

Gadgets: Affordable noise-canceling headphones both fit and sound great

January 22 2010, By Gregg Ellman



When Able Planet sent me a pair of Clear Harmony (NC300B) noise-canceling headphones to test, they included a splitter to compare side-by-side with a pair of any other brand.

My answer to that is, "Why bother?"

They fit comfortably and produced great sound right out of the box.

Able Planet is known for superior sound quality and clarity with their

patented LINX [AUDIO technology](#). After just a few minutes you can hear that while blocking out [background noise](#).

A padded adjustable headband, along with padded ear cups, makes for the perfect fit anyone would want, which is especially true when getting comfortable on an airplane, just like I'm doing as I write this.

They are powered by a AAA battery (included), which is managed by an on/off switch on the right ear cup. The cord to connect to any 3.5 mm audio port has an in-line volume control to adjust loudness.

My only problem with them: where were you guys when I spent a whole lot more money on different set of noise canceling headphones?

With a suggested retail price of \$129, it wasn't hard to find them online for around \$80, which is less than a third of what I paid for my headphones.

A hard shell protective carrying case is included along with an airplane audio port adapter.

Details: ableplanet.com

With many of the USB wall chargers on the market you have to dig out the cell phone box and find the [USB cable](#) that came with it. Otherwise it's off to purchase a new one.

The Newer Technology NuPower Charge & Sync device eliminates the need for those cables or having to transport multiple chargers and cables.

It measures just 2 by 2 inches making it an ideal multipurpose charging device for home or when traveling.

Charging the 1400 mAh lithium Ion battery itself is done by simply sliding out an AC plug and plugging it in a wall outlet.

The unit comes with a standard 30 pin Apple cable for iPods and iPhones along with cables for micro and mini USB.

Each cable switches in and out of the charger with ease and one cable can be stored in the charger itself by wrapping it around the unit and tucking the end into a small compartment hidden by an access door.

The syncing part comes into play since they can also be used without the charger. Just connect your device to one end and plug the USB side to a port in a computer.

An indicator LED will illuminate while charging and turn off when complete.

Details: newertech.com, \$39.99

The Microsoft LifeCam Cinema is a multi-function device, acting as a traditional webcam along with having a 720p sensor to capture true widescreen (16:9 aspect ratio) HD video.

While there are many webcams on the market, this one was manufactured with audio and video quality in mind.

The video is captured with an auto focus lens made with high-precision glass elements.

On top of the camera is a digital noise-canceling microphone, which captures crisp audio.

Anytime I have to boot up the Windows side of my MacBook to load software, I'm always waiting for something to go wrong or just be a hassle.

I was pleasantly surprised to have everything load up with ease and work on the first try. The software records the audio, video and still digital images. Multiple applications can work with the camera, including Windows Live Messenger, AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger and Skype.

The camera has an aluminum body and attaches to a laptop or desktop monitor with a flexible stand. A connection is for use via USB.

Details: microsoft.com, \$54.99

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