

Sandberg Wireless Keyboard Set

Did this push our buttons?

by Chris Hall published on 19 June 2008

You don't often think that your keyboard plays such a significant part in your daily computer usage. Whilst people get excited about graphics cards and surround sound, it is too easy to overlook the really important things, like the mouse and keyboard that provides all your input.

The Sandberg offering gives you a wireless mouse and keyboard, all centred around a central USB cradle that acts as the wireless hub, whilst also doubling as a neat charger for the mouse. Batteries are included in the box for both the keyboard and the mouse, which, obviously, takes the rechargeables.

Unfortunately it is not a direct plug and play set, so you'll have to install the software, which requires a restart and dumps a couple of icons in your system tray. One of these is a control to customise multimedia keys scattered around the periphery of the keyboard. The second icon was the mouse options, which actually took on an existing mouse installation, so it is worth uninstalling any existing mice.

The keyboard offers a full QWERTY layout, with number pad on the side and function keys across the top as you'd expect to find. Around the edges of the keyboard you'll find multimedia keys that are programmable, and provide access to your everyday functions, like browser, email, favourites, search, media player controls, volume, calculator (very useful), my computer and standby. However, on the programming section there were controls available for two buttons that didn't appear on the keyboard, much to our confusion.

The keys themselves are fairly soft, so you don't get that efficient secretarial clatter as you type, although this doesn't bar you from being able to type at higher speeds. The keyboard itself is flat and straight, which means you have to keep your



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hands higher to reach all the keys with your fingers, bringing more strain into the hands than with a more ergonomic design.

Across the front of the keyboard is a sort of rubberised palm rest which has a tactile feel to it, whereas the rest of the keyboard is smooth. On the underside you'll find two small feet, which will raise the back of the keyboard by approx 15mm, exacerbating the problems caused by being flat, meaning your hands need to be even higher and fatigue increases, so we found it better to not use these legs.

The mouse, however, was no end of trouble. It is very lightweight, so you don't get a convincing feeling as you move it around. There are the standard left and right buttons and the central clickable scroll wheel. The scroll wheel is sluggish and doesn't spin as smoothly as some others. On the left, where you would place the thumb of your right hand, are two smaller buttons set as forward and backwards by default. As these buttons appear together on one side, it is less convenient for left-handers, who will have shift their grip and grope around for these controls.

The mouse sits in the cradle to charge, which is a tidy solution, and to preserve battery life the mouse will go to sleep when not being used. You tap a button to re-awake it, which is efficient on battery life. It is worth considering that because it is rechargeable, if you use a notebook that powers down the USBs when it shuts down, then your mouse will no longer be charging.

You also have to push the mouse firmly into the cradle to get it to charge, otherwise it will just sit there and you'll get frustrated when the battery dies. There is a red LED to indicate that the mouse is charging, but we found it barely illuminated. The cradle also suffers from flashing light syndrome - every movement of the mouse or tap on the keyboard is reflected in a flicking from a green LED. When nothing is happening, it just flashes.

At a glance

What is it?

Wireless keyboard and mouse

Good

Shortcut buttons, quiet keys

Bad

Mouse shape and weight, keyboard suffers poor ergonomic design, flashing LED on cradle, mouse doesn't dock neatly

Verdict

During the course of this review, we stuck with the keyboard, but had to revert back to our regular mouse and that neatly summarises our opinion on the Sandberg Wireless Keyboard Set

Price £25.99

Our score

5/10

Your score

?/10

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at this price point there are many offerings, including from the likes of Microsoft and Logitech, which offer a better design to increase comfort and reduce strain on your hands whilst typing, unless, of course, you are looking for a relatively flat key set. It is liveable, a better solution than a reduce-sized notebook keypad, so would perhaps appeal to that user demographic.

The recharging mouse is a nice touch, but the mouse lacks the quality feel you want. The flashing light on the cradle will also drive you to distraction. During the course of this review, we stuck with the keyboard, but had to revert back to our regular mouse and that neatly summarises our opinion on the Sandberg Wireless Keyboard Set.