

August 2003 - Reviewer Daniel M. East is President of the The Mid-Atlantic Macintosh User Groups Team (MaMUGs)



Checking My iSight

Daniel M. East

From the moment I saw this thing on the WWDC keynote, I knew Apple had something special.

Not only responding to long-time rumors and speculation about video iChat, but also knocking everyone's proverbial socks off with hardware that only a select few saw coming. This product is terrific from package to performance and all of the right things were taken into consideration.

First Glance

When you open the shipping box, you know that you are looking at an Apple product. Clever design, neat fitting packaging with a stunning box that makes you even want to keep the styrofoam! It is all right there and easy to figure out. In fact, I never even opened the small CD-sized pack of papers to get anything running. It just works and works well.

At first glance, it does live up to the reputed descriptions. It does look similar to a nuevo salt shaker of sorts. Very compact, nicely seated; Apple has thought this out well. Figuring out the mounting options is extremely easy and based on an intuitive assembly. The PowerBook mount clips on easily although getting the cabling run involved a few trial and error moments.

The use of the iSight in iChat AV (beta) is not utilizing the total potential of this camera package. In fact, in other applications (iVisit, LiveChannel, Yahoo Messenger, etc.) the image is really great overall.

iSIGHT by Apple
 \$149.00 USD

Summary:
 Stand-alone video camera with built-in noise cancelling microphone.

Minimum requirements:
 PowerPC or better, G3 or later preferred
 10.1.5 or 10.2 with support for 10.3

Reviewer's System:
 Apple Titanium
 PowerBook G4 500 -
 1Gb RAM

Evaluation

For this review, the "focus" - if you will - is on use with iChat AV as intended. The f 2.8 optics are just right for most ambient room lighting, however, best results come from stronger light sources. Being by a window during the day or having a close lamp is helpful. My hope and expectation is

that Apple will apply more image controls and clarity into iChat AV once it is "gold."

The audio quality is clearly better than my PowerBooks internal microphone or the internal on my Sony camcorder which I was using to test iChat AV until this product arrived. The key remains that the best results, of course, come from a quieter room with little reverberation since there is some splash back between mic and speakers. I use my Future Sonics Ears earphones for best results.



How easy was it to install?:
Easy from novice to power user. 5 STARS

How clear were the instructions? Very clear and simple. Great for anyone, really. 5 STARS

Appearance

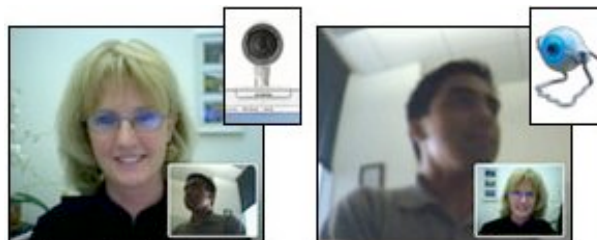
Small and designed to blend in with nearly any Apple product. Neutral enough but very high on the "cool factor." People want to ask questions and are amazed by the results of the iSight. 5 STARS

Likes?

Terrific lens quality for its size; compact, serves its purpose well.

What were your dislikes?

Cable assembly might be tricky for some but not too tough. I like that a case is provided but maybe it isn't too much trouble to put something around the smoked plastic case (ala an iPod case)? It would provide a little more tangible sense of value and just look nicer. A minor detail, really.



iSight sits directly in front of you at eye level.

Other cameras are made to sit off-center on your desk.

How does it compare

How does it compare to the alternatives available that serve this purpose? Clearly superior to iBot and nearly every other video camera I've connected with - including my Sony with a Zeiss lens nearly twice the diameter of the iSight. This is clearly made to serve a purpose and it really does the job well.

Would you recommend this product to a friend? YES 5
STARS

Final thoughts:

Very portable, fun and easy. Great for grandparents, family and friends. Works well (and is impressive quality) for business use.

Overall rating: 5 out of 5 stars

[See iSight at Apple.com](#)

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