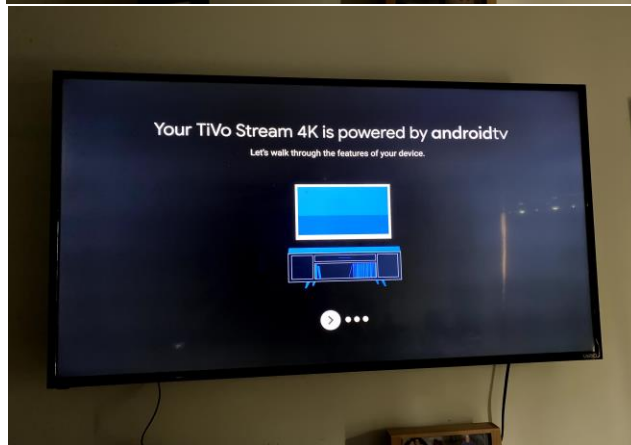
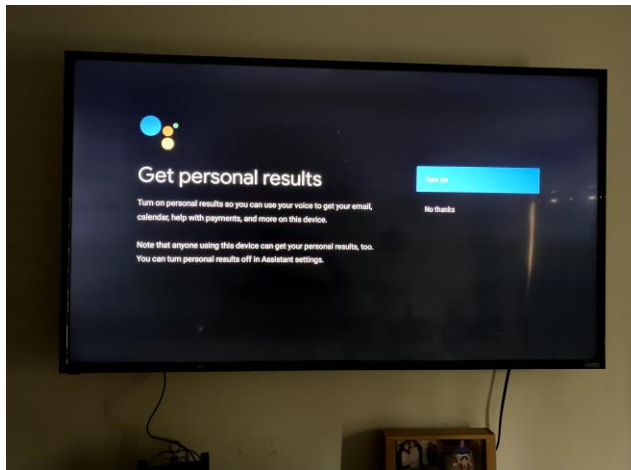
I took the first streamer and hooked it up to my Vizio m series 4k tv, along with the USB cable (make sure to always plug the USB cable into an outlet and not the tv USB cable...it needs more power than most TV's can supply and while it may seem like its working I have had some funky errors pop up due to the wrong power being used). The start up process (I will group pictures later) came to life on my screen and I was off with a familiar and warm looking TiVo guy popping up and a new android tv splash screen as well, blending the old and new. The setup process was, interesting. The have you pair the remote which is connected to the streamer via Bluetooth, by holding the back and TiVo button till the

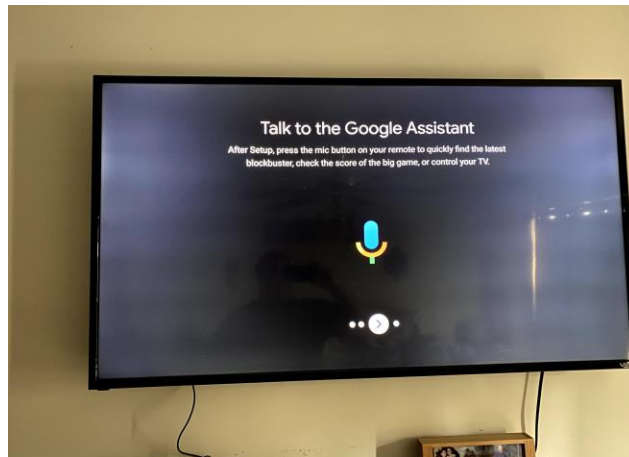
led at the top of the remote turns red. I was greeted with a searching for remote screen, and got stuck there. Attempt two and three of pressing the buttons and trying to sync the remote were unsuccessful so I unplugged and restarted. Try three resulted in a successful sync, then back to needing to sync, then to a screen where you select your language, then back to needing to sync, a little frustrating. I was okay with this, but to anyone else who doesn't have the patience or understanding of technology this would be a very frustrating setup which would lead to phone calls to son in laws or children, or help desks. Once I got the remote to sync and fully past those screen (try 6) setup was painless. I hooked up to my Eero router, linked my google account and then TiVo had me login to my TiVo account from a phone or computer. I do need to mention there was a firmware update in there which took all of two minutes to do, I have gigabit internet and had no issues although some are reporting that it took a while to update their Stream 4k's. Once the main system setup was down, now was the time to see what TiVo has for us, and it starts off with wanting to learn your tastes. The stream 4k will show two shows at a time and have you pick one so it can learn what you might like. After this process is done it will have you add shows (Like a DVR setup so you can "record") to your my show list. At this time Sling tv is their Preferred partner (their words not mine, they lead me to believe there will be more that will work) and it feeds your Sling tv media plus other apps media (at the time of release Netflix, HBO Now, Amazon prime, Hulu, Google Play Movies and Tv, and Disney+, with the promise of more to come) into the TiVo Stream app. For the sake of time I am going to focus on the TiVo app, not android tv. I will bring up some nuances and positives I find with Android Tv as TiVo has married these two products together and you cant have one without the other.



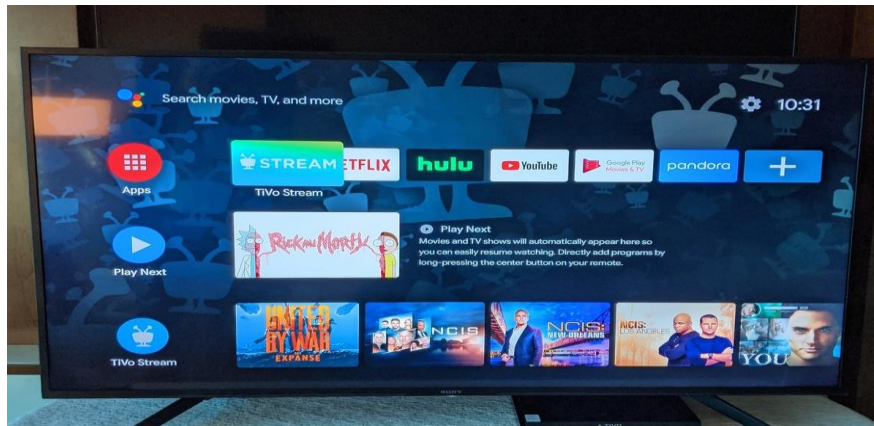




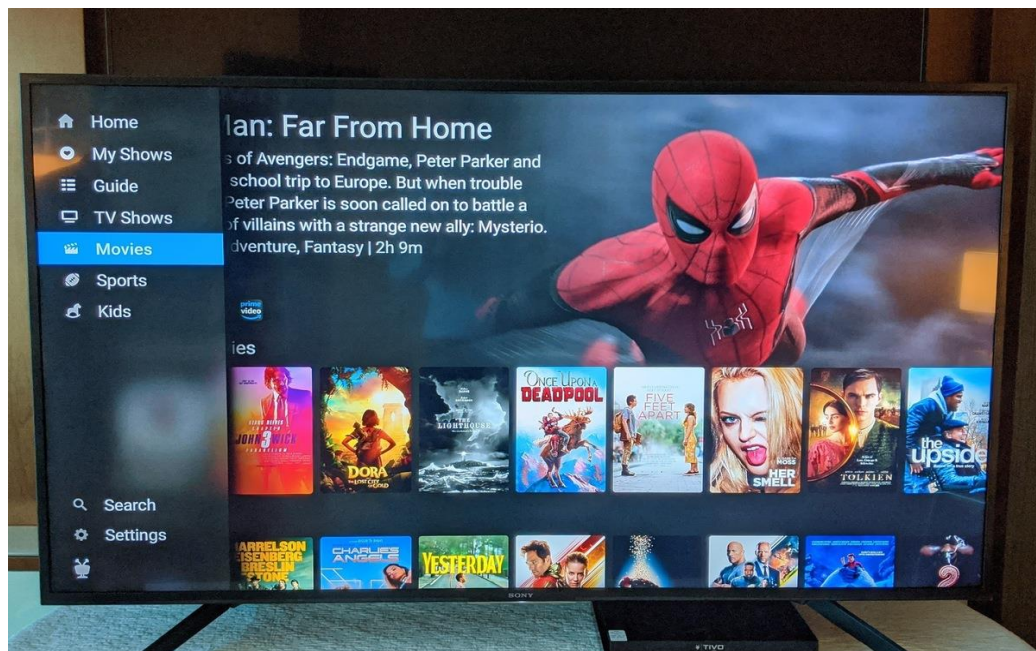




With that we are at the android home screen with the TiVo app as the first one. (photo used from Techive.com I have no rights to photo and didn't take any).



When you launch the TiVo Stream app you are greeted with the one Place TiVo hopes in the near future you will need! (again techive.com owns this photo I didn't take it)



You will be able to locate your Shows and movies all from this screen, along with a guide and search for new media, and have TiVo suggest new ones based on your shows and preferences. This is where all the integrations and roads lead, and its what TiVo hopes in the future you will need. But there is work to be done. As of right now the only apps that are integrated into this are the ones I listed above. When you search for shows and movies, it will ONLY pull from those sources and not show you other choices. For example, my family loves the impractical Jokers and if I search for them I get a listing for the impractical Jokers movie and show from prime video, but not the show from Trutv or other apps that aren't integrated. For those I will need to search through the apps I know they are on and manually pull from there. If TiVo is serious about this new direction, they will work to get other apps integrated quickly, and I mean like tomorrow. I know Disney+ was added recently so there is hope they are working on it. Reaching their goal of high percentage of app integration will be their greatest strength.

Apple tv does a good job of integration and search but isn't complete and neither is Roku. I think Apple is farther along than some, but TiVo is after them for the crown. I would love to see Complete or high level integration with apps when searching for new shows, meaning if I search for the office it will list every app I can open it on, and when added to the my shows section it will keep track of what I have watched episode wise, not app wise so if season one is here and season two is there it just keeps going (remember their tagline, Flip shows not apps). Adding shows to the my shows section is easy if they are a partner, just search for the show and hit the add to my shows button, the more partners added the better the search will be. This is an extremely high task to do, but TiVo has set their sights on it and I hope it can be accomplished. If there is one group who can do it, it is them (they own a ton of patents and have done great things in the past). If there is one group who can crash and burn though, it is also them (please don't make me bring up the lack of streaming apps on the bolt itself and speaking of apps where are those other tivo apps). Also, in the integration section I would like to see streaming services

OR Other services in the guide section. Right now when you go to the guide tab it opens up Tivo+ channels which are adding quantity of channels every day, but for my viewing I have yet to watch one, or sling tv channels like a traditional cable guide. While that is a start can we please get some other partnerships in there. I do not know if sling is a timing thing, or what but their wording when it was released was sling is the preferred partner which leads me to believe there will be more, and hopefully sooner rather than later. I would love to see ATT tv, YouTube tv, Hulu live, or even Channels DVR with my Ota locals all be integrated into the guide. The more sources you have the higher chance there will be duplicates as well so I hope they put a way to customize the guide and what channels to pick from and what source. If you are listening to my requests, you will also integrate TiVo DVRs into this area, I know you want people to find a new normal, but there is a large group of us that prefer TiVo over many others. I am testing out channels DVR as I need to keep my options open, but if you are reading TiVo I am asking for a favor, especially from a long-time subscriber.

Performance wise the picture quality is good, hd is on par with apple tv. I can't test 4k out too much as here is a little problem with being one of the first to have this, some apps don't support 4k. We use vudu as our movie locker and as of right now they do not support 4k and Dolby Atmos on the stream 4k, they were also bought by fandango so who knows if they ever will. I will find a new source to test 4k, but as of this time I have not done a lot of 4k testing. I will give one minor thought here though why is it that streaming services always need to "ramp up" the video quality, when I use my apple tv 4k, it starts off at the highest stream possible, why can't others do that...listen first world problems I know but come on. From a techie stand point, you set the resolution and color space and it stays there, I would like to see a update soon that I can set it at 1080p SDR and when I play 4k Dolby vision content it auto outputs that resolution. Right now mine is set at 4k 60hz HDR, and that is exactly where it stays, a match frame rate, resolution and color space option would be great!

App selection is handled through the google play store, so any app that is available for android tv will be available here. I don't know who handles this but I would love to see mirrored home screens and apps, again I have three TiVo stream 4ks why do I have to download all the apps and customize home screens three times, why can't I just set one and copy it over to all three? I hate to pull this out but Apple TVs do it and its one of those nice touches that makes owning more than one encouraged, not discouraged. This maybe more on Google than TiVo, but TiVo might be able to do something at their level. Also one thing I would like to see is single sign on, and the way I see it work is go to settings, sign into my tv provider there and all the apps use that login to auto login (subscription package dependent

of course) when I download new apps, again 2020 here folks, and if TiVo plans to use app access as a backbone to pull data from, I would assume this would need to be done.

Right now I am going to use this as my daily driver as far as streaming goes. I am doing this in the hopes that they have some updates that will fix issues. I loved my apple tv 4k, but it started out with issues of its own, and I gave that time. Speaking of apple, please make a android tv based Apple Tv+ app, I really do enjoy your shows. I think with some software improvements this could be THE streaming device. As it sits right now, it's a swing and a soft single. TiVo though has a chance to knock it out of the park and the ball is in their court. I would suggest some focus groups with people (I volunteer as tribute) and beta testers and take feedback and suggestions and get going on updates and new app integrations....DON'T STOP, have some follow through and this could be the device to have it has a great start...if you don't and you leave it where it sits today, this device will be just another streamer that had potential and didn't come through.