

# Listen up—with Schubert's SRC System

By Wes Fleming

I've been riding motorcycles since the early 1990s and until I got a Schubert S2 helmet, have never had any kind of communications system or the ability to listen to music inside any of my helmets. I like the solitude—even loneliness—of being in there with nothing but the air and my thoughts.

Having said that, it sure is convenient to be able to listen to music and even take a phone call while out riding all day long.



*The SRC is unique in that it's built right into the collar. All the controls are glove-friendly and located on the left side of the collar to keep your throttle/brake hand free at all times.*

Schubert says the main complaint they've received to date about the SRC is from long-distance riders, who say the battery doesn't last long enough. I think for most riders this won't be a problem, as I was easily able to get seven to eight hours of constant use out of an overnight charging of the system. I left the system powered on for a week without actively using it and was able to take calls the whole time, so its low-power standby mode is quite effective.

It's clear that Schubert takes rider critique seriously; one major change between the original SRC for the C3/C3W helmet and the new version of the SRC for the S2 and C3/C3W Pro is the antenna built into the EPS foam inside the helmet. Not only does this greatly improve radio reception, but it extends intercom connectivity up to about a half mile. In normal use, I never got that far from my intercom partners, but it's nice to know there's a little bit of range to the system.

The SRC's electronics are made by Cardo and are based on their popular Scala line of communications systems. This means that you can link to not only other riders using the SRC in a Schubert helmet, but any rider

using a Scala as well. There's a bare minimum of controls on the left side of the collar—one bank of three buttons (A, Mobile, B) and one bank of two buttons (Volume Up, Down). Each bank of buttons has rigid plastic dividers, enabling easy use even by gloved hands. Winter gloves make it a little more difficult, but a thinner three-season glove is no problem.

Installing the SRC proved to be more than I could handle with the basic instructions supplied by Schubert; I had to head down to my local Schubert dealer, Morton's BMW in Fredericksburg, VA, to get help with the installation at the parts counter. What is really needed is for everything to come out—the original collar, the cheek pads and the inner liner as well. Once all that stuff is out, installing the SRC is a snap. The speakers fit neatly under the lining in pockets molded into the EPS; the microphone goes anywhere on the chin bar you'd like it to be.

The sound quality of the speakers is good. There's not a lot of bass response and they will distort at high volumes, but these are tiny, rugged speakers, so I feel like they perform as well as can be expected. I discovered that the maximum volume attainable by pressing the Volume Up button repeatedly is not actually the loudest setting possible; there's a built-in noise-sensing mechanism that boosts the volume slightly when wind noise increases.

When used to communicate (instead of listening to music), the SRC's speakers sound just fine. Voice fidelity is good, even when using ear plugs, and there's no difficulty understanding what the other person is saying, whether they've called you on the phone or are riding near you and communicating directly.

Accepting an incoming call is simple—just start talking, or as the instructions direct, "speak loudly." Dialing out is possible,

too, by tapping the Mobile button and speaking the name of the person you want your phone to dial. If your phone can handle that kind of protocol, it works great and you're speaking to your intended conversationalist in no time.

In addition to some hook-and-loop sticky tabs, the SRC ships with a wall charger, a USB-to-Mini-USB cable used to charge the system or hook it up to a computer, and a Mini-USB-to-1/8" stereo adapter cable that allows you to connect a non-Bluetooth device to the SRC.

The owner's manual contains clear, easy-to-follow instructions on how to pair the SRC with Bluetooth-capable cell phones, MP3 players and GPS units. I wasn't able to successfully pair my Zumo 550 GPS with the SRC as either a headset or a phone, but pairing with my iPhone 4S was a snap. Though it sometimes requires turning the SRC off and back on again to re-synch the connection, that's a complaint for Apple, not Schubert. Some other SRC users have recommended a



*Installing the SRC is easier if you remove the cheekpads and helmet liner, both of which snap right back in once you're done. The speakers go into an oval cutout on either side of the helmet's EPS liner and have a small range of adjustability for comfort.*

specific sequence for multi-device success: turn on the SRC, then the GPS and finally the phone. I found that to work well.

As with my review of the S2 (see the June 2013 issue), I have a few minor quibbles with the SRC. First is that the front edges of the collar press into my neck, even now after the helmet is well broken-in. It's a minor discomfort that I've gotten used to, but in cold weather—with a balaclava, scarf or the collar of my under-layers sticking out above my jacket collar—it can get uncomfortable.

The next issue I have with the SRC is that it is not Mac-compatible. This can't be blamed on Schuberth, however, because this is a function of Cardo's protocols. Effectively it means I have to take my helmet to a Schuberth dealer to get firmware updates or to reprogram the six stored radio stations. The other option is to install a Windows emulator on my Mac, and that's not going to

happen any time soon.

The SRC is quite a marvel of communications technology for use with the C3, C3 Pro and S2 helmets. While this kind of high-tech accessory might not appeal to every rider—especially those who don't like or aren't used to listening to music, communicating with other riders or talking on the phone while riding—it's more than just another farkle. Its ease of use and ability to quickly be swapped out for the standard collar make it a solid, flexible tool for any rider that uses a Schuberth helmet.

For more information on the SRC or Schuberth's helmets, look at their website: <http://www.schuberthnorthamerica.com>.



Naturally, Schuberth has to make separate SRCs for the S2 (full face) and C3/C3 Pro (flip-front) helmets. From a user standpoint, the main difference is the microphone, shown here as a boom mic with a C3 helmet. Photo provided by Schuberth.



The new, longer antenna in the S2 and C3 Pro helmets fits into grooves built right into the exterior of the EPS. The antenna then plugs into the SRC and gets tucked under the lining of the helmet.



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