

Sights & Sounds of Multimedia

George Harding

Explorist

One of Magellan's popular series of products is the Explorist. It is a rugged, handheld GPS with camera, microphone, and speaker to record all your actions and navigate the outdoors. I received an Explorist 510 for review.

It is a small, handheld unit, but surprisingly heavy. As such, it is quite durable. With this device you can record the track of each of your walks or hikes, create waypoints, take photos and record your thoughts about the location you just visited.

The unit requires two AA batteries. It's best to use rechargeable batteries because the unit uses battery power rather quickly, in my usage. Batteries can be alkaline, rechargeable or lithium. To install or replace the batteries requires removing the unit's back plate. In the battery compartment is a location for an SD card for increased storage.

The screen is touch-enabled so that you can select the various capabilities easily. When the unit starts up, you get a brief video of a group hiking in beautiful country. When you touch the screen, you get the main page, a selection of functions, like Maps, Waypoints, Geocache and more.



If you select Maps, the screen fills with a map of your location and surroundings. If you are moving, the map shows your track along with speed and heading. Each of the four corners of the screen has an icon for Dashboard, One Touch screen, Main Menu and Options.

The Dashboard has a mini-compass, and other information about your location and track.

The One Touch screen has icons for various places you have defined, like home, camp, etc. This screen gives you quick access to common destinations.

Main Menu gives access to waypoint, route and track tools, maps, geocaches and more.

The Options Menu gives access to the most commonly used functions related to the screen being displayed.

The Map screen gives you a wealth of information in addition to the displayed map. It shows battery status, compass heading, time, satellite status, current location, north direction, scale of map, elevation and distance traveled. There are two larger buttons which can be used to zoom in or out.

The GPS unit in the device is used to locate your position and to give you distances to and from, as needed. It also provided elevation and compass direction.

This is a really handy and valuable device to have if you do a lot of hiking or walking. It has enough tools for you to be able to find out where you are, how to get to where you're going and to record by photo or voice where you have been.

About: Explorist

Manufacturer: Magellan
www.magellangps.com

Price: \$550±

Bluetooth Keyboard

Your mobile phone probably has a way to type text into it, either through a keypad like the BlackBerry or iPhone, or by the more (much more!) cumbersome method of using the three-letter key system used by telephones. Either way, it's difficult and error-prone.

Enter the Bluetooth keyboard. It is smaller than the keyboard for your PC or notebook, but the keys are much larger than those on my iPhone or the BlackBerry I used to have. Further, it has a full set of keys, rather than the abbreviated set of the BlackBerry or the dual-set of the iPhone.

The keyboard has an internal lithium-ion battery that takes



up to 1½ hours to charge. It has a sleep and an idle mode. Idle mode is triggered by one second of inactivity; sleep is triggered by two hours of idle mode. Even the sleep mode consumes some power, but not much. There is an On/Off switch.

The keyboard comes with a retractable cable for charging from a USB port. There is also a Quick Start guide that tells you about all you need to know to use the keyboard.

Since this is a Bluetooth device, it must be paired with something else that is Bluetooth-capable, like an iPad (for which this keyboard was designed), an iPhone or iPod.

To pair it, you turn it on, turn on your mobile phone or device and press the ID button on the back of the keyboard. When your mobile device recognizes the keyboard, it will show up along with a short message with the key code that must be entered on the keyboard. Once this is done, the pairing is complete.

In addition to the normal keyboard keys, there are several hotkeys designed to use with an iPad, such as search, brightness up/down, photo and more. There is also a Command key, standard on Apple keyboards.

There are three indicators on the bottom right of the keyboard for Bluetooth connection, charge/caps lock and low battery.

The size is about 8.5" X 3.5" and can be easily fit into an iPad sheath or even a purse.

This is a nifty product, made for those with larger fingers that don't work well on mobile device keypads and those who want to do more than casual typing with their mobile device.

About: Bluetooth Keyboard

Vendor: Zoom Telephonics
www.zoomtel.com

Price: \$45±

Green-Slim Projector

Projectors have gotten smaller and brighter over the years, leading to a product such as this one. It's small, bright and shows a great picture!

One of the most important features of a projector is its brightness. This one produces 3,000 lumens. A lumen is a measure of the brightness perceived by the human eye. For comparison, Wikipedia states that a 23 watt CFL bulb emits about 1,100 lumens.

The display is created by a combination of laser and LED light, which eliminates the use of a bulb that contains mercury, thus the label "Green." Further, a light source such as this eliminates the expensive bulb replacement cost associated with many older projectors. This projector light system is estimated to have a life of 20,000 hours.

The resolution provided with this projector is 1280 x 800, making the projected image extremely sharp.

The projection system is DLP, meaning digital light processing, a Texas Instruments technology. The mechanics (that's a misnomer, since it's digital) are very interesting. The DLP chip contains a million or more hinge-mounted micro mirrors, each of which measures less than one-fifth the width of a human hair.

The mirrors are switched on and off based on the digital signal being fed to the chip, at a rate up to several thousand times per second, producing up to 1,024 shades of gray. The resulting gray-scale image then passes through a filter to produce up to 16.7 million different colors.

The light system uses a blue light emitted by a blue laser, green light converted from the blue laser and light from a red LED to get the color spectrum.



The unit is quite small, only 1.7" high and 5 lbs. in weight. It can be carried in a briefcase very easily.

In view of the light system, it's not surprising that the projector is quick-on (as fast as 8 seconds) and quick-off with no cool-down required.

The top surface of the projector has the control buttons for power, focus, zoom, menu and arrows to use for selecting choices in the menu. The unit comes with a remote, so the surface buttons aren't necessary to use. The remote has a laser pointer embedded in it, to make demonstration easy.

One last and very useful feature is keystone correction. If the image is distorted by the position of the projector, with top edges of the picture wider or narrower than the bottom edges, the projector can adjust the image up to a maximum of 30 degrees, without changing the location or orientation of the projector.

This projector is a marvelous piece of equipment useful in business, education and home theatre, is easy to set up and use, and produces a brilliant sharp picture in most any venue.

About: Green-Slim Projector

Vendor: Casio
www.casio.com

Price: \$1,399