

HOMEPLUG NETWORK ADAPTER

# Vesenet Homeplug 3-port Ethernet power strip

Just plug in to add three ports to your network



sockets off, while at the base are three Ethernet ports, plus a set of lights and buttons to control the Homeplug side of things. Annoyingly, the buttons need to be pressed with a paperclip through a hole. That said, we didn't need to press anything to add the unit to our existing Homeplug network.

The filtering on the mains sockets provides cleaner power to your devices and it stops those with cheap power supplies from interfering with the Homeplug AV network. In our tests, the Piggy 6 performed well at that; plugged into a problematic mains spur that supplies all the AV gear, it was able to stream standard-definition video without a hitch, whereas the standalone unit we tried kept losing the connection – though on our noisy ring circuit, we only managed a connection at 40Mbps/sec, and HD was still juddery. Connecting directly to the ring main boosted that speed more than threefold – so adapter placement is obviously very important with Homeplug AV, and the filtering in the Piggy 6 won't solve every problem.

With TVs, set-top boxes and games consoles all having Ethernet ports these days, the Piggy 6 is a great way to network several pieces of equipment easily – and at about £40 more than a six-way filtered mains strip, it's pretty good value too.

*Nigel Whitfield*

## Verdict

**Pros** Simple to set up; good performance

**Cons** Fiddly buttons for Homeplug security and reset

**Overall** A great way to network all your AV gear – and more compact than many power strips

**Features** ★★★★★  
**Performance** ★★★★★  
**Value for money** ★★★★★

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Price** £72.10

**Contact** Solwise [www.solwise.co.uk](http://www.solwise.co.uk)  
 0845 458 4558

**Specifications** Homeplug AV compatible • Three Ethernet ports • Six filtered/surge protected mains ports • Easy-connect security

**H**omeplug AV is a great solution if you live in areas where Wifi is too congested. Solwise's range of easy-connect units support connections at up to 200Mbps/sec and to set up encryption you just push an 'easy connect' button.

The three-port strip, called the Piggy 6, provides more than just Ethernet. It's a six-way power adapter, with surge suppression and filtering on the mains sockets, which are arranged around the hexagonal unit. In the centre is a power button that turns all the

IPOD ACCESSORY

# Gear4 Video Buddy

Play media stored on your iPod on your TV or stereo



that plugs into the dock connector of your player. A supplied RCA cable can then be connected between the device and a TV or stereo, with the player's controls used to browse and select content.

The iPod's TV-out setting is remotely enabled to save you having to trawl through menus, so to set up you just plug it in and select media files for playback. We were impressed by how quick and easy the Video Buddy was to use and reproduction quality on the big screen is about as good as can be expected.

Unfortunately the experience is hampered by the supplied cable being just 1.5m long and therefore unlikely to reach between a television and a sofa. Users will have to keep walking up to the player to adjust settings, though an extension cable could obviously be used to make things slightly easier.

In addition to video, photo and audio playback, iPod Touch users will note that Youtube clips can be streamed wirelessly for playback through a TV.

The Video Buddy is a tidy, reasonably priced device and, in the absence of a (more expensive) iPod dock with dedicated video-out support and a remote control, is certainly a nice way to view video and photos on a TV or play music through a more powerful stereo.

*Paul Lester*

## Verdict

**Pros** Slimline design; easy to set up; decent performance; can stream Youtube videos to a television via iPod Touch

**Cons** Relatively short RCA cable supplied

**Overall** The Video Buddy is a simple way to connect your iPod to the rest of your home-entertainment equipment.

**Features** ★★★★★  
**Performance** ★★★★★  
**Value for money** ★★★★★

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Price:** £29.99

**Contact** Gear4 [www.gear4.com](http://www.gear4.com)

**Specifications** Authentication chip ensures compatibility with new players • Supports iPod; iPod 4F Colour; iPod Classic; iPod Nano 2G; iPod Nano 3G; iPod Nano 4G; iPod Touch • 1.5m RCA cable supplied • Dedicated volume controls

**G**ear4 produces a wide range of iPod accessories and its Video Buddy is a simple way to play media on your iPod on a big screen. The Video Buddy allows any new iPod to be hooked up directly to RCA ports on a television or stereo to enjoy content without the restrictions of the iPod's small screen. Although the iPhone isn't officially supported, Gear4 tells us it, too, should work fine.

The kit takes the form of a small AV module with built-in volume controls (though we're not sure why)