

An exclusive look at Bragi's ambitious smart headphones



 James Trew | @itstrew | January 5, 2015 4:10 PM

Eleven months ago an [audacious Kickstarter campaign](#) promised a sports headphone like nothing we'd ever seen before. Bragi's spec sheet for "[The Dash](#)" read like a ridiculous wish list. There was touch control, two separate ear buds (that connect to each *other* wirelessly, as well as to your phone), 4GB of onboard storage, 3.5-hours battery life and a self-contained media player. That's impressive enough, but Bragi didn't stop there. The Dash would be stuffed full of sensors like an accelerometer, heart rate monitor and an oxygen saturation sensor. It didn't stop *there* either. Some pretty special-sounding software meant that The Dash would serve as a personal trainer through audio feedback; there would be a "transparent" mode so you could hear ambient sounds and more. Bragi didn't stop there.

Gallery: Bragi - The Dash Hands on | 14 Photos



The Kickstarter campaign was a massive success, with The Dash smashing its modest (and perhaps naive) original goal of \$260,000. It went on to raise a total in excess of \$3 million, making it the highest funded campaign in Europe. People were obviously excited about these do-it-all headphones. But, with success, comes the inevitable backlash of doubters and naysayers. And not just from the now-weary Kickstarter community. Meeting with Bragi CEO, Nikolaj Hviid, at CES, he told me many big industry players told him what he was trying to do with The Dash simply wasn't possible. They were wrong. Conclusively. Because I just saw them for myself -- the first time the working product has been seen outside of the company.



The version I saw lacked the final software, and the hardware didn't have the gloss and finish that the final product will, but it's essentially the same hardware. They look very close to the initial renders we saw, not unlike a set of ear molds for swimming, with enough touches to let you know these are a designed product. Hviid placed them in my ears, and I instinctively tapped the side of the right bud. Music started playing. Tap twice, and the

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track changes. You don't need to think too much about how to use them for their most basic purpose.

Many worried that because the headphones weren't connected physically, that they might feel loose, or be prone to falling out. The set I tried had the smallest buds (they come with "skins" with different-sized buds), and I normally pick the larger ones when using in-ears. My attempts at jumping up and down in the Sands exhibition center were met with bemused looks by those passing, but the headphones didn't budge. Whether this would still be the same eight miles into a run, ears full of sweat, I can't confirm, but Hviid assures me, the fit has been tested. Put simply, they ain't going nowhere.

My time with The Dash was more about seeing the product for real. Testing the audio is difficult. I'm reluctant to pass any considered judgment until we get to really put them through their paces. But it might be a good time to mention that Hviid has worked with companies like Harman Kardon and AKG. He's worked on numerous audio products. His team? They include members who've worked on products by Jabra. There's software expertise from Samsung and the iPhone. The team is not green.



The most exciting thing about Bragi, and The Dash, is the sense that this will be a living product. Kickstarter backers can expect to receive theirs in February. Everyone else, starting in April. But the product has been designed to improve over time. There is an API for developers to create their own apps that work with The Dash -- so expect tie-ins with Runtastic and the like. Bragi itself is committed to improving the firmware over time too, with Hviid giving the example that The Dash might soon "learn" what activity you are doing through sensor data, so that when you start a run (or ride), the headphones "ask" you if you started running, and you just nod to kick off the activity tracking.

There are bigger picture possibilities that Hviid is keen to impress on me, too. He likes the idea of using the sensors, and the brain's spatial awareness for audio to create things like skiing tutorials that guide you (through spatial sound) as you carve through snow. Or my favorite, adding real-time translation to make them a real-life Babel fish. Ambitious? Yes. Realistic? Well having seen how far the company has come, the obstacles it's overcome (each earphone is its own, tiny, proprietary computer), I'd say: Never say never.

The Dash will cost \$300 when it launches in Spring.

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Bose QuietComfort Ultra headphones and earbuds are reportedly on the way

You'll have more options to experience the company's excellent ANC.



Billy Steele/Engadget

 **Lawrence Bonk** | August 11, 2023 12:55 PM

Bose is reportedly preparing to launch some new headphones and earbuds, a refresh in the QuietComfort line, [as leaked by MySmartPrice](#). The Bose QuietComfort Ultra earbuds will be a successor to the [well-reviewed QuietComfort Earbuds II](#) and the QuietComfort Ultra headphones look to be a more premium-take on the company's [QuietComfort 45 headphones](#).

One of the highlights of any Bose product, and particularly the QuietComfort II earbuds, is active noise cancellation. The company's ANC technology is unparalleled and these new products offer it in spades. Both new products offer fully-integrated ANC technology so you can safely ignore the person next to you on your next flight.

Beyond ANC, the QuietComfort Ultra earbuds ship with a variety of soft ear tips, with a similar exterior design to its predecessor. They are available in black or white and should include a built-in microphone, touch controls, Bluetooth v5.3 support, IPX4 water-resistance and more. Bose hasn't officially announced these yet, so some specs remain under wraps.



MySmartPrice

The Bose QuietComfort Ultra headphones will also be available in black or white, with physical buttons to adjust volume and control music similar to other products in the QuietComfort line. There's also a USB-C port for both charging and for making wired connections, and a sleek design reminiscent of the [beloved Bose 700 line of headphones](#).

Remember, these are leaks from a reputable third-party, so Bose hasn't announced pricing or availability. [A recent report from Dealabs](#), however, suggests that the QuietComfort Ultra earbuds will cost around \$380, and the QuietComfort Ultra headphones will cost \$550. As for availability, Bose tends to release new product lines in September, so look for a launch around then.

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Rode's Wireless Pro mic kit lets you forget about 'clipped' audio

Onboard 32-bit float recording means you'll always have a safety track.



Rode

 [James Trew](#) | [@itstrew](#) | August 21, 2023 8:00 PM

It might not be an overstatement to say Rode's original Wireless GO microphone system changed how a lot of YouTubers work. It wasn't the first wireless mic system, not by a long long shot, but its focus on creators made it incredibly popular. That success would inspire a lot of competing products – [such as DJI's](#) – which have since won over fans in a category that Rode arguably defined. Today, Rode fights back with the Wireless Pro – its new flagship wireless microphone system for creators.

The headline feature is the inclusion of onboard 32-bit float recording which means you should no longer have to worry about setting mic gain levels (though it's probably best that you do). This feature means the onboard recording will be almost impossible to "clip" or distort through being too loud. Effectively you should always have a useable recording if things went a bit too loud on the audio in your camera, which will be a great anxiety reducer to anyone who's ever had a production ruined thanks to bad audio.

The Wireless Pro could arguably help bring 32-bit float into the mainstream. There are specialist audio recorders out there that already offer this feature. And Rode already included it on its [NT1 hybrid studio microphone](#), but given that you can plug a lot of different microphones into the Wireless Pro transmitters, this opens the door for recording a wide variety of audio content in 32-bit float – as long as you can feed it into a 3.5mm jack.

In a further attempt at streamlining the creatory process, the Wireless Pro also has advanced timecode capability so you won't need an external device for this. Though you will need to set this up via Rode Central, the companion app for the mic (there's no option on-device for this setting).



Photo by James Trew / Engadget

The Wireless Pro borrows a few features from alternatives or aftermarket accessories by including a charging case as standard (Rode currently offers one as a standalone purchase). That case is good for two total charges of the entire system according to the company and comes as standard with the new model. The stated battery life for the transmitters and receiver is around seven hours, meaning the Wireless Pro should be good for at least 20 hours total recording onto the 32gb storage (good for 40 hours of material apparently).

Another key upgrade is the improved range. The [Wireless GO II](#), for example, has an approximate range of 656 feet (200 meters). The new Pro models expands that to 850 feet (260 meters) which is, coincidentally, a shade more than DJI's stated 820 feet (250 meters).

When Rode unveiled its more affordale Wireless ME kit, it introduced the idea of the receiver doubling as a "narrator" mic via a TRRS headset in the headphones/monitoring port. That's a feature that carries over to the Pro meaning you can record up to three different speakers albeit one of them will be wired, rather than cable free.

There are a couple of minor, but welcome quality of life updates, too, such as locking 3.5mm jacks so you won't rip your lav mic out and plugin power detection so the system can detect when the camera its plugged into is active, using that info to optimize power usage.

At time of publication, DJI's dual-mic product retails for \$330. The [Rode Wireless Pro](#) will cost \$399. That's obviously a slice more, but the company decided to include two Lavalier II mics as part of the bundle. The [Lavalier II](#) costs \$99 on its own, so from that perspective the entire bundle represents a decent value if you're looking for complete solution.

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