

Two apps to help you locate broadcast towers

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I have been having some pixelization on my TV picture in the past week or so, and I finally got frustrated enough to get the ladder out of the garage and climb up on the roof to adjust my antenna.

I've been pretty pleased with my [picture quality](#) in general, but a week or

so ago, I started getting pretty bad pixelization and signal breakup from KXAS-TV (NBC5) in Dallas (the media partner of The Dallas Morning News).

I tried rotating the antenna an inch or so either way, but I didn't have a good way to see the signal strength from up on the ladder.

My TiVo Bolt OTA has a signal strength meter, but it doesn't work. Every channel I tune to shows 72% strength, which isn't right.

There is another diagnostic screen on the TiVo that does show the actual signal strength, so I've been asking my wife to stand in the doorway and relay the signal strength numbers while I'm up on the ladder.

I have been using my compass app on the iPhone and a list of antenna [tower](#) locations, showing the compass heading (222 degrees for NBC5 from my house).

I'm not sure why, but at my house, the signal from NBC5 fluctuates by the second. The other major networks' signals are pretty solid.

I found a resource to help on the iOS app store with an app called TV Towers (\$1.99), which can show you all the local towers on a map and point you toward the tower as you rotate your phone.

The app uses your phone's GPS to pinpoint your location to help with accuracy.

The TV Towers app just reaffirmed that I was pointing in the right direction, but I still had some dropouts.

I also researched a signal strength solution involving an HDHomerun external TV tuner.

The HDHomerun is a tuner box that takes your antenna input and uses your home's network to allow you to watch TV through an app on your Apple TV or Roku or even smartphone.

I happen to have an HDHomerun tuner I wasn't using, so I hooked it up to my antenna and downloaded an app called Signal GH (\$2.99) to read the signal strength coming from the towers on my phone's screen in real time.

Now I can be up on the ladder and see the signal [strength](#) of each channel on the phone as I make fine adjustments.

The app showed I had a peak [signal strength](#) of 92% from the NBC5 tower, but I could also see the signal drop every so often to the point that the picture broke up.

I was still having some breakup of the signal, but I reached out to Brian Hocker, vice president of programming at NBC5. He suggested I rescan for channels on my TiVo and see if that helped—and it did. I've had a clear signal on NBC5 for the past 12 hours.

He also mentioned the importance of a well-placed and aimed antenna, as well as watching out for obstructions like new buildings or trees between your antenna and the towers that could cause reception issues.

That's the thing with a digital TV signal—it either looks perfect or it looks terrible.

If you're having issues, try the TV Towers app and make sure you are aimed correctly, and if you still have problems, don't be afraid to reach out to the TV station for some advice. They won't come to your house to aim your [antenna](#), but they will likely give you some ideas to try.

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