

Company & Product Recommendation: ZAGG & the ZAGGfolio

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Related Categories: Mobile

The product recommendation:

The ZAGGfolio for iPad 2. If you're going to get The new iPad (you may refer to it as the iPad 3; Apple isn't referring to it that way, however), you're covered too: ZAGG is already selling **the ZAGGfolio for The new iPad** and I'm sure it's just as awesome, maybe even more so, as the ZAGGfolio for iPad 2. And Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1 users, there's a **ZAGGfolio for Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1** too.

The backstory:

When **Adobe** issued me an iPad 2 to use in my job, I...well, I really didn't care. See, I'm not a technology for technology's sake type of person; to the contrary, I'm only interested in technology that can really provide value to me and I just didn't see a tablet doing that. In fact, I already had a tablet, a 7" Samsung Galaxy Tab (also issued to me by Adobe), that I didn't use much. You may be thinking "well, that's an Android device and iOS is the only way to go"; for me this is not true: for me, both iOS and Android have their pros/cons; I have an Android phone (the Motorola Atrix) and so I'm comfortable in Android and my non-use of my 7" Samsung Galaxy Tab was in no way because it is an Android device. You may be thinking "well, a 7" tablet is too small, that's why you didn't use it" and that's not it for me either: to the contrary, the interesting thing is that, for me, one of the great attributes of a tablet to me is portability and because a 7" tablet is more portable than a 10" tablet (I can fit it in the side pocket of my cargo shorts!), I anticipated that the 7" Samsung Galaxy Tab would be my tablet of choice whenever I did use a tablet--so I thought that I would use the iPad 2 even less than the 7" Samsung Galaxy Tab.

The issue for me isn't screen size and the issue for me isn't operating system--the issue for me is whether or not the device has a keyboard I can use approximately as well as a full-size physical keyboard. When consuming content (such as when clicking around the Internet), a tablet is all I need. But when creating content, I need a device with a keyboard--a **real** keyboard, not a software keyboard on the screen. Both Android tablets and iPads allow the use of any Bluetooth keyboard. However, as previously mentioned, portability is for me one of the key attributes of a tablet and so what I needed was something that would bundle up my iPad2 and a Bluetooth keyboard all in one convenient package. And that's exactly what the ZAGGfolio for iPad 2 provides.

Before buying the ZAGGfolio, I did a lot of online research into iPad2 cases that include a Bluetooth keyboard. There are quite a large number of them available and most of them cost less than the ZAGGfolio. But only the ZAGGfolio has what I consider to be a faithful recreation of a MacBook keyboard and that was critical to me. You may say "well, I'm a Windows person so I don't care if my tablet Bluetooth keyboard is laid out like a Mac keyboard or not" but I'm pretty sure that if you compare your keyboard to a Mac keyboard, you'll see that they're very similar whereas if you compare your keyboard to the Bluetooth keyboards that come with some of these other iPad2 cases, you'll see that certain keys on those Bluetooth keyboards are shifted around. This made those other keyboards all non-starters for me. So, encouraged by a couple of online reviews calling the ZAGGfolio the best typing experience among iPad 2 cases with a Bluetooth keyboard, I purchased the the ZAGGfolio for iPad 2.

As you can tell from the fact that I'm writing this review, I've been very pleased with the ZAGGfolio--so pleased that when my dad got an iPad 2, I bought him a ZAGGfolio too (and in the spirit of full disclosure I will note that the price of the ZAGGfolio for my iPad 2 was covered by **Adobe** as a business expense; however, the key point is that I like my ZAGGfolio so much that when paying out of my own pocket for a case for my father, I bought him the ZAGGfolio as well). In regards to comparison with other cases on the market, I can only provide this one small note: my uncle has another iPad 2 case with a Bluetooth keyboard and I used it briefly one day and the mucked-up keyboard layout definitely caused me trouble. UPDATE 2012-07-27: after seeing and using my ZAGGfolio, my uncle expressed interest in one so I bought him one for his birthday and he's loving it and he says it's much better than his previous iPad 2 case+keyboard (which, again, I already knew but the point is that he is very glad he made the switch).

Having the ZAGGfolio has made a night-and-day difference in my use of the iPad 2: far from rarely using it, I use it **constantly** now. In fact, I typed most of this blog post on it, something I wouldn't dream of doing on the iPad 2 without a good physical keyboard. And, because it's so portable, I take it with me pretty much everywhere I go--in fact, my wife has been known to ask me if I'm really going to take it to such-and-such place that we're going (the answer: sometimes yes, sometimes no). I've been taking notes during church for years by hand but now I've switched to typing them, again something I wouldn't have dreamed about doing on the iPad 2 without a good physical keyboard. Speaking of notes, if I'm not presenting at a business meeting but rather am just taking notes, I'll leave my MacBook Pro behind and just use my iPad2 (by the way, I highly recommend **Notability**: it's a great note-taking and note-management app that can do a lot of cool things including recording audio and synching it up with the notes you type; last I knew, Notability was a mere \$0.99).

What about that 7" Samsung Galaxy Tab? Well, it still has the advantage that it fits in my cargo shorts so it might get some use here and there but since it doesn't have a physical keyboard, it pretty much just sits around. I will note, however, that if you just want to consume content, not create it, the 7" size is really great: it fits in one hand nicely (well, okay, my big hand at least) and it's a **lot** bigger than a mobile phone and definitely provides a much nicer user experience than a mobile phone--so if you're ruling out 7" tablets without ever using one because you think they're too small, check them out before you dismiss them so quickly.

One last note: if you're thinking that all this sounds well and good but you'll just use your laptop, thank you very much: more power to you! It certainly can be hard to justify the cost of a tablet if you own a laptop. But a tablet does bring increased portability. And don't overlook battery life: my iPad 2 will get 10 hours easily on a single charge whereas my MacBook Pro can't go more than a few hours on a charge. Now, I hear that the MacBook Air with a solid state drive can go a really long time on a single charge and given its size and weight, the portability argument for an iPad is weakened for MacBook Air owners. In regards to user experience: I personally find that it

can be more enjoyable to do certain things on a tablet (for instance, I prefer the **Weather Channel iPad app** over **their website** though for Windows users they do have a **Windows app** that looks very similar to the iPad app) and on the flip side, other things are more enjoyable to do on a desktop/laptop; sometimes one being preferable to the other is due to the paradigm of the OS itself but many times it is due to app considerations (as with the example above where Weather Channel has an iPad app but not, at the time of this writing, a Mac OS X app).

Note that ZAGG has run some promos in the past to sweeten the pot a little on the ZAGGfolios so you might look around for those (if you **contact me** I may be able to see what I can do to help you find a promo).

The company recommendation:

ZAGG

The backstory:

It's important that I broaden things out a little bit to a general company recommendation, not just a product recommendation, because I've had a really good experience with the folks at ZAGG. My nephew accidentally broke a key on my dad's ZAGGfolio; I emailed ZAGG about it, asking if I could get a replacement key and not only did they email me back quickly, they sent me a **free** replacement key! Now that's a company that stands behind its products! It was through no fault of their workmanship that the ZAGGfolio broke but they went to time and expense to help me get it fixed anyway. I'm tempted to say "that's how business should be done" but I think it's better than that: it would have been perfectly fine for them to charge a reasonable few dollars for shipping & handling. But instead, they went over and above and I think that really speaks highly of ZAGG.

UPDATE 2012-07-27: my dad learned his lesson about letting my nephew use the iPad while it's in the ZAGGfolio--yet somehow my nephew got hold of the iPad in the ZAGGfolio and broke some more keys so dad got in touch with ZAGG and once again they came through with free keys. Awesome! But dad certainly doesn't want to take advantage of the generosity of ZAGG so here's to hoping he can keep the ZAGGfolio away from my nephew!