

EchoStar unveils PMP for use with DVR



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ENGLEWOOD, COLO. -- The first portable media players that store music and video transferred via high-speed USB connection from a set-top DVR became available in mid-October through EchoStar's independent satellite-TV dealers.

The devices, made by Archos, might be made available in the future to other EchoStar retailers such as Sears and RadioShack, a spokesman said.

EchoStar's trio of co-branded PocketDISH/Archos portables store time-shifted music and video channels transferred via USB 2.0 from EchoStar's single USB-equipped DISH-network DVR. The portables also store music, video and photos transferred from a PC. USB 2.0 enables a five-minute transfer of an hour's worth of DVR-recorded video, EchoStar said.

Although only one EchoStar DVR, the 942, features USB, all future EchoStar DVRs will come with the high-speed digital connection, said a spokesman. In the meantime, purchasers of the top two portables can use those models' built-in time-shifting capabilities and analog inputs to directly record audio and video content in real time from any connected cable box, satellite TV receiver, TV, DVR, DVD player or VCR.

The three devices, all equipped with HDDs, include the \$599-suggested PocketDISH with 7-inch 16:9 screen and a \$499 version with 4-inch 16:9 screen, both with built-in time-shifting capability and USB 2.0. A \$329 model with 2.2-inch 16:9 screen lacks built-in time-shifting but stores content transferred via USB. All three lack removable memory. HDD capacities are 40GB, 30GB and 20GB, respectively.

The devices also store DISH Network's Sirius-provided music channels, which are recorded by the DVR in blocks of time and played back by PocketDISH in blocks of time. Dish's DVRs don't allow for automatic recording of songs by title or artist, nor do the portables allow for the recorded songs to be selected by title or artist. Nor do the DVRs and portables let users skip from song to song during playback. The devices also store MP3, WAV and protected WMA files transferred from a PC.

For copyright protection, the portables' audio and video content can't be transferred in digital form via USB to other USB-equipped DVRs. Via their analog audio and video outputs, however, a PocketDISH can be connected to the analog inputs of a TV or a stereo system to reproduce stored content.

To protect the copyrights of ripped DVD-Video discs, the devices incorporate Macrovision technology that locks the content of most prerecorded DVD-Video discs to the units' HDD. The technology prevents copying and prevents the unit's analog outputs from displaying the video on a connected TV screen.