

What's New!

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AUD Mini6 Party

When you have a party, you want music. And how do you get it? Not with your iPhone, at least not if you want to hear it above the party noise! Instead, you use the AUD Mini6 Party external Bluetooth speaker.

This is a really neat device! It plays your music, of course, from your iPhone, other smartphone, your Apple smartwatch, an MP3 player or any other device that has Bluetooth capability.

Bluetooth has been around for quite a while but has improved over the years to the point that today it transmits data faithfully. It still requires pairing with your device, but that's pretty easy. Once you have your device turned on with Bluetooth running on your iPhone or whatever, you look under Bluetooth in Settings and wait for the two to hook up. It usually takes a minute or so.

Once paired, you can play your songs through the AUD Mini6 Party. You do this for several reasons.

First, the quality of the songs is much better than through the iPhone alone. While the sound is quite good from the iPhone, considering the size of the speakers (tiny), it can be much better. This external speaker gives you higher highs and lower lows, for more enjoyable listening.

Second, the volume through the iPhone tends to distort as the volume increases. If you are having a party, or just listening on your patio, you will want more volume without distortion. The AUD Mini6 Party gives you just that. I tested the frequency response with several of my songs, testing both the distortion at low frequency and at high frequency. I noted some distortion at low frequencies, but none at the high end. The stated frequency response range is 200Hz to 20KHz.



AUD Mini6 Party

Third, you can answer your calls through the speaker, even if your songs are playing. There is a microphone built in to the speaker so you can hear and respond to a phone conversation.

Fourth, the controls are the essence of simplicity! One button turns on the speaker (a sound tells you that there is a connection with your phone), another increases volume, another decreases volume, each also moves forward or back to other songs. There is also a button to press when you receive a call.

Fifth, a delightful feature of the AUD Mini6 Party speaker is the lighted panel, which not only changes with volume levels, but also presents a changing display of colored lights to enhance your listening pleasure. A last button allows you to change the display to seven different ones, or to turn off the display.

The design of the speaker is compact. The unit I was given to review is black, about an inch thick and its length and width are about the same as an iPhone. It's easy to handle and to pack.



The kit includes speaker, cable for charging the internal battery and a Quick Start Guide. The QSG is brief and contains mainly pictures rather than text. The contents are printed in English and seven other languages.

About: AUD Mini6 Party

Manufacturer: iLuv
www.iluv.com

Price: \$40

ScreenGuardz with The Crown

So you bought a new smartphone and want to protect the screen from scratches and other damage. Consider ScreenGuardz for this.

The package comes with three parts: a screen protector layer; an aluminum rim; and an align tray.

The screen protector is tempered glass with





rounded edges. It is chemically hardened to provide maximum impact and screen protection. It has rounded edges to match the corners of the iPhone6.

In order to protect the rounded corners of the screen protector layer, the kit includes a thin

aluminum frame that fits exactly over the frame of the iPhone. It keeps the screen protector edges from fraying.

One of the best features of this product is the alignment tray. For other products, you must first clean the screen of dust and moisture (have to do that here, too), then wet the screen with a special solution and wet your fingers, as well. Last, for other products, place the screen protector exactly over the iPhone's screen, sliding it into place and squeezing out the bubbles.



For this product, though, the alignment tray saves you all that mess. You place the tray over the iPhone, press to attach the protector, then remove the tray with the provided tab. This is an extremely simple, effective and unique method of attaching the screen protector to the screen.

When you are done, which should take only a few minutes, you have a sleek, protective cover for your screen that will give you maximum protection.

While the product I was given to review is for the iPhone 6, versions are also available for iPhone 5, several iPads and several Galaxy products.

About: ScreenGuardz with The Crown

Manufacturer: BodyGuardz

www.bodyguardz.com/the-crown

Price: \$35

National Association of Broadcasters

NAB is an interesting show. If you've ever wondered how they do that stuff on TV, this is the place to find out.

The primary products being presented are hardware and software, no surprise!

The hardware includes video cameras, lighting equipment and transport cases. The software includes what you need to prepare your nightly newscast, spruce up the weather presentation with live info, use green-screening in a way that puts the announcer in a wholly different environment (3-D). There were a lot of drones, too!

If you watch the evening news, you may sometimes see the video operator with a large camera device on wheels, with steering handles out on the side. There were many of these on exhibit. There were several vendors with five or six of these large units trained on a display room with a model or two (good-looking, of course) reading a book or whatever.

The video cameras were focused on various parts of the room which had an array of objects with many brilliant colors. The presentation was aimed at showing you how each of the different pieces of video equipment showed off the display room on the video camera's TV, but also on a large monitor placed below.



Lighting equipment includes a broad array of lights, reflectors, cabling and enhancers. Each of these shown by many vendors. The lights themselves ranged from very bright illumination to multi-LED apparatus. Most were designed for indoor use, but some were clearly for outdoor. The TV reporter "on-site" type of presentation comes to mind.



Transport cases are required to protect the valuable hardware when in transit from one place to another. They vary from those for handheld cameras to those to protect the large video cameras used on TV.

Each case is filled with tailored padding to fit a particular physical device, surrounded by shock-proof material. The exterior is hard plastic to survive the hard knocks that occur in transport. Latches and locks complete the package.

The software packages available to broadcasters ranged from those that provide real-time data and pictures about weather to full-scale 3_D sets in green screen. The latter was really impressive. The demo used election results from the most recent presidential election. Each state had vote totals changing before your eyes and even county data was available.



One company had a green screen application that put the announcer into a vivid newsroom set with display panels showing active pictures of sports (all green screen, remember). One impressive part was the ability to use an elevator to descend a couple of floors below the set for a different subject. Again, all green screen, not real. The announcer could also place a display panel in front of him, pick it up, turn it and move it to a different location.



I was impressed with these software

applications. No price was available, but I assume that they are not cheap. Technician training also has to be paid for.

The many drones on display were interesting as news and information gathering units. Each of the drones had camera attachments on gimbals, so that not only could the drone be maneuvered here and there, but the camera could be oriented in any direction from a handheld control unit.



One of the interesting camera lens displays showed some 55 detachable lenses, from small to huge!

An unusual aspect of this show was that that few of companies were ones I recognized. Even the largest vendor spaces were by companies unknown to me. There's a world out there that's not well known outside the industry!

About: National Association of Broadcasters

Sponsor: National Association of Broadcasters
www.nabshow.com

FreeCast and RabbitTV

I received a card at CES for free registration for FreeCast. I had some trouble figuring out what sort of service it is.

It appears to be a source for free TV, movies, radio, sports, games and more.

The TV shows available are not just network regulars, but also cable shows. You can pick a particular show and see episodes of it for free. There are interspersed ads, of course, but that's no different than real TV. You can search for your favorite show and watch episodes of it.

I watched parts of *U-571* and *Harry Brown* movies for free. Each came from Crackle through Rabbit TV, an associated company. There was, at the time I was browsing, a selection of many movies in several genres. The movies are uncut, but have interspersed commercials.

Some of the movies come from satellite services. To see these, you have to be a member of that service.

One of the big advantages of FreeCast is the ease of finding what you want to watch. Most of the time you want to watch immediately, but for some you can also download the offering.

This service used to require a USB unit which cost \$10, but apparently there is enough income available from ads and commercials to fill the gap.

This is an interesting service. While it doesn't take the place of your TV set, it is convenient and very low cost.

About: FreeCast and RabbitTV

Manufacturer: www.freecast.com and www.rabbittvgo.com

Price: Mostly free

Jam Audio Transit Earbuds

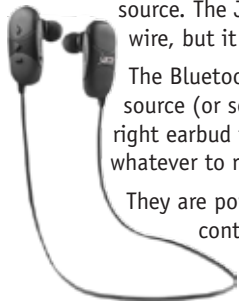
There are many earbuds today available from which to choose. What makes the difference between them? Usually, not much.

The Jam Audio earbuds have a few features that make them outstanding.

The major one is that there is no wire connecting them to your audio source. The Jam earbuds are wireless by Bluetooth. There is a wire, but it joins the left and right earbuds. That's it!

The Bluetooth process to hook the earbuds up to your audio source (or sources) is called pairing. You press a button on the right earbud then wait a few seconds for your phone, tablet or whatever to recognize the Jam and you're good to go.

They are powered by a rechargeable lithium-ion battery contained in the left earbud. The USB cable comes with



the earbuds. Charging takes a couple of hours but then they are good for 6 hours or so of continuous use.

You can wear the Jam earbuds while you exercise, if you want. They won't fall out of your ears, nor will they be affected by sweat.

The right earbud has three buttons on its side: Play, reduce volume and increase volume. The latter two buttons can also be used to advance or go backwards for selection if you hold for two seconds.

The last advantage is that the earbuds will also receive calls and you can talk through them. They're not only a receiver, but also a transmitter.

So forget that cord to connect to your iPhone, tablet or MP3 player (it's always too short, right?), get Jam earbuds instead – no connecting wires. They come in red, blue and gray.

About: Jam Audio Transit Earbuds

Manufacturer: Jam Audio
www.jamaudio.com

Price: \$40

808 Thump Bluetooth Speaker

This is an amazingly small Bluetooth external speaker. It's only 2 ½" tall and 2 ½" in diameter! But what a sound!

First of all, like all the external speakers I've tested, it uses Bluetooth wireless technology to transmit signals from your MP3 player, tablet or cell phone to the unit. In order to use this, you "pair" one with the other. The speaker emits a signal which your playing device recognizes. The name of the speaker shows up in the list of Bluetooth devices and when you click on it, the two devices can communicate with each other.



Bluetooth has a nominal range of about 30 feet, but objects in between sending and receiving devices may limit the range somewhat.

Thump provides surprisingly good sound from its small size. I tested high and low frequencies and found that there is no distortion I could notice at high frequencies. This may be because my hearing is impaired and probably couldn't hear any distortion! I did notice some distortion at very low frequencies at high volume.



The product comes with the speaker, a charging cable (micro-USB to USB) and a small *Quick Start Guide*.

Charging takes a couple of hours, which provides up to six hours of playing time.

The back of the speaker has two connectors and two LEDs. One LED shows the status of the Bluetooth connection. The other lights when charging is in process. When charge is complete, it turns off.

One of the connectors is Aux In, used when you want to use a different source than Bluetooth.

The base has two buttons, one for On/Off and one to initiate pairing. Pairing is started automatically when you first start up the speaker. You would only need to initiate pairing if you wanted to pair with a different or additional device.

This is a great, compact external speaker, available at a very reasonable price.

About: 808 Thump Bluetooth Speaker

Manufacturer: 808 Audio
<http://www.808audio.com/speakers/thump/>

Price: \$20

TCS Member Incentive Program

What is it?

It's **YOU!**

A current member of the *Tucson Computer Society* sharing the value of your membership with others.

Have you ever posted a question to the ListServ and received an answer that saved you money (or time)? Or maybe learned something by just reading others' postings?

Have you ever enjoyed a presentation at a SIG or General Meeting? How many times have you learned something you'd not otherwise have known or discovered tricks in your own software – all due to your *TCS* membership?

Be honest now – surely you aren't the only person you know with that same curiosity, the same questions or a similar need. Help others you know by giving them the gift of knowledge. Members with three new members to their credit in a twelve-month period will receive a reward.

Your reward?!?

(besides that warm fuzzy feeling?)

A \$50 Gift Certificate.

So *share* TCS. Your friends will thank you *and* you gain \$50!

– Grow the Society –

! WIN – Expand Others' Knowledge – WIN !