

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2719/blueany-z9-bluetooth-headset-review>

BlueAnt Z9 Bluetooth headset

Should you start putting insects in your lughole?

by Davey Winder published on 12 November 2007

You probably haven't heard of BlueAnt, unless you happen to be Australian that is. Down under it can boast of being the biggest supplier of Bluetooth peripherals in the country.

It has chosen an interesting product to attempt to break into the UK market, and one that has already picked up an innovative design award at the 2007 Consumer Electronics Show.

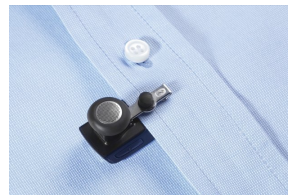
The Z9 is a small, and we do mean really very small indeed, Bluetooth headset: measuring 41 x 17.5 x 11.2mm and weighing just 11g including the removable ear-hook.

Don't mistake small for lacking in functionality and features, or somehow equating to a budget model design either. This is seriously sophisticated stuff all round.

Starting with the design, the Z9 is both stylish in a black finished minimalist kind of a way, and as that award suggests innovative as well. The innovation being that the clear Perspex ear-hook makes the already diminutive Z9 look even smaller on the ear as there is no black band of plastic to add to the perceived bulk.

It doesn't stop there, because you can also wear this headset on your shirt or tie when not in use courtesy of the integrated "clip" which considering the size is an excellent idea as it means you won't be losing it easily.

The real innovation starts when you look beyond the design though and at the technology. The Z9 employs dual microphones together with noise reduction via its patented Voice Isolation technology, a really rather revolutionary proprietary Digital Signal Processor software and hardware solution.



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What this all does is separate the voice signal from any background noise, such as wind or traffic, and both enhances and isolates those frequencies that affect voices coming into and out of the headset itself. It effectively reduces wind and traffic noise while cancelling echo, and in our testing provided superior voice clarity in use both in-car and out on the streets.

Throw in the 2 hour charging time for the Lithium Polymer battery, providing 5 hours of talktime and 200 hours standby, plus a no nonsense 2 year replacement warranty and you'd think BlueAnt have pretty much got the fiercely competitive Bluetooth headset market sewn up. Well, possibly.

There is no doubting that it has all the functionality you need and then some, we really liked the ability to pair up to three phones and have them automatically switch on the fly for example, as well as differing ring tone support. But it also has a few flaws, well one in particular: the ear bud is a one size doesn't fit all design and so is almost guaranteed to never be 100% comfortable.

The Z9 will not slip, thanks to that ear hook, and it isn't designed to be a pure in-ear device. However, custom ear buds would have made the difference between being fairly comfortable and invisible to the wearer.

Still, the fact that the multi-function button that controls all the functionality has a blue ant logo which literally does glow bright blue in use makes up for that.

Who wouldn't want a blue ant in their ear after all?

VERDICT

Small and sexy, packed with innovative technology, and it won't dent your wallet too much either.

At a glance

What is it?

Bluetooth Headset

Good

Audio quality, size, weight, style

Bad

One size fits all ear bud

Verdict

Putting a blue ant in your ear has never been more attractive

Price £59

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10

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The BlueAnt Z9 has winner stamped all over it.