

# Review: These three gadgets can help you work from home

June 10 2020, by Jim Rossman, The Dallas Morning News

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I'm getting a lot of pitches these days for products and gadgets aimed at the work-from-home crowd.

Even gadgets that aren't aimed at the segment are more interesting to me if they can help people work from home more efficiently.

Today we have a webcam, a desktop power strip and some wireless earbuds with a charging case that has a built-in Bluetooth speaker.

## **iLive Truly Wire-Free Earbuds**

I've tried a lot of wireless earbuds, and the \$69.99 iLive Truly Wire-Free Earbuds (model IAEBTS410B) are decent for the price. But what grabbed my attention was the fact that the charging case doubles as a Bluetooth speaker when one or both earbuds are in the case.

Each earbud is plain black with a touch button in the center for call and music control.

When the case speaker is active, you can use the connected phone to control music or calls.

I had a bit of trouble getting the earbuds to pair to each other. The key seems to be to remove the earbuds from the case, put them in your ears and listen for the voice prompt to tell you they are paired, then pair them to your phone.

I think I tried pairing too soon and they paired individually, which isn't right. The second time was the charm.

The earbuds have a six-hour battery life at 50% volume, and the battery case can recharge the earbuds once before it needs a three-hour recharge.

The earbuds use Bluetooth 5.0, and iLive says they're sweatproof. They come with three sizes of ear tips and once I found the large size worked

best for me, the sound was pretty good.

The tiny speaker is pretty good for a phone call or podcast, but there isn't enough size or power to do music much justice.

Pros: Inexpensive, decent earbud sound.

Cons: Speaker isn't suited to music, short battery life.

Bottom line: Interesting design, but I wish it sounded better.

## **Ausdom AW635 1080p Streaming Web Camera**

The first thing I noticed when everyone got sent home to work in March was the need for webcams to facilitate video conferencing.

At work, we ordered half a dozen Logitech webcams, but they were out of stock.

This became a familiar refrain. Webcams are hard to come by these days.

When the big-name webcams disappeared from shelves, I started to get review requests for brands that were new to me.

I've been reviewing the Ausdom AW635 (\$99.99) for a few weeks, and I've been pleased with its performance on my desktop Windows PC.

The AW635 is plug and play on both Windows and Macs. Just plug it in and it works. The picture is clear, and the lens has a manual focus ring if you'd like to use to for close-up work.

I found the focus to be easy to set and discovered that I like manual

focus. I have another brand of webcam with auto focus that sometimes loses focus if I move out of the center of the frame.

The AW635 has a 1080p HD sensor with automatic light correction and a built-in noise reduction microphone.

I've seen the camera in and out of stock on the Ausdom website and Amazon. I'm afraid you'll have to keep checking for when they are back in stock.

Pros: Good picture quality, manual focus, plug and play, good microphone

Cons: Not much.

Bottom line: Good webcam, but it may be hard to find one for a while.

## **Accell Power Dot Office**

As an IT guy, I need to plug in lots of things on my desk—usually for a short period of time. I don't like to get down on the floor any more than I have to, so I have come to appreciate having a surge protector on my desk for easy access.

I've been using the Accell Power Dot Office (\$54.99), which brings AC outlets from the floor to your desktop.

The Dot Office is a 1,080-joule surge protector with four protected AC outlets that tilt a bit to make plugging in a bit easier.

It also has three USB-A and one USB-C charging ports with a combined output of 5 volts/24 watts.

The large round bin in the middle is designed for a voice assistant like the Amazon Echo Dot or Google Home Mini or you can just use it for storage (it has a removable lid).

I don't use a voice assistant at work, so I've been keeping my USB thumb drives and other small adapters in the storage area.

The Dot Office comes with an 8- or 16-foot power cable with a 90-degree low-profile plug.

If you need plugs up on your desk, the Accell Power Dot Office is a really good choice.

Pros: Nice design, puts power outlets and USB ports within easy reach.

Cons: None.

Bottom line: Could earn a permanent spot on my desk.

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Citation: Review: These three gadgets can help you work from home (2020, June 10) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2020-06-gadgets-home.html>

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