

# DVB-Shop Technotrend S1500 Budget, plus CI DVB-S for Win MCE2005

**PC-DVB-S solutions for Windows Media Center Edition (Windows MCE 2005)** are a rare treat. The TT 1500 Budget – which is distributed by DVB-Shop – is one of these very few cards. In combination with a CI slot which serves as an

We tested the PCI card with an optional CI slot and the remote control system. The whole package arrived at the test lab complete with the latest driver CD-Rom (version 2.19). The necessary infrared eye which is plugged into the slot sheet of the PCI card and a flat-type cable for connecting the CI slot to the actual DVB-S card are all that is additionally required for the installation.

The image to the right clearly shows that Technotrend focuses on owners of mini PCs in the living room (so-called barebones) as its prime target group. On these barebone PCs the number of card slots is usually very limited, so any alternative solution which avoids using a second card (CI slot) is extremely welcome. As a matter of fact this is also why we were able to misuse the slot which is originally intended for the AGP slot card as the actual CI slot with our test system.

The 'Digital TV – TT Budget' software that comes with the system was tested in its premium version in a previous report and so we will not go into any detail here regarding the software. We should like to mention, however, that the TT S1500 Budget also comes with a

data application, thus allowing surfing the net via satellite.

## Plug & DX

Configuring the card for this default application is as easy as expected: screw in the card, install the driver, install the DVB TV application – and you're done!

Using the TT S1500 Budget according to the supplier's main sales argument requires a bit more time and patience. Or let us put it in plain English: the configuration for Windows MCE 2005 needs some getting used to. DVB-Shop customers have a head start here because the constantly updated DVB-Shop forum is a very helpful resource loaded with numerous references to drivers and documentations.

With this wealth of information at our fingertips we were able to replace the standard PCI drivers with Microsoft-specific drivers in a matter of a few minutes. The easy to read manual is an absolute necessity and does not only explain each step of the installation, but also shows how the DVB-S card works with Windows MCE 2005: by using the DVB-T interface. Virtual DVB-T channels are mapped onto satellite transponders – what sounds conspicuous at first turns out not to matter at all in the daily routine with a Media Center PC.

In the end the MCE 2005 scans all alleged DVB-T channels without a whinge and as a result detects all satellite channels

additional PCI plug-in card this new offering from DVB-Shop has the potential of becoming a truly happy-go-lucky solution for satellite reception using a Windows MCE 2005 PC.

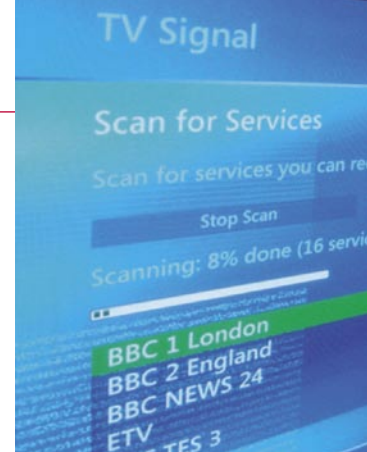
we wanted to receive. A complete scan on Eurobird/Astra 2 lasted 17 minutes. Switching between channels within Windows MCE 2005 is surprisingly swift.

## CI slot

The CAM-specific extension of the TT S1500 Budget for Windows MCE 2005 consists of two

slightly dated CA module. Please note, however, that you have to perform the security rollup 2 before the CAM functions of the additional card will work under Windows MCE 2005.

We also recommend having a look at the file with the name 'MultiDecode.txt' which is located in the sub-directory 'MCE\_Tools' of the application directory of TechnoTrend. Here you can link and/or define transport stream IDs and service IDs, allowing you to decode up to eight data streams automatically (or



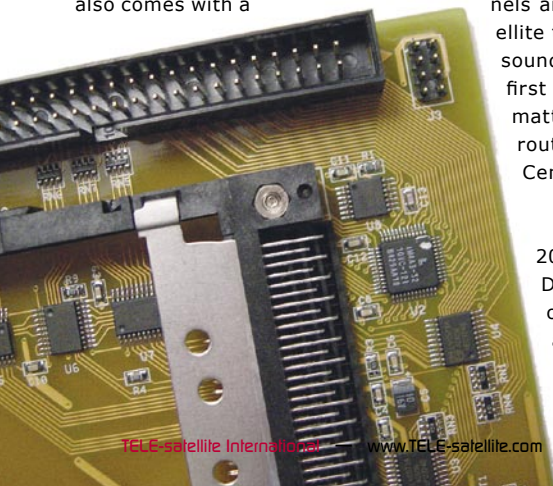
applications: the 'Background Add-In' runs in the background – as the name suggest – and initialises the CAM when launching Media Center. The 'On Demand Add-in' can be used to start a dialog application revealing details about the CI slot and/or the used module or smartcard and in particular offers decoding services.

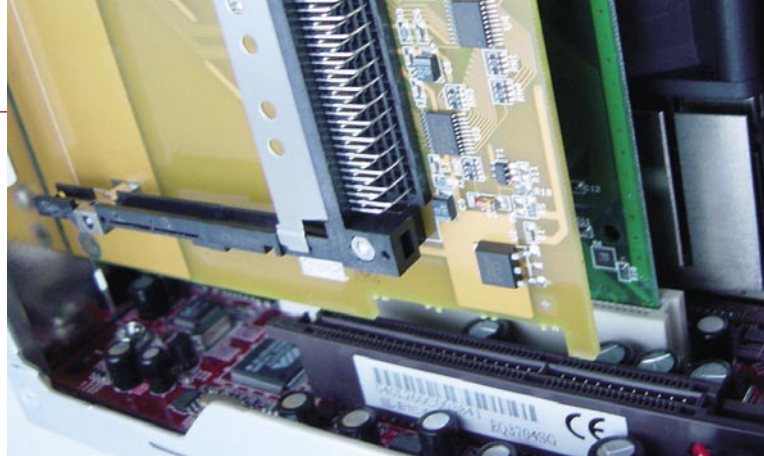
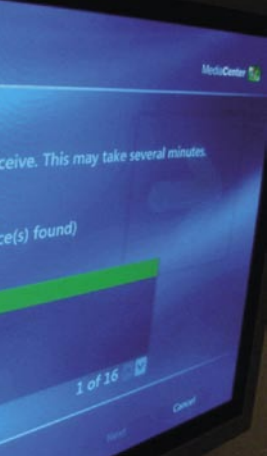
During our test the decoding device worked flawlessly with a

rather: simultaneously). The file can be viewed in any text editor (e.g. Notepad) and comes with a few examples.

## BDA drivers

The Broadcast Driver Architecture (BDA) is a frame architecture interconnecting various components and topologies for television reception (digital and analog). This also includes the definition of control applications





which are required for networking, de-multiplexer and IP data transfer for all current digital TV standards like ATSC and DVB. BDA was developed because not the mere video transmission as such could cause potential copyright problems, but rather the recording of material on high-power media (such as hard disks) using a TV/PC platform. It would indeed be easy to use PCs with Windows MCE 2005 as a forum for distributing movies and TV series through peer-to-peer file sharing.

With anticipatory obedience Microsoft intends to use Protected BDA in order to prevent such a development. In addition to that, this move also holds some advantages: BDA offers a standardised architecture for developers, which ultimately will deliver more stable applications for TV reception to customers. In actual fact, however, a PC running Windows MCE 2005 has to be fed with security updates at least as frequently as any other Microsoft application. In terms of user-friendliness, on the other hand, Microsoft MCE 2005 clearly has the cutting edge at the moment.

## Eco MCE

Most users will be troubled with the hardware requirements for Windows MCE 2005. After all, Technotrend offers its own BDA application by the name of 'TT

**Above (from left to right): The TT S1500 scanning Astra 2; connections in the slot sheet: coax and IR socket, space-saving barebone installation of the CI slot through removal of the green PCI flap (also see picture on the right).**

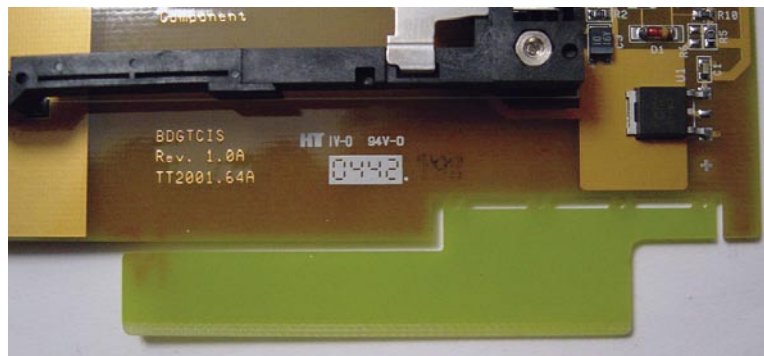
Media-Center', which we briefly tested in its version 1.0.6. It features timeshift viewing, recording, EPG, etc. – similar to the features of Windows MCE 2005. The bottom line is that this alternative software has enough features to allow for daily use as a TV reception system. Testing additional media software such as HTPC, for example, would go far beyond the scope of this test report.

## Conclusion

Watching TV with the TT S1500 Budget and Windows MCE 2005 is fun. But bear in mind: Windows Media Center Edition limits the card (and consequently the user) to an extent that will satisfy only ingenious couch potatoes.

For the DXers among us the default software from DVB-Shop (resp. Technotrend) will be the first choice for scanning the skies above us with the TT S1500 Budget.

However: especially all users of Windows MCE 2005 will see their system significantly enhanced by the TT S1500 Budget. This

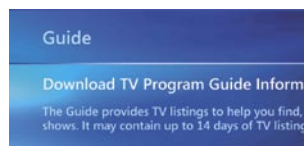
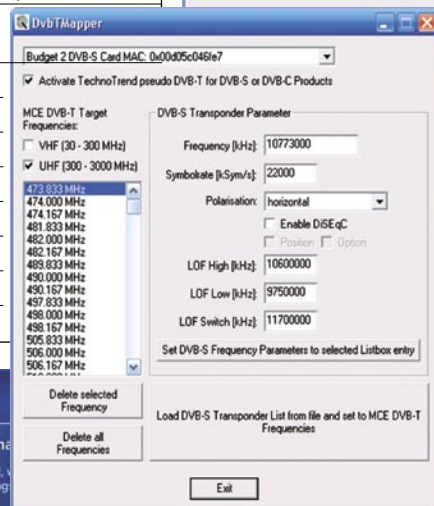


product offers features such as DiSEqC 1.0, a CI slot) which were not planned

and intended by Microsoft in the first place. We can look forward to what Technotrend (resp. DVB-Shop) will introduce next.

## TECHNIC DATA

Distributor	DVB Shop
Internet	www.dvbshop.net
Model	TT S1500 Budget, plus CI
Function	Digital satellite tuner PCI card
System requirements	Windows 98SE/ME/2000/XP, 500 MHz PIII or above, 128 MB RAM or above, VGA card with at least 16 MB memory
IF range	950 – 2150 Mhz
Symbol rates	2 – 45 Ms/s
SCPC compatible	•
C band compatible	•
DiSEqC	1.0
IP multicast	•
Teletext	•
EPG	•
Memory	unlimited



## Expert conclusion



For users planning to add satellite reception to their Windows Media Center 2005 there is virtually no way around this robust and easy to handle card which will be a big plus also on standard PCs without Windows MCE.



**Reto Jeger**  
TELE-satellite  
Test Center  
Switzerland

The TT S1500 Budget still needs some smoothing with regards to BDA drivers and requires research in online forums and a thorough read of the manual.

