



Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the **North Orange County Computer Club**, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at noccc.org.

QUESTION: We have a lot of pictures, videos and music tracks on our PC. Is there a way to share them over our TV? Any help would be appreciated.

PC CLUB: This is a rapidly expanding segment of the electronics marketplace and is changing almost daily. There are two methods to have various types of media on your PC show up on your TV. One of the methods utilizes an Internet connection, either wired or wireless and other method does not.

This is referred to media sharing or media streaming. Streaming media is sending media, including music, pictures or videos, over the Internet or a network allowing viewers to see or hear them in real time.

There are two basic options for sharing media with your TV, either by connecting your computer directly to your TV or by using a set-top box that acts as an intermediary. This box retrieves media from your PC over your home network and delivers it to your HDTV through direct HDMI or component connections. Most of these boxes stream video, music and photos, and some even handle podcasts, Internet radio, YouTube, Netflix and downloaded rental movies, and other streaming sources.

Some of the devices that allow you to stream media to your TV include the following:

- Apple TV
- Western Digital Live TV Plus
- PlayStation III
- Xbox 360
- Netgear Push2TV
- D-link DSM-750
- Blu-ray Players
- Google TV combined with the Logitech Revue player
- Seagate FreeAgent Theatre + HD Media Player
- Viewsonic VMP75 Streaming Media Player

To learn more about the above devices, use your favorite search engine to read the reviews. The Samsung Smart TV uses another approach; it has many features built in that allow streaming. You can read about it at <http://bit.ly/bdU3D6>. Note – other manufactures such as Toshiba and Sony have joined the party.

I've recently evaluated the Western Digital Live TV Plus (WDTV LIVE) and it took me less than 10 minutes from the time I opened the box until I was watching a Netflix movie.



After hooking the WDTV LIVE up to the TV I was able to share media from any PC on the network to my TV. I then plugged a USB hard drive into the device after loading it with media and was able to share that media also. The advantage of the USB hard drive is that my PC doesn't have to be on to access the media.

The WDTV LIVE is available in several stores including Staples for \$129. I found the Netflix experience as good as using a BluRay or Roku player. The WDTV LIVE on-screen menu lets you select Media Shares (Windows 7) or Network shares (Windows XP).

Be sure to go to the Western Digital web site at www.wdc.com and look for Support Article 3792 or try the link at <http://bit.ly/wdc379> for how to share with Windows 7. One of the pleasant surprises is that the WDTV LIVE will wake up your PC if it is sleeping when you try to access its media, even if you use a password. For an overview on media sharing see the PC World Magazine article at <http://bit.ly/streamedia>.

I also evaluated a Samsung BD-C5500C Blu-Ray player. The player has an input for a network cable which provides you with Internet TV capability. You not only can play Blu-Ray and regular DVD movies but you can also watch Netflix or Blockbuster movies, Weather, Pandora Music, USA Today and other services. In addition, you can also access media from your PC by installing Samsung's PC Share Manager which is available for free. Despite what you may read in the reviews this feature works flawlessly with Windows 7.

If I had to choose between the WDTV LIVE and the Samsung player I'd choose the latter – in fact I already have. If you don't have the ability to connect an Ethernet cable directly to the player you will have to purchase the WIS09ABGN wireless adapter – see <http://amzn.to/samsungadapter>.

Terminology

- DLNA – see <http://www.dlna.org/products>
- Wireless Ready – you need to purchase an additional Wireless adaptor (or Dongle)
- HDMI – High Definition Multimedia Interface. These cables are not always included and can be pricey. Staples sell them for \$40 but they are available on line for \$12.

Ed Schwartz is a member of the North Orange County Computer Club. To send in a question, go to edwardns.com and click the Contact Me menu. Archives of previous columns are also on the website.