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Motorola EQ3 compact folding speaker

Time to get down in Moto town?

by Chris Hall published on 15 September 2008

At the bottom end of Motorola's new EQ speakers is the EQ3, which falls under the Motorokr banner. They are described as a "compact folding speaker" which is, to be fair, an accurate description. But can they offer anything to get excited about?

The EQ3 look a little awkward, like a premature Transformer, with the ends housing the speakers. The centre section will let you slot four AAA batteries into the rear for power. Hiding in the battery bay is also the short cable for hooking up to a 3.5mm-equipped source. The top features a power switch, backlit with a blue LED when turned on. When we first saw these speakers we did stifle a laugh, because they do look a little, well, rubbish.

Also in the box is a long extension lead, which Motorola describe as an "FM extension cable", i.e., for those players with a radio that would normally use the headphones to pick up a signal. We hooked it up to a Creative Zen Mozaic and found that it worked very well.

With little else to talk about, let's move swiftly on to performance. We weren't expecting much from these speakers to be honest, with a market full of cheap and cheerful MP3 speakers in all shapes and sizes we thought this would be just another number. Well, very nearly isn't. In fact, it's close to being pretty good.

The thing that works in the EQ3's favour is the folding design. Rather than having two flat speakers throwing gravelly tunes out, you can set the speakers to any angle you like, meaning you avoid some of the inherent problems with small speakers. The result is a better overall performance. Granted, this is incomparable to other portable speakers and doesn't compare to either a set of headphones or a proper set of speakers, but it's not bad: certainly we think it is



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better sounding than the EQ5 model.

Ok, there is no trickery here it is just a compact stereo speaker set. Motorola claim this is down to "high-excursion drivers", "neodymium magnets" and "ferrofluid cooling". We tried a range of tracks with the speakers and were generally impressed - ok, so Leftfield's Phat Planet didn't really come out too well, but it did justice to Kayne West's Stronger, again a little weak in the bass, which is its real problem with this type of speaker.

You'll also find distortion at higher volume levels, but this will be partly down to the level put out by your player. The cited battery life is around 12 hours.

VERDICT

Speakers can be had for a lot less money and at this size can sound a lot worse. For general usage on the road, beach or camping, the EQ3 are a good bet. At £30, the price isn't too bad either.

Yes there are drawbacks - they aren't rechargeable out of the box, lack of bass, no extra features, and the looks are not the best, but thanks to being able to pick the angle of the speakers, you can get some decent results. The extension cable is also an applaudable move, because it means you still get those radio functions that might otherwise not have been possible.

At a glance

What is it?

Portable speakers

Good

Reasonable performance for the size, FM extension cable, flexible speaker angle

Bad

Lacks bass, design might deter some

Verdict

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Price £29.99

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10