The hunt for a good headset

one thing that covid taught us is to use audio / video conferences for quick meetings. We use MS teams in our office and i am using it now just as much to hold one-on-one calls as i use it for conferences with more than two participants. Right when switching to home-office mode I initially got a Logitech Zoom Wireless headset which has served me well so far, however, I wanted more and started looking around for the perfect headset **for me** .. mind you, choosing a headset is probably a very personal thing, as we all have different requirements and proportions.

Important features

Wireless: i don't want to have a long cable dangling around my chair when i move around in front of my pc, it just always gets caught into something which is annoying

Sidetone: the ability to hear yourself while you talk is very important on a stereo headset. without it, you never know if you scream or mumble which is very uncomfortable. my first usb headset did not have that and i ended up using it like a mono headset by placing one speaker behind the ear so i could hear myself and understand how loud i was talking

Comfort: if you have a series of calls you can easily spend half a day non-stop under those headphones. It is imprtant, that the headset is comfortable to wear even for several hours.

Sound Quality: sometimes i'm alone in my (home) office, but when for example my wife is around and she is in a call herself or the kids are home too and scream in the background, i would like to listen some music to stay focused. So a good sound quality is a big plus.

Microphone Quality: my current headset has a pretty good microphone for conf-calls, so the standard is set pretty high for my new headset. I can't afford to sound worse with my new headset if I want to avoid to be “forced” back to the old one by the other callers in a conf call ;)

Previous Headsets

my first one was a sub 30$ USB headset from a brand called ISY. It was a wired USB headset with no sidetone.. you can imagine how happy i was with it afer treading the above.. Basically it showed me what I did NOT want :)

My current headset is a **Logitech Zone Wireless** and it is a phantastic headset for the occational conf call. It has a great microphone, is wireless, can be charged wirelessly as well and can even be used as a bluetooth headset. Further more it comes with some rather limited ANR and it is very comfortable to wear for about an hour or so. And that sadly brings me to the reason, why I want something elese now: if you wear it for more than one hour, it starts to feel very heavy and your ears start to hurt. The zone wireless is an on-ear headset, so it rests ON your ears and not on your head AROUND your ears. Compared to traditional telephone on-ear headsets it is quite heavy and bulky, and hence pushes more onto your ears than you might want. The plastic ear muffs also get very hot after a while and the sound quality for listening to music is acceptable but nowhere near my Bose Quiet Comfort 35's. So I ended up wearing my Bose's to listen to music but then missed incoming

calls and chats because they rang on the other headset.

New Headset

BOSE Quiet Comfort 35 II

Obvioiusly the first Headset I tried was the one I already owned privately. Since my PC (a Intel NUC) has Bluetooth, i just paired my BOSE headset and used it this way. While it was great for listening to music, it was a nightmare for conf calls. As soon as the microphone was activated by a conf call application, it would switch to mono mode and the sound quality would get extremely poor. Like in a mobile phone call. Also the built-in microphone really is a room microphone rather than a personal one. so it picks up everything in the room and the other callers told me i sounded far away. At least it had sidetone, but that was about all there is on the positive side when it comes to using it for a conf call. I constantly had to keep my audio settings window (on linux) open to switch the microphone to some other microphone (like the one of the web cam for example) after the call in order to be able to select stereo mode to continue to listen to music.

I soon figured out, that these problems are comon to all Bluetooth connected headsets, so bluetooth for video /voice calls using teams, zoom and other such software, forget it! It does “work” but you will definately be harder to understand for others and it will be harder for you to understand others during the call due to the limited frequency band used both ways

Sennheiser EPOS Adapt 660

probably the biggest disappointment so far was the first one I have tried. Reviews on Youtube prased it as a great headset for audio conferences and comfortable to wear for a long time. The hard, plastic covered ear muffs which barely fit over my hears however, and the strong clamping force which may make it a great headset for sports but not for office use really made me return it instantly. I gave it a short try as a headset and it was okay sound quality wise, but the ANR was far from my Bose QC 35's, the sound was terribly laking base and it just looks ugly as hell. So that went back quickly :)

Jabra Evolve 2 85 MS

MS stands for Microsoft Teams certified. Sicne this is our primary application at the office, I thaught i'd purchase the MS certified headset to take advantage of the useless teams button feature.. however, that does not work on linux, so no benefit at all from being MS teams certified if you use linux :) at least there is no disadvantage, so we're good :)

This headset was way better than the EPOS, sound quality was almost up to par with my Bose, ANR was about as good as my previous Bose QC 25's which i considered sufficient when travelling in airplanes and the microphone quality was on par with my Logitech Zone Wireless headset when the Boom mic was extended. So all in all a good start. It was also quite comfortable to wear for a longer period of time. BUT, and this is a big one, sadly: Sidetone is missing! Jabra provides a sidetone setting in their Jabra + app, but this does not really enable a real sidetone, instead it switches the headset into what they call “Hear through Mode”, so you hear everything around you almost as if you had no headset on. This can be irritating if you have noise around you which you don't want to hear in a conf

call but more importantly it just feels like you are wearing a very light stereo headset with no sidetone as you still can't hear yourself as good as if you where talking without a headset on. even on the most extreme setting the “sidetone” was way too quiet for my taste. There are tons of people complaining about this in various reddid threads and some claim it got worse with one of the first firmware updates. Sadly that was a no-go for me, so I returned it as well.

Audio-Technica ATH-G1WL

that's the next one i'm going to try.. advertised as an “Audiophile gaming headset” it is praised in reviews for its sound quality, wearing comfort and especially the microphone quality which is almost like one of those lower end streaming “studio” mics. Sidetone seems to be called “Monitor” and seems quite present, so my hopes are high

Bose 700 UC

I just recently found out that there is a “UC” version of the Bose 700 headset. The 700 is the successor of my beloved QC 35II and it promises a much better microphone as they now use 8 microphones to then cancel surrounding noise and calculate a “virtual boom mic” effect, so it supposedly should sound like a boom mic. However, the normal Bose 700 is a pure Bluetooth headset, with probably the same issues i already know form my QC 35's, BUT there is a UC version which comes with a little USB dongle that should solve all these problems and make the Bose 700 behave like my Logitech Zone Wireless, the Jabra or the EPOS i had tested already. It is however only available through Bose directly and costs about 200 CHF more than the normal 700 which is availble through various outlets and therefore the price has been dumped to about 300 CHF. I just found out that the USB dongle can be purchased separately for just 70 CHF or USD and with a firmware upgrade, your regular Bose 700 become 700 UC's with ms teams certification. So I picked up such a usb stick today and will be testing the Bose 700 soon. So far i have paired the stick successfully with my Bose QC 35 which supposedly is not supported, but it worked flawlessly and already solves all the handling issues as well as the sound quality issues, it just sadly can't fix the bad mic, so i will still have to buy the 700 to try it out ;)

From:
http://wiki.psuter.ch/ - **pswiki**

Permanent link:
http://wiki.psuter.ch/doku.php?id=the_hunt_for_a_good_headset

Last update: **12.04.2021 01:30**