

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: VERTIX RAPTOR-I BLUETOOTH MULTIMEDIA HELMET COMMUNICATOR

Take phone calls, talk to another rider or listen to clear, loud music



Submitted by Steve Farrell on Thu, 18/06/2015 - 16:56

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I'VE tested and reviewed a Vertex Bluetooth headset before but then I was using it with in-ear headphones. Now I've got the Velcro speakers which go inside your helmet.

The kit lets you make and receive phone calls and talk to another rider but its main function for me is playing music from my phone, without need for wires.

The main unit goes on the side of your helmet and has big, tactile buttons that let you change track, turn the volume up or down or switch the music off altogether, easily.

The two speakers come with sticky Velcro patches but I didn't have to use those. The Velcro on the back of the speakers clings well enough to my helmet lining anyway. It took a few goes to get them in the right position but I think they are there now.

The mic and main unit also use sticky Velcro patches, the latter an especially course one to keep the main unit in place at speed. I suppose the Velcro lets you take it all out again and perhaps switch it to another helmet. In practice, having got it all in place you'll probably just leave it there, except for the main unit, which comes off to charge.

The battery lasts for ages – up to 10 hours of use and 30 days on standby according to the makers.

It gets really loud – there's no problem hearing it at speed. The speakers are good but don't seem to offer quite the depth of bass of the Vertex headphones I had before, which were exceptional. But obviously I now don't have to put headphones in before putting the helmet on, and the wires from the speakers to the main unit

are tucked inside the helmet lining instead of dangling around my chin. Ultimately it was dangly wires that spelled the end of the headphones. They packed up in one ear, probably due to a damaged connection.

I've only been using this set for a couple of weeks and haven't taken any phone calls on it yet, but I do know from my old set that it automatically picks up a call after a couple of rings, and that you and the caller can hear each other perfectly, even at motorway speeds. The makers say it filters out wind and engine noise, which it must. Double-press one of the buttons and it redials your last call.

The sound-quality of the old in-ear headphones is a high bar to meet. I like this set and the convenience it brings. It's not cheap, at £169.99, but it's high quality and you get a discount on a pair, to use as intercoms, at £299.99. There's also a kit for open-face lids, with the mic on a stalk.

Product tested: Vertex Raptor-i Bluetooth multimedia helmet communicator

Price: £169.99 (£299.99 for two)