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Microsoft SideWinder X5 mouse

Will this mouse appeal to gamers?

by Chris Pickering published on 8 December 2008

After a number of gaming mice emanating from Microsoft intent on claiming the higher priced end of the gaming market, the SideWinder X5 is the first attempt at cracking the budget end of the mouse buying public.

The SideWinder X5 is essentially a bare bones version of the SideWinder gaming mouse that appeared last year. Gone is the daft LCD screen that told you what DPI settings you were currently using, and materials have been almost universally changed in order to slim down the price tag.

The mouse itself, visually, is a long way from appealing. In fact, you could easily go so far as to call it a bit of an ugly duckling. The two underside lights might help those dazzled by shiny things, but for most, this is one to hide away when friends pop round.

Its chunky size certainly feels initially awkward too. For those of you with smaller hands that intend to keep a firm grip on the mouse for extensive periods it may be best to try before you buy. After a short period of use however it does seem to fit in a natural and comfortable grip, assuming your hand span is up to the challenge.

The trim in price tag has certainly affected the overall feel too. The X5 feels a touch too light for extensive gaming use, particularly for fast paced titles. However, the five pads placed on the underside help combat any awkward feel by introducing smooth movement, and the on-the-fly DPI changes certainly go a long way to make the lack of weight a non-entity.

Just under the mouse wheel there are three buttons, each offering one of six preset DPI settings. The option you choose is gaudily lit up, so you're always aware of exactly what setting you are currently utilising. The included software even allows you to save settings for particular



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games which automatically change as you load up each title, which is a handy option if you regularly like to switch from genre to genre.

Tested with a variety of games, the X5 certainly feels more at home with slower paced titles, particularly RTS games. Trying to swiftly target enemies in fast paced shooters proved a little more tricky, with discovering the best setting taking a fair old while. Certainly not the worst offering gaming wise, especially when you get your most fancied settings all locked in, but not the best currently on the market.

One major plus for those of you with sweaty palms is the moisture resistant coating. It's a horrible fact of life that lengthy gaming sessions do usually create a lot of moisture that on most mice feels disgusting. Here it is completely eradicated, meaning that the mouse always feels as if it's just been ripped out of the box.

VERDICT

The stripped down SideWinder X5 is a pretty handy mouse, with enough features to encourage at least a try.

But, the awkward feel for those of you not packing huge hand spans, and the slightly cheap and lightweight feel only nudge the score a few points downwards.

At a glance

What is it?

Gaming mouse

Good

Moisture resistant coating, constantly smooth movement

Bad

Bulky frame not for everyone, feels a little lightweight

Verdict

A decent mouse, but not the best on the market for the true gamer

Price £49.99

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10