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Review - Belkin Rockstar Music-Sharing Media Player Accessory

by [Kris Abel](#) on Thu 25 Sep 2008 11:30 AM EDT

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The Belkin Rockstar is a simple, but unique device, a plastic audio splitter that can take the music from a single MP3 player and share it with up to five sets of headphones. The idea is that it can be used to create a listening station for schools and libraries or as a fun accessory for groups of friends to share music while travelling. From my own travels through public transit and airlines, I've often seen two people sitting next to each other, trying to share their music by either each taking one bud of a set of earbuds or by using one of the Y-shaped splitters you'll find at The Source or at Canadian Tire. I have one of those Y-shaped splitters and it degrades the audio quality. When I first saw the Rockstar, my immediate concern was that the problem would only be compounded five times, that without a power source and a way to amplify the signal, the audio would be weakened. Not the case as it turns out.



I've tested it using a wide range of MP3 players, earbuds and headphones and am surprised at the clarity and strength of the audio. Volume level and sound quality is the same regardless of how many headphones are connected and yet the \$20 accessory doesn't have any fancy components inside of it. It features one hard-wired input cable and five 3.5 mm output jacks that all meet in the centre. If you hold the Rockstar up and look inside one of the headphone jacks you can see right through the device and out the headphone jack on the other side.



A feature that was never intended when Belkin first came up with the design and something they freely admit was a surprise when they figured it out is that the headphone jacks can also double as audio-in ports. You can connect two MP3 players and four headphones if you like and either DJ or mix the music between the two MP3 players. Again, the sound quality from the two players is the same as if you were listening with just one headphone or with four. The mix between the two music sources can be adjusted using the volume settings on the players themselves and the effects works just fine.

You can experiment with any combination of audio in and out that you can think of. As long as it can send or receive audio using a 3.5mm jack, you can connect it up. For example, you can add a PlayStation Portable, an MP3 player, and a set of headphones to add your own music soundtrack to the game you are playing. With a cellphone that uses a 3.5 mm jack for its hands-free connection, such as the iPhone, you can use the Rockstar to allow others to listen in on your conversations. I've tested this out and yes, others listening through headphones can hear the conversation I'm having with the iPhone's hands-free set clearly. I don't have an extra iPhone hands-free set to experiment with, but I'd like to assume that you could connect two headsets to an iPhone and have both people participate in the phone call like a party line, which would be better than trying to share the call using an external speaker mode.

There are other combinations and uses I'm sure and regardless of whether your interest is for sharing or experimenting, it is durable and inexpensive enough that you'll easily get your money's worth from it.