

Promax Prodig-5 TV Explorer

Thomas Haring

In the last issue of TELE-satellite magazine, we introduced the basic functions of the Prodig-5 TV Explorer from Promax to our readers. Over the past several weeks we took a closer look at the various details of this unit and want to present them to you in this report. Fortunately the manufacturer also recently released a new software update for the TV Explorer. This gives us the opportunity to tell you about the changes that Promax implemented with this update.

Software update

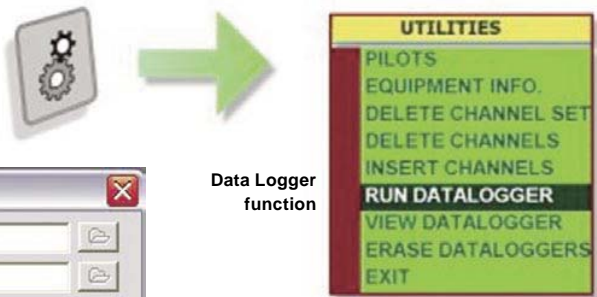
Thanks to the RS232 connector on the Prodig-5 and the PKUpdate tool, Promax can easily improve the unit's functions by releasing new software updates. The new software as well as the upload tool are available free of charge on the manufacturer's website www.promax.es. The update itself is simple Plug&Play; just connect the unit to your pc via the RS232 port, start the upload tool and transfer the new software to your Prodig-5 TV Explorer. For those of you that are not so experienced, Promax includes step-by-step instructions in the update tool.

Datalogger

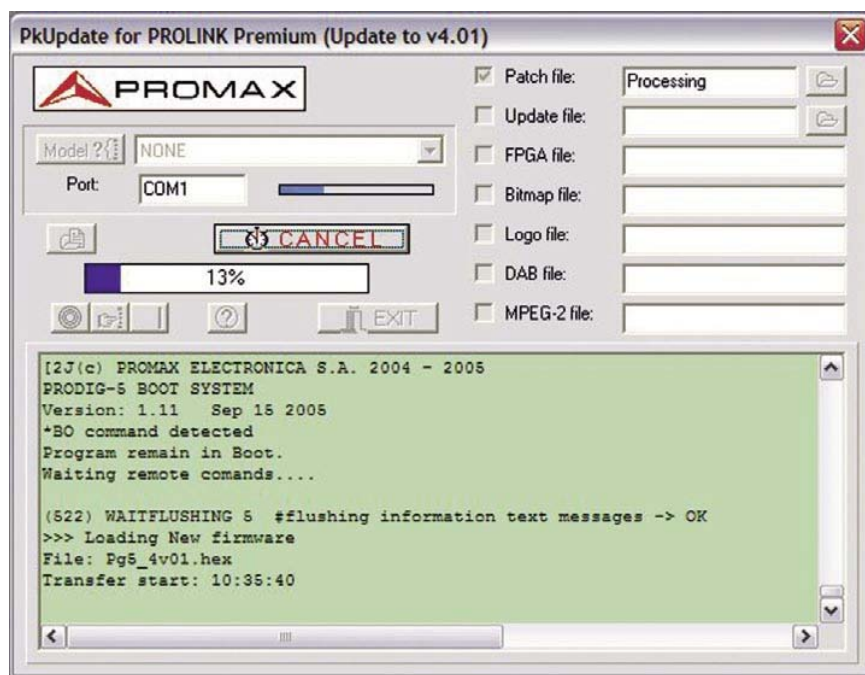
The Prodig-5 TV Explorer comes with a

Datalogger function; a feature included with all other Promax products as well. Professional installers will immediately know what we are talking about: after installing a new satellite dish, the customer or your boss would want to have a written report showing all the measurement results and providing proof that everything was installed correctly. By pressing just one button, you can now easily activate the unit's Datalogger function. This feature stores all measurement results (Power, C/N, BER, MER etc.) and prepares them for output,

either on the built-in display or via RS232 and the PKTools software on your PC. With this function it is possible to measure the signals from different antennas and even to check the signal quality in different apartments, if you happen to be building up your own small TV network. The PKTools software can also be found free of charge on the manufacturer's website www.promax.es



Data Logger function



Software update via RS232

IF-Test

In a large apartment building it's not only for aesthetic reasons to share one common terrestrial antenna and satellite antenna. And if you build up your own small cable network you don't even need a receiver on every connection box to get all of your favorite channels. The IF test or Attenuation test enables you to determine the quality of a SMATV cable network before installing the head-end equipment. In this way you can identify the quality of already existing cable installations or the maximum loss you'll experience before you have to buy and install the other equipment. The test is performed in combination with the RP-080 signal generator. It creates four different output signals, two of them in the terrestrial range (85-750 MHz) and two of them in the satellite range (1000-

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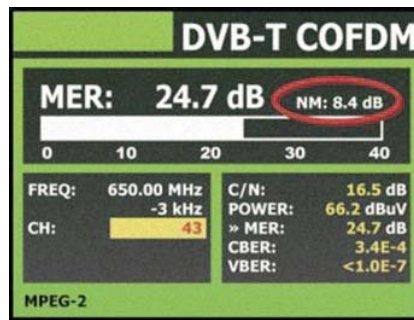
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2150 MHz). The Prodig-5 is now directly connected to the signal generator and the unit will save these values as calibration default. In the next step the Prodig-5 can now be connected to every available connection box so that the current signal can be easily compared to the default one.

Noise margin measurement

Promax has added this new and very clever option to the Prodig-5 TV Explorer with the last update (4.02). The unit can now perform a noise margin measurement, which means that it calculates the maximum loss of the MER (in dB) so that the signal still can be received without distortion. With this new function, Promax offers for the first time a way to measure the bad weather reserve of a satellite dish.



Noise margin measurement

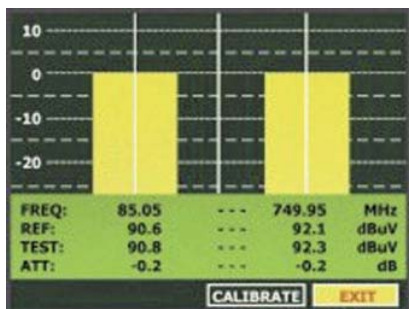
Automatic detection of saturation

Amplifiers and overly powerful head-end outputs can cause saturation in analogue SMATV cable networks. The Prodig-5 helps you to detect this problem by indicating it with a small symbol in the upper left side of its display and to fix it by reducing the gain of the amplifier or the head-end output signal. Furthermore, you can determine the maximum allowable gain, so that even in case of some unexpected higher gain no saturation will occur. While displaying black/white signals, the symbol will always be displayed since these signals don't contain any color information.

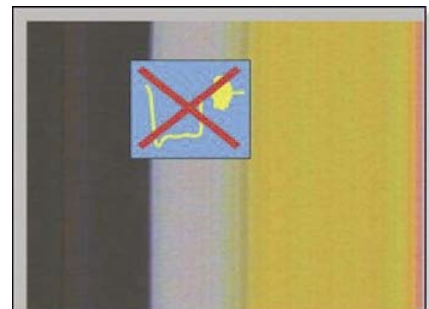
HDTV

Of course the Prodig-5 TV Explorer can measure HDTV channels and transponders, but with some limitations: Because of the built-in tuner, only transponders using the DVB standard can be processed, DVB-S2 is not supported. However, the compression type (MPEG-2 or MPEG-4) doesn't really matter, the unit can measure MPEG-2 signals as well as MPEG-4 but for MPEG-4 it can only display Power and C/N while for MPEG-2 Power, C/N, BER, MER etc. are available. The HDTV picture itself can't be displayed either for MPEG-2 or MPEG-4 but since we're not talking about an HDTV receiver but a satellite gauge that's really ok.

We strongly recommend that you install the software update. The manufacturer did an excellent job and the update provides you with some new and very useful functions.



IF-Test



Automatic detection of saturation