

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/3371/orbitsound-t3-ipod-speaker-system>

Orbitsound T3 speaker

Will this engulf you in sound?

by Stuart Miles published on 15 August 2008

With the promise of creating a stereo sound on the move without headphones, the Orbitsound T3 could either be the best product in the world or something that could be horrible.

The size of a mobile phone, albeit a large one (102 x 60 x 20mm) the Orbitsound T3 is a small black and silver glossy box with a built-in speaker on the front.

The sides sport a power switch and a button that has just three toggles - Off, N, and Max - all very cryptic, we know, and power is provided by the internal battery that you can recharge via a USB cable via your computer or a powerpack.

Connection to an MP3 player or other device is via a 3.5mm jack for which a cable is included in the box.

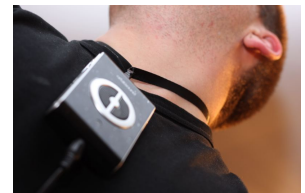
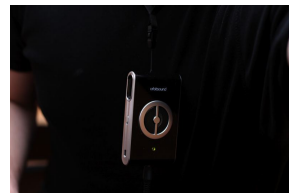
Those random Off, N, Max options stand for the Off, Normal and Max and this controls the level of airSOUND allowing you to adjust its performance.

airSOUND is the magic technology used to make you believe that the single speaker in the device is actually one of many, confusing your ears into believing you are hearing stereo, while at the same time engulfing you in sound.

Call it science or magic, in practice it is one of those crazy technologies that just works. I have no real idea how it does, it just does. Everyone we showed the Orbitsound T3 had a grin on their face like they'd just seen an exquisite magic trick.

Brilliant, "9 out of 10!" I hear you cry. But there is a catch: you've got to wear it round your neck.

Yep that's right. For this device to work effectively you've got to attach an included lanyard in the box, slip it over your neck and walk around



...cont.

looking like something out of a sci-fi movie forcing everyone around to listen to "Now 70", or what ever you happen to have on your iPod.

Ok, so the box says that the T3 will work on any flat surface, but we tried that and had little joy. The results are certainly not as good as wearing it and even if you do manage to think you're hearing a difference it then just starts to sound a bit naff compared to other desk offerings for half the price.

VERDICT

We loved the airSOUND technology in the company's T12 sound bar system for your television.

The trouble is, that while the airSOUND technology works, you've got to look like an idiot to benefit.

This is one of those "great tech" moments that is too expensive and asks too much of the user to benefit. Would you wear this to work? We wouldn't even wear it out of the office.

UPDATE: Following our review of the T3, Orbitsound, the maker of the device, has got in touch, saying our description of how the device works:

"confusing your ears into believing you are hearing stereo"

is scientifically misleading. For those interested. Here is its official explanation of the technology from Orbitsound:

"Airsound technology is primarily based on the work of Alan Blumlien in developing what we now call stereophonic sound, and in the founding principles he defined in 1931. These describe two methods of reproduction; one based on spaced mono signals (left and right channel stereo) and another based on 'middle and side' (M/S) or 'sum and difference' principles (see attached

At a glance

What is it?

Portable speaker

Good

Stereo sound from a single speaker

Bad

Only really works when around your neck

Verdict

The trouble is, that while the airSOUND technology works, you've got to look like an idiot to benefit

Price £70

Our score

5/10

Your score

9/10

...cont.

description). M/S gave rise to the single point microphone configuration favoured by so many classical recording engineers as producing a highly accurate stereo soundfield, without 'a hole' in the middle, but it has never been successfully engineered to produce an equally accurate stereo playback system - until now.

"The basis of Airsound stereo is the M/S binaural principles developed by Blumlein, in parallel with conventional left and right channel stereo. As such it is disingenuous to describe it as, or imply that it is, some form of trickery. I guess a real problem is that we are so use to almost always hearing stereo sound as emanating from discrete left and right sources (rather than hearing it in the intended accurate - but very limited - sweetspot) that that is what we imagine it should sound like; as opposed to actually sounding like a group of real instruments on a stage, for example, which is the sound image that airSOUND will reproduce."