

Sights & Sounds of Multimedia

George Harding

Prizm

Prizm is a graphing, electronic calculator that can do amazing things.

First things first: the box contains the Prizm unit, *Quick Start Guide*, USB cable, CD-ROM, four AAA alkaline batteries, a protective hard case and a unit-to-unit cable. The *Quick Start Guide* gives you a basic introduction to using the calculator. The print is very small and the examples are basic.

The USB cable connects the calculator to a PC so that work may be shared with others. The hard case covers the face of the calculator to protect it from damage when not in use and to prevent accidentally turning the unit on. The unit to unit cable allows two Prizms to share data and results.

The CD-ROM has a full manual of operation in several languages. This would be your primary reference for operation of the device.

You learn quickly the many buttons on the face of the Prizm are multi-functional. A single press of a button gives the indicated result, but to get one or the other alternate results, you first press the Shift or Alpha button.

Further, the function buttons operate in coordination with the screen display. At different steps in your calculation sequence, the options at the bottom of the screen tell what each function button will do next. Thus, function buttons work differently than they do on a PC.

Also, the calculator operates in a “forward” fashion (as opposed to the reverse entry process of many other calculators) and by successive presses of buttons. If you’re used to the multiple-button press method of a PC, you will have to relearn for the Prizm.

To enter a quadratic equation, for example, you press the following sequence:

Shift = $2x^2 + 3x + 4$

This gives the equation $2x^2 + 3x + 4$.

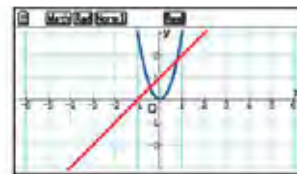
The calculator can solve equations, graph them, show solutions, vary constants, perform spreadsheet, matrix

and statistical operations, and more. It can even perform financial calculations.

The screen is larger than for most graphing calculators, being 8 lines of 21 characters each.



Graph relation list screen



Graph screen

I found the calculator a bit hard to use, mainly because all calculators I’ve used previously have been RPN style. It takes a little getting used to when you need to switch! Another problem I had was the inability to erase the screen of prior work. There appears to be no way to do that. The prior information is retained in memory and appears whenever you go to the same function again.

One nifty process is solving simultaneous equations. You must enter each equation, but then a simple button press solves and displays the results. One way to do this directly is by entering each equation and selecting Solve.

Another nifty feature is showing in graphical mode how two inequalities interact, with the possible answers for each displayed in a different color. The intersection is easily seen on the display.

This is a wonderful tool for math students and others. The graphical display in color makes the work more interesting, meaningful and understandable.

About: Prizm calculator

Vendor: Casio
www.casio.com

Price: \$130 MSRP

Mobi Technologies

The company states its philosophy as, “to bring new and innovative technology while elevating current standards.”

One of their products is Headphonies, portable micro-speakers. These are fashioned as small characters that look as little like a quality speaker as possible! Yet, the character pumps out high quality sound without the tinny distortion that plagues portable speakers.

The character must be charged by plugging it into a USB port. The character kit comes with two wires, one of which has a speaker plug at one end, a USB plug at the other. Just plug it into your laptop to charge it.

The other wire has two speaker plugs, one at either end. This one is used to connect your mobile phone, MP3 player, iPod, laptop or whatever to the character.

The charge, according to the Company, lasts for up to 4 hours and is powered by a lithium-ion battery. The quality of the speaker system is remarkable!

Mobi offers several other products such as thermometers, night lights, video monitors and more.

About: Mobi Technologies

www.getmobi.com



Moovida

Ever encountered a video file that you couldn't play? After downloading it, your regular player stops and gives you the helpful message that the file is either corrupted or in a foreign (unreadable) format. What to do? Download Moovida and your problems are solved!

Moovida is a new media player that plays just about any format. That's good, but there's more... Moovida lets you catalog and back up your collection. And find any movie in your collection quickly. That's good, but there's more ...(cont'd on page 12.)

It provides a database of over 70,000 movies that can be referenced whenever you want to find out about a particular movie.

It can be used for music, as well. Your collection can be catalogued and played at any time. It's easy!

If you can connect your PC to your TV, you can enjoy Moovida and your movies on your TV.

If you have a large collection, Moovida will make a Living Wall of Entertainment, showing all your titles with cover artwork so that you can easily navigate to what you want to watch.



The web site has a free download for you to try out. It is ad-supported. If you want to eliminate the ads, go for the Pro version.

About: Moovida

Vendor: Moovida
www.moovida.com

Price: Free

Yurbuds

If you want the best sound in your ears, try Yurbuds. They are rubber-like covers for earbuds, which the company calls enhancers. The enhancers are designed to fit in your ears so little external sound enters and that you have the best hearing experience ever!

The trial Yurbuds I received were the Iron Man series. These were designed and worn by triathlete Seth Burgett who was training for an Ironman competition. The most important feature is the quality sound, but great comfort is important, too.

The line was designed to stay in place, avoid pressure points and provide a pain-free experience. Running an Ironman event would test any earbuds to their limit. Of more benefit is that Yurbuds are guaranteed not to fall out of your ear!

Another feature that is particularly valuable to runners is the protection for the headphone elements from perspiration. The protective silicone ensures that rain or extreme humidity, as well as sweat, will stay out of the headphones.

The kit I received came with one set of Yurbuds with smaller covers, a larger set of covers and a zippered bag in which your equipment can be stored.

About: Yurbuds

Vendor: Yurbuds
www.Yurbuds.com

Price: ±\$30 for earbuds and enhancers

