

BYPASSING YOUR SET TOP BOX FOR ANALOGUE BROADCASTS

A TYPICAL SETUP

Installing a Set Top Box is a great way of improving the picture quality on existing analogue TV sets. Many digital stations also transmit additional information that can be displayed on the screen. The Set Top Box sits between the antenna and an existing analogue TV and converts the digital transmissions from the antenna into an analogue signal suitable for the TV. While there are several variations on how the connections are made between the Set Top Box and the TV, the following picture shows possibly the most common method. The TV is set to 'AV' (Audio Visual) and the Set Top Box is used to switch between channels.



Typical Set Top Box installation without analogue signal bypass.

NO ANALOGUE RECEPTION?

Many people find that once they have installed a Set Top Box in this way they are no longer able to receive analogue TV transmissions. Set Top Boxes simply ignore analogue transmissions. They are not passed through to the 'AV' sockets. This isn't necessarily a problem if all of the TV transmissions that the viewer is interested in are in fact digital. However, should the viewer wish to continue to receive analogue transmissions such as those still used by many community based TV stations such as QCTV (Briz31) in Brisbane, then it is necessary to ensure that the analogue signal bypasses the Set Top Box.

METHOD 1

This involves the use of the inbuilt antenna 'loop' that is typical on most Set Top Boxes. This method requires the purchase of an additional coaxial cable to connect from the 'Loop Out' socket to the TV's antenna socket. These cables can be purchased from many sources, including electronics stores, supermarket stores and variety stores from as little as three dollars. The quality of these cables will vary from store to store. The cheapest purchase is not always the wisest.



Typical Antenna Loop

The following picture shows a typical setup using this method. Most TV's will have an 'AV/TV' switch to switch between 'AV' and the inbuilt analogue tuner.



Showing an analogue signal bypass.

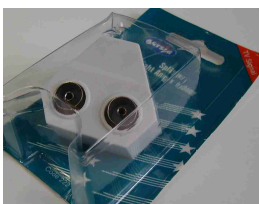
When the viewer wishes to view a digital transmission the TV is set to 'AV' and the Set Top Box is used to switch channels. When the viewer wishes to view an analogue transmission the TV's analogue tuner is used. Occasionally this method proves unsatisfactory as the quality of the signal from the 'Loop Out' socket is sometimes found to have been significantly lowered and may even suffer from interference from the Set Top Box. As with the cable this may be dependant upon the quality of the Set Top Box.

METHOD 2

This method can be used if there isn't an inbuilt 'loop' in the Set Top Box or if there is, it

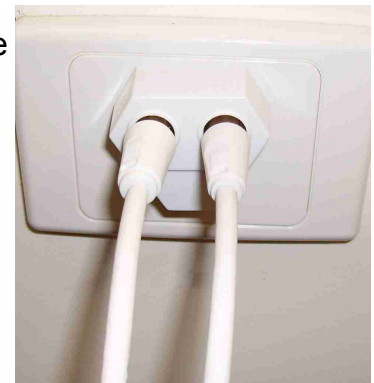


doesn't provide a suitable analogue signal to the TV. A coaxial cable and a 'Y' connector must be purchased for this method. Coaxial 'Y' connectors come in a variety of shapes and orientations as pictured. Coaxial 'Y' connectors are often obtainable from electronics stores, supermarket stores and variety stores. The quality of these also varies and their cost ranges from around seven dollars upwards. The ones pictured here were both purchased at Kmart for around eight dollars each and both were found to work.



'Y' Connectors.

At the wall socket of the antenna, the existing coaxial cable that feeds the Set Top Box is removed from the wall socket and a 'Y' connector is inserted in its place. The coaxial cable is then reinserted, this time into one of the sockets of the 'Y' connector. One end of the new coaxial cable is then inserted into the



At the Wall Socket

other socket of the 'Y' connector. The other end of the new coaxial cable is then inserted into the antenna socket of the TV. The following picture shows the connections at the Set Top Box and TV end of the two coaxial cables.



External Set Top Box bypass.

This method provides exactly the same functionality as the the first method. The viewer uses the TV's 'AV/TV' switch to switch between 'AV' and the inbuilt analogue tuner. When the viewer wishes to view a digital transmission the TV is set to 'AV' and the Set Top Box is used to switch channels. When the viewer wishes to view an analogue transmission the TV's analogue tuner is used.

SUMMARY

The information provided in this document is meant to be a guide only. No responsibility is accepted for any damage to equipment or injury to persons resulting from the use of this guide. The items and hardware pictured and described in this document are reasonably typical. However, there are many variations. For example there are many different types of connections for both video and audio outputs of Set Top Boxes as well as for audio and video inputs of TV's. Consultation of the user instruction manuals for both the Set Top Box and the TV is recommended. This will usually confirm the best connections and cables for specific hardware and circumstances.

Enjoy your *analogue* viewing!

Kim Rendell
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