

## **AB 550 Cryptobox HD - the news on the market**

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Original text: <http://www.satelitnatv.sk/2012/08/ab-cryptobox-550-hd-novinka-na-nasom-trhu/>

Two new satellite receivers named AB Cryptobox 500 HD and AB Cryptobox 550 HD are being launched on the market these days. I had the opportunity to test the latter for several days and that is why I can share my experience with you. After the initial startup, AB Cryptobox 550 HD attracts one's interest with a VFD display on the front panel, which displays information like the program position number, signal quality and strength and or the name of the program just being watched. If I had to briefly compare the older receiver Cryptobox AB 450 HD and the new AB 550 Cryptobox HD, in addition to the VFD display, the new 550 has one USB port more (front panel), as well as a digital optical audio output S / PDIF. As for the new features, there is a possibility of uploading and downloading files from FTP, or a completely redesigned menu of the receiver, as well as addition of several new applications, games, and an improved Media player.

### **Basic characteristics of the receiver:**

1x Card Reader

1 Common Interface slot for decoding module

2 x USB2.0 (1x rear and 1x front panel)

VFD display

Network Interface Ethernet 10/100 Mbps

1x RS232 serial interface

1x HDMI connector

1 optical audio output S / PDIF

1x SCART connector

1x RS232

Fast Scan - for fast tuning of not only CZ / SK programs

Memory for 100 satellites, 4000 transponders and 6100 programs

Support: DiSEqC 1.0, 1.1 and 1.2, USALS, Teletext, Timeshift, PVR, EPG, timer, or up to 1080p resolution.

## Box contents

Along with the satellite receiver, the package includes a remote control in black color, two AAA micro batteries and a 104-page user manual in Slovak and Czech language. The package lacks any interface cables; therefore, it is necessary to buy them separately, if needed.

## The front panel

On the front panel, as I mentioned in the introduction, there is a VFD display, whose intensity of lighting can be reduced, as well as whether the display will show the program name or just the current time. In addition to the VFD display, in the front part of the receiver, there is a red LED indicator that lights permanently, even in the operational or standby mode. In the front part there are also three basic buttons, Power, CH + / CH-, and under the opening the lid, it is possible to find one more USB port, a universal decoding card reader and a CI slot for inserting CAM module.



## The rear panel

At the back of the receiver, we will find LNB in, LNB out, RS232, USB 2.0, LAN, HDMI and analog SCART connectors, as well as optical SPDIF audio output and a power switch.



## The remote control

The remote control may be familiar to owners of AB Cryptobox 400/450, which, in recent months, has been distributed with exactly the same remote control like the new Cryptobox 500 HD receiver. However, it took a little longer to get used to its size, as sometimes it was necessary to move it in the

hand when using buttons placed at the bottom. The control sensitivity itself could be described as very good.

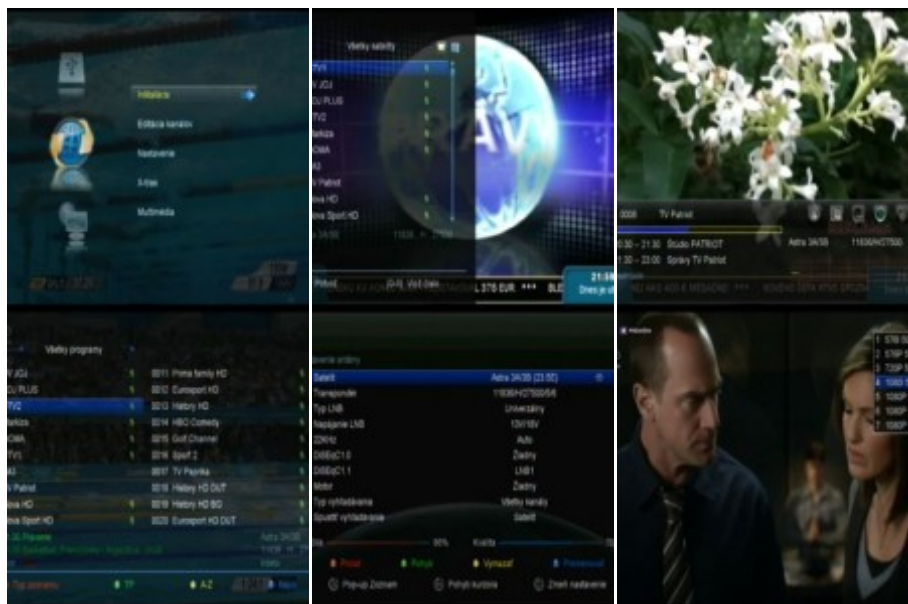


### The menu

The menu of AB Cryptobox 550 is toned in black. In comparison to the earlier series of AB Cryptobox 4x0, it has been completely redesigned. It contains five basic categories, namely: Installation, Edit Channel, Settings, X-tras and Multimedia. We move across the menu with the arrow keys on the remote control (up / down), the OK button or the arrow keys (left / right) confirm the selection.

After pressing the "Info" button on the remote control, the infobar on a television screen shows, in addition to the standard information like the currently watched or the following program, also a graph, which shows the signal strength.

EPG is available by pressing the corresponding button (EPG). There are two ways of display (daily and weekly), which can be changed simply by pressing the green button. In addition to viewing the program information, the automatic recording timer can be set directly from the EPG.





## Experience

The initial installation can be done in a few steps. It is quite easy thanks to the Fast scan function, where you select, for example, "Channels Slovakia" as a provider, and the receiver searches for all the current programs offered by the satellite platform of Skylink or CS Link, and arranges basic Slovak programs as the first and then all the others.

Decoding card is inserted into the reader with the chip facing downwards, towards the receiver. During the few days of my testing period I tried all my active cards in the receiver, namely SkyLink Cryptoworks, Skylink ICE, Skylink IRDETO, as well as CS Link Cryptoworks, CS Link Irdeto, or freeSAT by UPC Direct ICE, and I noticed no problems with decoding. I therefore assess the receiver compatible with all the cards tested, as well as with Irdeto Smit CI + CAM module.

Switching encoded channels took up to two seconds, unencoded channel switching is even faster, and that is up to one second.

The receiver can be connected to the Internet using either an Ethernet cable with RJ 45 connectors, or wirelessly via a WiFi network. When connecting to a wifi network it is necessary to buy a wifi dongle to be inserted into one of the USB ports, and everything needed can be set up in the receiver's menu (Menu-Settings-WiFi settings). It should be noted that the receiver does not work with every USB wifi adapter. I have personally tested the WiFi Dongle 2.4 GHz for AB CryptoBox 400/450HD and the internet connection worked without serious problems.

After connecting to the Web it is possible to use network applications, such as FTP Download, Weather, RSS reader, Exchange rates, Stock Market Indices or YouTube video player. To get to the network applications we can use speed dial on the remote control, pressing the XTRA button. A wide range of applications also includes a calendar with the possibility of writing comments, or 9 games, which are generally available directly in the satellite receiver with very enjoyable graphics. Specifically you can find games of Sudoku, Boxman, Trans, WhiteBlack, Gobang, Snake, Tetris, Hexa and Mine.

Of course there is the Timeshift function, PVR recording to an external device (FAT32 and NTFS support). Recordings are in the TS format but when recording encoded programs, I didn't manage to play them on my PC because of encoding. Therefore, it was possible only on the receiver itself, even without a decoding card inserted. When recording unencoded programs, it was possible to play the files without any problems on any device, of course, on a PC as well.

While recording an encoded program it is possible to watch other programs in a given transponder, but only the free ones. In case of recording an uncoded (FTA) program, it is possible to watch or record another coded or uncoded program in the same transponder.

Power consumption of the receiver during several hours of watching reached 15 W, in the standby mode it was normally about 1 W.

## Multimedia

To access the main menu item "Multimedia", it is necessary to connect the receiver to an external device via one of the two USB ports, for example a hard disk or a flash disk. The receiver was able to play almost all multimedia files available. There were no problems playing AVI, MP4, FLV, MPG, MKV, TS, TP, TRP files; music files like MP3, WAV, OGG, or images as JPG, PNG, BMP or GIF. Subtitle support with video files is necessary as well, for example SRT format. With the current version of software, some characters, such as "č" or "ř", were yet not shown in the subtitles correctly. However, the contractor promised correction in this regard in one of the newest versions of software. Nevertheless, I cannot omit the fact that, when viewing images, you can simply turn the photo or image using arrows on the remote control (left / right), which every user will certainly use.

In addition to the support of a large number of files, they can be moved among folders, renamed or deleted directly from the receiver menu using the remote control.



## Conclusion

The new AB Cryptobox 550 HD receiver is suitable for both less and more experienced users, who will not be disappointed by its functions. The new AB Cryptobox 550 HD receiver brings several improvements compared to the AB Cryptobox 450 HD. Besides standard functions, it has a VFD display, sophisticated Media Player, Fast Scan feature - a quick search of programs by provider without having to know the frequency, and FTP manager. The universal card reader works trouble-

free with all the decoding cards available on our market with no need to install or modify the software.

Recommended retail price: 89 €

**Link to the product:** <http://www.abcom.sk/produkt/ab-cryptobox-550hd-1055460.html>

Thanks to AB-COM, s.r.o. from Topolcany for loaning the AB Cryptobox 550 HD receiver.