

## HD STBs WITH USB RECORDING

If you're after the cheapest way to begin recording digital TV, an STB with USB recording is a good place to start. All those we tested sell for under \$100 and offer a single HD tuner that'll record shows to a USB storage device. The upside to this is that you can unplug your drive and back up recordings to your PC. On the other hand, only having a single tuner does limit these devices' flexibility somewhat: you can't record (or watch and record) two shows at once, for example, but most will let you record one channel while watching a sub-channel from the same network. All the units here can play back PC media files, so they're passable for watching downloaded videos or backed-up home movies. Most will stretch PC videos to fill your TV, though, so they're not ideal for this task.

### KOGAN HD DIGITAL SET-TOP BOX WITH PVR

RRP \$39 / CONTACT KOGAN / PHONE 1300 304 292 / WEB [www.kogan.com.au](http://www.kogan.com.au)

80%

The obvious standout feature of Kogan's USB recorder is price: at \$39, it's basically half the cost of all the others here. And while its interface wasn't quite as clean or modern as, say, Grundig's, it covers the basic features well — it was generally likable, and fast and responsive while browsing menus and channel surfing. It was the only USB model that let us pause shows during recording and it'll also let you save time-shifted shows. There are caveats here, however. While the parental locking feature does work, it isn't Australian ratings-based (you pick an age from the list of 10,12,16 or 18). There's also no way to hide the ugly onscreen REC logo while recording and while the device's



EPG shows programs up to eight days ahead, it's quite frankly horrible to use — it uses a horizontal, multichannel layout that truncates show names and takes forever to scroll through, as there's no easy way to skip ahead full days. That \$39 price isn't quite as inexpensive when

you factor in delivery costs, either — to the Sydney CBD it's around \$17.

**PC User says:** Does all the essentials well at a very low price, but its EPG is painful to use.