

## Jabra SP700 Bluetooth speakerphone

### Calls through your car stereo

by Chris Hall published on 31 December 2008

Sometimes you just don't want to be encumbered with a Bluetooth headset hanging out of your ear, especially when driving and listening to your radio. There are ways around this, and the Bluetooth speaker is elbowing its way in, offering increasing features to appeal to those looking to make calls on the move. We have seen good and bad examples over the past year - so where does the Jabra SP700 lie?

Out of the box Jabra have gone for a sleek design backed by a strong wire clip that will keep the unit securely attached to your sunvisor. Slipped into place, it stayed put which is the first key ingredient - it is no good if it shakes around distractingly or wobbles once you start driving.

Buttons are essentially kept to a minimum, with the leading edge of the device acting as a large multifunction button, meaning you barely have to glance at it when on the road. Around the sides you'll find an FM button and a volume control.

That front area of the speaker also hides a number of LED icons to give you the status. When a Bluetooth connection is made to your phone, you'll get a symbol to tell you, as well as a spoken confirmation of your connection. You also get an indicator for the second major function of the speaker, which is the FM connection, which we'll come back to later. There are also symbols to indicate call and battery status. These icons can be switched off for night driving too, which is a clever feature.

Connection to our BlackBerry Curve was easy and setting to automatic connection was the simplest approach, meaning that simply getting back into the car saw the device connected without having to press anything.

Pressing the FM button launches the FM transmitter which will allow you to divert



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everything over to your car stereo and the frequency will be announced. This frequency is automatically selected, but if you find it is not clear enough, you can manually scan for a better option. This not only means that you receive calls through your car's speakers, but you can play music from your phone so when calls come in the music is cut out. It supports A2DP so you'll get the full advantage of your stereo music too.

This does mean that the on-board speaker becomes redundant. Jabra have opted for a traditional style of speaker rather than the flat panel NXT type found on the Bluetrek or Parrot MINIKIT Slim devices. We have not been so enthusiastic about NXT speakers and in truth, you don't gain much extra thickness here, and whilst the sound quality is not brilliant, size needs to be taken into account. The advantage of the traditional speaker is you don't get the same shrill sounds you typically get from NXT.

Volume is reasonable and whether you can use it whilst on the motorway will depend very much on the soundproofing of your car. We found the speaker a little quiet for music when on noisy routes in a diesel VW Passat, however the FM transmitter does negate that problem. Calls tend to be much louder than music, and we found that generally we had no problem hearing callers, but things can be a little boomy.

In practise it all works very well, and once your music has started, you can just leave your phone alone, using the main button to accept calls, as well as using the voice dialling feature in your phone, the experience here will depend very much on your handset. In this sense it falters against the Parrot MINIKIT Slim which has excellent contacts transfer and voice control.

The supplied Quick Start Guide is as good as useless, so to get the most from the SP700 you'll need to head over to the Jabra website and download the full thing, where you'll find all the functions that the speaker supports, link below.

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## At a glance

### What is it?

Bluetooth speaker and FM transmitter

### Good

Compact, simple to use, price

### Bad

Features depend on mobile phone, no contacts recognition, sound quality can be a little boomy

### Verdict

A nice alternative to the Bluetooth headset, but make sure you download the full guide to discover all the features

**Price** £49.99

**Our score**

**8/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**

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There are a variety of combinations to master, such as a double tap for redial, but generally it is pretty easy to use. Beeps and voice confirmation provide the assurance that you have done what you intended, voice responses can be turned off too if you don't like them.

To keep things clear Jabra have included their normal array of noise reduction and echo cancellation which in practise works fairly well. As said, callers tend to sound a little boomy through the speaker, but reported no problems with quality from their end, but could tell that we were hands-free.

Charging is via Micro-USB on the side of the unit. You'll find that the moulding around the socket is rather tight, so check before setting off with just your mobile phone charger, as it might not physically fit. The supplied 12V car charger/USB cable does get round this problem however, and with Micro-USB becoming the standard for mobile devices, you should have no problem charging in the car. You do get a cited 14hrs talk time - better than most mobiles, and 255hrs standby, about 10 days, and we would say this is about right.

## **VERDICT**

A neat little package from Jabra, and at a price that is more than reasonable too. From a driving point of view we have always found a speaker phone to be less distracting than a headset, with the added advantage of not having it stuck in your ear.

If this had the contacts features that the Parrot MINIKIT Slim has, then this would be close to perfect. Unfortunately it misses out on that great feature. The FM transmitter is also preset to various stations before you get around to manual scanner, unlike the Motorola T505 which will select a clear frequency for you.

Overall though, a nice alternative to the Bluetooth headset, but make sure you download the full guide to discover all the features.