

Audio

Recording microphones are common place these days. They are on our phones, cameras, iPods, and mp3 players. But usually these microphones don't result in the best audio quality. This guide provides information on a selection of good quality, low cost recorders that will give you good quality audio without breaking the bank.

Zoom H1 (around £75)

A handy, affordable audio recorder ideal for capturing short interviews and performance recordings at library events. The Zoom H1 is made of plastic and feels extremely lightweight. It has a professional look but it does feel like a bit like a toy. To get the best recording quality from it, you need to handle it carefully and keep your hand still and steady while recording. The package includes the Zoom H1 Handy Recorder with a preloaded 2GB microSD card, an AA battery and instruction manuals.

To buy: <http://amzn.to/over6r>

Review: <http://digitalvoicerecordersreviews.com/zoom-h1/>

Video review: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLvESdlgHAK>

Tascam DR05 (around £100)

Another handy, portable recorder. Simple to use with intuitive buttons and menus, again it's at the bottom end of the market so it's not as robust as some units, but for the price you get a great sound quality. It's easily comparable in sound quality to the H1 and is great for recording interviews and events.

To buy: <http://amzn.to/nLffue>

This video compares the Zoom H1 and the Tascam DR05, discussing several different elements of the recorders. It's helpful to give you an idea of the over all size of the recorders too.



Zoom H2 (around £130)

The Zoom H2 is the next model up from the H1. Expect the same quality in sound and ease of use.

To buy: <http://amzn.to/pFCXR5>

Olympus LS5 (around £130)

Solid but still light and well balanced. Lots of features and great quality recording. Layout of controls is very intuitive and uses full size SDHC cards so easy to swap with your digital camera etc if you need more recording space

To buy: <http://amzn.to/onJctg>

Full review: <http://bit.ly/q3w0vS>



Top Tips

When buying an audio recorder, always check what you're getting for your money – does your product come with a carry case, batteries, SD card, etc...

Also you will need to have a pair of robust headphones to accompany your audio recorder. You may have these already within use in the library.

If not the Sony MDR-V150 are ideal (£9.99): <http://amzn.to/ovnRGs>



Video

Choosing a low cost video camera has become more difficult since the demise of the Flip camera – which was everyone's favourite model. For the MyVoice Roadshow project libraries were using the Creative Vado camera. Really easy to use, its only limitation is that it records in mp4 format, which can only easily be edited on a Mac. The Vado does however come with its own software; check you are able to install this on your computer.

If you already have access to a good quality digital camera, check out its capacity for filming.

Creative Vado HD (around £100)

A small, easy to use camera – about the size of a mobile phone. Possible to switch between video and photography modes. Has external mic socket – for better sound quality.

To buy: <http://bit.ly/qh091j>

Kodak PlaySport (around £100)

A good quality camera that comes with its own software (check for library permissions for installation). Does not have external mic socket. Records in mov format.

To buy: <http://amzn.to/qeImvI>

For a guide to the rest of the low cost cameras that are available, this review is helpful: <http://mashable.com/2011/05/06/flip-camera-alternatives/>

