

## The Sound of Things

by Norman C. Berns

Stuck a POT in your ear lately...? *POT?* That's a *Plain Old Telephone*. Weird old things, ain't they....?

I stopped years ago. My chiropractor took six months to repair the damage from all my necking with the phone's headset. Finally unkinked, I still stayed tethered to a wall until various "wireless" phones finally freed me. That still left me wired to whatever was wired to the wall. Or clipped to my belt.



Acceptable. Not ideal.

Let's face it. In our work, we're forced to LIVE on our phones. Mine starts ringing before the morning coffee stops dripping. I supposed I could pop for a Bluetooth-enabled phone, but my own office system was installed before Bluetooth was available. Or affordable. And now I'm too busy to change it all.

*Besides, I do most of my work on location. Don't you...? And I rarely have the option of changing the existing phone system before I have to get down to business.*

In some location office or another, the phone seems to be in a dead-heat to out-ring my cell. I always have to be on the move. *Off to the rental house, from accounting to the set, on to one department, back to another, then back again.* Just in time to grab the phone again and return a stack of calls.

To survive, I had to find something that freed me from the desk. From the wires.

Bluetooth never seemed robust enough for me. Audio comes and goes in the midst of my comings and goings. And its best range seems to range from slim to none. It's fine when I have to check the grocery list with Alicia, but when I'm working, I can't afford to have a word dropped in or out.

*You're wrong on the prop budget. Your rug arrived but I can't budge it. Kinda makes a difference there....*

Fortunately, there's a better solution. Interestingly, now that I've found it, I find it in every office I visit. Seems I was out of town when the big news came in.



The knockout punch to the phone-as-we-know-it has come (surprise) from AT&T and their ATT/VTech TL7610 DECT 6.0 Digital Wireless Headset. This isn't just another add-on. It reinvents the phone as we know it.

Use your phone as much as I do? You're gonna love this.

It's a wireless headset. The base plugs into one or two phone lines (making it ideal for small offices). And you can talk, uh, wirelessly. Effortlessly. So why am I so damn excited about a headset...?

For one thing, this baby is gorgeous. And it delivers crystal clear audio up to 500 feet from the base. That's a whole football field with sidelines and room for a victory dance. It's good up four or five flights of stairs. It'll keep on working over to the next office and the one past that one, too.

In short, the range of this thing will knock your socks off. AT&T claims these headsets are 45% better than any competitive headsets. I listened; I heard; I believe.

The sound – in and out – is amazing. I said *crystal* clear and I meant it. After all, if the sound were all scratchy or dull, this would be of little interest to me. But it doesn't. No matter where I wander, the audio remains bright, present, pleasant. It just sounds like real sound.

The headset has a toggle for volume, a mute button and three wearing styles – over-the-ear (ouch), over-the-head (okay) and wrap-around-your-neck (odd). All are quantum leaps ahead of tucking a handset between your shoulder and ear (&#@^).

I'm not easy on anything. A week into testing, my over-the-head band snapped. Fortunately there's a year-long warranty. I'm sure they are more elegant solutions than my gaffers tape.

You can **conference two headsets**. Use an optional **handset lifter** to eliminate any need to return to your desk phone. Even add a **remote dialer** if you want to make calls from your own side pocket. Now if only people would stop calling to tell me to come back to my desk....

The 7610 can team up with recent AT&T DECT 6.0 cordless phones. Wirelessly. Ah, it's the best of all possible worlds. I wish the headset were as ambidextrous around otherly-branded phones. Or to my cell phone for that matter. Alas, no such luck.

*DECT is an acronym for **D**igitally **E**nhanced **C**ordless **T**elecommunications, the current standard for high-end cordless. As far I can tell, the 6.0 moniker is merely marketing. DECT operates on a channel reserved for voice communication so calls are isolated from any other wireless devices. Technological brouhaha aside, it just SOUNDS better. For all I care, they can call it KaPow-Ringading v l l.*

Most importantly for itinerant filmmakers endlessly shifting from one show to the next, the 7610 plays well at home or in an office. It connects to virtually any phone, corded or cordless. That includes multi-line business systems. To keep things exceptionally simple, the setup line cords are even color-coded. The 7610 readily travels from home to office to location. Its entire setup, out of the box and onto the line, takes less than 15 minutes, even before you get adept at setting it up.

For that little effort, I can chatter wirelessly for 9 hours. Or leave the unit on standby for most of a week.

This one's really as good as it looks. And definitely worth a spot in my toolkit. If you move about as much as I do, it belongs in yours, too.



AT&T DECT 6.0 Cordless Headset – Model TL7610  
MSRP: \$199.95  
<http://snipurl.com/gar3b>

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