

Stream your Media and TV

Stream your Media and TV | Tech Tips Podcast by PcCG

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The Olympics are on. Now if there is any sport I'm more likely to watch than Football, it's the Olympics. I'm an Olympic addict. If watching the Olympics was a sport, I'd definitely get the gold. Of course, I also have to somehow still get things done for the those two weeks. How do I cope? With Orb!

Orb is a great, FREE program that allows you to stream content on your home computer to you, anywhere. You can use it to stream videos, music files, access documents, and of critical importance for the Olympics--TV.

Before we continue, as a side note: the Olympics are also being streamed at <http://www.nbcolympics.com> [2] if you have a participating provider (att U-Verse, Comcast, Brighthouse). If you subscribe to one of these providers, you can then stream the Olympics without Orb, if that's strictly what you are wanting. You can also get live streaming of the Olympics from the NBC Olympics live TV app for iphone and android. I prefer the NBC broadcast coverage which doesn't give you choices of every sporting event, but provides better commentary and edits down the events to "the good stuff." Orb will also allow you to stream any of your TV channels in the future for things like the superbowl!

Setup isn't really too difficult. Most people can probably get it done in under an hour, perhaps even 30 minutes. But there a couple prerequisites to keep in mind.

1. You need a Tuner card in your computer to stream TV
2. Your computer (obviously) needs to stay on if you want to access stuff while away from the computer
3. You need a decent internet connection (pretty common these days).

Lets start with the tuner. This is what I use Orb for the most... especially for ... you guessed it, the Olympics.

You need a tuner that is compatible with Orb in order for it to work properly. Believe it or not, many computers already have such a card installed. You can tell by looking at the back of the computer and seeing if it has a coax-like screw on connector commonly found on TV's. If you don't see that, or have such a card you need to get one, specifically, it should have an mpeg 2 hardware encoder for best results. Many tuner cards have this, and Orb will sometimes even work without that. Hauppague cards are respected and affordable, ranging between \$60-\$120 on average. If you are comfortable opening the computer, it's best to get an internal Tuner, but if not, sometimes USB tuners will work. Even if it doesn't work for Orb, you'll end up with a computer on your computer for less than \$100 bucks.

You also need a source to feed to that tuner card. This will likely either be an Antenna connected to the tuner card for over-the-air channels, or cable without a converter box. Now this part may be a bit tricky. I'll keep it short.

If using Cable, then the cable company needs to provide you unencrypted channels. This can either

be old-school analog signals, or ClearQAM signals. Some cable providers provide neither of these. You can usually determine if that's the case if your cable provider **REQUIRES** you have a box in order to watch TV. This eliminates dish/satellite unfortunately. Technically you can still make it work, but it gets more confusing and complicated.

So, now you have your Tuner card and the TV source - what's next? Simple! Install Orb from <http://www.orb.com>! [3]

All you have to do is follow a couple easy prompts asking you what you want to share - including your TV and you're done!

Now that you've shared your media and TV, you can access it simply by going to <http://mycast.orb.com> [4]. You will log in with the username and password that you created when setting up orb. That will take you to a website providing you access to all of the things you allowed Orb access to. You can do this from any laptop, computer or smartphone connected to the internet. This is how I stream the Olympics from home to my cell-phone when I am out and about--saving me from the horror of having to miss a moment of the games.

A couple notes to keep in mind...

With my tuner card (Hauppague 1255), orb has problems streaming the ClearQAM channels. This means I can't "tune in" to the HD channels on my cable; I can however tune into the SAME channel in it's analog version. I'm fine with that.

Your quality of video isn't going to be perfect like it is on your TV. Remember it's streaming, meaning it's being encoded and sent over your internet connection in real-time.

The quality of your internet connection also plays a major role in the quality of video. All-in-all, it should be acceptable, or even good--under most typical conditions.



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