



▼ advertisement

An advertisement banner for BusinessWeek Mobile Edition. On the left is the BusinessWeek logo in white on a red background. Below it are icons for a mouse, a mobile phone, an open book, a computer monitor, and a speaker. In the center is a small image of the MobiBlu DAH-1500i mobile device. To the right of the device is the text "Introducing BusinessWeek Mobile Edition." and the Windows Mobile logo with the text "sponsored by: Windows Mobile".

MobiBlu DAH-1500i (1GB, Black)

http://reviews.cnet.com/4505-6490_7-31473739.html

At a glance

- **Editors' rating:** 7.0 Very good
- **Editor's take:** If the MobiBlu DAH-1500i got any smaller, it wouldn't exist.
- **The good:** The cute and stylish MobiBlu DAH-1500i features a user-friendly, ultratiny design; a bright OLED screen; and useful extras such as FM tuning and recording, voice recording, and SRS Wow sound effects. This MP3 player also works as a removable flash drive and is DRM compatible.
- **The bad:** The MobiBlu DAH-1500i uses a nonstandard USB cable and has poor battery life.
- **What's it for:** Listening to ripped or purchased MP3s and WMAs; recording voice notes; listening to and recording FM radio.
- **Who's it for:** Style-conscious music lovers with a craving for tiny tech that doesn't skimp on features.
- **Business use:** Acts as a decent voice recorder and can be easily concealed in any pocket.
- **Essential extras:** [Better headphones](#) and a more attractive lanyard or neck chain.
- **The bottom line:** If you love all things tiny, consider picking up MobiBlu's cute cube, the DAH-1500i.

CNET editor's review

Reviewed by ; Jasmine France

Edited by ; James Kim

Reviewed September 8, 2005 (updated October 12, 2006)

Editors' note: We have lowered the score of the DAH-1500i from 7.3 to 7.0, given the arrival of the more feature-filled Cube2.

MobiBlu is one of a multitude of lesser-known portable audio companies trying to make a name for itself among giants such as Apple, Creative, and iRiver. While most of the MP3 players that we've seen from MobiBlu have been decent, they're not standouts, so the company has thus far skirted the spotlight. However, it appears that the MobiBlu DAH-1500i is poised to change this status. The ultratiny, cube-shaped device is a tech marvel and has certainly turned some heads among industry journalists, including those here at CNET. And despite its unimpressive battery life, the DAH-1500i largely lives up to the hype.

If nothing else, the MobiBlu DAH-1500i is versatile. The cute MP3 player is compatible with both Windows and Mac operating systems (plug and play--no driver install is needed for operating systems released after 1998), and you have a choice of six colors: black, pink, silver, blue, red, and orange. And at \$129.99 for the 1GB version and \$99.99 for the 512MB version, it's quite a bargain.

Had MobiBlu made the DAH-1500i any smaller, it would have been an ergonomic disaster. As it stands, the player weighs just 0.6 ounce and measures 1 cubic inch (1 by 1 by 1 inch)--about the size of four sugar cubes stacked together--and it manages to accommodate a usable control pad, with a four-way rocker (volume up/down and track forward/reverse) surrounding a play/pause/power button. That said, while the MobiBlu DAH-1500i's buttons are functional, they are pretty stiff and will pose a problem for those with large fingers. This stiffness can also be an issue when trying to navigate the many options. Just around the corner from the control pad is the 3/4-inch-diagonal [OLED](#) with fairly large, bright blue text on a black background. Due to the smallness of the screen, songs with track names longer than four letters continually scroll, making them difficult to read. Of course, you have to expect such a concession from a device that you can easily conceal in a closed fist. Continue around the side from the screen, and you'll find the menu key and the hold button, while the top of the device sports the headphone jack and the lanyard loop. Be aware that there is no standard mini-USB port; instead, MobiBlu provides a proprietary USB cable that plugs into the headphone jack. This cable is used for both transferring and charging, so don't lose it!



© 2005 CNET Networks, Inc.

The cube-tastic MobiBlu DAH-1500i in its minimalist case.

While the MobiBlu DAH-1500i is cute enough to make you want to take advantage of its wearable nature, the white headphone/neck strap combo that's included isn't stylish enough to tempt most people to sport it; a silver or clear cord would have been better. Unfortunately, the lanyard loop isn't large enough to string a standard necklace chain through it. In addition to the headphones, a minimalist case is included. This highly appreciated extra is made of clear rubber and wraps just along the edges and around the corners of the player, thus protecting it from dings while not overly concealing its stylishness. You also get an install disc with a program that allows you to update the firmware of the player. You don't get music-management software, but you don't really need any. Drag-and-drop takes care of most transfers, while Windows Media Player--a standard on all Windows machines--is necessary for moving DRM-protected files to the device.

Surprisingly, the MobiBlu DAH-1500i isn't as feature-sparse as one would expect from a device of its size. The player supports MP3 and WMA (including DRM) files, packs in an FM tuner, and records voice and FM radio. There's also an ample selection of sound settings, including five preset EQs, a custom setting, and the SRS Wow sound-enhancement setting, for which you can select SRS Surround, TruBass, or Wow (for both). All in all, you end up with your choice of nine sound-adjustment settings. You can even fiddle with several levels of the SRS effects--focus the SRS on the low, mid, or high levels; choose the speaker size; and adjust the individual volume levels for TruBass and surround sound--not bad for an MP3 player that's smaller than your average ice cube.

In the numbers segment of our [testing](#), the MobiBlu DAH-1500i wasn't quite up to the task. Its 7-hour battery life was the main disappointment, though transfer times didn't fare much better at 1.6MB per second over USB 2.0. Luckily, the little player gave a fairly impressive performance in the sound department. Even through the included earbuds, which were fairly uncomfortable, tunes were loud and clear with no noticeable background hiss, and highs and lows were balanced and defined. When we switched in our [Shure E4c](#) test 'buds, the sound actually seemed to *deteriorate*--things got too bright for our tastes. We also noticed a very faint clicking, staticky sound between some tracks. Overall, however, the MobiBlu DAH-1500i is a decent little performer and easy to recommend to those who drool over [tiny tech](#).

User comments

Average user rating

Very good

7.5

out of 10

Average user rating: from 54 users

User rating

Spectacular

9

out of 10

Feature packed, tiny mp3 player.

by sr788 - August 19, 2005

Pros:

Tiny, rechargeable, drag-drop support, FM radio.

Cons:

No belt clip. Proprietary USB cable

22 out of **22** users found this user opinion helpful.

3 comments posted to this opinion.

User rating

Spectacular

9

out of 10

I never even knew I wanted an MP3 player until I saw this thing

by chadley25 - September 15, 2005

Pros:

Tiny size, OLED display, feature-laden, upgradeable firmware, very nice sound, "cool" factor

Cons:

Ugly white earbuds, buttons sometimes unresponsive

15 out of **15** users found this user opinion helpful.

User rating

Spectacular

9

out of 10

Good Things Come in...REALLY Small Packages

by richardgear - August 19, 2005

Pros:

Tiny size, fantastic sound, easy loading of music, FM Tuner!!!, great accessories