

***Sky Digital explained - part two - features and extras you may not be aware of!***



*Welcome back to RTN's series of monthly features about the world of British TV here on the northern Costa Blanca where we update you with the latest news, products and developments in a plain English, easy-to-read format. Last month we covered some of the lesser-known features of the standard Sky box, such as programming channel changes for when you're away.*

*This month in part two, we continue our look at the humble Sky digibox and how to get the most out of it. Much of the following info also applies to Sky+ & HD boxes too. Age, make and model make no difference!*

**Sky Multi-Room** is a clever offer from Sky to tempt you into spending an extra £10 a month on TV. In return, you get a second Sky subscription card (assuming that you already subscribe, of course!) on the same package as the first, but at a reduced price. The second card is used in a secondary location such as the bedroom, kitchen, den, etc. and allows two channels to be viewed simultaneously - one in each room - using separate Sky digiboxes. However, one of Sky's ingenious rules is that the second box **MUST** be connected to a UK landline, and yes, they do test it each month by 'pinging' the modem in the box!

So multi-room is not an option here in Spain. Instead, we must pay full price for a second card, if we wish to use one subscription card in the UK and the other in Spain - and we must be careful not to let Sky know!

Now - it *is* possible - with a Sky box in each country, to simply bring your card over with you and insert it into the Spanish box. However, Sky Sports and Sky Movies will not transfer from box to box so easily. You will get the Family Pack channels just fine (depending on your dish size, of course) but you will get an error message on the Sports or Movie channels, as these are 'married' to the digibox the card is officially registered to.

Another option is to connect a second TV direct to your primary Sky box (e.g. in the living room) via either a cabled or wireless link. A cabled link provides a consistent signal, but a) requires yet another cable from the box to the secondary location, and b) requires the secondary TV to either come from the UK, or have a country-switching option. You will also need to go back to the living room each time you wish to change channels, unless you add a handy 'magic eye' gadget which will do this for you quite cheaply.

The wireless option is great, because it allows a) flexibility – you can move your secondary TV to a new location, b) expandability – you can add additional receiver units to receive TV all over the house from only

one transmitter unit, and c) you can change channels from the remote TVs. They all work on the 2.4Ghz band, which unfortunately clashes with microwave ovens (causing a buzzing sound when the microwave is on), and some wireless burglar alarm systems (which interfere with changing channels), so they might not be suitable for all. And lastly, of course, ALL of these home re-distribution methods mean that you receive the *same channel in each location, because you are simply re-distributing an existing signal*. Change channels in one location, and it changes all over the house!

I get a lot of emails asking me how to easily reset a digibox after a power-cut or other service interruption. If you visit [www.conexions-javea.com/skylogon.pdf](http://www.conexions-javea.com/skylogon.pdf) you can print out my step-by-step guide to getting your TV back up and running at any time of day, and in all but the most extreme weather.

Have you ever noticed the red and white RCA or Phono connectors on the back of your Sky box? Do you have a stereo or hi-fi system nearby with similar inputs on the back, and an AUX (auxiliary) mode? In that case, if you run a 3-5€ cable between the two and set your hi-fi system to AUX, you can enjoy full, deep sound like never before (depending on the quality of your hi-fi and speakers, of course!). Movies that rumble; deep, rich music; realistic sound effects that your TV can only *hope* to imitate – this is the single cheapest improvement you can make to your Sky system! Email me direct, for advice on your own personal situation...

If you ever wish you could operate your TV volume via your Sky remote control, you might be interested to know that although the default setting is for use with Sony TVs, you can reconfigure your remote control using a procedure and code table found towards the back of all Sky Digital manuals. Simply follow the instructions to convert your Sky remote to suit your brand of TV, and stop fighting over the remote with your other half!

Speaking of remote controls, due to their rubber keypads Sky and Sky+ remotes are prone to getting sticky buttons, faded buttons, or buttons that are a real pain to press after a while. Ease your frustration by replacing your old remote control with a genuine Sky replacement, available from any good local supplier. This applies to Sky+HD remotes too, although these are generally less prone to 'sticky button syndrome' as unlike their older brothers, they don't have rubber keypads but hard plastic buttons.

Exclusive info: The standard Sky digibox is an endangered species. The rise and rise of Sky+ and Sky HD have meant that manufacturers in most cases are no longer producing the 'standard' (ie non Sky+ or HD) boxes. We will be covering the benefits of upgrading to Sky+ next month, but in the meantime if you need a NEW standard Sky box, contact your local supplier asap as stocks are dwindling, if not exhausted already. Soon, there will only be Sky+ and HD boxes available new, although I expect the second-hand market in standard boxes will play a part for some time to come...

Next month: Sky+ boxes – the best TV gadget of the Naughtyies? We cover the pros and cons of upgrading. Until then!

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