# Solid Signal's

# HANDS ON REVIEW



DIRECTV HS17 Genie 2

"Headless" Video Server



# **DIRECTV HS17 "Genie 2"**



This is the next generation of DIRECTV technology. The new Genie 2 (possibly to be called the "Genie Air") builds on the solid foundation of previous DIRECTV products but adds a new twist. This one box combines a DVR, Wireless Video Bridge, and power inserter into one box, and allows up to seven clients at once, but it loses the ability to output video by itself. It's designed to be a "set it and forget it" device.

The HS17 Genie 2 is designed to be the only DVR device in the home, but with the ability to output to 7 rooms at the same time, that won't be a problem for most people.

## **HS17 Genie 2 at a Glance**

An all in one device that combines 7-room output with a built-in wireless video bridge, a built-in power inserter, and a new process that makes adding clients easier than ever. The Genie 2 should appeal to 99% of home customers, but its limitations may push some power users away.

### The Genie 2 will not support:

- Any TV output without a client
- AM21 Over-the-air module
- Picture-in-Picture
- Any other DIRECTV receivers on the same account

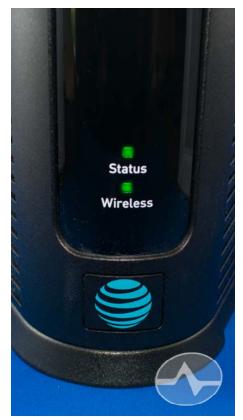
### **Key features:**

- 7 recording tuners
- 400 Hour Recording Capacity
- Up to 5 HD clients at once
- Up to 2 4K clients at once
- Mix-and-match wired and wireless
- Built-in video bridge
- 21v power to SWM dish
- Wired and Wireless internet
- New access card design
- Prefers 4K LNB, will work with SWM16 and legacy LNB

# THE GENIE 2 IN DETAIL











The Genie 2 is a "headless server" meaning that it does not output to a television by itself. All TV viewing is done through clients. This means the end of Picture-in-Picture, but all other features are available through the clients. Its faster processor means that clients seem to move about 25% faster on average. It is designed to sit on the shelf with the user not touching it for months or years at a time.

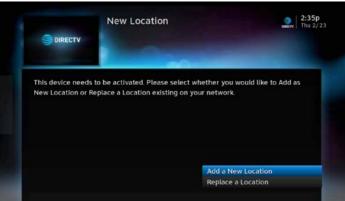
The big improvements come in two areas: installation and user capabilities. For the installer, it's never been easier to get a DVR up and running. No external power inserter or video bridge is necessary and the built-in Wi-Fi means internet connections are quick and painless. Dish type detection is automatic. Adding a wired client is as simple as connecting it, and adding a wireless client uses a new "Add Client" button at the top of the unit. However, the system will only work if the serial number and MAC address of the clients has already been entered into DIRECTV's system. DIRECTV strongly recommends connecting the Genie 2 to the internet.

For the end user, there is a faster client experience and more flexibility. Up to 7 clients (5 HD, 2 4K) can be active at once. 400 hours of HD space and 7 simultaneous recordings mean that conflicts are a thing of the past.

This is designed to be the only DVR that 99.9% of people need, so there is no way to make it coexist with older equipment, and only one HS17 is allowed per account.

# **ADDING A CLIENT**





With no PIN requirement, adding a client is extremely easy. For wired clients, connect the client over coax and power it up. You will see a menu prompting you to add a new location or replace a location. If you add a new location, there's not much more to do except possibly copy settings from another client you've already installed. If you are adding a wireless client, press the "Add Client" button at the top of the Genie 2. The light will flash white and the client will automatically connect to it.

If this is the first client being added, you may be taken to a menu to confirm your satellite dish selection, but if you are using the 4K LNB (which is the recommended option) everything is automatic. DIRECTV recommends professional installation for the Genie 2 and installers will be equipped with an app on their phones which will aid in the process. If you aren't a DIRECTV installer, the activation experts at Solid Signal can do all the backend work. The new "PIN-free" system requires that the correct serial number and MAC address of every client and smart TV be entered into their systems before it is possible to watch TV.

# **Decoding the front panel lights**

The Genie 2 cannot output video by itself, so understanding the front panel lights is critical in troubleshooting. Although the HS17 is designed to be self-repairing and require almost no user interaction, there may be times when it is necessary to know what's going on, especially if the clients are not working. Here is a guide to the lights.

### **Status LED:**

FLASHING GREEN SOLID GREEN FLASHING WHITE

SOLID BLUE

**FLASHING YELLOW** 

FLASHING RED SOLID RED

Wireless LED: SOLID GREEN FLASHING YELLOW Unit is booting up. This is normal.

Unit is operating properly.

New Software Available. Press "Add Client" to download.

Unit is ready for its first client.

No connection between Genie and SWM or between Genie and dish.

Hard drive repair is taking place automatically.

Unit should be replaced.

Unit is operating properly.

Poor connection between HS17 and wireless clients.



# **GENERAL IMPRESSIONS**

The HS17 Genie 2 represents the future of DIRECTV and AT&T products. When satellite TV was still primarily for hobbyists and "cutting edge" types, DIRECTV offered very flexible solutions that allowed for a lot of customization. While this allowed for many different install options, the resulting installations were sometimes messy, difficult to support, and were hard for average users to operate.

In the past decade, DIRECTV (and now AT&T) has worked on simplifying the installation and operation experience to make the hardware easier to install, simpler to operate, and make everything work with fewer boxes and doodads. They've done that by making each device more powerful so that more people can use the "standard" installation. While it once would have taken four DVRs, three receivers, and a bunch of back-end wiring to cover seven rooms and 400 hours of recording space, it's now possible to use the HS17 and seven client boxes (mixing wired and wireless) to do the same thing, and without an external internet adapter, video bridge, or power inserter. This cuts down on installation time and leaves the customer with a simple, clean home theater.

There will be some people who will say that AT&T has gone too far. The HS17 is the first device that cannot be combined with any other receiver or DVR on the account, meaning that if you have more than 7 locations you want to use at the same time, this isn't the DVR for you. It also does away with picture-in-picture and support for over-the-air antennas. An external SWM may be used, for example if you need to use the WorldDirect international dish, but the preferred installation is the 4K LNB which runs one wire to the DVR.

Still, by delivering a single box with the most recording capacity of any DIRECTV product, supporting 7

rooms at the same time, and offering easy setup and operation along with about a 25% speed bump, this DVR will appeal to over 99% of DIRECTV users. Those users who still want more capacity or flexibility can still rely on the previous generation hardware for the time being.

After several months of long-term testing of this device, it's simply been flawless. If you've used other DIRECTV DVRs, it will seem familiar to you. This technology is so mature now that even non-hobbyist types can enjoy it.



**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!



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