

Designer streamer

Chris Jenkins has a killer media streamer in his sights

Compro's VideoMate Network Media Center T1000W, to give it its full Terminator-style title, is cooler than it sounds. Take something like the Popcorn Hour A110 – an all-singing, all-dancing, web-surfing, bit-torrenting media server that looks like it was cobbled together on someone's kitchen table – then imagine it dressed up as a super-stylish desktop unit with snazzy blue lights and an added digital TV tuner. That's the Compro.

The design is immediately eye-catching, but there's a feeling of disappointment when you realise that its vertical element does not include a video screen, merely a status display. The base contains a bay into which you can insert your choice of SATA 3.5in hard drive. After fitting and formatting my HDD it was time to play...

Five star

The nifty, appealing GUI has five main

sections; Setup, TV, BT, HD and Web. The TV section features full auto scanning of channels and delivers a solid Freeview picture. There's an EPG with manual and programmed recording modes, though it lacks a series link option.

From the HD menu, you can play back video, audio and image files from the hard drive, attached USB device or another networked device. Formats supported include hi-res MKV and AVCHD. There are functions to copy files from one device to another; network options include setup for Samba/NFS device sharing.

Web functions on the T1000W are limited to YouTube access (Compro says it plans to add more in future). This means that to use BitTorrent functions you have to find the torrent files you need on a PC, transfer them to the Compro and activate them using the BT menu. Up to three torrents can be handled at a time, including when the machine is

AV/CV

Product: Network media centre with digital TV tuner, web access and BitTorrent client

Position: PC accessory specialist's first standalone media centre

Peers: Popcorn Hour A110; Wyplay Wyplayer

on standby; but torrenting is suspended while you carry out any other video tasks.

A small telescopic aerial is supplied, which you'll probably find pretty useless for Freeview reception. Likewise, the 802.11g wireless network functions are suitable for 'net purposes only; for movie playback a physical 10/100 LAN is recommended, as I experienced stutter and stoppage when trying to stream video wirelessly.

Solid start

The T1000W is beautifully-designed and full of potential. If it's a let-down in any area, it's in the lack of Freeview series recording and the limited web access, but as with many of 21st-century bits of kit, these may be improved via updates ●

→ Specifications

HDMI output: YES plus component, composite, and S-video
Digital audio output: YES via HDMI, optical or coaxial
HDD: 3.5in SATA, up to 1TB
Video formats: AVI, MPEG-1/2/4, MOV(H.264), TS, ASF, MKV, WMV9, AVCHD, VC-1, ISO, VOB
Audio formats: MP3, WMA, WAV, PCM
Image Formats: JPG
Dimensions: 180(w) x 270(H) x 180(d)mm
Weight: 3kg
Features: Bit Torrent client; file copy function; NFS/SMB network sharing; firmware upgradeable; 3 x USB 2.0 inputs; Ethernet and wireless LAN connectors



The Compro certainly looks the part

→ Tech Labs

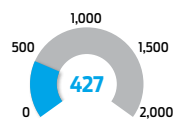
Power consumption: Watts



Idling: Using only 11W when idling, the T1000W won't be the worst culprit in your setup

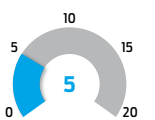
Playing: ...and it doesn't make much difference to the Compro's power consumption when it's playing

Audio Jitter: Ps



Analogue: Jitter is relatively low – as you might expect from a solid state streamer

Video Jitter: Ns



Vision: This is a good result, suggesting a stable video output signal

HCC VERDICT

Compro VideoMate T1000W
 £190 Approx

Price check: www.techradar.com/reviews

Highs: Living room-friendly looks; extensive functionality; quality performance

Lows: No series recording; limited web access

Performance: 1 2 3 4 5

Design: 1 2 3 4 5

Features: 1 2 3 4 5

Overall: 1 2 3 4 5