

Solid Signal's

HANDS ON REVIEW



*Technicolor COM2000
Headend solution for hospitality, lodging and institutions*



COM2000



Freedom from bad hotel TV. Let's face it, hotels haven't kept up with TV technology in the last ten years. Sure, hotel rooms have embraced large flat TVs that eliminate the need for big credenzas in the room, but turn on that TV and you're likely to find blurry, grainy, stretched analog TV. Major chains like Hilton and Marriott have laid down the law, promising to force their hotels into the digital HD age, but with so many hotels being franchised there's only so much they can do. Luckily, DIRECTV has two excellent solutions.

DIRECTV-approved solutions for hotels

We've talked a lot about [DIRECTV's Residential Experience](#) system. It's a great solution and it works with about 80% of hotels, but it's expensive to implement and for some hotels, it may be just too much. Getting a hotel certified for DRE takes time and while the results are great, it's not always the right way to go.

That's why DIRECTV has also offered the COM1000 headend system for hotels. COM1000 was a revolutionary system when it was released in 2009. It's a compact system built by Technicolor that just keeps getting better. It combines DIRECTV receivers -- real DIRECTV receivers -- into a chassis that is smaller than anything out there. COM1000 revolutionized the hospitality market, but 2009 was a long time ago and you can't just stand still. That's why Technicolor scientists have been hard at work in the next generation of headend systems: COM2000.

COM2000 DETAILS



This is COM2000, fresh from its debut at DIRECTV's Revolution show in Las Vegas Nevada. It's the smartest possible evolution of COM1000. We spoke with Doug Strachota, Technicolor's Product Manager for the COM2000 to learn more about this new, exciting product. Take a look at these specs:

- The new COM360 chassis is 25% smaller -- just 3RU tall -- meaning that it's easier than ever to fit a COM2000 anywhere you need it to be.
- The new chassis also drops power consumption to 225W, which is a fraction of what a large headend would use.
- Best of all, the new COM46 receiver cards give you 8 HD receivers on a single card for unparalleled efficiency. The chassis will also use the old 2-receiver COM24 cards for full downward compatibility.
- The new chassis has two slots for QAM modules making this a fully self-contained system.
- Built-in Gigabit Ethernet allows for easy monitoring by plugging a laptop into the front panel ports.
- Best of all, the cost of a fully configured COM2000 is expected to be about half of a similarly configured COM1000 system.

The good things haven't changed.

If you're familiar with COM1000, you'll be glad to know that many of the same features from the COM1000 system have been brought into COM2000 and their proven technology makes COM2000 super-stable and full-featured out of the box.

There is so much power to this system, and there is simply nothing else that is as flexible with such a small size. Take a look:

- Able to integrate off-the-air programming with available 1 RU ATSC module
- Incorporates both Pro:Idiom and LYNK encryption as needed
- Works with existing Technicolor set-back boxes and any hotel TV designed for Pro:Idiom or LYNK
- Can be integrated with existing Guest Services devices like in-room checkout and pay-per-view systems
- Integrated, automatic program guide that gets its data straight from DIRECTV
- Full PSIP integration so properly equipped TVs get interactive guide data
- Easy web-based setup and monitoring
- Multiple COM headend systems can be combined into a single, scalable solution.

It's easy to see why COM2000 is the headend system of choice for DIRECTV dealers and hotel operators around the country!

PIECES OF THE PUZZLE



It all starts with the compact COM360 chassis, which replaces the COM200 chassis. It's holds the power and networking components necessary to make the system work.



There are six slots for tuner cards, and you can mix and match COM24 (2 HD), COM24-FLX (3 SD), COM46 (8 SD or HD) or COM46-FLX (8 SD) cards. The cards are hot-swappable meaning that in the rare case when a card goes down, you don't need to take the entire system down to replace it.



The plug-in QAM modules give you up to 36 HD channels per module right out of the box and let you mix and match HD and SD as well. With this 6-channel QAM, the COM2000 becomes a completely self-contained headend with room to spare for additional video sources like local interest channels, off-air, or hotel information channels.

TECHNICOLOR

technicolor



Yes, that Technicolor.

If you thought Technicolor was left behind in the age of MGM musicals, you'll be amazed to know what the company has in store today. It's the same company, and though there have been different owners the commitment to craftsmanship is still

the same. Technicolor still designs color management systems for movies, but they do so much more. Since 1994 they have been a premier provider of set-top-box technology for DIRECTV and other satellite systems, originally selling under the RCA name. They're still the top manufacturer of DIRECTV receivers and DVRs and the chances are if you have a DIRECTV system in your home now, you're using their technology.

Technicolor's expertise in DIRECTV receiver technology makes them the perfect choice to develop a tiny, powerful headend system with the power of real DIRECTV receivers on board. This isn't some simulation... each COM46 card has the same technology as eight real DIRECTV receivers, and Technicolor knows how to do it better than anyone else.

Encryption is mandatory. It's just the way it is.

Don't blame the messenger. The simple fact is that headend systems for hotels are going to require encryption. This means that a hotel operator will either need a special hotel TV or a separate converter box. The converter boxes are small, inexpensive, and come with their own RF remote, so either way you have full capability.

Encryption's required, and it's not DIRECTV's rule. Believe it or not, content providers (like Disney, HBO, etc.) really believe that people would check into a hotel for the purpose of pulling down digital copies so that they could be pirated or given away. Of course most folks think that's ridiculous and for the people who really want to pirate content, there are so many easier ways. That hasn't stopped those pesky content providers from demanding that every HD headend system be fully encrypted or watermarked. Until they change their minds, you're still going to need an encryption system like Pro:Idiom to make the system work.

The good news is that COM2000 makes Pro:Idiom (or LYNK, the other leading technology) easy by legally stripping away DIRECTV's encryption and adding your choice of approved hotel encryption in one easy step. The boxes that sit behind any TV connect with HDMI for a no-fuss system, too. We may never be free of encryption, but at least COM2000 makes it easy.

Pro:Idiom[®]

REPLACING AN EXISTING SYSTEM



The Paradise Point resort in San Diego, CA uses Technicolor COM1000 to each of its rooms on existing wiring.

If you are using an existing analog headend, you may be worried about the downtime involved in switching to HD. It's a very real concern, because you're talking about taking TV away from every single hotel guest in a 24/7/365 industry. That's where

you should feel very good about COM2000. It's a direct swap-in for an existing headend and in many cases it requires absolutely no additional wiring. A lot of the staging and design can be done before the system is hooked to hotel TVs and then it's a simple matter of connecting the new system, disconnecting the old, and setting up the in-room TVs. In many cases it's less than a day. When you compare that with the long process of rewiring that is sometimes required for DIRECTV Residential Experience, you see a big difference.

With DIRECTV Residential Experience, you subscribe to a programming package which gives your customers over 100 channels of pure HD. That's great but if it's too rich for you, a COM2000 system lets you pick just the channels you want to carry and pay only for those channels. That's another way you save money in the long run.

Making the right choice... even outside a hotel



Up to this point we've talked about COM2000 as a hotel system, which is how it was designed. However, COM2000 can also be used for bars and restaurants using the MediaTune solution, or as the backbone for a Philo college-based TV-over-IP system. It's a flexible headend solution, expandable and reasonably priced, and if that sounds great to you... it really is.

If you're interested in a COM2000 system, contact Signal Connect, our commercial sales team, at 866-726-4182.



SolidSignal.com is your source for DIRECTV equipment, supplies, and support. We have over 10 years' experience in installing and supporting satellite equipment. Our technical staff is ready to answer all your questions!

visit SOLIDSIGNAL.COM for the best selection of equipment and supplies for the high-end installer or do-it-yourselfer!

FORUMS.SOLIDSIGNAL.COM is your source for 24-hour support!



BLOG.SOLIDSIGNAL.COM is your information destination for news, reviews, and tips!

