

## Gadgets: Good earphones, good price

August 27 2009, By Gregg Ellman

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Ultrasone announced a new set of headphones called the Zino. Just like anyone else, I plugged them into my iPod and hit play before I knew any specifics on them. From then on, I didn't want to take them off.

Not only was the sound clear and natural, they also are the most comfortable headphones I've ever tried on.

The headphones' design is simple and useful for portability. When not in use, they easily fold up for storage in the included hard carrying case.

The adjustable headband is made with a gunmetal black brushed finish and the ear cups have an aluminum finish.

What delivers the sound are two powerful 40mm gold-plated drivers. The system uses S-Logic technology, which delivers the sound in a way that's directed to the user's outer ear. Ultrasone claims this help reduce sound pressure on the eardrums by about 40 percent.

If that doesn't confuse you, then knowing the company also says the Zino features MU-Metal shielding (ULE technology), which reduces the amount of radiation directed to the listener by up to 98 percent compared to conventional headphones, should.

"Music lovers, concerned about the effects that ear buds have on their hearing, will be glad to know (with the Zino) they have a safer and better sounding headphone," said Paul Taylor, President of Ultrasone Inc. in a recent press release.

The bottom line is simple: They sound and look great for a decent price.

Details: [ultrasone.com](http://ultrasone.com), \$99 at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

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If your desk is anything like mine, you'd do most anything to clean up the cables and clutter.

Somehow, no matter what I do, the clutter always comes back but Dexim's MacHub Dock Station can solve part of the problem.

The multi-purpose desktop device gives users three additional (on top of what your computer has) USB ports, one mini [USB port](#), a docking/charging/syncing port with an Apple 30pin connector for iPhones or [iPods](#) and a SDHC card reader. All of this is packed into the 3.75-inch wide unit, which is built in an aluminum case.

Specifically, the docking port is on top, two USB ports are on the right side, one is in the back and the mini is on the left with the [card reader](#). Also on top are three indicator lights to show when the unit is powered up, a card is in the reader and when an iPod/iPhone is docked.

The AC adapter acts as a dual device, since it not only powers the station, but also has a USB port for charging an electronic device. This can include cell phones, digital cameras or anything else able to charge with a USB cable.

The multi-function power supply makes for a nice travel gadget since most any device can be charged via USB, thus eliminating the need to bring separate chargers.

All iPod and iPhone models can be docked for charging and non-

dockable units (shuffle or any other MP3 player) can be connected via USB for charging and syncing. Users must take their units out of any cases before docking them.

Since the iPods have changed sizes over the years, Dexim has also included an adjustable bracket on the top to ensure any unit docked will have a close and secure fitting.

All the necessary cords are included along with storage sack. Dexim even puts a nice touch on the cables by including Velcro ties to ensure the cable clutter is kept to a minimum.

Details: [dexim.net](http://dexim.net), \$54.90

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A portable speaker from cy-fi allows hands-free iPod/iPhone use through a wireless speaker.

The speaker broadcasts sound in CD-quality via Klear technology. It was created for bikers and reduces the danger of biking while wearing headphones.

Two mounting brackets are included with the speaker kit, one small and one for larger mounting devices. Just determine the diameter of where you'll mount the speaker, choose which bracket will fit best and connect it in seconds.

From there, just tighten them on with the locking key inserts. They include rubber spacers inside the bracket for a proper fit and to prevent scratches.

Measuring about 4.75-by-4-by-1 inches and weighing just a few ounces,

it's not difficult to find a spot on any bike that is out of the way. Since the speaker has a wireless range of about 30 feet, users can find it useful for other possibilities including baby strollers, tents and even lounge chairs for poolside sound.

If multiple speakers are purchased, a single iPod can broadcast music to up to four cy-fi speakers.

Once you have the bracket mounted, speaker charged (power adapter and dock included) and your iPod ready, connect the iPod transmitter to the unit and the connection is made.

The speaker has simple buttons on the front for power, volume, forward/back and indicator lights for charging and power. It takes about two hours for a full charge, which should give about six hours of speaker time.

In addition to the iPod model, a Bluetooth version is available for other portable media players.

Details: [mycyfi.com](http://mycyfi.com), iPod/[iPhone](#) is \$159 and Bluetooth \$149.

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