

# SOUNDBITES – LOGITECH WIRELESS Hi-Fi LINK

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## Logitech Wireless Music System for PC £60

Not a name one would normally associate with audio equipment, Logitech are best known for their computer mice, keyboards and webcams. I was, therefore, delighted to find this splendid low-cost solution to the problem of how to link the audio output from a personal computer to a Hi-Fi system, thereby enabling internet radio and downloaded MP3 files to be heard in reasonable quality.

I am quite content to have wires running between the Hi-Fi and the computer on the rare occasions that I want to record from my Hi-Fi system onto my computer, but not when I want to relax and listen to music. Increasingly, a PC is becoming another potential sound source for a Hi-Fi system and Logitech have come up with a very elegant solution – a wireless link that uses Bluetooth technology to transmit the audio from your computer to a receiver connected to your Hi-Fi via standard RCA phono connectors. Bluetooth is a radio standard that, for example, enables mobile phones to link with 'hands free' kits and earpieces.

Apart from the lack of connecting cables, the wireless approach also overcomes potential problems associated with earthing, such as hum loops, that could occur with a physical connection. The wireless range extends up to about 100 metres, which should be more than enough for the average household!

The Logitech system consists essentially of two main components: a combined Bluetooth transmitter and sound card that plugs into a Universal Serial Bus (USB) port on your computer and a Bluetooth receiver and Digital to Analogue Converter (DAC) that connects into the Hi-Fi. The beauty of this unit is that it is not necessary to install any additional software on your PC if you are running Windows XP or Windows Vista, although Logitech do supply some "Music Anywhere" software that can be installed to provide extra functionality, if desired. However, all your existing media players will work with the device since it appears as another sound card on your PC when plugged in.

In addition to the transmitter and receiver, the unit comes with a mains adaptor for powering the receiver (the transmitter is powered by the computer), a USB extension lead and a snazzy plinth to

support the transmitter if the USB port on your PC is not in a convenient location. Finally, there is even a remote control to control the volume and (if the optional software is installed) track selection. Incidentally, the receiver includes a switch to lock the output at maximum, which I would recommend for Hi-Fi applications as this sets the output at a normal line signal level.



Curiosity got the better of me and I just had to dismantle the receiver unit (don't tell Logitech) to see what was inside! This revealed a Wolfson Microelectronics WM8955LS stereo DAC "for portable audio applications" according to the DAC data sheet downloaded from the internet. This is a great little unit with all the facilities on-chip. Its features include an integrated headphone amplifier, which can deliver 40mW into a 16 ohm load, as well as the line outputs.

Installation was simplicity itself. Connect the power adaptor into the receiver and plug the supplied phono leads into a spare input on your Hi-Fi system and into the receiver. Insert the transmitter into a USB port on your PC and you are ready to play some music!

Internet radio is the main reason I purchased this device and is where the Logitech link comes into its own. For example, the internet radio portal site at <https://www.reciva.com/> currently lists over 6,000 stations! Compared to my humble sound card and speakers, playing internet radio through my Hi-Fi was a revelation of how good even modest bit rates could sound. The best I could find from the UK at the time of testing was BBC Radio 3 at 48Kbps 32KHz stereo and that did not sound bad. However, the US gave me 128Kbps 48KHz stereo from KJUL Las Vegas (104.7 FM if you are local) which sounded pretty darn good!

For the price, this device is a real bargain and is more than adequate for streaming current standards of internet radio through your Hi-Fi system.

Contact Logitech on +44 (0)207-309 0127 for product information or visit their website at <http://www.logitech.com>.

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