

RØDE Wireless Go

NIGEL JOPSON tests a truly miniature wireless system you don't need to be 'minted' to own



Run-and-gun videographers were once thrilled to get a wireless mic system the size of a couple of cigarette packs, now RØDE have introduced a transmitter/receiver system where the units are smaller in width and height than an After Eight mint! RØDE claim the Wireless GO as “the world’s smallest, most versatile wireless microphone system”, and while there are several contenders for the latter accolade, the Aussie mic-maker wins hands down in the Lilliputian stakes.

The TX and RX are more or less identically sized at around 44x46x18.5mm, and weigh a diminutive 33gm each. Both of the square units are equipped with well made (rubber grips inside) plastic spring clips, which are exactly the correct dimensions for hot shoe mounting on a camera, as well as clipping to garments. A key feature is that the TX unit, equipped with a flush-mount omni on the top edge, also has a TRS 3.5mm (non-locking) jack input (which supplies 2.8V plugin power) for a lavalier or external mic. If you're looking for the ultimate 'little black dress' belt-pack, this is probably it. Both units have simple power and pairing buttons, with battery and pairing status LEDs for the TX and a small LCD screen for the RX.

Connection options

The receiver's miniature screen displays an input level bargraph, battery displays for both TX and RX, wireless connection status and a three-position output gain display. The output gain settings (controlled by the dB button) of 0dB, -6dB and -12dB



/ The Wireless Go receiver belt-clip doubles as a camera hot-shoe mount

adapt the unit for different camera inputs. Even on -12dB, many Canon cameras will require setting at the lower end of their manual input gain. A short red curly cable is supplied to connect to the camera's 3.5mm input. A single short press on the 'on' button toggles between two brightness modes for the display: Bright mode - in which the screen stays illuminated while in use, and Dim mode - the screen dims after three seconds.

The internal Li-po battery is quoted as lasting “up to 7 hours”, but I found around 5 was pretty much the limit. Two USB-A to USB-C cables are provided for charging, and a very good point is that the units continue to operate while charging, so power bricks and the like can be deployed when in the field.

The internal mic on the TX has a pretty obvious roll-off below 100Hz, and a gentle boost around vocal presence frequencies. Pickup is on the 'broad omni' spectrum but, on balance, pretty useful response characteristics for the sort of situation where one wants to quietly place the unit on a lectern or some such. A couple of furry windshields are provided, but I found presenters knocked them off quite easily. I successfully used the TX with a variety of lavaliers, which are obviously going to be preferable if the situation allows. The EIN of the internal capsule is 21.8dB(A), but it's still useful to have.

Are we in range?

The 2.4GHz Frequency Agile Digital System “is optimised for shorter range operation in dense RF and Wi-Fi environments, but also offers a line-of-sight range of up to 70m”. Having been incredibly impressed with the range of both the Sennheiser AVX (1.9 GHz, review, *Resolution* V14.6) and the RØDE Newsshooter kit (2.4GHz, review, *Resolution* V16.7), I was keen to see how the Wireless Go compared. Used indoors, with normal plasterboard (stud) walls, I was impressed I was able to separate the TX & RX in different rooms and still get solid reception. To challenge the Wireless Go a little more, I tried the same thing in a reinforced concrete building - discovering I could even go up 36 steps in a concrete stairwell and maintain a link. For a device which is six times lighter and ten times smaller than the RX-CAM of the Newsshooter kit, I

was pretty impressed.

Outside, however, it was a different story. As long as 'direct line of sight' was maintained, around 40m distance on a flat field was possible. However, as soon as the presenter turned their back, or someone walked between the TX and RX, the link was lost. The Wireless Go is perfectly usable outdoors for 'talking head' style interviews up to 4m distant, but I would not recommend using the system for the sort of on-body action sports work I've used the Sennheiser AVX for. The 'Go' is only the size of a mint chocolate, after all...

Another important issue, highlighted by Simon Clark in his Sennheiser XSWD review in this magazine (p24), is latency. I tested the Wireless Go in a controlled WiFi environment, and again in a fairly polluted radio environment, and found latency to be generally no longer than 9ms. I spent some time to verify this, as it's a very important factor for videographers who wish to take footage straight from the camera to post online.

This is an exceptionally good bit of kit, coming in at roughly half the price of a RØDE Newsshooter or Sennheiser XSWD. One always wishes for more... and I wish RØDE had equipped the RX with a headphone monitor jack. Cameras capable of fantastic cinematic video and digital audio recording lack this simple feature, and I found the Wireless Go LEDs and signal meter did not really flag-up momentary drop outs. In any case, if you have your eye glued to an EVF or loupe, you're unlikely to be watching the meter.

The Wireless Go is incredible value for money, and is the ideal setup for a videographer working on his or her own who wants to keep their rig lightweight, reactive and quick to operate. **1**

resolution/VERDICT

PROS Great value for money at £179, simple operation, external mic input on TX, miniature size and weight.

CONS None at this price. Can only be used outdoors for close-range interviews.

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