

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2428/microsoft-lifechat-zx-6000-wireless-headset>

Microsoft LifeChat ZX-6000 wireless headset

Can Microsoft get you chatting?

by Stuart Miles published on 26 June 2007

Microsoft, perhaps realising that it should do more to sell the fact that you can make voice calls from its instant messenger package Windows Live Messenger, has released a wireless headset. But can it compete against other offerings on the market? We get chatting to find out.

Called the Microsoft LifeChat ZX-6000, the rather large and dated looking headset sits uncomfortably over one ear and offers a pick-up/hang-up button along side volume control. Due to its size, it's actually bigger than a similar device we reviewed from Logitech in 2004, the rubber ear piece sits around your ear awkwardly squashing it. There are two different sized earbands available, supposedly to suit different ears, but even the large one isn't that large.

Rather than fit in your ear comfortably as you would expect from a regular Bluetooth headset, the speaker is large and padded and about the size of a chocolate button. This clearly isn't designed to give you a decent sound and overall the sound quality on this is appalling. Protruding out from the earpiece is the boom mic which has some movement in it.

Once installed, and it's one of those packages that will request you install a plethora of other applications like Microsoft's Internet Explorer tool bar, you can get to the point of making calls. The wireless headset will of course work with any instant messaging application however Microsoft is keen to encourage you to use its service.

Connecting to the PC via the now standard Microsoft dongle, it's the same one that you'll have seen and used if you've ever connected one of the company's wireless mice, keyboards, or controllers (including the Xbox controller) to a PC.



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When it comes to making calls, the audio quality is shockingly poor with the mic producing quiet, muffled and distorted results. Worse still, for some reason the device insists on being the primary sound output for the computer regardless of what your soundcard set-up is.

It's not great for talking on the phone and certainly not great for playing games, hey - that's why you've got those snazzy PC speakers on your desk for.

VERDICT

While those lacking Bluetooth on their computer will warm to the idea that this works wirelessly via a USB socket, the reality is that it's not a great buy.

If you are lucky enough to have Bluetooth installed on your PC then there are better options on the market that sound better, are more comfortable to wear and wait for it, look better as well.

Microsoft has been slow to the game here and the results show it.

At a glance

What is it?

2.4GHz wireless headset

Good

Works via your USB socket

Bad

Poor sound, uncomfortable

Verdict

There are better options on the market that sound better, are more comfortable to wear and wait for it, look better as well

Price £30

Our score

4/10

Your score

3/10