



Remote control



## TV Anytime, Anywhere

**ON TEST** Compro VideoMate U900 External USB TV Tuner Box

BY CHRIS YONG

Size matters, and while there is a race to make the largest televisions, there is also one to make the smallest gadgets. Compro seems to have done a little of both, putting the largest television into the smallest box. Actually, the screen size is irrelevant, because this little credit-card sized box is really an external TV tuner device. Compro claims that the VideoMate U900 is the worlds smallest fully functional USB2.0 TV Box, and it certainly lives up to its claim. It slips into our shirt pocket, and can easily compare in size with our mobile phones. It even draws power from your PC via the supplied USB cable, so you don't have to worry about carrying around different power adapters when you visit different countries. However, this means that you would probably need two USB ports free on your system, as the U900 needs an extra one to interface with your PC.

Don't be fooled by its minute size, as Compro has managed to squeeze in a host of features. PAL, NTSC and SECAM is natively supported, and you can record in MPEG 1, 2 and 4 formats. However, the U900 relies very heavily on the processing power of your CPU, so if you intend to record video of the highest quality, you need to ensure that you have a processor of at least 2.4GHz. When we connected the Compro to our test machine, we managed to attain smooth frame rates and relatively decent TV playback quality. However, it still cannot be compared to higher end hardware based tuner cards.

The U900 is controlled by Compro's proprietary ComproPVR2 software. It was easy to set up and use right out of the box. A very comprehensive software bundle is also included to allow you to edit and store your video, and considering the street price of the Ulead software, we were well pleased with this addition. The U900 also has a scheduling function, screen-on-screen channel surfing, time-shifting and frame capture. With the channel surfing feature, you can watch up to 13 different channels on one screen, and you can even pause your show mid-program and the U900 will buffer the show till you are ready to continue. This means that you can carry on watching your soccer match 'live' while you head off to grab food and not miss a moment of the action.

The Compro VideoMate U900 is the perfect-traveling companion. It is astonishingly easy to use and it can be easily stashed in any laptop bag, and then easily connected to the hotel's TV point so that you can record your favorite programs on the move. With its multi-system support and adapter-less power supply, it is a truly mobile product that you can use internationally.

### SPECIFICATIONS

Formats	Interface	Power	Price
NTSC, PAL, SECAM	USB 2.0	USB	\$5167

**TV Formats:** NTSC, PAL, SECAM

**Video ADCs:** 10-bit Video CMOS Analog-to-Digital Converters (ADCs)

**Video bitrate:** 200K~10Mbps

**Resolution:** NTSC (720 x 480 / 352 x 480 / 352 x 240), PAL (720 x 576 / 352 x 576 / 352 x 288)

**Video Compression:** ISO/IEC 13818, ISO/IEC 11172

**Support Video:** VCD / DVD

**Recording Formats:** MPEG-1 / MPEG-2 / MPEG-4

**Audio System:** NICAM and A2/Dual

**Sample rates:** 44.1KHZ / 48KHZ

**Audio ADCs:** 16-bit ADC converter

**I/O Connector:** TV cable/antenna in (3.5mm Jack), USB connector, USB powered input, S-Video or composite video input (3.5mm Jack), Stereo audio in (3.5mm Phone Jack), Built-in IR Receiver

**Dimensions:** 7.6 x 5.4 x 1.4cm

**Weight:** 60g

**Price:** \$5167

### HWM's Rating

Physique: **9.0**

Features: **8.0**

User-friendliness: **8.0**

Performance: **7.5**

Value: **8.0**

**A tiny TV tuner jammed with features that seem impossible for its size.**



**8.0**

Overall Score Out of 10