

Sonoro Elements W Wi-Fi Internet radio works without a computer

August 7 2009, By Jim Rossman



The Sonoro Elements W Wi-Fi Internet radio (\$499.99, sonoro-audio.com) is a smallish, glossy black or white clock radio with some standout features.

First off, the radio connects to your Internet connection through ethernet cable or [Wi-Fi](#) (802.11b or g), so I don't need my iPod or computer to listen to music in the living room.

The connection is used to tune into more than 16,000 streaming Internet radio stations.

Browsing to choose a radio stream can be daunting. Luckily, there is a search function, so if you know you want to listen to Cajun music from public radio station KRVS, you can search for those call letters instead of scrolling through thousands of stations.

You can also search by genre.

Internet streaming is going to sell a lot of these radios. Not having to drag out a computer and connect it to a home stereo is a big plus.

Even better is the ability of the Elements W to stream Pandora stations.

Pandora (pandora.com) is a free Internet music site that creates personalized radio stations based on a song or artist. Pandora takes your suggestions and programs music it thinks you'll like -- and it does a pretty good job.

Users can save their stations on the Pandora Web site for later listening or even to share with friends.

Once you sign up on the Web and register your serial number at mysonoro.com, your Pandora channels appear on the radio, ready for you to listen.

Because the radio is on your home network, you can also set it up to stream your music collection from shared folders on your computer.

The Elements W is also a very nice bedside clock radio with FM tuner (sadly, no AM) and an optional iPod dock (\$80).

There are 10 channel presets for FM or Internet streams.

The Elements W is a bit unusual in that it features a single, upward-

facing speaker.

If you'd like to connect external speakers, there is a standard 3.5 mm headphone jack on the back. There is also an aux-in port to connect a CD player or other source.

The Elements W also has a credit card-size remote control and an OLED screen that's dimmable but still might be too bright for bedside use.

I like to unbox a new toy and start playing right away without reading the directions. Unfortunately, that was not possible with the Elements W.

I pored over the radio for a full five minutes and still could not figure out how to turn it on.

The Sonoro logo on the radio's face is the power button. Touch the logo with your finger for a second and the unit springs to life. Control of the radio is done through a ring of navigation buttons.

If you hate navigating through menus and numerous choices, you might not appreciate the Elements W. I had to consult the manual more than once to figure out the choices.

Once I set it up, operation was straightforward.

The sound is good, but not outstanding. There's only so much sound that can come out of one speaker.

Bedside operation is helped by a row of buttons on the top to turn the alarm on and off, set the volume or invoke a snooze alarm.

Overall, the Elements W is a solid clock radio with a lot to like.

Price: \$499.99

Pros: Internet streaming, iPod dock, Pandora. Looks great.

Cons: Complicated menu, display too bright, single speaker, expensive.

Bottom line: The Elements W combines many good features with a few outstanding ones. It's a solid music source.

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