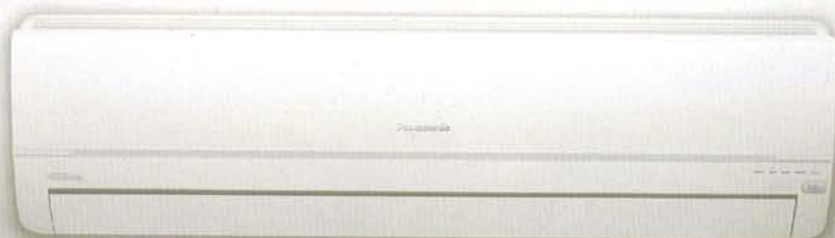


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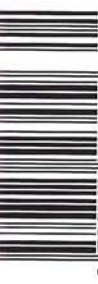
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Filling the gap

Philips Pronto TSU9600

THE LATEST PHILIPS PRONTO AIMS TO PLUG THE GAP BETWEEN UNIVERSAL REMOTE CONTROL AND FULL-ON INTEGRATED HOME CONTROLLER.



UNIVERSAL REMOTES: CAN'T LIVE with them, can't live without them. And while there's an ocean of them out there that do a mediocre job, ultimately you tend to get what you pay for.

One new arrival to the market is the latest in the Philips Pronto range of universal remotes — the TSU9600 priced at \$2399.

That's pricey for a universal remote but then the TSU9600 is no simple stick of buttons — it's more a 'high-end Smart Home Control Panel' as the distributor QualiFi says, or more succinctly, an 'Integrated Control Solution.'

With much of the functionality of full-on touchscreen controllers, it has an enormous degree of customisation possible through the included software.

Can you just buy one off the shelf and get going? It's possible, since the unit comes with built-in templates that you can amend to match your own gear and system. But it's not for the faint-hearted and it doesn't take long to understand why QualiFi bills this remote as 'built by installers for installers.'

So we decided to quiz one installer who already knows the product and can gauge its capabilities. David Tegg, from Hobart's Quantum Hi-fi, has been on the global beta test team for this product since August last year, after emailing the Belgian designers with an interest in joining the team.

Now through the Australian distributor, QualiFi, he has become an accredited installer of the TSU9600. Mike Wilcox sat down with Tegg and started out by asking what to expect from using the device.

DAVID TEGG: Basically it's a tablet touch-screen remote with a removable stylus. Out of the box, the configuration is pretty much 'activity' driven, similar to other devices that offer 'Watch TV', 'Watch DVD',

'Listen to music', 'Play games' and so on. So you use either the touch-screen's icons or the programmable hard buttons to select an activity, which takes you to a second page of controls to do with that activity.

MIKE WILCOX: So has the TSU9600 been localised in any way for the Australian market?

DT: It comes with mainly European and American products and TV stations already included, but there is a website which QualiFi has started with downloadable buttons designed for Australian free-to-air networks around the country, as well as Foxtel and Austar channels.

MW: What exactly does Philips mean when they say the TSU9600 is 'built by installers for installers'?

DT: What I believe they did was speak to installers throughout the design process about what they wanted in a remote of this type, and they've taken various elements of what everyone said and put them into this product.

MW: This is no doubt why the software interface is pretty daunting for first-time users, right?

DT: Correct.

MW: Once the device has been properly configured (by a certified installer) the user interface should be very intuitive and straightforward to operate, but how much goes into getting it to that point?

DT: On the programming side of it, a lot of it is about visual design and page layout, but then each button must be assigned a command or string of them depending on the function.

MW: This is where the TSU9600 pulls away from the pile of generic 'hard button' universal remotes, thanks to the control the ProntoEdit Professional software offers to customise the interface.

TW: That's right. After adding a new device, I can create the number of pages needed for controlling it. Then I place buttons anywhere on the empty pages, and then tell each button what I want it

THE TSU9600 IS NO SIMPLE STICK OF BUTTONS — IT'S AN 'INTEGRATED CONTROL SOLUTION'...

to do. I can add a sound, put a timer on it, add a delay, even bring in images of the actual devices I'm controlling as buttons.

Obviously if someone has spent \$20,000 on their system, this remote would only represent 10 percent of that investment. *Mike Wilcox* **SH**

Philips Pronto TSU9600

Price: \$2399

Feature: 39.4cm VGA LCD TFT touch-panel screen (640 x 480), 802.11g Wi-Fi, WEP 128/64-bit, built-in loudspeakers, cradle-docking station, rechargeable Li-Polymer battery, ProntoEdit Professional software.

Weight: 0.285kg

Warranty: 1 year

Distributor: QualiFi
03 8542 1111
www.qualifi.com.au