

PLAY IT AGAIN

Missed your favourite programme? Technology expert Camilla Chafer reveals how to make the most of catch-up TV



Gone are the days when the phone rang and you missed the vital part of your favourite show. Now catch-up TV allows you to relive key moments or see just-missed episodes again and again. Many channels are available via TV – you'll need a digital set-top box to access them, while others can also be accessed via your PC.

The good news is that much of the online catch-up TV is free. But, while TV set-top boxes do incur a charge, many can be bundled with extras, such as broadband or phone rental.

TV PACKAGES

VIRGIN MEDIA

What is it? The last seven days of TV with all the key channels like BBC1 and C4.

How do I get it? You'll need a Virgin Media subscription and its V+ set-top box.

It's good for: Accessing lots of channels from one location.

Costs: Free to Virgin TV customers. Free with the Size: M Virgin Phone package, £11 per month. virginmedia.com

SKY PLUS

What is it? Sky Plus is a digital set-top box that allows you to pause and rewind live TV and record programmes to its internal hard drive.

How do I get it? You'll need the Sky Plus set-top box.

It's good for: Recording up to 40 hours of

TV without the need for tapes.

Costs: The Sky Plus box costs £75 to £150, plus a monthly subscription fee. sky.com.

BT VISION

What is it? On Demand TV.

How do I get it? You'll need BT Total Broadband, plus the V-box.

It's good for: Pausing, rewinding and recording to the set-top box.

Costs: Connection £30. From 29p per view. Or from £14 per month for a viewing pack (free connection). btvision.bt.com



DOWNLOADING FILM

Mention downloading films and most people aren't sure if it involves piracy. Fortunately there are legal ways to download films and TV episodes. Lovefilm.com and iTunes both offer a download service where, for a fee, you'll be able to download the film or TV programme to your PC. Costs vary, but expect to pay from 79p for a film rental lasting up to seven days and from £2.49 for a film purchase at Lovefilm.com. iTunes charges around £2.49 per rental or from £6.99 to buy the latest releases.

APPLE TV

What is it? An on-demand service that offers film rental and purchasing.

How do I get it? You'll need broadband and iTunes.

It's good for: No-fuss video rental and paid-for downloading.

Costs: Apple TV box costs £199, downloading iTunes to your PC

SLINGBOX

If you want to watch TV, you don't have to be near your TV set. With the Slingbox, live television can be wirelessly transmitted to your PC or mobile phone anywhere in the world via your broadband connection, so it's great for travelling. There aren't any monthly charges, just a one-off purchase price, from £129 plus a £19.99 licence fee per device. It's connected to your laptop, for example. Software for a Mac or PC is free. slingmedia.com



is free. Prices vary for rental and purchasing. store.apple.com

BBC iPLAYER

What is it? The last seven days of BBC TV programmes and radio can all be replayed here.

How do I get it? You'll need a broadband connection and a PC.

It's good for: Catching up on missed programmes.

Costs: Free. bbc.co.uk/iplayer

ITV

What is it? Thirty days of past TV programmes from ITV.

How do I get it? Visit the website and find programmes with the A-Z programme list. Click the "click to play" video screen to stream the show directly to your PC.

It's good for: Catching up on a whole month's worth of TV.

Costs: Free. itv.com/catchup

C4

What is it? 4oD has 30 days of C4, E4 and More4 programmes.

How do I get it? Download the software from the website.

It's good for: Planning ahead with the pre-book service.

Costs: Free for the catch-up service. Film rental, from £1.99. channel4.com/watchonline **w&h**