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The Laptop as Recorder, Remote Control Included

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A new Toshiba laptop, the Satellite 5205-S705, comes with an unusual accessory: a television remote control.

The computer is supplied with that channel hopper's best friend because television programs can be recorded directly to its hard drive. The unit is also supplied with software to schedule recording sessions, turning the laptop into a stripped down variation of the TiVo.

Carl Pinto, product marketing director for the Toshiba Computer Systems Group, said the company anticipates that the laptop will be used by business travelers. He also said the laptop was likely to find a following among "space-constrained users" like college students who live in dormitories.

If there is nothing worth recording on regular television, the $2,700 computer (available from www.shoptoshiba.com) can also play DVD's. Conversely, it can create DVD's from television programs or other material recorded onto its 60-gigabyte hard drive that users wish to preserve.

Of course, the thought of the tinny sound offered by speakers on most laptops might be a disincentive. But Mr. Pinto said that the 5205-S705's designers made changes to overcome that potential objection.