

Audioengine B1 Bluetooth Music Receiver



I've been struggling with my home audio system. I want to be able to stream audio from my Mac, iPhone or iPad to any of a number of speakers throughout my house. Thus far, I've been doing this by setting up an AirPlay based network with a series of speakers and Airport Express base stations. Unfortunately, I've found the reliability of AirPlay lacking with regular audio dropouts and other odd behavior. I've looked at

installing a Sonos system, but have hesitated because of its proprietary nature and the fact that outfitting my house with a complete system would cost in excess of \$1,500.

The B1 may be a solution because it allows you to add high-quality bluetooth to an existing stereo system or powered speakers. I've seen inexpensive Bluetooth adapters for speakers available for years. I've tried a few and been unimpressed. [Audioengine's B1](#) is very different. The B1 uses a high-quality audio converter and special circuitry and an antenna to provide a superior experience. I connected the B1 to a set of [Audioengine's A2 speakers](#) sitting on bookshelves in my home office that I had previously connected to an Airport Express for AirPlay support. The styling of the B1s perfectly complemented the A2s. In terms of audio quality, I found a significant improvement when using the B1 to stream music and podcasts when compared to the same speakers over AirPlay. The connection was stable and I didn't experience any audio dropouts.

At \$189.00 the B1 is pricey, significantly more so than other bluetooth speaker adapters that can be usually bought for \$50 or less. But this may be an instance where

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you get what you pay for. The B1 isn't designed to be plugged into inexpensive computer speakers, in fact, you won't find a mini-audio jack on it. Instead, the B1 is designed specifically to connect to stereo systems or powered speakers. If you've already invested in high-quality speakers or an audio system, adding a B1 is a great way to upgrade your system to stream virtually any type of audio from your digital devices.

This article first appeared in the August Issue of [ScreenCastsOnline Monthly Magazine](#). ScreenCastsOnline monthly magazine is packed with hints, tips, articles and links to streamable versions of ScreenCastsOnline tutorials and delivered monthly via Newsstand on the iPad. You can find out more at <http://www.screencastsonline.com/magazine/>

November 8, 2014

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