

Media eater

This modest-looking networkable player, reckons **Martin Pipe**, is a multimedia powerhouse hampered only slightly by a few usability niggles

Mede8er's player sports a functional, as opposed to stylish, design



MEDE8ER'S MED800X3D NETWORKED

multimedia player features a bottom-mounted slot for an internal SATA HDD. It's thus a potentially serious instant media library of your videos, movies, photos and music and, thanks to its compact size, an easily transportable one. The HDD is a cinch to fit, and a device-mode USB 3.0 connector on the side of the case allows the box to be treated as an external drive – great for transferring media to or from a computer. If you do plan to take the MED800X3D travelling, though, don't forget the external power unit.

A convenient collection of buttons resides under a glossy strip. A display would be handy (it would enable the unit to be used for music playback without your TV being powered up, for a start) but you don't get one. Control of the player is possible via third-party smartphone apps, but they're not free (and an Android 'trial' didn't work properly). The standard backlit handset is pleasant enough to handle, but buttons occasionally stick.

Wi-Fi support isn't standard – you can spec it from UK supplier My HTPC, but it bumps up the price to £175. Ethernet is, of course.

AV INFO

PRODUCT: Enthusiast-grade media player/server

POSITION: Below the more stylish-looking MED1000X3D

PEERS: Dune HD Base 3D; Popcorn Hour A400

Firmware upgrades can't be initiated via a network; installation is instead via USB.

Enough about what the 'base' MED800X3D can't do – there's an awful lot that it can. Firstly, it's bristling with connectivity. You get HDMI (capable of passing HD/3D/24p

video and multichannel audio) as well as component/composite analogue video. Also on offer are an SD card slot and a pair of USB ports, one of which is side-mounted. Then there's the sheer scale of media compatibility.

Every file I tried, with the exception of some ancient DivX/XviD video clips, played perfectly. Among them were HD MKV files, SD/HD broadcast transport streams, FLAC/MP3/AAC/WAV audio, VIDEO_TS DVD rips and ISO images, both Blu-ray and DVD. All DVD menus are preserved, although 'ripped' Blu-rays yield just the content – with HD soundtracks passed via HDMI to your amp.

Then there are all the extras. The MED800X3D, fitted with a hard drive (or purchased with one – the retailer offers capacity up to 4TB) will act as a DLNA or SMB file server. And, naturally, it will play content stored on DLNA, SMB or NFS servers.

The attractive menu system, which is more responsive than many, offers a YouTube function alongside some other apps, including a web browser, BitTorrent, net-radio client, Picasa and Bing. Some web video is accessible, but the lack of a compatible Flash player meant BBC iPlayer was off-limits.

Picture and sound quality proved to be fine, from a myriad of test files. You can even set the refresh rate to match any video files you're playing, although this function should be disabled if you're playing multiple clips (e.g., camera video) or you may miss the first few seconds of each.

In all, the Mede8er MED800X3D is a powerful and flexible networked multimedia player. It's not without its operative niggles, but the advantages of its wide-ranging feature roster more than outweigh my concerns

SPECIFICATIONS

HDD: Fit or specify your own choice of 3.5in SATA drive (up to 4TB)

CONNECTIONS: Ethernet; 2 x host mode USB; 1 x device mode USB; SD card slot; HDMI; composite video; component video; coaxial/optical digital audio; stereo analogue audio

AUDIO FORMAT SUPPORT: MP3; WMA; AAC/M4A; APE; OGG; FLAC (up to 24-bit/192kHz); WAV (up to 24-bit/192kHz); AIFF (up to 24-bit/44.1kHz); Dolby Digital/DTS (5.1 passthrough; decode is two-channel/downmix only); TrueHD (passthrough); DTS-HD Master Audio (passthrough)

VIDEO FORMAT SUPPORT: MPEG-1; MPEG-2; X.264/H.264 (inc MP4, MKV); MVC; WMV; XviD (not all); MPEG-2 and H.264 off-air transport streams; ISO disc images; VIDEO_TS DVD rips; GIF/JPEG/PNG/BMP still images (with HD support)

DIMENSIONS: 225(w) x 60(h) x 160(d)mm

WEIGHT: 1kg (without HDD)

FEATURES: Provision for onboard HDD with file server functionality; 3D support (MVP/SBS/TB); playlist support (with shuffle/repeat); video upscaling; file browser; media library with search; web browser; Shoutcast internet radio; photo slideshow; 1080p24p support; 750MHz Realtek RTD1186 chipset with 512MB flash memory and 512MB SDRAM; BitTorrent; social media integration; copy between network/SD card/HDD; customisable user interface; Wi-Fi as an optional extra

HCC VERDICT

Mede8er MED800X3D

...From £150 approx ... www.my-htpc.co.uk
...Tel: 01133 229 496

HIGHS: Flexible; very easy to install and use; access via USB or network to any internal HDD you install; wide support of video and audio

LOWS: Wi-Fi not offered as standard; firmware upgrades via USB only; web browser difficult to drive with supplied handset; no free app control

Performance ★★★★★

Design ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★