

UFG GOES HANDS ON WITH THE CIDEKO AIR KEYBOARD CHATTING!

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COMING SOON

AD SPACE

Coming Soon

One of the coolest things about being a journalist is getting the opportunity to be exposed to new products. Products that may have been over looked due to lack of knowledge or money are now available. Being a journalist in the video game industry is no different. Over the years I've had the privilege to play games in genres I used to shy away from, talk to developers about new concepts in gaming, and even try out new technological gadgets. This has slowly shaped my views on emerging products. Although I have always been interested in gadgetry, usually their usefulness doesn't outweigh their costs. Since I have been given the opportunity to review these gadgets, I have a slightly different view of these types of products.

With that being said, I still feel that there needs to be a balance between expense and usefulness. For example, I am currently reviewing Cideko's Air Keyboard Chatting device. Cideko has taken a compact, wireless keyboard and combined it with a gyro mouse. Basically, it allows the user to type or chat up to 30 meters away from their PC (within 10 meters being the most effective) and the built in mouse is controlled by moving the keyboard around in midair. It also has ports for headphones and a microphone, great for voice chatting. It is compatible with PCs (running Windows 98/ME/2000/XP/Vista/ or Windows 7), Macs (running OS v10.2 or later) and Sony's PS3. All of this sounds good on paper, but is this product really useful?

My experience with the Air Keyboard has been a good one. Upon opening the box and removing the plastic carton holding the keyboard, I noticed that it was smaller than I thought it would be (a good thing). It came with an earbud/mic combo, a rechargeable battery, a mini USB cord for charging, a USB Air Dongle used to pick up the keyboard's signal, and a driver disk (more on that later). I put the battery in the keyboard and plugged it into my computer to charge. After an hour or two, the keyboard was ready to go. I looked around and didn't see the Air Dongle. After looking at the manual (something I never do) I found that it was tucked away in a small compartment on the side of the keyboard. This is great for easy storage, especially if you're prone to losing things. The Air Dongle automatically installed itself after being placed into the USB port. Pairing the keyboard with the Dongle was a simple as holding the keyboard next to it. All of it took about, 15 to 20 seconds. After that I was able to play around, surf the web, and do some chatting.



I found that the keyboard was very user friendly. As for the gyro mouse, it is extremely accurate and does not require any calibration, but it definitely takes some getting used to. I found myself floating all over the screen at first. After getting the hang of things, I was able to move around my browser with ease. There is, however, a button that turns off the mouse feature altogether. That way, if you shift in your seat you won't have to worry about the cursor moving with you. The keyboard itself is lightweight and fits nicely in my hand. The center sinks inward a little, making the keys more accessible to people with small hands. Typing was easy thanks to the fact that I have been texting for years. Even if that weren't the case, Cideko made sure that the placement of everything felt just right. The lower half of the compact features a full QWERTY keyboard. Above the keyboard are the playback buttons (play, stop, skip) and the volume. Above those are the programmable buttons. These allow users to pull up files, media, or programs with the hit of a button. This is when you'll need the driver disk; you'll have to download the extra drivers off this disk before you can use this feature.



Customizing these buttons wasn't at all difficult as the on-screen prompts were self-explanatory. A slight set back here for Mac users, they will have to download an update to be able to utilize this feature. To the left of those buttons is a directional-pad used for going back and forth through text or for picking different files in a folder. On top of the unit are the left and right shoulder buttons used as the left and right mouse buttons, respectively. On the bottom are the headphone, mic, and mini USB ports. The earbuds provided do a nice job of allowing the user to listen to music or chat with the built in mic. You can mute the mic by pressing a button on the earbuds or on the keyboard itself. Either way, there is an indicator that shows whether or not your mic is muted.

Over the past few days, I have had a chance to try out the majority of the keyboard's features and found them to be quite useful...most of the time. While I had a blast chatting on my PC, I realized that my normal keyboard and mouse combo was a better choice. I could type and click on things much faster with my normal peripherals. The fact that I needed to be close to my monitor to see what I was typing made the "freedom" in the wireless keyboard less desirable. Being able to use it 10 meters away from my computer isn't always a good idea. However, this changes when you use the keyboard with the PS3. Cideko's device made sending messages and surfing the web much easier when compared to the PS3's controller. Of course you would still need your controller for playing games. The Air Keyboard could become a great accessory to the controller in this case. This fact is made more obvious when chatting to a friend while playing DC Universe Online (a popular MMORPG). Most MMO's require chatting to be done via text as apposed to voice. The Air Keyboard works wonders here. And although I don't yet own one, I think the Air Keyboard would be great for a Smart TV as well; using a wireless keyboard for surfing the web and downloading digital media seems pretty logical.



Cideko's Air Keyboard Chatting is a great device. It works the way you'd expect, is user friendly, and has nice features that most will find useful. On the other hand, depending on what you are using the device with, you will find your tried and true methods of typing a better fit. One thing I didn't mention before was the cost. As of this writing, the Chatting will run you \$99.99. For those of you who are gadget savvy with PS3's and/or Smart TV's, this might not sound like a lot of money. For everyone else, its usefulness probably won't outweigh its cost. Then again, there are people who flock to touch pads when they have perfectly good laptops or Kindles at home. It really comes down to whether or not you'd use it along with the products you already own. Personally, I think it's a great buy as I actually have a reason to use it!

Final Verdict:

Recommended!

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