

Gadgets: BlackBerry wireless headset offers true hands-free calling

October 1 2010, By Gregg Ellman



BlackBerry HS-700

Simple, easy and works very well is how I sum up the BlackBerry HS-700 wireless headset from Research in Motion.

After pairing it up with any Bluetooth-enabled cell phone or PDA, operating the device is simple. Everything is controlled from just one simple button on the side.

I wondered how this one button could control everything but it does -

somewhat.

The HS-700 works by putting your voice in control, providing a true hands-free device once it is turned on by rotating the headset.

Once the unit is on and paired, it walks you through the setup to such features as answering calls by saying "answer."

All the other standard features are done with [voice commands](#).

Voice prompts even let you know when the battery needs charging, which can be done via Micro-USB or AC.

Buttons aren't needed to control the volume as they are also adjusted automatically depending the amount of outside noise in your present environment.

I put this to test by driving with the windows up and down and I must say the volume adjust pretty well.

Advanced noise-cancellation technology built into the headset let all calls be heard in a clear and crisp manner. I never got the dreaded complaints that I can't be heard on the other end.

Included with the headset are five earpieces and a pair of ear hooks to enable all users to get the most comfortable fit.

Details: na.[blackberry](#).com, \$124.95

While it's still a little early for holiday shopping, put the Newertech 7 Port USB 2.0 Hub on your list for most anyone.

Just as the name says, it powers up to seven USB devices including printers, scanners, hard drives or cables need to charge other devices.

It works on both Mac and Windows systems, requires no drivers or software and is powered by the included AC wall outlet plug.

Computer enthusiasts who have multiple hubs will appreciate that this one can connect to additional hubs to support up to 127 devices. While I don't have that many to test, if you do - let me know how it works.

I chose to have it running with multiple (six) external hard drives and each worked perfectly.

The pocket-sized device measure about 3-by-2-by-1 inches and is made with a durable aluminum enclosure.

The seven ports give a full 500mA per port to power most anything, with a data transfer rate up to 60 megabytes per second.

Details: newertech.com, \$27.95

Once you have your iPad, Griffin Technology makes it one-stop shopping for accessories.

The Loop for iPad (\$29.99) lets users position the unit in a landscape or portrait position for hands-free use.

Just rest the iPad in either direction and since the Loop is weighted down, there are no adjustments necessary to keep it upright.

In addition, the cradles where the iPad sits have soft cushioned, non-slip inserts to keep it scratch free.

Accessories such as dock and charging cables can easily be used when sitting in the Loop.

The Griffin A-Frame (\$49.99) for iPad also keeps the media player securely in position in vertical or horizontal positions but also allows it to lay flat for easy access.

It's constructed with heavy aluminum and stands upright or flat, depending on how you want it.

Like the Loop, it has soft silicone cradles to rest the iPad and keep it positioned scratch free. Cables and accessories can also be used with the A-Frame.

For portable protection the FlexGrip (\$34.99) and Elan Passport (\$49.99) are a great combination.

The FlexGrip puts your iPad in durable silicone exterior shell to protect it from most everything that might scratch or dent it.

With it on, the snug-fitting case gives users full access to the touch-screen, ports and controls.

The Elan Passport opens and closes like a book but can store the iPad for traveling in a laptop bag or most anywhere. A tab folds over to keep it closed when not in use.

When it's closed, a soft interior keeps the touch-screen protected, while adjustable straps keep everything in place.

It's nice the straps stretch, so users who also use the FlexGrip can keep it on when using the passport.

Details: griffintechnology.com

GelaSkins are a great choice to dress up many of today's expensive portable [gadgets](#) in style while keeping them safe from dirt, scratches and dents.

The high quality skins (stickers) are easy to apply; for testing purposes I applied it slanted so it had to be peeled off and reapplied.

Without a problem, it set in place after several attempts to get it straight with no peeling or corners lifting.

GelaSkins' site offers a choice of skins for most every portable gadget; cell phones, iPods, laptops, gaming and the fast-growing iPad and eReader category.

Artwork choices include more than 1,000 pieces from over 100 artists, or you can create your own with artwork or digital images.

One of the new series is the new College Humor BustedTees series. This includes artwork from the BustedTees t-shirt collection of humorous sayings, drawings and artwork.

Details: gelaskins.com

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