

Solid Signal's

HANDS ON REVIEW



DIRECTV
GenieGO 2



DIRECTV GENIEGO 2

Transcoding device for streaming and offline viewing



Sometimes the sequel is better than the original. DIRECTV has given us early access to the next generation of GenieGO and we're bringing you this exclusive review! Is it better? Is it stronger? Is it faster? The original GenieGO (what we'll now call GenieGO 1) was a little bit of a slow starter, late to market and slow to add new features, but it's turned into a great general-purpose streaming and transcoding device. [When we last reviewed it](#), GenieGO finally had the whole package -- [Android support](#), a [true iPad app](#), and [streaming](#) outside the home. It's a little extreme to say it had gone from zero to hero, but it's a lot easier to recommend a GenieGO to a customer now than it was in 2011 when it was first launched. Now, DIRECTV comes back with a new device that promises to build on all the great software improvements we've seen from the original GenieGO. Let's take a look.

This is GenieGO 2. DIRECTV may never end up calling it that -- just like their DVR products, they'll be offering GenieGO 1 and GenieGO 2 interchangeably when a customer orders one. The only way to be sure you're getting the second generation is to order it from Solid Signal.

The front panel is simplified, with only one light and no silkscreening. There is also no USB port on the front, and the reset button has been relocated. On the next page we'll take a closer look.

PHOTO GALLERY



GenieGO 2 (at bottom) is just slightly larger than GenieGO 1 (at top.)



The reset button has been moved to the side and isn't behind a rubber door.



Not a whole lot to see on the underside, except a label calling this an MDR2 (The original was an MDR1) The original GenieGO has keyhole slots on the back so you can mount it on a wall, but this one doesn't.

GENIEGO 2 BACK PANEL

Where the magic happens



Here's the big difference: GenieGO 2 has a coaxial connector. That's right, it can be connected by **coax OR Ethernet**, whichever works best for you. This means it doesn't need to be in the same room as your router or switch. You can connect it inline with any DVR or receiver. Also, there is the customary USB port for you to add a flash drive for almost unlimited storage.

Also in the box...

Of course this generation of GenieGO uses the now-ubiquitous [EPS10 power supply](#) so that if it breaks, it's an easy fix. The previous generation had a proprietary power supply that was never sold separately. Our test unit also came with a short cable with high-quality compression connectors. Let's hope DIRECTV keeps this up, as some of their earlier products did not ship with quality cables.

The other item in the box is a garden variety two-port splitter that has had one of the weather boots removed and replaced with a short cable that's shrink-wrapped onto the splitter. The label is also a little different, identifying ports for GenieGO and Receiver. It's not clear why they left the other two weather boots on, you would never use this splitter outside, but then again, that's more weather boots for you if you need them for something else... just pull them off as needed.



CONNECTING GENIEGO 2



Connecting the device is very easy and can be done one of three ways. You can connect it via ethernet to your home network, run a line from an open port on your splitter, or disconnect one of your receivers and use the supplied splitter to split the line so both GenieGO and your receiver can use it. The cables are even labeled.

Of course, if you do connect via coax you must be using a SWM system and all GenieGo installations must be internet connected, that's sort of the point of the product. The next page shows a diagram of how it's done.

Finally, download the PC or Mac software from directv.com/geniego and install. As with the previous generation, it's best to do the initial setup using a PC or Mac, and you must be within the home. GenieGO must be on the same network as your DIRECTV equipment and the computer you're using for activation, and the first three octets of the IP address (such as 192.168.1...) must be the same on all devices. If you're not sure what that means, you're probably ok.

The software is the same for both first and second generation devices and can be downloaded from the App Store ([iPhone/iPod Touch](#) or [iPad](#)) and [Google Play](#).

The startup process for GenieGO 2 is very simple. DIRECTV obviously took notes when people said that the original GenieGO was hard to understand and they made the process quite simple.

The AC adapter plugs into the GenieGO and if there is power, a green light illuminates right above the power cord. When the device starts up, the light at the front glows different colors to tell you what's happening.

INSTALLING GENIEGO 2

Installation options for customers with and without SWM technology

OPTION 1

Ethernet cable from router or switch (must be on same network and IP address range as DIRECTV equipment)

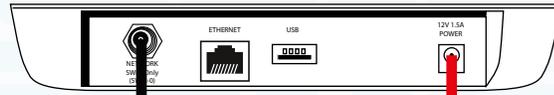
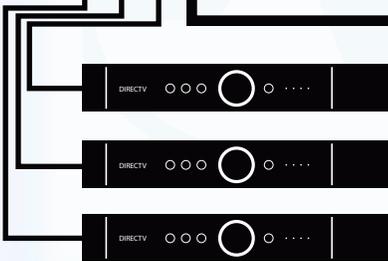


To power supply, plugged into wall outlet

OPTION 2 (SWM required)

To Dish or SWM

Use open port on existing splitter

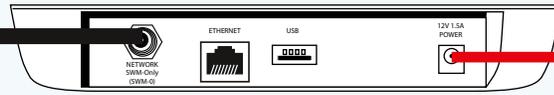
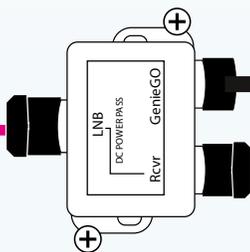


To power supply, plugged into wall outlet

OPTION 3 (SWM Required)

Supplied splitter

To Dish or SWM



To power supply, plugged into wall outlet



Disconnect cable from receiver or DVR and connect to supplied splitter. Use supplied cable to connect back to receiver or DVR.



Difficulty (1 star is easiest) ☆☆
DOCUMENT DATE: March, 2014

POWERING UP GENIEGO 2

A flashing blue light at startup is perfectly normal and may continue for 3-5 minutes.

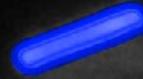
The first time you start GenieGO the light may be BRIGHT WHITE which indicates it is downloading software from DIRECTV. This is normal. The GenieGO may not be usable for up to 15 minutes during this time.

A flashing amber light means that GenieGO 2 can't find the internet. This may happen when you first start up for a second or two but if it continues for more than a minute you should try to figure out why you're not connected to the internet. Press {DASH} on your DIRECTV remote while watching live TV to confirm that your DIRECTV system is connected.

A purple light (from some angles it may look like a blue light under a pink light) means that GenieGO 2 is connected to the internet, but can't find your DVRs. This can be hard to diagnose but usually means your network is too complex; for example you are using different subnets, multiple routers, etc.

Within 10 minutes (unless it is downloading new software) the front panel light should turn solid blue and should stay that way, indicating that GenieGO is ready for your use. Once the light is solid, it is ready to go instantly; the only time you have to wait is if you unplug it or lose power.

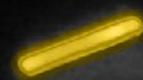
Flashing = bootup
Solid=Ready



Updating
Wait 10min



Flashing=
Can't find internet



Can't find DVR



USING GENIEGO 2



Using GenieGO 2 is a familiar experience. Since all the user software is the same, there's no difference in the process. If you're new to GenieGO you might want to read what we had to say in [our 2013 review](#) when the hardware was still called Nomad. You can use GenieGo to stream programs to your computer or mobile device from any DVR you have either in home or outside the home, or you can go through the "transcoding" process which puts a copy of the program on your device so you can watch it where there is no internet access.

GenieGo 2 still requires a strong Wi-Fi connection but like GenieGO 1 it can be fooled by using one device as a Wi-Fi hotspot and then connecting to it using another device. Unfortunately true streaming over LTE isn't available yet, even though LTE speeds are sometimes faster than Wi-Fi.

The pleasant surprise... Both streaming and transcoding were faster and smoother. Streaming seems to start about three seconds earlier and transcoding is 40% - 100% faster. We're told that not every DVR will have this performance bump - our test DVR was an [HR44 Genie DVR](#).

GenieGO 2 is a very decent improvement over the original. In some cases you'll see faster speeds and smoother streaming, and the standard power adapter should solve a lot of problems for people. If there was a single complaint it's that DIRECTV is very fond of super-bright blue LEDs that aren't necessary. Our advice is to put a piece of electrical tape over the light once you have it set up -- it's not going to give you a lot of useful information anyway.

DIRECTV hasn't established an upgrade path from GenieGO 1 yet, meaning it may still be a challenge to get a new GenieGO added to your account if you already have one. There's also no clear way to transfer a GenieGO from account to account so if you do upgrade, be aware that your old device may be impossible to sell.

All that said, if you're a heavy user of GenieGO already, it's a worthwhile upgrade especially if you have a faster DVR like an HR44 Genie. Out-of-home streaming is especially improved compared to GenieGO 1. The problem is, DIRECTV won't promise you a particular model... they consider all GenieGO products to be equal so if you order one from them you never know what you're going to get. **Only a retailer like Solid Signal can deliver you the GenieGO you want.**



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