

Osprey® SSR-42R

4:1 3G SDI/DVB-ASI Reclocking Switcher



The new Osprey SSR-42R recently showed up on my desk for testing. First impressions are important, and I have to say that I really like the bold orange and black color scheme! The black lettering on the orange faceplates is very easy to read when making connections or selections. I like the rounded sides as well, versus the all-too-common square black box designs.

This device serves multiple purposes. First, it's an SDI Reclocker. SDI cable length has a practical limit, beyond which the video signal strength degrades and the signal is lost. For longer runs, inserting a reclocker into the signal path rebuilds/retimes the digital signal to full strength for another cable run, basically doubling the practical distance between the SDI source and destination.

Next, the SSR-42R serves as a distribution amp, turning one SDI input into two matching reclocked SDI outputs. The user might send one output to a video switcher and another to an on-set monitor for example. The secondary output may also be routed to an instant replay unit or recorder, or used as a backup source in case of primary cable damage in outdoor locations - the possibilities are many.

What sets the Osprey unit apart from more common reclockers is the fact that it has 4 *switchable* SDI inputs, greatly increasing its usefulness. The user might add 4 possible sources to a video switcher that has only one remaining physical input available, or select from multiple sources to feed an on-set monitor.

Setup and operation is quite simple - there are 4 clearly marked BNC connectors on the back plate for the video inputs, along with the 2 outputs. I appreciate the wider spacing between the BNC connectors - they are not crowded together like some units, which can make twist-on connections difficult.

The mini-USB power input port is also located on the back panel. The included cable features a knurled thumb screw for a positive, locking connection to the back plate. The other end of the cable can connect to the bundled AC adapter or a computer USB port for indoor use. For portable or outdoor use, power can be supplied by one of those inexpensive, readily-available USB battery packs which are popular for recharging cell phones. Drawing only 5v/2.5w, a battery should power the unit for several hours in the field.

I did have issues trying to attach the power cable locking screw with only my fingers. Due to its close proximity to the cable itself, I was just unable to get a good grip on it. Instead, I simply used a small blade screwdriver to screw it down firmly. Of course, the cable will stay put under normal conditions without the locking screw, but it does provide some extra peace of mind knowing it won't get pulled out by accident.

The front panel has 4 momentary push-buttons for input selection, plus a power button that is located apart from the selection buttons to avoid accidental contact. Bright LED indicators directly below each button display status for power and inputs, and are quite easily viewable even from across the room.

A red LED below an input button means there's a valid video source connected to that input, ready for selection. Green indicates the currently selected source, while selecting an invalid source results in a rapidly flashing red warning LED, indicating *no signal*. The fact that the indicator LEDs are directly below each input button is great versus other products which tend to group the selection buttons and indicator LEDs separately. The Osprey layout leaves no doubt as to the current status of any input, even in a dark environment at a distance.

A small remote control is also provided with 5 simple buttons, covering the 4 input sources plus power. The thin little remote actually has larger buttons that would allow use in total dark just by feel. The buttons provide a reassuring click when pressed, and the large, bright LEDs on the SSR-42R face verify selections. I was surprised to find a spare button battery included, in addition to the pre-installed remote battery.

One important thing to note is that the SSR-42R does not synchronize video inputs for a clean switch - the output will show black for about one second every time the input is changed. It's not a replacement for a video switcher - rather, it acts as a video "switch box" that allows you to select from 4 inputs, sending the selected input to its destination, whether a professional switcher or monitor or what have you. But remember that it's much more than a simple switch box, with the signal reclocking and dual outputs included as well.

I ran my tests using 1080i HD-SDI inputs, feeding an HDMI monitor using an HD-SDI > HDMI converter box. There's not a lot to say - it does what it's designed to do. My final thoughts after testing the SSR-42R is that it's a good-looking, well-built unit with thoughtful design features and usability that will meet the needs of many video professionals at a reasonable price point. It has a one-year warranty, along with the Osprey brand reputation to back it up.