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MSN TV 2 Combines Media Hub and Web Access
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Looking for new and interactive ways to access your photos, music and videos? The new MSN TV 2 Internet & Media Player might be the solution you're looking for.

Due to arrive in electronics stores in mid-October (\$199.95 direct), the MSN TV 2 Internet & Media Player is a complete overhaul of the MSN TV Internet service (formerly WebTV). The new receiver adds media-hub capabilities and allows users to access files from their computer (photos, music, and video) and display them on a TV or any other entertainment system. The player also delivers premium MSN content, which includes news, weather, sports, and entertainment headlines, through the MSN TV homepage. It will also allow users to perform basic online tasks, such as Web browsing, e-mail, IM, and chat.

"The new MSN TV 2 Internet & Media Player frees consumers from their home offices so that they can enjoy Web or PC-based photo slide shows, music, or videos with their families in their living rooms," says Sam Klepper, general manager of MSN TV at Microsoft.

While many of the features are aimed at broadband users, the MSN TV 2 Internet & Media Player still includes a 56Kbps modem. This represents an upgrade for those dial-up users who have MSN TV. Some premium MSN content features, such as video clips, are only available over a broadband connection, however. "Although our new focus is on delivering broadband services, MSN TV 2 provides an easy and affordable alternative for consumers currently without Internet access and e-mail at home," says Klepper.

The MSN TV 2 Internet & Media Player requires no additional software. It runs on Microsoft's Windows CE operating system and Internet Explorer 6, and connects to a TV through an audio/video jack, the antenna connection, or an S-Video jack. The receiver can also connect to a stereo through RCA inputs. It also includes a wireless keyboard and remote control.

The receiver is powered by a 733-MHz Intel Celeron CPU and includes 128MB of RAM and 64MB of flash memory. It can't be run wirelessly right out of the box, but it includes an Ethernet port and two USB ports that can be used either to connect a wireless router or to add a wireless adapter.

A subscription fee is required to use the service. This fee includes access to MSN' premium content, access to 200 commercial-free radio stations, a MSN e-mail account with 2GB of storage, and 10 secondary e-mail accounts with 250MB of space each. MSN TV offers subscription packages for \$9.95 monthly or \$99.95 annually for broadband users. Dial-up users, depending on what kind of ISP they have, can subscribe for the same price, for \$21.95 monthly, or for \$199.95 annually