

# Jambox a boombox for the smart gadget era

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A man listens to an mp3 player through his earphones. San Francisco firm Jawbone has packed the monster sound of a boombox into a pocket-sized "Jambox" that wirelessly adds home-theater sound to mobile gadgets from smartphones to tablet computers.

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The San Francisco firm known for fashionable earpieces for smartphones crafted its trademark blend of art and engineering into an "intelligent wireless speaker."

"We've combined cutting-edge innovations in acoustics and microcomputing," said Jawbone founder and chief executive Hosain

Rahman. "Jambox is not just a new kind of stereo speaker; it's a whole new category of high quality mobile audio."

"We are getting the biggest sound in a small footprint," Jawbone vice president of product management and strategy Travis Bogard told AFP as he balanced a sturdy but stylish Jambox in the palm of a hand.

Jambox easily synchs to Bluetooth-enabled gadgets such as iPod MP3 players, laptop computers, and smartphones and a customizable voice keeps users posted on the Jambox status.

The speakers feature MyTalk software launched early this year to add brains to beauty in the line of Jawbone Icon wireless earpieces designed to be Internet smart and techno-chic.

While Bluetooth headsets have historically been "dumb" devices that handle audio to and from mobile phones based on control buttons, Icons can be customized with mini-applications to do tasks with personality.

Jawbone parent company Aliph dubbed the Icon "the first intelligent headset."

Icons and Jamboxes can be personalized with voice notifications and mini-applications such as speaking text messages or Twitter posts.

The devices can be programmed to tell users phone numbers of incoming calls or how much battery life is left.

Japanese and Mandarin were recently added to MyTalk language choices that include English, French, German, and Spanish.

Aliph envisions adding richer applications to MyTalk, perhaps podcasts or letting people customize earpieces with voices of their children.

Aliph has also unveiled a new "EarWear Collection" of Icon headsets which famed industrial designer Yves Behar, Jawbone's chief creative officer, said "is our most successful product ever."

Icon headsets are priced at 100 dollars and the new models available for pre-order online at [jawbone.com](http://jawbone.com) will be available at US shops this month.

Behar's fashion sense was applied to Jambox, which is available in "Black Diamond, Blue Wave, Red Dot, and Grey Hex." The speakers synch to MyTalk and are priced at 199 dollars.

"We are consuming a lot of music and movies on devices like this," Bogard said as he gestured from his iPad to his iPhone. "You get a great visual experience but not necessarily a great audio experience."

Jambox speakers will hit the global market on November 14, with Apple a main launch partner, according to Aliph. "Apple loved it," Bogard said. "It turns an iPad into a full multi-media theater on the go."

He said networking and communications technology colossus Cisco Systems is also interested in Jambox.

Jawbone and Cisco in October released an Icon headset that bridges mobile phones and Internet telephony networks.

Employees using "Icon for Cisco" Bluetooth headsets can move around taking calls with them as earpieces keep them connected where ever they are.

"We think of this as wearable computing," Bogard said. "Ultimately, you want the coolest devices but want them with the most robust functionality."

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