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You can install a media player, such as VLC, on to Raspbian, and use that to play videos.

This works fine if you're using your Raspberry Pi as a general computer and giving it occasional multimedia functions.

However, the small size of the hardware, and the fact that it runs silently, makes it a good choice for building your own entertainment center. You could start from Raspbian and customize it to your needs, and this is a good idea if you have any unusual functions in mind. Fortunately for us (and you), a team of hackers have done all the difficult bits of building a media center for the Raspberry Pi, and packaged it for you to use. Follow the guide on page 6 to install the **XBMC** operating system from the NOOBS image.

This uses the popular XBMC media desktop, which is quite different from LXDE, which

you may have experienced on Raspbian. You can play media stored locally or, through the use of add-ons, stream content from the internet. Music and videos can be added to your setup either by attaching a USB device, or directly on to the SD card using FTP (username pi, password raspberry). See below for how to find the IP address.

Perhaps the only piece of configuration you will need is to make sure the sound is sent to the right place. Under 'System > System > Audio Output', make sure that Output is set to Analog if you're using the jack, or HDMI if you're using this.

The J Model B boards have mounting holes to help you keep your entertainment center tidied away.

This is all good, but it's a bit impractical to use a mouse and keyboard to control your telly. The good folks at XBMC thought of this and added support for remote controls. The simplest and most general-purpose way of doing this is via RaspBMC's web interface. Using this, any device with a web browser that's on the same network as the Pi can control the playback.

This is enabled by default, so all you need to do is find out the IP address of the Pi in 'System > System Info' (you should be able to set this to be a static IP on your router). Then, on any other device attached to a network, open a browser and point it to that IP.

If you're a modern sort, and using an Android or iOS mobile device, you should find a selection of apps in the various app stores that can do this with a nicer interface than the HTML pages. A new feature on the Pi 2 Model B allows a software switch to be set in the config.txt which allows additional power to be routed to the 4 USB ports (up to a maximum of 1.2Amps). This provides enough power to drive a 2.5 inch hard drive directly off the Pi. To enable this feature the Pi must be powered using a 2.4A micro USB power supply.

Taking it further

It is possible to take complete control of your TV viewing using Linux, including watching live TV, and recording shows for later. This can be done using *MythTV* (available from www.mythtv.org). You'll need a separate computer with the appropriate cable connections to act as the server.

You can play video files that you have stored on other computers on your network, for example those on a Network Attached Storage (NAS) box. The exact method for doing this will vary depending on how you share the files, but they are configured through the 'Add Sources' buttons. For more information about this, you should check out the wiki at: bit.ly/OOvXb6.

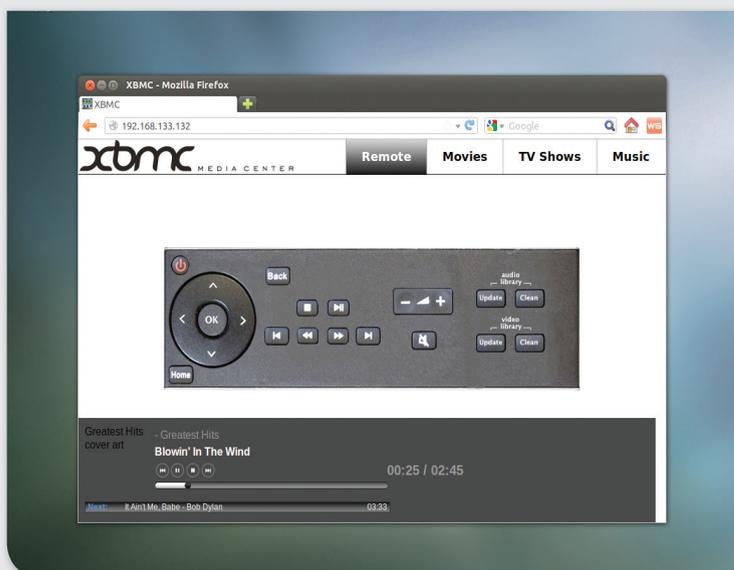
To add the lines to the config.txt you can do the following:

```
Sudo nano /boot/config.txt
```

Add two lines at the end of the file

```
"max_usb_current=1"  
"safe_mode_gpio=4"
```

Then type **Ctrl-O** and **Ctrl-X** to exit and reboot



■ This is the default remote, but other more graphically stimulating ones are available in the RaspBMC settings.