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Review: iRig Voice microphone and EZ Voice app for iOS

Review By Lester Victor Marks

The iRig Voice microphone and accompanying EZ Voice app for iOS are the latest products from IK Multimedia intended for non-professional musicians who want to sing along with their favorite songs. Together they work well, and can make homemade karaoke recording a lot of fun.



Hardware

The iRig Voice microphone (\$39 USD) is almost similar to the iRig iMic of a few years ago, except this time it's available in colors that match Apple's iPhone 5c. IK Multimedia provided us with Pink, Blue, and Lime Green colored microphones.

What you get is a competent microphone with an on/off switch and a standard 3.5mm headphone plug that should fit with most iPhone or iPad cases. It also sports its own pass-through headphone jack for monitoring as you record.

The mic features a compact cardioid pattern that minimizes feedback, and the body is made of a lightweight "thermoplastic." The specifications are:

- Microphone Type: condenser electret
- Polar Pattern: unidirectional/cardioid
- Frequency Response: 100 Hz - 15 kHz, -3dB
- Maximum Sound Pressure (set for high sound pressure): 105 dB
- Distortion: 3% THD at 105 dB, 1 kHz
- Windscreen: built-in
- Power and Connection: works with iOSM.

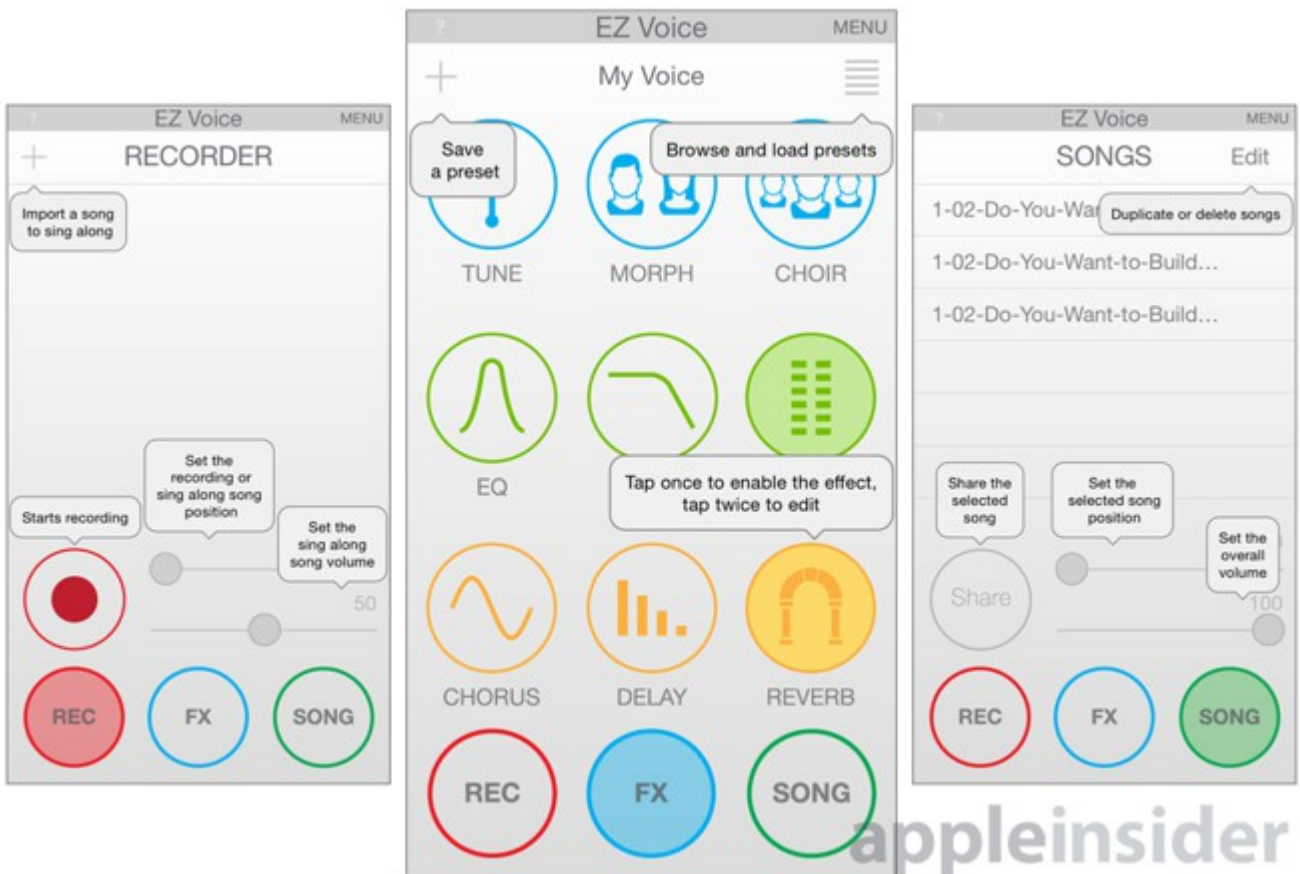
From our tests, the microphone sounds great. And while it's advertised to work with "dozens" of karaoke and sing-along apps available on iOS, we wanted to test out the hardware with IK Multimedia's official app intended to pair with the iRig Voice.



Software

EZ Voice, the app meant to accompany the iRig Voice microphone, aims to be the fastest way for the rising star in you to import a song, add some effects to your voice, remove the voice from the song, and record yourself singing along. You can import a song either from the music library on your iOS device, or from the iTunes file sharing function in iTunes on a Mac or PC. We tried both ways and had better luck importing from iTunes file sharing.

The app is divided into three sections: Record, FX, and Song. Song is where you import songs. FX lets you choose from 9 effects, and effects presets. Want to add reverb? It's here. Autotuning is present, too. Then, go to Record. Add the song you'll sing along to, then press record.



To do multiple takes, we were supposed to be able to click on the "restart" button on the top left corner of the screen. This should have restarted the recording without having to exit and import the song again and again.

Missing that detail means discarding the recording and re-importing the song each time. In our case, we re-imported from iTunes File Sharing, which would get tiresome.

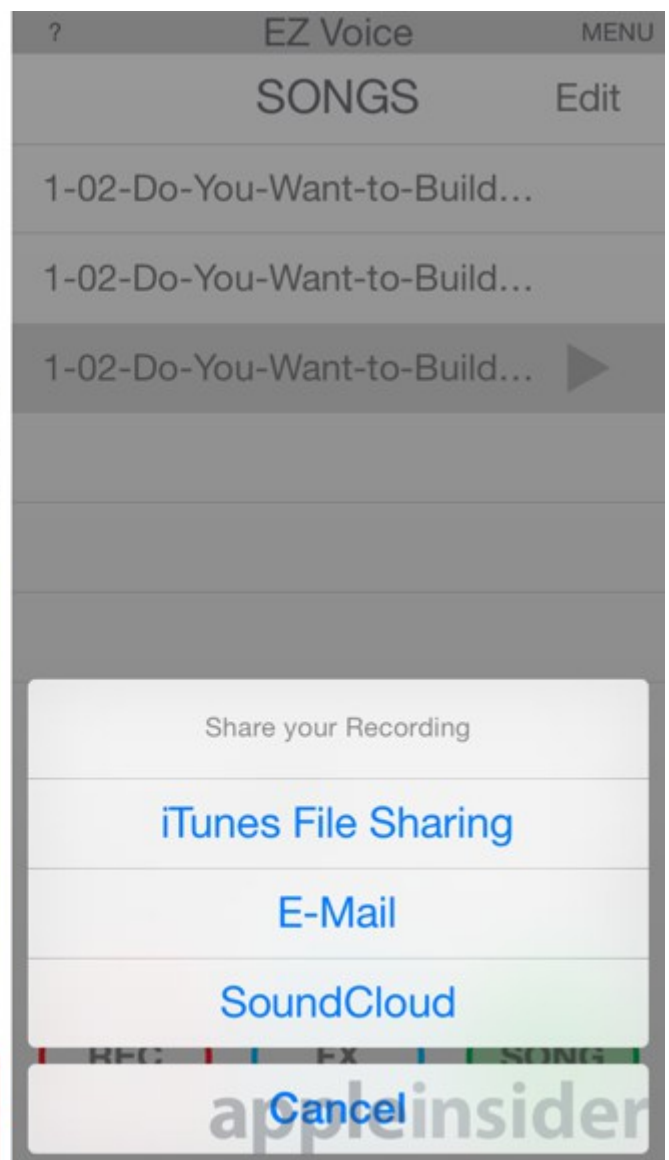
How, you ask, did we miss the "restart" button for retakes? It's a light gray arrow in the shape of a circle that takes the place of the Plus symbol (+) when a recording is being made. Tapping it returns you to the beginning count-in that plays before the song.

Getting past that rough spot, we recorded several takes of the songs from "Frozen," making a little girl very happy. It's really for the person who enjoys singing along with a favorite song, singing covers, and maybe a little karaoke. Picture the kid who sings into a

hairbrush, but using a microphone instead.

Things EZ Voice gets right: The effects, and sharing of recorded songs. There's autotune, morph, choir, EQ, filter, level, chorus, delay and reverb, which is enough to fill almost any need you'd have. Then there are 21 presets with names like Space Alien, Arena, The Ghost, and Backup. Sharing sends the MP3 to iTunes File Sharing, E-mail, or SoundCloud, which feels like the right set of options to us.

In our experience with the iRig Voice and EZ Voice combination, it took no time at all to get started. Registering the mic in the application settings unlocked the Reverb effect, and an additional \$4.99 unlocks all the other effects as a bundle. Strangely, even after having registered a microphone it still shows a panel that advertises all the compatible IK Multimedia microphones that work with EZ Voice. We'd prefer it just let us into the app instead of making us browse the catalog or tap "skip" each time.



Admittedly it's easy to hate the sound of your own voice, and it took us a few tries to find a recording we were comfortable sharing with our closest friends. But even if we had to record a few times to get closer to something we'd call "okay," we had fun doing it.

If you know a kid who likes to play with toy microphones, sings out loud for fun, makes up songs, and has an iOS device, this is an easy purchase at \$39 for the microphone, the free app and \$4.99 to enable all the effects. It was fun, and other than a few bumps along the way as we learned to use it, was pretty quick at getting down to making recordings and cover songs.

Score: 4 out of 5



Pros

- Affordable, cheery, colorful microphone
- App that exists to make cover songs with lots of vocal effects
- Quick path to pick FX, import songs, and record
- Headphone monitor jack

Cons

- Importing songs was confusing at first and the iTunes File Sharing path is more involved than the Music Library path
- EZ Voice App shows catalog of compatible microphones on every launch