

User Guides

TF5800

www.topy.org.uk

A simple guide to installation and checking your aerial

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Introduction

This guide is intended to help new or prospective users of the TF5800PVR to get through the setup process, and to check their signal strength and quality, which is much more critical with a PVR than with an ordinary set-top box.

It is not a replacement user manual, but it does point you towards other guides and resources that will help you get to grips with your new Topy.

Before it arrives

There are several things that you can do before your Topfield arrives, which will help make things go more smoothly later.

1. Try to make sure that you have a good signal on all six Freeview multiplexes. If you are in any doubt about what all that means, a good signal is 70% or over for Signal Strength and 98% or over for Quality, and it cannot be over-emphasised just how important this is. Pay a visit to www.dtg.org.uk/retailer/dtt_channels.html, where you will find a list of all the stations available, separated into their individual multiplexes.
2. Make sure that you have access to a USB 'A to B' lead - this will be used to connect the box to your computer. It is OK to borrow a lead from another peripheral, (ie) a scanner, printer etc.
3. Visit www.heathrowsystems.com, click on Software Centre, and then Topfield. Download three files:
 - a) Setup for Topfield Utilities - this will install the vital Topfield Windows Applications, which contains Altair. Altair loads TAPs into your Topfield and can be used to copy recordings to your PC
 - b) Easy Guide to Install & Upgrade your TF5800PVR - much better than the one which comes in the box.
 - c) How to upgrade the Firmware - you should not need this immediately.
4. Buy, or make, a short co-ax lead, male to female, or male to male, and a female to female extension - this sort of lead is available from Maplin (www.maplin.co.uk) - code L32J - for about £5. This lead is not essential, but there have been reports that the one supplied in the box is not very good.

TAPs

TAPs are small programs that extend or enhance the functionality of the Topy, and are transferred to it via the USB port, so need a connection to your computer.

When your Topfield arrives, you should make a decision about when you are going to add the TAPs of your choice. If you have a desktop PC, you may want to transfer the TAPs before you start - this will save you dismantling your set-up later, with all the problems that may bring. Even if you transfer TAPs to the box, you don't have to run them right away, so you'll still have plenty of opportunity to use the built-in software before you experiment further. Most people have found Jags EPG and Improbox very useful, and they solve one or two problems that some users have with in the box. You can download both via the Topy.org.uk Downloads page at www.topy.org.uk/downloads/taps.php

Tim Crook's guide Installing TAPS, available from www.topy.org.uk/documents/, will steer you through the TAP transfer procedure. When you've copied over any files you want, it's time to connect up to your TV system.

Making connections

For best results, use a SCART cable to connect the Toppy to your television, following the details in the guide downloaded from Heathrow Systems' web site.

Remember to connect both tuner inputs on the Topfield. The cable from your TV aerial should be connected first to the socket labeled ANT 1. A loop cable then connects the socket labeled RF LOOP 1 OUT to ANT 2. You can then pass the signal from RF LOOP 2 OUT on to your TV or video recorder. Forgetting to connect anything to the ANT 2 socket is one of the most common causes of problems for new users!

When you have connected up your system, make a note of which socket on your TV you have used for the SCART lead from the Topfield. On most TVs this will be AV1 or AV2. The reason for making a note is that, depending on your setup, you may end up with a picture on both AV1 and AV2, but only the one direct from the Topfield will have functions such as volume V+ and V- controlled by remote.

Checking your signal

Assuming that you have tuned in all available stations, and done all the other setup operations via the menus that you feel you need, now you can check your signal strength and quality on all six multiplexes.

Press "Menu" then scroll down to "Installation" and then "Service Search," and you will find the characteristics of the channel you are tuned to, shown on the two bars.

If you progressively work through the stations listed below, you will be checking out your reception capability. It is quite a bit of key pressing, but it will be worth it.

Mux 1	BBC 1
Mux 2	ITV 1
Mux A	Five
Mux B	BBC 4
Mux C	Sky News
Mux D	The Hits

At the end of this process, you will be able to tell whether you need to do some work on your aerial system or not. The goal is to get to 70% signal, with 98% quality. Most of the problems that users experience with a PVR, from missed recordings to picture breakup, are to do with poor signal quality.

When you have finished measuring the channel performance, press Picture in Picture. You should see a picture in top right hand side of your screen. If you then press Picture Exchange, you will move to the other tuner. Go back to Installation, Service Search etc and you can now measure both tuners in operation. This checks that both tuners are receiving the same quality of signal, and it is only necessary to do this once. You should now have a clear idea of the quality of signal into your PVR.

If you find that the signal strength is lower on the second tuner, there are a number of options that you can try.

Firstly, if you are using the supplied loop cable to link the output of Tuner 1 to the input of Tuner 2, try changing it for an alternative one.

Another option is to dispense with the loop-cable, and instead use a splitter, or a signal booster, that has two outputs, feeding a signal directly to the input of each tuner on the Topfield; this will ensure that both are receiving the same level of signal.

And finally, remember that if you need help or advice, you should check out the forums and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at www.tippy.org.uk



You may find the remote control a bit daunting, if you haven't experienced a PVR before, but just concentrate on the buttons mentioned in the "Getting Started" and "Menu Operations" sections of the manual you downloaded. The only other buttons to note for now are the steering arrows in the centre and Picture in Picture (PIP) with Picture Exchange (bottom left). The button you can hardly read in "Getting Started" is the OK button!