

Laptop speakers and Netbook speakers alike are notoriously well known for being dire, and offer up a tinny and lacklustre experience when you want to watch a film, play extended media or blast out your tunes for the world to hear.

The single most common way to combat this is to either purchase a multimedia laptop in the first place which offers up high spec speakers, whilst at the same time costing a lot of money, or going the separate way of getting an external speaker. Our choice would be to opt for the external speaker.

So which is the best external speaker on the market? Well for an answer to that question we have turned to Edifier, a company well known for their quality and innovation in audio consumer products. The

product in question is the Edifier Sound To Go MP250 Multimedia Speaker.

Review: Design & Build Quality When you go to your local hardware store for the purpose of buying speakers the most important thing on your mind should be sound quality followed by the design of the product you are going to fork your hard earned cash on. The trouble you will face however is that a lot of Multimedia speakers are either too boring or too flashy looking to warrant a purchase, so finding a speaker in between the two of these would be perfect, right?

Right. Checking out the packaging on the Edifier MP250 it is made apparent that this particular product has won design awards. These come in the form of the Product Design Award 2011 and the Design & Engineering Showcase Honours 2011 (courtesy of CES). It does have to be said that having never taken the Edifier MP250 out of the box these awards being promoted on the packaging got my hopes up rather high, and upon my first inspection I expected none other than a design masterpiece.

So was it a design masterpiece? Well in an aesthetic word, yes. When I took the speaker out of the box the first thing that hit me was the quality materials the speaker is made out of. The Edifier Sound To Go's external housing is made up of 75% brushed aluminium, and is near enough to makes no difference the same as Apple's Macbook Pro line. This machined aluminium is unibody in the sense that it has been warped to form a wedge (the speaker is wedge shaped, see image below) and it makes the whole product fantastically good looking.

Protecting the speaker is metal mesh grill keeping in line with the products whole metallic feel. The front mesh is black in colour, and the mixture of black on brushed aluminium makes the whole portable speaker wonderfully modern. At the bottom of the speaker you'll find two rubber sticky pads which make sure the speaker stays put on a flat surface and also balanced properly during use.

The combination of brushed aluminium and a metal mesh front makes this device weighty however not uncomfortable, and at 0.73 pounds this portable speaker is none other than very bag friendly. Dimensions wise you're looking at 10.3" X 1.4" X 1.7", or in other words perfectly comfortable say on top of your keyboard on a 13" Macbook or laptop.

On the left hand side of the Edifier Sound To Go is a 3.5mm jack and a mini USB connector, whilst at the other end is a single button to adjust the volume. When the MP250 is connected to a powered USB port a blue light glows around the volume button, which I found to be a very nice touch to an already well designed product. To increase the volume you simply push the button whilst decreasing the volume required me to push in the button and rotate it.

Connectivity Options & Sound Quality Where I was impressed with the design of the Edifier I was less than impressed with the connectivity options this product ships with. To use the device you HAVE to be near a USB power supply, which means that the MP250 can not be tossed in your bag and put in any room of your house whilst your laptop is unconnected via USB in another room. This means you have to carry it along attached to your laptop / netbook everywhere, and for anybody who goes to grab some lunch and carries their laptop with them, this can get a bit tiresome.

Why the MP250 does not ship with Bluetooth I do not know. Bluetooth would have enabled this little portable speaker to be multi-functional and cross consumer device compatible, and I would even go as far to say that an extra £20 on top of the current RRP of this product would not be such a bad thing if it only had bluetooth.

So the design is great and the connectivity options are lacking, but what's next? Well that'll be sound quality, and i'm pleased to report that on this level the MP250 succeeded my expectations. The sound quality being pumped out from the MP250 is none other than brilliant when compared to laptop speakers, and we can personally say that even top end laptops with very impressive speakers can not outperform the MP250. High and mid range sound levels pump out of the MP250 perfectly fine and clear, however once you start to crank the volume up to about 70% the sound does fall apart a little bit; this however is to be expected.

Bass levels were less than great. The speaker had trouble even registering the bass to Lil Wayne's 'a Milli' however numerous other tracks from The Prodigy sounded alright, meaning that the bass on the Sound To Go is not going to shake your windows but rather provide a satisfactory bass level which you would miss from your laptop speakers anyway. In a small room the Sound To Go pumps out enough volume to fill a small room, and enough bass (if there isn't much in that room) to get you dancing.

Pricing The Edifier Sound To Go is priced at a very reasonable \$49.95 at the Apple Store and cheaper elsewhere online. It does have to be said that I was incredibly surprised by this, because the product itself feels at least 3 times more than its current minus fifty Dollars RRP.

Conclusion True to their word Edifier have come up with a product that does offer sound to go in a beautifully designed portable and affordable product. The device itself would suit anybody who has a Mac or Macbook perfectly, and for that reason I can highly recommend the Edifier Sound To Go for its design alone. I was completely caught off guard by the brilliant sound quality of the Edifier Sound To Go too and so this little speaker is definitely recommended on this level. The one thing that let this product down was the connectivity options, and having to connect via USB and not Bluetooth became a pain occasionally especially when everything is turning wireless gradually, however for the price you'll be paying we can't really fault this little speaker for that.

So would I buy one? Yes. Should you buy one? Maybe. If you are in the market for a portable speaker system that delivers brilliant sound quality in an even more stunning design then this product is for you. The choice as they say is your