

Mains Cables R Us Squeezebox Touch power supply

The Logitech Squeezebox Touch has been with us for a couple of years now. For those who have yet to stretch to pricey premium streaming units, it has been well received as an excellent-sounding network transport to dabble with. Dixons are currently knocking them out for £200, nearly a third off!

With no new Squeezebox product announcements from Logitech at CES this year, it remains to be seen if they will ever reintroduce a high-end device to follow the much-missed Transporter. But in the meantime, the Squeeze-loving community continue to embrace the stock device, and tweak with both hardware and software mods to their hearts' content. It's an excellent introduction to the world of streamed music, and one that's highly tweakable too.

Before one leaps to these never-ending measures, however, there is one simple change which is reputed to bring an instant night-and-day improvement to the Touch's audio performance. Although the switched-mode power supply which comes with the Touch is better than that of the preceding Squeezebox 3, it is still an inherently cheap and electrically noisy device.

Historically there have been linear replacements available at price points many multiples of the humble Touch's base cost. Now David Brook of Mains Cables R Us has released an ingenious design at an appealing £165 price. His supply is very neatly put together. This stock sample came with one of his No.14 IEC cables. These are £29.50 individually, but a £20 addition if ordered with the power supply. Other tweak-ups are available on ordering from the site such as higher quality IECs and other cabling and socket gear.

It all comes carefully packaged, with the silver DC connector to the Touch covered with a mini ziplock. Similar units are available for other DC devices of varying voltages and connector types. It should be pointed out to anyone still running an SB3, this 5 volt DC supply and its connector will also work for that.

The main features of the design are separated mains-facing and device-facing regulators to ensure linearity, separated by a braided cable. The other run to the device is short in length to minimise impedance, and the DC regulator is a small unobtrusive black box which can be hidden behind the Touch. The other end is larger, slightly bigger than a laptop brick, but can be situated nearer to the wall. There's also a pleasingly unobtrusive blue power LED.

Sound quality

Testing was done on a stock Touch using FLAC from Logitech Media Server 7.7.1 and the digital output, as this is the most common usage in audiophile applications. The last track auditioned before switching from the stock switched mode wall wart was a 24-bit version of Jill Sobule's *I Kissed a Girl*.

Switching to it was one of those 'stopped in your tracks' moments... grab it while you can!

The result of the switch to David's product was one of those 'stopped in your tracks' moments, when you can scarcely credit the upwards leap in fidelity which has just happened. The presentation seems less harshly digital, voices seem more real, and the whole picture more interesting. Similar results were experienced with 16-bit/44.1kHz fare from the likes of Leonard Cohen, Nine Inch Nails, Pet Shop Boys and Toto, with all sample tracks coming across as richer and more detailed.

It's clear that the 'ditch the switch-mode' mantra is no waste of time. At current prices you could procure a Touch and one of these supplies for not much more than the original list price for the Touch. Grab it while you can, and then move on to audio tuning software mods to eke out even more performance. **PC**



DETAILS

PRICE: £165
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OUR VERDICT

