



DBSTALK

.com

The Internet's Satellite Resource



FIRST LOOK SERIES:

DIRECTV

HR23-700

HIGH DEFINITION DVR

DIRECTV HR23-700 HIGH DEFINITION DVR



Introduction by bhelton71

It's quiet, looks good, one step less on the install than the HR20, and who doesn't like additional drive space?

2008 has already been a busy year for DirecTV, yet its receiver and dvr families continue to grow at a seemingly non-stop pace. Some of DBSTalk's Cutting Edge members were extended an opportunity by DirecTV to field test the newest member of the HR family - the HR23-700. Externally the HR23-700 retains the now familiar styling of its predecessors, but that's where the similarity ends. The HR23-700 includes enhancements directly supporting ongoing hardware initiatives like the SWM ODUs. At the same time, recording capacity has been increased to take advantage of the recent HD expansion. In short the HR23-700 is quiet and looks good, has one step less on the install, and of course, who doesn't like additional recording space? And in that spirit, DBSTalk presents a first look at the DirecTV HR23-700.

Basic Specs:

Manufactured by PACE Micro

500GB Hard Drive

Internal B-Band Converters

OTA support through AM21

SWM-capable

Improved picture and sound

Ethernet passthrough

Red record light

Internal RF antenna

Software-compatible with HR21-700

What's Inside by pdawg17

The HR23-700 arrived in a plain, brown cardboard box with the Directv logo on it, containing:

- HR23-700
- RC64R Remote with 2 AA batteries
- RCA Composite cable
- Component cable
- HDMI cable
- Power cord
- Phone cord
- Quick Start Guide
- Channel Lineup/Quick Fixes card
- Remote/Receiver Identification stickers

First Impressions by reweiss

The first noticeable differences between HR23 and other HD-DVR receivers is the ability to receive all of the high definition channels without B-Band converters. Your satellite cables can be plugged directly into the satellite inputs on the back of the HR23. This removes one component that could cause a critical failure.

Once you power on your HR23, you should notice the boot time is a little faster than other DVRs. After the DVR boots up, you should notice the picture is a little clearer. The menus, guides and the programming seem a little sharper than other DVRs. The guide and menus are laid out the same as other DirecTV DVRs. The sound output by the HR23 definitely has gotten a bit louder and arguably clearer.

After setting up your 'Series Links' and recording your favorite shows, you will start to notice that your playlist will have a higher percentage of space available. This is due to the inclusion of a 500GB hard drive. My impression is that it seems like I am able to record twice as many shows/movies as I was on my HR20-700. With the last HD channels that were broadcast with MPEG2 compression now being broadcast with MPEG4 compression, this should allow for an additional incremental increase in the programs that can be recorded (assuming you record the former MPEG2 channels).

As far as performance, I have seen different speeds at different times. Most of the time the HR23 seems to run as fast (if not faster) than my HR20-700. However, there are times where the menu and guide navigation drag a little. It is a fairly safe bet that DirecTV will continue to enhance both performance and functionality through Cutting Edge updates.

Overall, the HR23 is highly recommended for anyone looking to add a new DVR. I would also recommend this DVR for anyone who wants to increase their storage as compared to their current DVR. When you compare the costs of adding an ESATA hard drive to other lower capacity DVRs and the fact that you lose the storage capacity of your internal drive, the HR23 is a good cost effective option. At minimum, you'll also have a receiver with a sharper picture and louder sound.

UNBOXING

by Michael D'Angelo



Setup and Activation by say-what

Setting up the HR23-700 differs from its older siblings in one significant manner – NO BBC's; the HR23-700 has the BBC circuitry built-in, so you just connect the cables from the satellite directly to the two Satellite Inputs (the HR23-700 will function on one tuner if you only have one available cable from the dish/multiswitch). If you're using a SWM-5, SWM-8 or SWMLine Dish, you simply connect one cable from the SWM device to Satellite Input 1 and the HR23-700 takes care of the rest (as is the case with its older siblings, the HR23-700 requires 2 channels from the SWM device). Like the HR21, the HR23-700 does not have a built-in ATSC Tuner, but it is compatible with the AM21, which will walk you through setup upon connection. Like its older siblings, eSATA is enabled on the HR23-700.

A/V Connections:

The HR23-700 has the full array of A/V Outputs that you're accustomed to: Composite, S*Video, Component, and HDMI. There are also analog L/R RCA audio outputs and digital coax and optical audio outputs. As expected, all outputs operate simultaneously.

Network Connections:

The HR23-700 has a dual Ethernet port like the HR21 series. Ethernet 1 is used to connect to your network and Ethernet 2 acts as a switched port that allows you to connect other network enabled devices to your network via the HR23-700.

Guided Setup:

Once the cables are connected and you power up the HR23-700, it goes through the standard guided setup. Upon activation, you're ready to customize the Audio, Display, HDTV, Network, Custom Guides, Parental Control and Remote options. These options are the same as are found on the previous HR2x series DVR's. The Remote can be configured to operate in RF mode. In IR mode, the remote operates with the default DirecTV code set (00001) and can also be programmed to operate on the alternate code set (00003).



HR23-700 FRONT PANEL

Operation by larryflowers

The HR23-700 uses the DirecTV RC64R remote control unit, and functions the same as the other units in the HR line. Setup was a snap, and proceeded more quickly than I remember my other DVR doing. The SWM dish and software version were picked up instantly and I experienced no difficulties with the setup. The HR23-700 shares a single wall connection with my HR20-700 and this has caused no difficulties. The SWM has performed flawlessly.

The HR23-700 has a 500GB hard drive, which is a wonderful upgrade. I strongly believe that for many users this will make the use of eSATA drives unnecessary as it represents a 100% increase in storage space when you consider the reserved space for Movies Now, Showcases and the Live TV buffer..

Ethernet daisy-chain capability is excellent. At no time during the test period did I experience an Ethernet failure on the HR23-700 or the HR20-700 connected to it.

The operating temperature of the HR23-700 is 12° cooler than my HR20-700. There are no vents on the top of the HR23-700 and they are unnecessary. The unit is extremely quiet and runs with with no discernable fan noise.

Audio performance on the HR23-700 is better than the HR20-700. I must emphasize that I cannot present empirical evidence to support this, but switching back and forth between the HR23-700 and the HR20-700 on the same channel, the audio feed from the HR23-700 is sharper clearer and louder than the feed from the HR20-700. Both units are connected by HDMI and the TV audio out feeds to the A/V receiver.

HR21 - HR23 Differences by Microbeta

1. B-Band Converters (BBCs) are no longer required because of the internal wide-band tuners.
2. Select Button is Concave on HR20/HR21 and convex on HR23.
3. On HR23, LED segments of the Blue Circle are slightly smaller then the HR20/21.
4. HR20, HR21 and HR23 share the same connections but on the HR23 all the A/V connections are clustered on one side while the peripheral connections (eSATA, network, USB, phone) are on the other side.
5. Even though the Power light is not as bright, it is larger and easier to see.
6. The Blue Circle is slightly smaller then the HR21/HR20.
7. The Record light is larger, red, and at least as bright as HR20/HR21.



HR23-700 REAR PANEL

PHOTOS by Doug Brott, Tom Robertson, and Stuart Sweet

HR23 Interior



▼ HR23 light ring

HR23 Back panel▲



HR21 vs. HR23 by MicroBeta

PHOTOS by Doug Brott, Tom Robertson, and Stuart Sweet

HR23 Mainboard



▲ HR23 drive

Broadcom 5325 chip ▼



▲ Power supply

Card Reader ▼



Final words from the test team

Stuart Sweet It has been my pleasure to test this receiver, and have been extremely pleased. Thanks to the field test team for a great job!

bhelton71 In closing the field trial participants would like to thank DirecTV for the opportunity to test drive the HR23. And as always without the tireless efforts, enthusiasm and guidance of Doug Brott, Michael D'Angelo, Tom Robertson, and Stuart Sweet these field trials would not be possible - so a hearty thank you to them.

reweiss If you're looking for a DVR with a sharper picture, louder sound and more storage, the HR23 should be your first choice.

coffey77 I have just been amazed. I know this was a Field Test receiver but the thing has worked great. I almost hate that not much went wrong.

larryflowers No one who has used an earlier HR series DVR will have any difficulties with this unit and a first timer will find it quick and easy to set up. The unit has not, during the entire time of my possession, given me any problems of any kind. The 500GB hard drive will be a strong argument against the need or expense of an eSATA drive.

Microbeta The HR23-700 is the very top of DirecTV's premier line of HD DVRs. The increased storage capacity allows for recording of up to 100 hours of MPEG-4 HD. Its quiet operation and subdued lights even make it friendly for use in the bedroom. From the most sophisticated home theater to the living room television, the HR23-700 will be a fine addition to the any home. We believe our contribution to the real world testing is something that can be claimed by no other service provider. We would like to express our greatest appreciation to DirecTV and to DBSTalk for this opportunity.

gulfwarvet This will make a great addition to anyone that wants to eliminate the BBC's and don't want the hassle with a eSata enclosure. with the wideband tuner being built-in, plus the additional 500g hard drive storage space. This is a well thought out HD-DVR package.

