Nanoxx 9500HD

Small Box, Great Picture

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NANOXX 9500HD
Small enclosure, superbly crisp picture, extremely fast channel search, and connection for HDD

After having put to the test the Nanoxx 9600IP in previous issue TELE-satellite and after the high marks that receiver was able to score we were of course more than happy to accept the manufacturer's offer of having a thorough look at the brand new Nanoxx 9500 HD for this issue. This time the surprises began even before we switched on the box for the fist time, because when unpacking 9500 HD the whole team was astonished by its small dimensions of only 37.5 x 6 x 23 cm. So to all readers with little space in their living rooms we can say that finally there is a HDTV receiver you too will be able to squeeze in.

Nonetheless, the range of features is much bigger than the sheer size suggests: on the back panel there is the usual IF input plus looped-through output, as well as two scart euroconnectors, a total of six RCA jacks for YUV, stereo audio and composite video, an S-Video output, an optical and coax digital audio output, an RS232 interface, an RJ network socket and even a USB 2.0 interface for connecting an external hard disk or USB stick.

HDTV reception

As we're talking about HDTV here the manufacturer has of course also thought about digital HDMI 1.2 socket which is able to provide digital audio and video in 576p 720p and 1080i.

Let's turn to the front panel, which boasts seven buttons for operating receiver without remote control and sports an alphanumeric VFD display which is extremely easy to read.

A small flap on the right side of front panel hides two CI slots for all standard modules as well as a card reader for Conax, X-Crypt, DG-Crypt, Firecrypt and Crypton.

The included remote control sits nicely in your hand and all buttons are cleverly arranged so they can easily be reached.

The labelling is exemplary, an assessment which also holds true for the user's manual which comes in German and English. It has a clearly arranged layout and provides all information necessary to use the features of the receiver.

Clearly arranged info bar

Everyday use

The Nanoxx 9500HD first greets its users with an installation wizard, just like most other boxes as well these days. This feature is intended to take the fear out of setting up a digital satellite receiver for the first time.

The first step is to ask for the desired language for on-screen display, with following options being available: German, English, French, Turkish, Russian, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Danish, Dutch, Polish, Czech, Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, Serbian, Greek, Hungarian, Croatian, Albanian and Farsi. This makes the Nanoxx HD receiver the box with the widest range of languages by far and we applaud the manufacturer for this effort!

Provided the box is used in one of the German speaking countries and the user has selected German as his language of choice there is the option to load a very up-to-date pre-stored channel list for ASTRA 19.2° East and HOTBIRD 13° East. If this option is not used, the receiver will proceed to the channel scan.

We think users in other markets would just as much appreciate this feature and Nanoxx should perhaps look at that possibility.

Once you've reached the antenna settings you need to tell the box which positions can

be received with the existing equipment and how the receiver should switch between available positions.

The Nanoxx 9500HD features a current list of 153 pre-stored European and Asian satellite positions and a number of selection options for each single entry. For example, DiSEqC 1.0 and 1.1 are supported for multi-feed installations while protocols 1.2 and 1.3 (USALS) are available for rotating dishes.

A number of pre-configured LNB type settings can be called up and even if you insist on connecting your new S-band antenna to the 9500HD you'll be happy to know that LOFs can be entered manually as well.

All initial settings are finished? Well then, let's move up another step to scan for channels. Three modes are available to fill the 10,000-channel memory, namely automatic, manual and blind scan. We were absolutely impressed with the speed with which the Nanoxx 9500HD performed this task. After just over three minutes it had completed a full scan of our 90-transponder test satellite.

The integrated blind scan feature is a very special extra of the Nanoxx 9500HD. Using this option the scan is performed in steps of 3 or 4 MHz covering the full frequency range. Up to four symbol rates can be predefined for each scan, or you can leave it to the receiver to detect the respective symbol rates automatically.

In our test the box did a very thorough job, which – however – took its time depending on the selected frequency range. It can take up to 60 minutes per satellite, but if you limit the scan to, say, only one polarisation you can cut that time in half.

If you need to customise the receiver according to your personal preferences the system settings menu is the place to go. Language options include a range of settings for audio, EPG, teletext and subtitles, while media settings can be changed to adjust the video output. Setting the internal clock and managing timer entries is also child's play in this menu.

Use the multimedia menu to set up the Nanoxx 9500HD for use with an external harddisk, USB stick or an existing network you may have up and working at home.

In theory, any harddisk in an external USB 2.0 case may be connected to the receiver, as long as it is formatted using FAT32. Otherwise, the receiver will not recognise it.

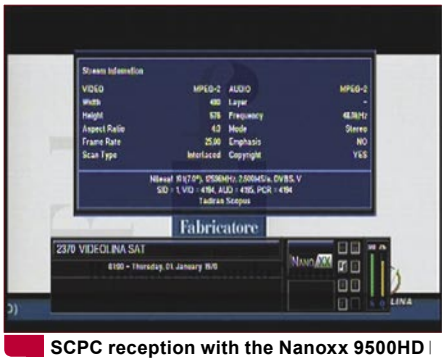
Unfortunately the receiver itself does not offer the possibility to create a partition on a harddisk and format that partition in FAT32. You will need to first connect the disk to a PC for formatting using software such as 'Partition Magic', as more than 32 GB cannot be formatted under MS Windows (Microsoft prefers NTFS for this purpose – mainly due to tactical considerations).

Thanks to the integrated network interface any PC wired to a home network can access the receiver. The IP address required for that can either be assigned manually or the box uses DHCP to obtain IP address from router.

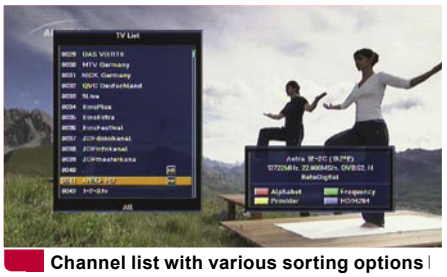
The integrated FTP explorer is another very nice feature which allows downloading and installing software updates directly from the Internet using any available server.

The next menu item reveals status information about the two CI slots, which we successfully tested with Irdeto, Cryptoworks, Alphacrypt and Viaccess modules. Information about the built-in smartcard reader can be also retrieved here.

Once all parameters are set



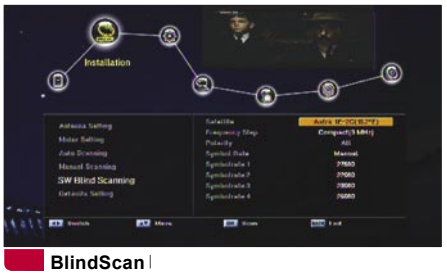
SCPC reception with the Nanoxx 9500HD



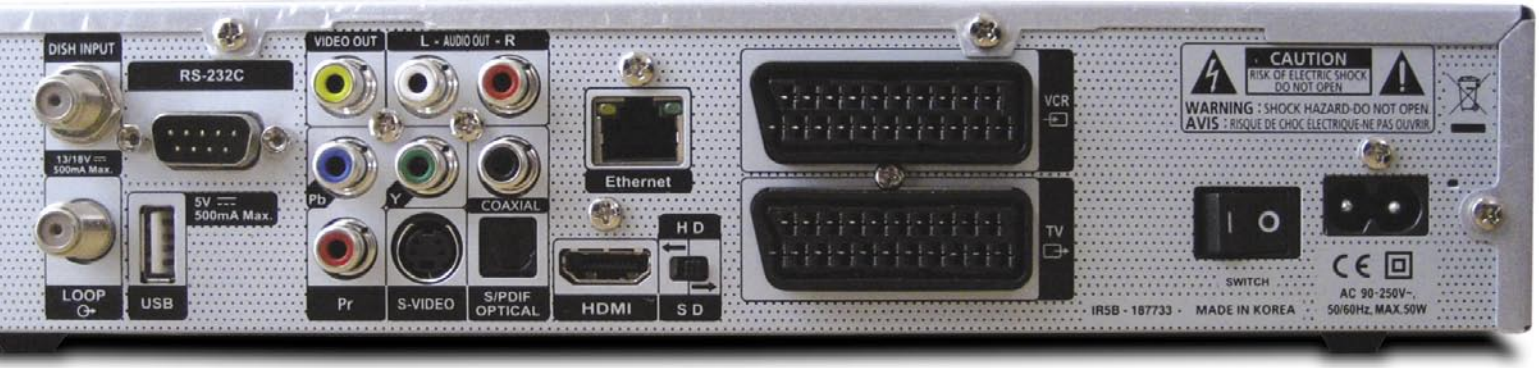
Channel list with various sorting options

EPG (multi-channel display)

Main menu



BlindScan



the time has come to leave main menu and let the receiver switch to first channel in list. Together with the picture there appears a clearly laid out info bar on bottom of screen, providing details about the current and next event as well as showing various icons about status of channel, such as encryption, HDTV, locking status, teletext, subtitles and audio options. Signal strength and quality indicators round off the perfect overall impression.

Pressing INFO button of remote for another time calls up extended information on currently shown event, and if you're still not fully satisfied try the same button yet once again and you'll be delighted to find a huge range of channel parameters showing up on the screen.

If you find the electronic program guides of many receivers less than convincing then the Nanoxx 9500HD might be the box for you at last. Its EPG either shows program details for one channel over several days, or for six channels at a time. And this information is not only available, but available in an easy-to-use and cleverly arranged layout. Timer entries for recordings can be set directly in the EPG, so what more could you possibly ask for?

If you want to change channels you need to press the OK button which prompts a list of all available channels to appear on screen. If you're looking for a particular channel you cannot only have channels listed alphabetically, but also sorted by provider, frequency or signal type (SDTV or HDTV).

The Nanoxx 9500HD is one of those boxes that leave channel list on screen after a new channel has been selected. To make it disappear again you need to press OK once more.

Channel switching is good and takes about 1.5 seconds. For channels that are transmitted on same transponder the switching time is even less. By the way, it does not make a difference whether zapping takes place between SDTV and HDTV channels or vice versa.

Are you one of those viewers who cannot resist zapping up and down the channel list during commercial breaks? Why not use the mosaic function of this receiver and have the video of four or six channels shown on screen as thumbnails?

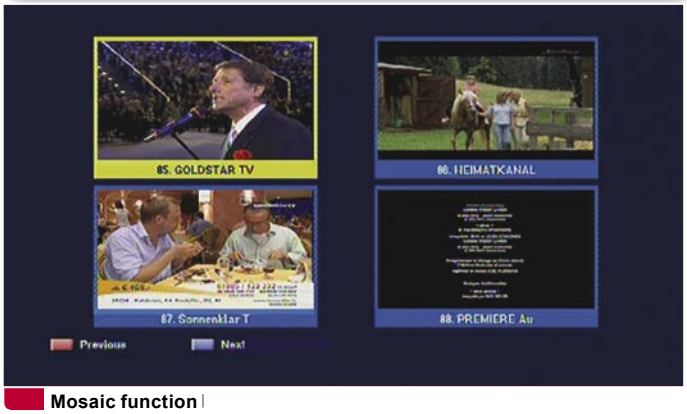
What we particularly liked as well is the extremely good video and audio quality of the Nanoxx 9500HD. The remote control allows for quickly adjusting the output signal and the supported 576p, 720p or 1080i formats can be chosen at the touch of a button.

Apart from HDTV reception the main focus of this box clearly is the possibility to connect an external USB harddisk. This is what it takes to make the 9500HD a fully-fledged PVR with all features we have come to expect and appreciate. We were pleasantly surprised that recordings started totally unnoticed, while several PVRs of other manufactures sometimes create short video or audio interruptions every time a recording starts. Only one tuner is built into this receiver, which in turn means you can make only one recording at a time. However, it is still possible to watch another channel on the same transponder while making a recording.

Playing back recorded events or content that is transferred to receiver via a network (XVid, AVI, JPG and MP3 files are supported) is very easy. Nanoxx has really put some brainwork into this and now all you have to do is press the MEDIA button on the remote control to start playback.

Various search, fast forward and rewind modes are also included and the only feature we somewhat missed is setting markings in order to jump to that particular point of the recording at a later stage with the touch of a button.

No test is complete without going to the limits of the tuner, and that's what we did with the Nanoxx 9500HD as well. Extremely weak signals like horizontal transponders on NILESAT 7° West in Vienna or ASTRA2D 28.2° East in Munich were dealt with remarkably well and signals with a C/N of 4.5 dB or above delivered faultless video. SCPC reception was no problem either and our test transponder with a symbol rate of just 2.5 Ms/s was locked and processed without flaw.



Mosaic function

Expert opinion

Thomas Haring
TELE-satellite
Test Center
Austria

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The Nanoxx 9500HD is a perfectly functional new-generation HDTV PVR receiver which will fit into any rack thanks to its small size.

It is exceptionally easy to operate and offers brilliant video and audio.

With its network and USB 2.0 connectivity it is suitable for a wide range of different uses.

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Customised channel lists should be offered for additional languages.

TECHNIC DATA

Manufacturer	Nanoxx
Website	www.nanoxx.info
Model	9500 HD
Function	Digital HDTV PVR Receiver
Channel Memory	10000
Satellites	153
Symbolrate DVB-S	2~45 Ms/s
Symbolrate DVB-S2	10~30 Ms/s
SCPC compatible	yes (2.5 Ms/s and above in our test)
USALS	yes
DiSEqC	1.0 / 1.1 / 1.2 / 1.3
Scart euroconnectors	2
Audio/Video outputs	3 x RCA + 3x RCA for YUV
YUV output	yes
UHF Modulator	no
0/12 Volt Output	no
Digital Audio Output	yes (optical, coax)
EPG	yes
C/Ku-Band compatible	yes
Power Supply	100~250 VAC, 50/60 Hz
Power Consumption	50W max. (Standby <3W)