

20 Years of Harman Kardon SoundSticks

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Twenty years ago, months before the scorching (and deadly) summer of 2003, I bought the transparent Harman Kardon SoundSticks¹ that I still have above (and below) my desk today.

They are the first iteration of the SoundSticks, those introduced at the July 2000 MacWorld expo, and designed by Jony Ive himself. And they still sound amazing today, even after 20 years of continuous use.

They also look fabulous; the two transparent speakers on my desk, at each side of my computer screen, and the subwoofer next to my feet, providing the bass. A humble USB-1 connection brings music to my office.

I have connected them to various computers; starting with my iBook G3 (bought in December 2002), various Macs (with PowerPC, Intel, and ARM chips), all the way to the Windows 11 PC of my wife, as well as my work computers, all running Linux (Ubuntu and RHEL).

I want to point out this very simple fact: no matter which computer I plug them to, they are immediately recognized and *they just work* without any further configuration. They even appear correctly labeled as “Harman Kardon SoundSticks” in every one of those operating systems.

This is, simply put, how all quality technology should work. Most amazing still, Harman Kardon still sells them². And Forbes magazine even published an article³ about them.

In these days where we try to consume less in a world filled with planned obsolescence, it’s soothing to find at least one piece of technology still compatible with today’s computers... 20 years later.

I’ve been celebrating the 20 years of my classic SoundSticks listening to a 50 year old classic: Pink Floyd’s The Dark Side of the Moon⁴ over and over again. Good things are timeless.

¹<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SoundSticks>

²<https://www.harmankardon.com/home-audio/HK+SOUNDSTICKS+4.html>

³<https://www.forbes.com/sites/marksparrow/2019/04/09/harman-kardon-soundsticks-are-still-the-ideal-apple-mac-partner-some-two-decades-on/?sh=6213ce691f3d>

⁴https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dark_Side_of_the_Moon