

After almost two years since I first complained about the Time Warner Cable DVR, I made the switch to a TiVo Premiere. The TiVo gives me 45 hours of HD recording, access to Netflix streaming without to use the Blu-ray disc as in my Sony PlayStation 3. TiVo has a much better search feature as well and access to Amazon Video on Demand.

What do I lose? I don't get access to any of the two-way content from Time Warner Cable i.e. the On Demand channels, and the guy on the phone said I don't get access to premium channels either, which is ok since I never had them on my account anyway.

The best part is how complicated Time Warner Cable made getting the TiVo up and running using their service. In order to work, the TiVo requires a CableCARD and a tuning adapter for the switch digital video used by Time Warner Cable and other cable companies. I called Time Warner Cable on June 10th to schedule an install.

On June 15th, Time Warner Cable sent out a technician to install the CableCARD and the tuning adapter. He showed up with a dented CableCARD, one that looked like it had been at the bottom of a parts bin and a tuning adapter. The tech rearranged the splitters outside and checked the signal strength, all looked good. Then he installed the adapter and card. The tuning adapter was solid green and seemed to be properly setup. But I couldn't get any of my channels. If we removed the CableCARD, we'd instantly get basic cable. The tech said I'd need a new card and he didn't have any more. He had to scrounge just to get the one he brought with him. So after 3 hours I still didn't have a working TiVo.

On June 19th, another tech came out. When he arrived he said 'I hear you need a tuning adapter'. I replied, 'um no I need a CableCARD, the tuning adapter is fine'. The tech didn't have one so he left after 5 minutes. He called his supervisor and rescheduled another install.

My only thought is that Time Warner Cable does this on purpose to keep people from buying third party equipment and locking them in to the cable companies DVRs. But it doesn't make much sense since they're still getting the service fee and still keep folks as customers.

Then on June 22nd, while I was on vacation, I got a voicemail stating Time Warner Cable was coming back out. Obviously I wasn't home to answer so they put down on my account that no one was home and didn't reschedule. So three visits and still no working TiVo.

Could this get any worse? Let's see. On June 30th, after returning from vacation, I stopped by the local Time Warner Cable office (right up the street) to ask for a CableCARD. I was told they are not allowed to hand them out. The customer service lady was kind enough to schedule yet another install. I made sure she noted that I needed a *new* CableCARD. Everything was setup for Friday July 2nd.

It is now July 2nd, the tech shows up between 2 and 4 pm. He comes in tells me he heard I've got a problem with my CableCARD. I said actually I need a new one. So the tech tries to debug my current one. When he asks if it ever worked I replied 'NO, that's why I told the customer service person that I needed a NEW one.' This tech didn't bring one either. When my wife, Liz, found out she was livid. Asked him why he was even here. The tech said he'd email his supervisor (go figure).

After the 4th tech left, I called their 800 number and was put on hold. So I got fed up and went to the interwebs. I tweeted to @TWCableHelp that the 4th installer showed up without a CableCARD.

Within about 20 minutes I got a reply from @TWCableHelp that they have contacted the local NC office and getting someone on it. Saturday morning at 8:30am (July 3rd), I got a call from Time Warner Cable tech asking if someone would be home in the afternoon. Then he called back at 11am to see if he could come over now since he was ahead of schedule. Josh, the fifth tech, showed up **WITH** a CableCARD! WOO HOO! Finally. Ten minutes later I had channels on my TiVo including my HD channels using the tuning adapter. Everything was working! Clearly Josh knew what he was doing.

Last night, July 9th, we had a power outage which rebooted the TiVo and the tuning adapter. Today, July 10th, I am missing many channels not available via the tuning adapter. I contacted Time Warner Cable customer service. They sent a reboot signal to the tuning adapter then transferred me to TiVo support without notice. It was a complete surprise. The TiVo support folks were knowledgeable and determined that I need a new tuning adapter.

I am not looking forward to contacting Time Warner Cable again. It has been almost a month since I bought my TiVo and tried to get it working with the cable system.