



# Using an IR Remote with a Raspberry Pi Media Center

Created by Simon Monk



<https://learn.adafruit.com/using-an-ir-remote-with-a-raspberry-pi-media-center>

Last updated on 2023-08-29 02:17:58 PM EDT

# Table of Contents

Overview	3
Parts	3
• Part	
• Qty	
Hardware	5
LIRC	6
Configure and Test	8
Using Other Remotes	10

---

# Overview

In this tutorial, you will learn how to use an Infrared remote with a Raspberry Pi configured as a media center.

The IR receiver is attached to the GPIO connector on the Raspberry Pi.



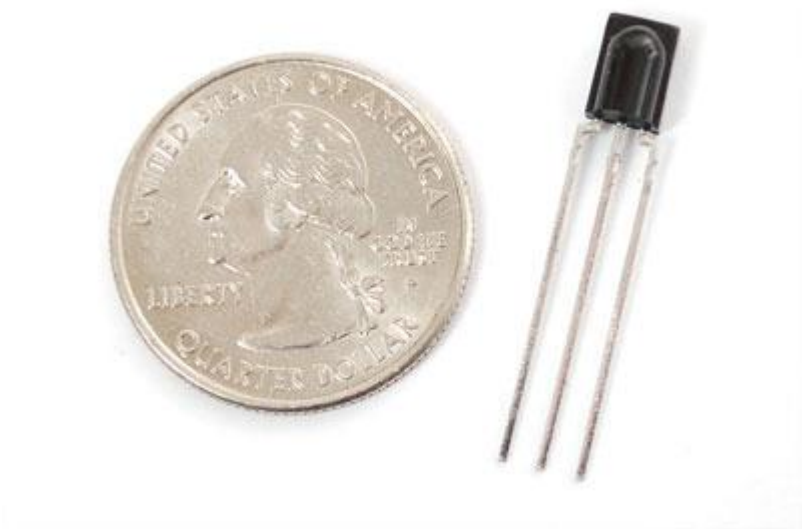
Before tackling this project, you need to follow [this tutorial \(\)](#) to set up your Raspberry Pi as a media center.

---

## Parts

To build this project, you will need everything from the [Media Center setup tutorial \(\)](#) and the following items.

Part  
Qty



IR Sensor <http://adafruit.com/products/157> 1



IR Remote <http://adafruit.com/products/389> 1



Female to Female leads <http://adafruit.com/products/794> 1

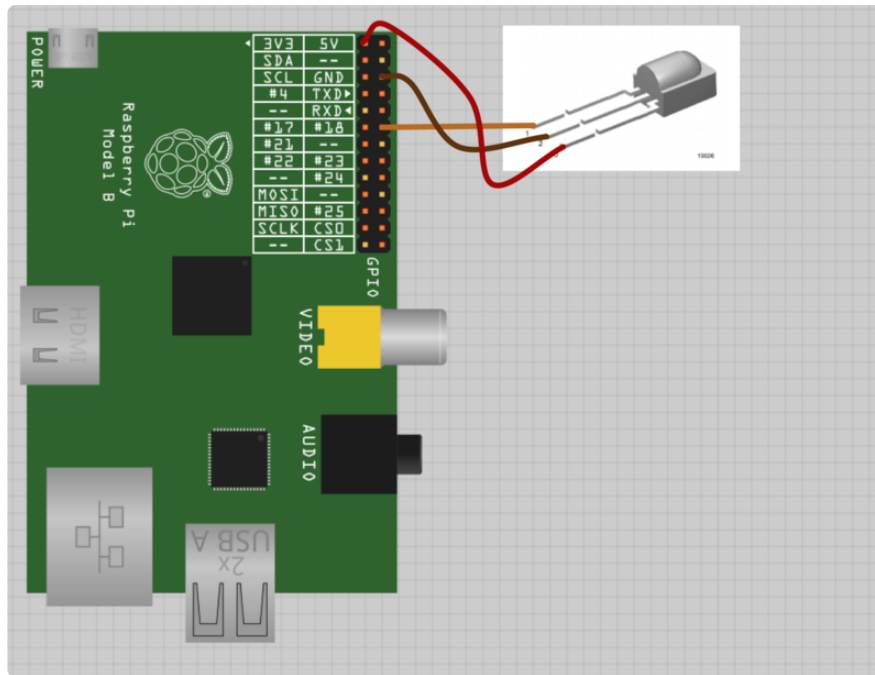
---

## Hardware

The IR sensor has just three pins, that will connect with three pins on the GPIO connector. To do the connecting, we can use female to female jumper leads. These make a good reliable connection as the IR sensor has unusually thick leads for an IC.



Make the connections as shown below. Note that you do not have to use the same colored jumper wires. But selecting adjacent wires that are still in a 'ribbon' will help keep things neat.



Note that the IR sensor chip needs to be operated at 3.3V not 5V when used with the Raspberry Pi.

---

## LIRC

The interface between the hardware and the Raspberry Pi media centre is managed by a piece of software called LIRC (Linux Infrared Remote Control). This is pre-installed on most recent Raspberry Pi distributions and is included in the Rasbmc distribution, so there is nothing to install, however, there is some setting up to do.

To make sure that the IR hardware is correct, we can connect to the Raspberry Pi running Rasbmc using SSH, which is automatically enabled on this distribution.

[If you have not connected to a Raspberry Pi using SSH before, please see this tutorial. \(\)](#)

You can find the IP address of the Raspberry Pi using the XBMC System Info page.



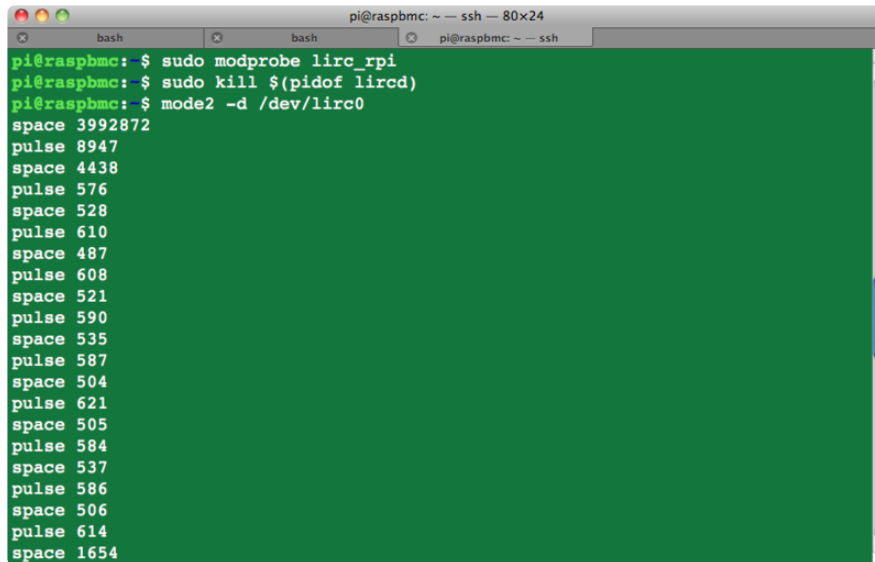
To be able to test the IR receiver without XBMC, you need to make sure that the IR remote feature is turned off, or you will not be able to use LIRC from the SSH. So run the Raspbmc Settings program and make sure that the option Enable GPIO TSOP IR Receiver is disabled.



If you needed to change this you will need to reboot.

Now connect to the Raspberry Pi using SSH and issue the commands shown below:



A terminal window on a Raspberry Pi showing the following commands and output:

```
pi@raspbmc: ~ -- ssh -- 80x24
bash
pi@raspbmc:~$ sudo modprobe lirc_rpi
pi@raspbmc:~$ sudo kill $(pidof lircd)
pi@raspbmc:~$ mode2 -d /dev/lirc0
space 3992872
pulse 8947
space 4438
pulse 576
space 528
pulse 610
space 487
pulse 608
space 521
pulse 590
space 535
pulse 587
space 504
pulse 621
space 505
pulse 584
space 537
pulse 586
space 506
pulse 614
space 1654
```

Now hold the remote in front of the receiver and you should see a series of 'pulse' / 'space' messages appear each time you press a button.

Congratulations! The IR receiver is working.

---

## Configure and Test

Now that we know that the hardware is okay, we need to give LIRC a config file to tell it about the keys on the remote that we are using.

From the SSH session, issue the command:

```
nano lircd.conf
```

... and then paste the following text into it, before saving the file by clicking CTRL-x then Y.

```
# Please make this file available to others
# by sending it to <lirc@bartelmus.de>
#
# this config file was automatically generated
# using lirc-0.9.0-pre1(default) on Thu Mar 14 14:21:25 2013
#
# contributed by
#
# brand: /home/pi/lircd.conf
# model no. of remote control:
# devices being controlled by this remote:
#

begin remote

  name /home/pi/lircd.conf
  bits 16
  flags SPACE_ENC|CONST_LENGTH
  eps 30
```



```

aeps          100

header        8945  4421
one           594   1634
zero          594   519
ptrail        598
repeat        8949  2187
pre_data_bits 16
pre_data      0xFD
gap           106959
toggle_bit_mask 0x0

begin codes
KEY_VOLUMEDOWN 0x00FF
KEY_PLAYPAUSE  0x807F
KEY_VOLUMEUP   0x40BF
KEY_SETUP      0x20DF
KEY_UP         0xA05F
KEY_STOP       0x609F
KEY_LEFT       0x10EF
KEY_ENTER      0x906F
KEY_RIGHT      0x50AF
KEY_KP0        0x30CF
KEY_DOWN       0xB04F
KEY_BACK       0x708F
KEY_KP1        0x08F7
KEY_KP2        0x8877
KEY_KP3        0x48B7
KEY_KP4        0x28D7
KEY_KP5        0xA857
KEY_KP6        0x6897
KEY_KP7        0x18E7
KEY_KP8        0x9867
KEY_KP9        0x58A7
end codes

end remote

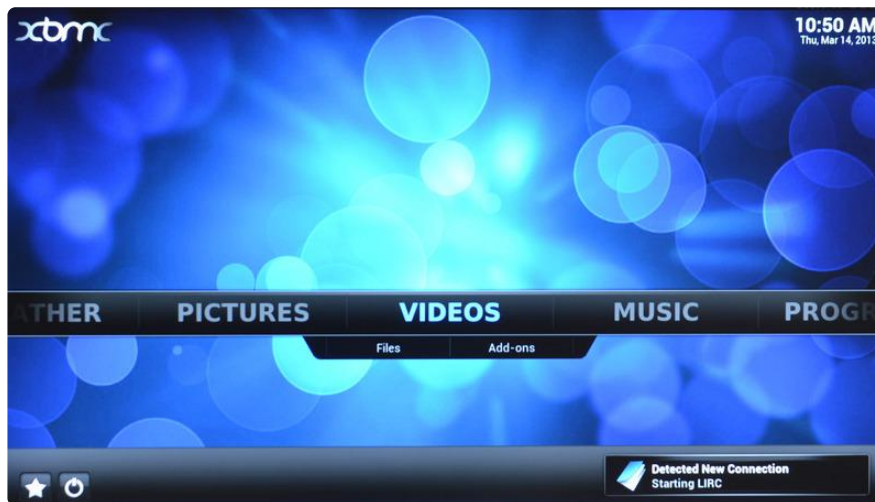
```

This file should be saved in the home directory for the user pi.

Now, return to the Raspbmc Settings program and enable the option Enable GPIO TSOP IR Receiver. At the same time, change the GPIO Remote Profile as shown below:



Restart XBMC and when it has rebooted, you should see a small popup message in the bottom right corner like the one below.



You should now find that your IR remote control will work and that you no longer need the keyboard and mouse to control XBMC.

---

## Using Other Remotes

I generated the config file for this remote using a utility that is part of LIRC called 'irrecord'.

If you have a different remote, then you can generate a config file for it using this tool.

The process is as follows:

- Turn the remote off on XBMC using Rasbmc as we did before using 'mode2'.
- Rename the existing lircd.conf out of the way
- Type the command 'irrecord --list-namespace'. This will tell you the allowed key names that you can use when prompted.
- Type the command 'irrecord -d /dev/lirc0 ~/lircd.conf'
- Follow the instructions to the letter. It all seems a bit odd, but the program has to work out the timings and encodings used by the remote.

```
pi@raspbmc: ~ -- ssh -- 80x24
bash bash pi@raspbmc: ~ -- ssh
Found const length: 106959
Please keep on pressing buttons like described above.
.....
Space/pulse encoded remote control found.
Signal length is 67.
Found possible header: 8945 4421
Found trail pulse: 598
Found repeat code: 8949 2187
Signals are space encoded.
Signal length is 32
Now enter the names for the buttons.

Please enter the name for the next button (press <ENTER> to finish recording)
KEY_VOLUMEDOWN

Now hold down button "KEY_VOLUMEDOWN".

Please enter the name for the next button (press <ENTER> to finish recording)
KEY_PLAYPAUSE

Now hold down button "KEY_PLAYPAUSE".

Please enter the name for the next button (press <ENTER> to finish recording)
```