

Computer Basics Part 2 – Television on your PC

In these instructions we will cover the following:

- How can I watch TV on my computer?
- Different types of TV Tuners?
- Using the TV Tuner
- TV Tuner Accessories

How can I watch TV on my computer?

Your computer has almost everything it needs to watch television already. You have the display you only need the tuner. What is the tuner? The tuner is what is used to pull in the television stations from the air or from a cable (if you connect it to cable TV). If your computer does not already have a tuner (some newer computers actually come with a TV tuner) then you can easily purchase one and connect it.

Different types of TV Tuners

There are two things you need to know when buying a TV Tuner for your computer. First, there are two main types of TV Tuners: **Standard** and **HDTV**. Just like a new television you can purchase an HDTV tuner for your computer! But don't worry it is much cheaper than buying a new HDTV television.

Second, you need to know how you want to connect the TV Tuner to your computer. There are a few options.

If you have a desktop computer you can mount the TV Tuner inside the computer by using a PCI TV Card (illustration 3). You could also use a USB TV Tuner on a desktop computer. For a laptop computer you can either use a PCMCIA TV Tuner (Illustration 1) (if your computer has a PCMCIA port) or a USB TV Tuner (Illustration 2).

Of these, the USB TV Tuner is the easiest to connect. Let me explain a little more about each...



Illustration 2: PCMCIA TV Tuner



Illustration 1: USB TV Tuner with Remote



Illustration 3: PCI TV Tuner

A **PCMCIA TV Tuner** (used on laptops) is designed to slide into the PCMCIA slot on the computer to connect. This is a fairly easy setup, but this type is not as common since USB TV Tuners are easier to set up.

A **USB TV Tuner** is by far the easiest and fastest to setup. The book that comes with the TV Tuner will explain exactly how to connect it and use it. In many cases you simply insert the CD that comes with it first, install the software, then connect the TV Tuner to any USB port on the computer.

A **PCI TV Tuner** requires you to install the card inside the computer. This is for desktop model computers. These usually have more features to allow you to connect a VCR, etc to the computer. These are a little harder to set up.

The illustrations given are just examples since there are many different brands of TV Tuners and therefore they may look different than the ones shown in these pictures.

A TV Tuner usually doesn't cost more than \$150.00 and that is for an HDTV tuner! Sometimes you can find a standard TV Tuner for as little as \$50.00.

Using the TV Tuner

After the software is installed and the TV Tuner is connected then you usually have an application on your computer that is television software. You simply open the television program to watch TV. You can change channels by clicking your mouse on the appropriate button on the screen. You can make the window full screen which turns your entire computer screen into a television. If your TV Tuner came with a remote then you can control the TV Tuner just like any normal television. Using the TV Tuner is just as easy as watching a regular television. If you are using Windows Vista Home Premium or higher or Windows XP Media Center then you may be able to use the Windows Media Center software to watch TV.

TV Tuner Accessories

Some TV Tuners come with an external antenna such as shown in illustrations 1 and 2. Some TV Tuners come with remote controls such as shown in illustration 2. The remote control makes your computer even easier to use when using it only as a television.

I hope this information has been helpful to you.

You may print this information if needed.

Check www.scottfam.us for additional information!