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MiShake portable media player

Will you want to shake it by the hand?

by Paul Lester published on 11 August 2008

You could probably count on one hand the number of innovations designed to "revolutionise" a device that works perfectly well anyway that actually end up working. Take an MP3 player for example. Not since Apple and arguably iRiver have we seen a "different" kind of control system really take off, but that is what MiShake is trying to do with its new Shocktronix-based player.

In a nutshell the device contains a motion-sensor that detects movement in the form of a "shake" or a "tilt" to the left or right. This can be used to switch between media files, namely audio, video or photos, if you don't want to use the controls on the 2.4-inch touchscreen display.

In addition to this you'll also find a range of applications that use the system for more practical purposes, such as a digital spirit level, step counter and dice shaker. These actually worked reasonably well though it is unlikely this will swing anyone's favour when contrasted against performance elsewhere.

The touchscreen display isn't particularly responsive and while the quality is good enough to make video playback quite enjoyable, it's often awkward to press the right control with the provided stylus which left us fumbling around with fingernails. Not that there's a lot to browse here, since although it does offer quite a few additional features in the form of a voice recorder, FM radio and text viewer, neither these or the standard media functions offer much in terms of control.

There are some limited graphic equaliser settings for audio but no aspect ratio control for video and even after fiddling with these for a while and replacing the rather poor in-ear buds supplied, we couldn't get what we'd describe as a "desirable" level of audio performance.

The MiShake reminds us of bargain-basement



...cont.

players from companies like Netac and Sumvision that you see shipped in from the Far East. It's packed full of features but none of them work particularly well and unless you're particularly forgiving in the usability stakes you'll inevitably end up frustrated by the experience.

The MiShake appears to be in a pretty early stage of development though: at the time of writing half of the features on the website were labelled as "coming soon", so if the device gets a couple of meaty firmware updates and some interesting new applications to take advantage of the Shocktronix system it may be able to make an impact.

In its current guise though there are too many problems to really recommend it over worthy rivals and performance issues that would be more difficult to solve are likely to leave it confined to the tech-graveyard sooner rather than later.

VERDICT

We wanted to like the MiShake, but the Shocktronix system doesn't add any genuine value to the experience and issues with performance and usability means that for the time being at least, this is one player that's best left alone.

At a glance

What is it?

A media player with a unique new control system

Good

Decent quality screen, range of features

Bad

Unresponsive touchscreen, lack of media control, poor audio performance

Verdict

The MiShake's biggest failure is in not getting the basics right, namely usability and performance. With little appeal from the Shocktronix system itself there's a lot left to do to make this player a success

Price £119.95

Our score

5/10

Your score

?/10