

TuneBug Sits Well with Sound

Written by Bob Snyder
30 December 2008

Shown for the first time at CES 2009, the new “TuneBug” solves a problem for any Tour de France wanna-be and anyone who has a hobby with a helmet. (*OK, hockey players and other contact sports excluded...*)

How do you get real sound while racing around on a bike, skateboard, skis? TuneBug's licensed technology provides an answer. Activities that require helmets don't easily allow headphones (and if not dangerous, it's certainly illegal in some places to use headphones on a motorcycle, bike, skateboard, snowboard or skis.)



Bypassing traditional stereo speaker technology, the TuneBug uses “exciter” technology that projects sound waves through the surfaces it rests on. When placed on a helmet, the TuneBug creates a type of surround-sound that lets the sound of the surroundings slip through. The diminutive 40 oz. TuneBug attaches to helmets and functions as an independent unit (MP3 Player + Speaker), or can be connected to an iPod (or Zen or Zune) and used as a speaker. The helmet-friendly device with a Micro SD slot can store 2GB (about 400 music files), and approximately 5 hours play time.



Actually, the surfaces it plays on are not limited to helmets, and many common household surfaces (even the lid of a notebook PC) are great conductors. The TuneBug's 3.5mm jack is compatible with normal headphones and earbuds, which make it practical for all types of users (on and off the road).

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Developed by NXT Sound (the folks that do the roof liner speakers in the Toyotas) with more than 250 international patents, **Silicon Valley Global** is now the assigned



owner of all patents on the TuneBug with a worldwide license to the exciter's SurfaceSound technology. TuneBug sees big opportunities in Europe where bike riding has not only epic legions of sports fans but communities like Eindhoven (and others in Holland) that depend upon two-wheeled transportation for their day-to-day commuting.

SVG's President & Founder Dick Brown, serial entrepreneur since 1980, has brought over 50 new products to market, including launching the \$1 billion SoundBlaster sound card into the US market.

Brown is a veteran from Radio Shack (setting up those original Tandy Computer Centers across the USA, as well as later stints at Televideo and Creative Labs) He claims every retailer that sees a demo asks, "When can we get it?" His answer: Q2 after the initial showing at CES.



With tentative retail pricing at \$79.95 in USA, and design by Scott Wilson (at Minimal, he handled some great Motorola designs), TuneBug is aiming for an out-of-box wow factor. The

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added accessory touches include little rain-proof sleeves for those rainy Benelux bike trips, magnetic dots to attach Tune Bug, armbands and more.

If TuneBug can make bikers as happy as iPod has made joggers, retailers should pedal all the way to the cash register.

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