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Review: AudioEngine W3 wireless audio link

JULY 31, 2012 BY ERIK VLIETINCK 1 COMMENT

The AudioEngine W3 is a wireless audio link with a 16-bit USB DAC on the transmitter side. The W3 can transmit to up to three receivers simultaneously, allowing for a multi-room audio system that comes close to audiophile quality at a low price. I tested the W3 with CD-quality audio in AIFF format and with a battery-powered video microphone at the transmission end, and simultaneously with a pair of powered AudioEngine A5 speakers and a Sennheiser HD650 at the receiving end.

The AudioEngine W3 transmitter/DAC handles USB audio up to 16bits/48KHz with no compression. It will also accept analogue audio via a 3.5mm mini-jack input. For this test, I used the iMac's USB port as my audio source. The iMac was connected to the network with WiFi for the occasion and both the Bluetooth connected Magic Trackpad and Apple keyboard were hooked up. For good measure and to create as much potential interference as I could, I also had my Plantronics Savi 745 connected and on standby.

The marketing babble wants it that interference with the W3 is a thing of the past, while simultaneous "broadcasting" of the audio signal across up to 3 W3 receivers over distances of up to 30 meters is effortless. There should be no dropouts, no static, no noise.

I tried the W3s for a good week. During that time, I tested them with the aforementioned equipment all turned on and with the Sennheiser at a distance of roughly 12 meters — a nice concrete wall in-between to make it a little harder yet.



The AudioEngine W3s performed nicely. Indeed, there was no noise and no static. Occasionally, the speakers would sound a "plop", but the odd thing is they didn't do that when sound was being transmitted. The headphones didn't "plop" at all; the music just transmitted fine. However, a distance of 15 meters and two — instead of one — concrete walls in-between transmitter and receiver was a bridge too far.

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RHINO CAMERA GEAR ANNOUNCES BATTERY HOLSTER

Rhino Camera Gear launches another [Kickstarter campaign](#): Battery Holsters. To have batteries easily and immediately accessible when you need them most, RCG created a hard shell holster that holds two Canon LP-E6 batteries. An integrated belt clip allows you to attach it on to your pants, backpacks, and camera straps.

Battery Holsters will be compatible with Black Rapid straps. The belt clip on a Battery Holster is wide enough to attach to all of their straps securely. Equipped with a 1/4-20 brass insert in the rear of the belt clip, you can attach the optional Black Rapid carabiner and clip it on to virtually anything. Battery Holsters will work with any camera that takes a LP-E6 battery. These include the Canon 5D Mark II, 5D Mark III, 7D, 6D, & 60D. Depending on the funding success, other camera batteries will be added.

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IT ENQUIRER RATING

8.5/10

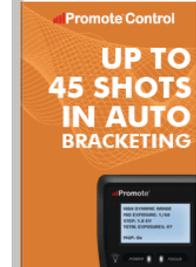
URL: audioin.ch

PROS

- good quality sound
- no static, no dropouts, no noise
- small footprint

CONS

- max. distance of approx. 20 meters without obstacles instead of 30 meters

PRICE (APPROX.): €121.30


My tests with the microphone succeeded fine. I used the transmitter with a power adapter and plugged in the receiver in the iMac's USB port with the audio cable connected to the analogue Line-in input. Obviously, the quality is only CD-quality, but the main thing is that even this setup worked. If you don't need more than 16bit/44.1kHz (which really is CD quality) sound, then you can use whatever device you want to become detached from long cables.

Setting up the W3s to work simultaneously involves matching them. This is done by holding down the button on each device for a couple of seconds until the blue LED doesn't blink anymore.

Although the distance of 30 meters seems to be stretching it a bit, I like the W3s very much. As long as you stay within the maximum distance they perform very well.

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About Erik Vlietinck

Content creator, editor, technology analyst. Publisher of the IT Enquirer, which contains reports, reviews, news, etc., related to content creation and dissemination. I have a proven track record as a consultant/content creator, publisher/editor and reporting analyst on both buyers' and suppliers' side (Ricoh EU, HP Graphics Dept., Easypress and many others).

Comments

ERIC SAMSON SAYS:
[March 30, 2013 at 9:41 pm](#)

The W3 wireless link is a very intriguing device and based on the review, it looks like a good way to play music stored on a computer through a quality sound system. But what about streaming services like Rdio? Is there the same benefit in this case? I'm listening to Rdio using an RCA cable connected to the jack output of my laptop, but the quality is very average. Would the W3 improve something?

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