

# Canned surround sound

**Steve May** is wowed by DD5.1 headphones

It's a fact: in-game surround sound enhances the video game experience, making your favourite shooter or RPG more immersive, and giving you an edge when it comes to gameplay – If you can hear those zombies shuffling up behind you, you've a better chance of shooting your way to another level.

Yet not all of us have our games console tied into an AV system, or want to conduct late-night sessions at teeth-rattling volumes. Sharkoon has a solution: X-Tatic Dolby Digital surround headphones. I used them with an Xbox 360, but they are also compatible with the PS3 and PCs (USB mic adaptor supplied). In-game chat is supported.

The cans are tethered to an outboard DD processor in the Sound Control Unit (SCU), which offers an assortment of time delay tweaks for both digital and analogue inputs, Dynamic Range Control plus support

for a second headset; there's also a separate volume controller, which decodes the optical feed from the Xbox and routes it to a nested array of four speakers in each earpiece.

## Highs

- The X-Tatics offer truly immersive audio and create a believable bubble of sound. Play *COD* (any version), and the fire-fights will light up your eardrums; bullets are panned every which way, and dialogue moves believably as you shuffle around characters. Very seductive.
- Can also be used for Dolby Digital 5.1 movie listening.
- These 'phones are comfortable to wear, with plush headband and cushioned ear pieces.

## Lows

- Once hooked up, you'll find yourself swathed in a spaghetti of wires and cables; not really very elegant.



**In the cans:**  
The X-Tatics offer four drivers in each earpiece

## HCC VERDICT

Sharkoon X-Tatic 5.1  
£110 Approx

Price check: [www.techradar.com/592328](http://www.techradar.com/592328)

Overall: **1 2 3 4 5**