

TV TUNER

COMPRO VIDEOMATE VISTA U2800F

Cost £44.59 inc VAT

Supplier www.overclock.co.uk

Manufacturer www.comprousa.com

This USB digital TV tuner is very easy to set up and run. It works well with analogue signals using the tiny aerial bundled with it, but not with digital. There's a standard aerial plug at the back, so you can also connect the U2800F to a fixed aerial. Once plugged in, the installation and setup process of the ComproDTV 4 playback software is quick; channels were speedily detected and we were watching 'Danger Mouse' on BBC2 within a couple of minutes. The software allows you to set up recordings and includes a Vista gadget that lets you watch TV in the Sidebar. The U2800F also works with XP, and the Media Center component of both versions of Windows, even though the remote is Vista-biased. The U2800F also functions as an FM radio, but this didn't work as well as the TV reception; this is no great loss, however, as most radio stations broadcast over the Internet. As a hassle-free way to watch TV on your laptop or PC, this device is as good as it gets. However, with services such as BBC's iPlayer, 4OD and ITV's CatchUp available, the need for a small portable TV tuner is on the wane.

Teletubbies > > > > > Telly Savalas

GAMING MOUSE

SAITEK PM42 CYBORG

Cost £31.36 inc VAT

Supplier www.scan.co.uk

Manufacturer www.saitek.co.uk

The Saitek Cyborg is a very odd mouse. For a start, it's motorised, and you can adjust its length by up to 15mm using the included software. This might sound like an elaborate gimmick, but it's quite handy. The motor securely locks the body extension, and the fine control over the length of the mouse body makes a marked difference in comfort. The Cyborg has three thumb buttons, with a four-way thumbstick between them (for four programmable functions); as you need plenty of space between all these buttons, the extending body helps to make them accessible. However, to click one of the thumb buttons, you have to push forwards into the part that juts out, which twists the mouse, especially when the Cyborg is at its maximum 3,200dpi sensitivity. The mouse wheel is solid and makes an ideal third button, and the Scroll Force switch on the base of the Cyborg lets you set how freely the wheel spins. However, while the Cyborg is packed with features, it lacks the polish and refinement of mice from big guns such as Logitech, Razer and SteelSeries.

Robot > > > > > Cyborg

TOMORROW'S WORLD

VUZIX IWEAR VR920

Cost £249.99 inc VAT

Supplier www.firebox.com

Manufacturer www.vuzix.com

These specs house a pair of screens, and act as a VR headset for games. A D-SUB connector is supplied (there's also a DVI adaptor), and you attach the VR920 as you would a screen. You then have what appears to be a 62in screen viewed at 9ft. The VR920 isn't only a personal screen – it adds head tracking for a virtual reality feel. In supported games (we couldn't find a definitive list, unfortunately), moving your head also moves the viewpoint of your in-game character. This is disorientating at first, but fun once you get the hang of it. The VR920 also supports Nvidia's Stereoscopic video drivers, which makes supported games (see <http://tinyurl.com/2r70lb>) appear 3D. Again, this is a little overwhelming at first, but it looks incredible when it works. The built-in earphones, which use USB, aren't the best, and fitting a headset over the top of the VR920 is a little awkward. If the real world in your peripheral vision induces nausea then you'll need the £15 eyeshield. However, with composite and iPod Video cables included in the box (see <http://tinyurl.com/3meuvk> for other compatible devices), you can use the VR920 for watching movies on the go, making it a flexible and fun gadget even if it is a little pricey.

Actual reality > > > > > Virtual insanity