

How to Create a Simple Classroom Sound System



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HAPPY

PRODUCTIVE

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USING MUSIC to help students become more independent is a great thing. The hassle involved in playing music is not so great.

Whether you are using a boom box with a CD player or playlists in iTunes, you have to somehow figure out a simple, effective way to broadcast the songs you want your students to hear. Because if it's *not* simple and effective, you won't be inclined to use music as often as you may wish.

For the record When I started teaching back in 1985, the state of technology for playing music in my classroom was limited.

- ✓ an old phonograph
- ✓ a cassette tape player

That was it.

With the phonograph I was not only stuck with whatever songs were on the record, I had to gently lay down the needle on the right track.

The cassette tape player was a major improvement because I could create my own mixed tapes. Like the phonograph, though, finding the right track was a total pain.

And then the CD revolution occurred and playing music—especially specific songs from a CD—became a whole new game.

Sadly, though, I still had to shuffle CDs to ensure the right one was in the player, not to mention remembering which track was which.



But let's not dwell on the Dark Ages of Music Technology and the limitations it imposed. Let us, instead, leave behind CD players and boom boxes, and move on from iPods plugged into computer speakers or docked in an iPod-friendly speaker device. Let's blaze a new trail.

What I suggest we do is take advantage of **inexpensive bluetooth wireless technology** to create that simple yet effective classroom sound system everyone is looking for.




Here's the slick little Bluetooth device that will enable you to play music easier than ever before.

I'll show you how a Bluetooth music receiver works on page 4.

The ordering information is right here.

Bluetooth™ Music Receiver (Limit 10 per Customer)



Quantity	Our Price
1	\$15.11
2 - 9	\$15.11
10 - 19	\$15.11
20 - 49	\$15.11
50+	\$15.11

Availability: In Stock
This item will ship on 7/29/2013 if ordered within 1 days 2 hours 45 minutes

Average User Satisfaction Rate
★★★★☆ (81.86%) rated by 291 user(s)
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Product ID
7364

Shop with Confidence

- 30 day money back guarantee
- No restocking fee
- Easy return
- 100% safe SSL encrypted shopping
- PCI-DSS Level 1 Compliant
- 9.70/10 Resellerratings.com Customer Satisfaction Rate
- Lifetime warranty on all cables and non-electronic products
- Free life time tech support

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MonoPrice.com
Bluetooth Music Receiver
Product ID 7364

Note: It was \$20 when I bought it a month ago. Now it's available for \$15. Bargain day.

What Else Do You Need?

Other than the bluetooth receiver from MonoPrice.com, the only other things you're going to need are:

- 1) a set of speakers
- 2) a music player with bluetooth capabilities.

Speakers

In keeping with the theme of simple yet effective, I think computer speakers are the way to go.

Computer speakers are relatively inexpensive and have enough power to fill your room with quality sound.

Spoiler alert: The green headphone jack you can see in the image to the right will plug into your bluetooth receiver.



Additional Speaker Options

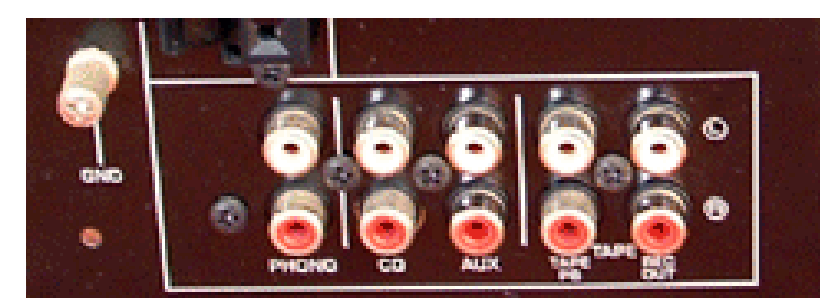
1. Built-In Speaker System

If you are fortunate enough to have a set of speakers in your room as a component of your SMART board system, feel free to use these in place of computer speakers. The Bluetooth Music Receiver comes with red and white RCA plugs that will enable you to patch into the wall plate or directly into the board inputs.



2. Old Stereo System

If you happen to have an old stereo, you can use the speakers connected to it to broadcast your music. You'll find the same type of red and white RCA connectors on the back of the stereo itself that will enable you to connect the Bluetooth Music Receiver.



3. Boom Box with Aux Input

There are a number of boom boxes that have an auxiliary input. Just plug the red and white RCA plugs into the back of your boom box, press the AUX button on the front of the boom box, and crank up the volume. (See photos on page 6.)



Music Player

As mentioned on the previous page, the only critical requirement of your music player is that it has Bluetooth capabilities. Fortunately for us, most smart phones and tablets are bluetooth-enabled.

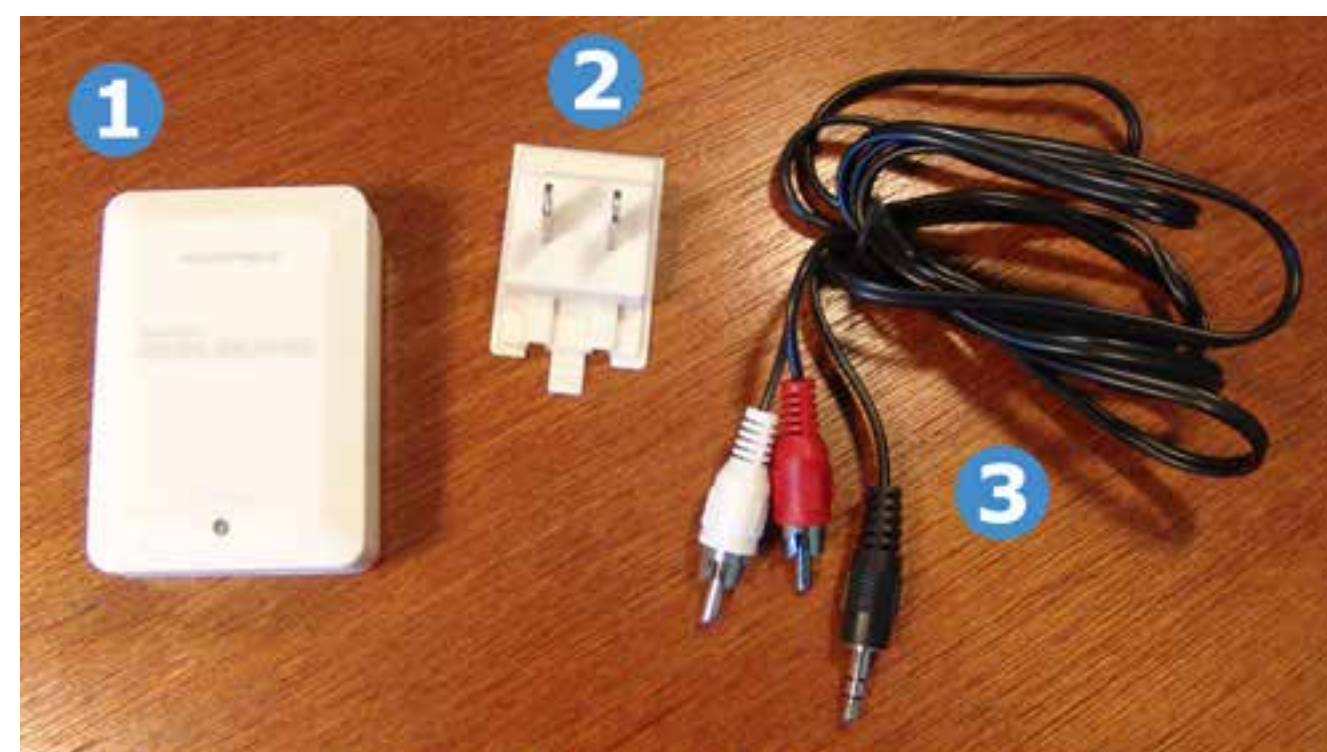
For this how-to guide, I'm going to use an iPod Touch as the demonstration device.

If you plan to use an Android phone or tablet, bear in mind that there will be slight variations in how things are done. You'll find Android set-up instructions just below the Apple set-up instructions.

How to Set Up Your Classroom Sound System

The box you received from Monoprice contains three items.

- 1 a Bluetooth music receiver
- 2 a power plug
- 3 an RCA-to-3.5mm audio cable



Bluetooth Receiver and Speakers

1. Slide the power plug into the slot on the back side of the receiver so that it locks in place.

You also have the option of using the USB port on the receiver as the charging source. But since we're trying to keep this sound system as simple as possible, I'd recommend using the supplied power plug.

2. Plug the receiver into a power outlet.

A blue light should turn on and then start to blink. While you're at, go ahead and plug your speakers into the same outlet and turn 'em on.

3. Plug the headphone jack from the speakers into receiver.

Don't worry about trying to find the perfect place for your speakers. All we're trying to do right now is get everything working. I'll share a couple of thoughts about **Speaker Placement** on page 6.



✓ *Power up the Bluetooth music receiver and the speakers. Take the headphone jack coming from the speakers and plug it into the music receiver. You are now ready to rock the room!*

Music Device - Apple iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch

1. Open the settings menu on your device.

It's the icon with the gears conveniently labeled "Settings."

Note: I usually keep it on the tray† so that it's easy to find.



2. Navigate to the Bluetooth setting.

Settings > General > Bluetooth

3. Set the switch to ON.

As soon as you do this, your device will become "discoverable." Very quickly, a new entry called **iSpeaker** will appear in your list of bluetooth devices.

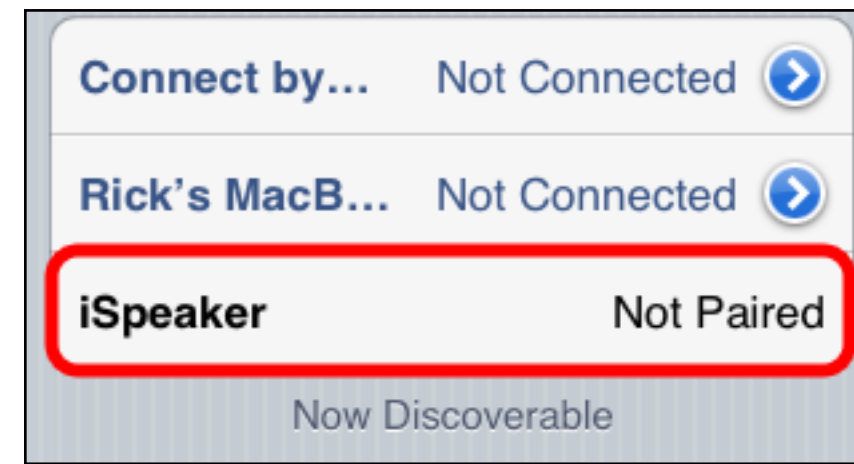


† The tray is the little shelf found at the bottom of every home screen. An iPhone tray will hold four icons while the iPad has room for six of them.

Music Device, continued

4. Tap the iSpeaker label.

This will start the device connection process.



5. Link your device to the music receiver.

The first time you do this you'll be asked to enter a code. After that, you won't; the connection will be automatic.

The code is **0000**. (Four zeros, the default code for most bluetooth connections.)



Once you've entered the code, the Pair button will become active.

Tap the Pair button, and you'll be returned to the previous screen. This time, though, the word "Connected" will appear to the right of the iSpeaker label.

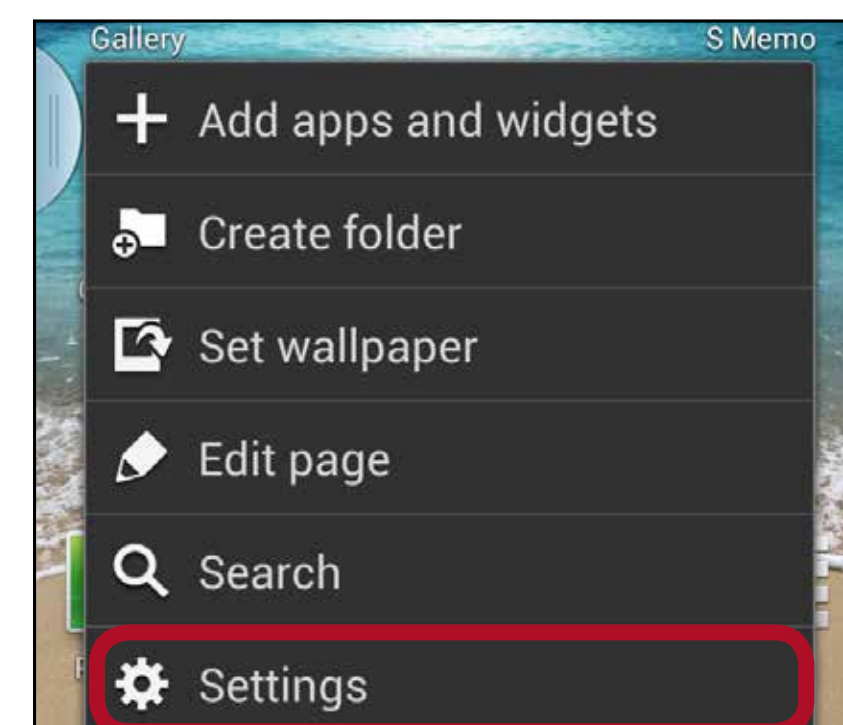
And just like that, you're ready to rock!



Music Device - Android phone or tablet

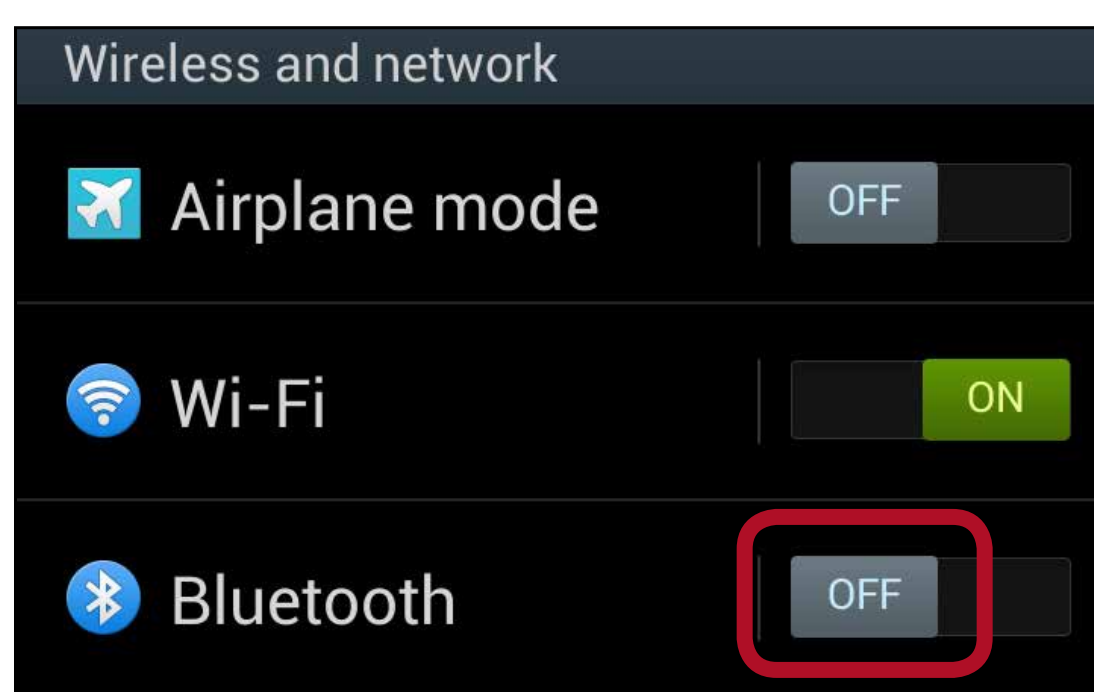
1. Open the Settings' menu on your device.

Tap the bottom left button on your device, and then tap the Settings label.



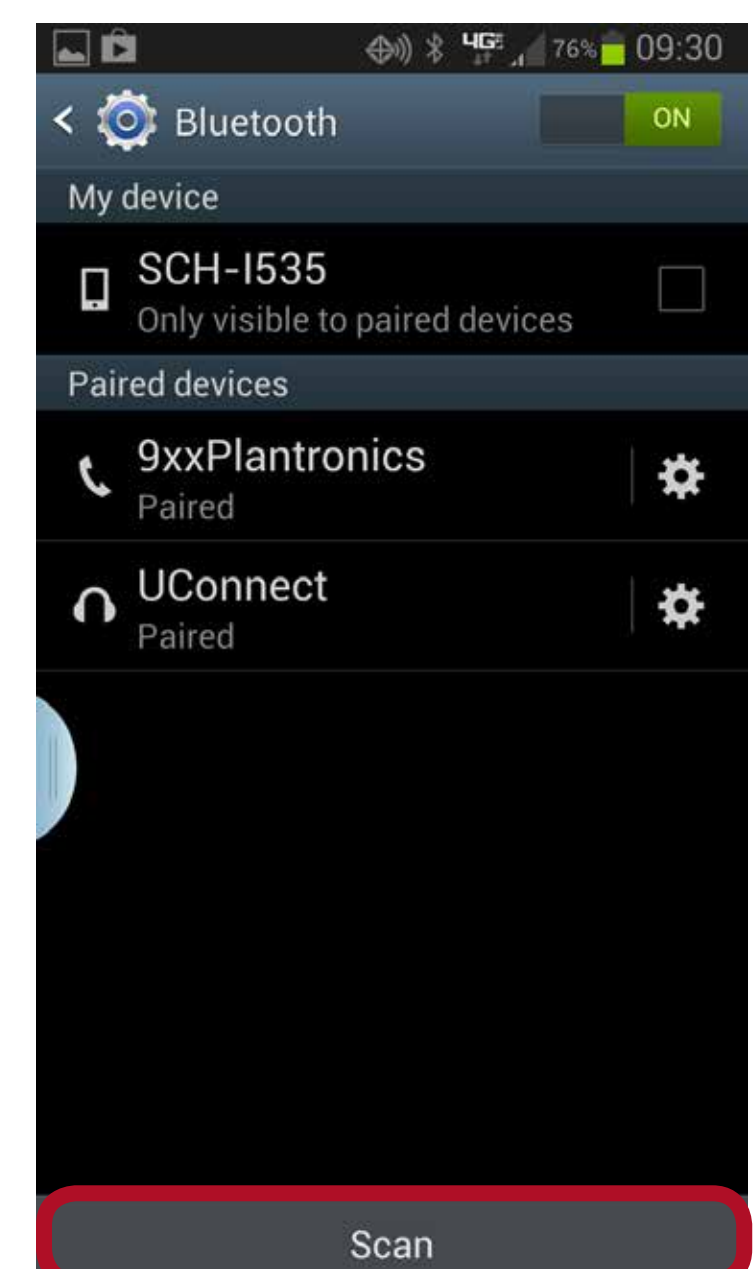
2. Find the Bluetooth setting, and turn it ON.

It should be listed toward the top of the list of individual settings.



3. Tap the Scan button.

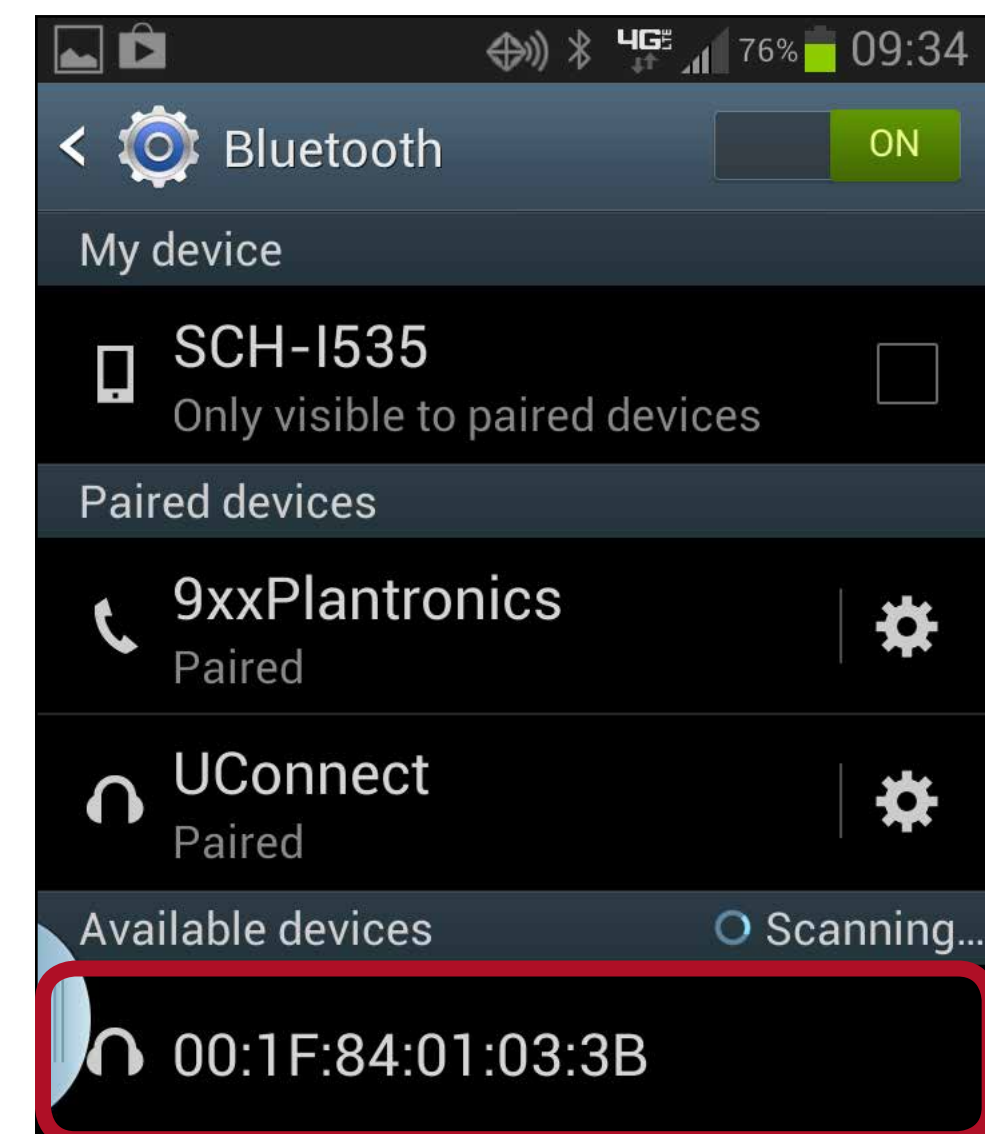
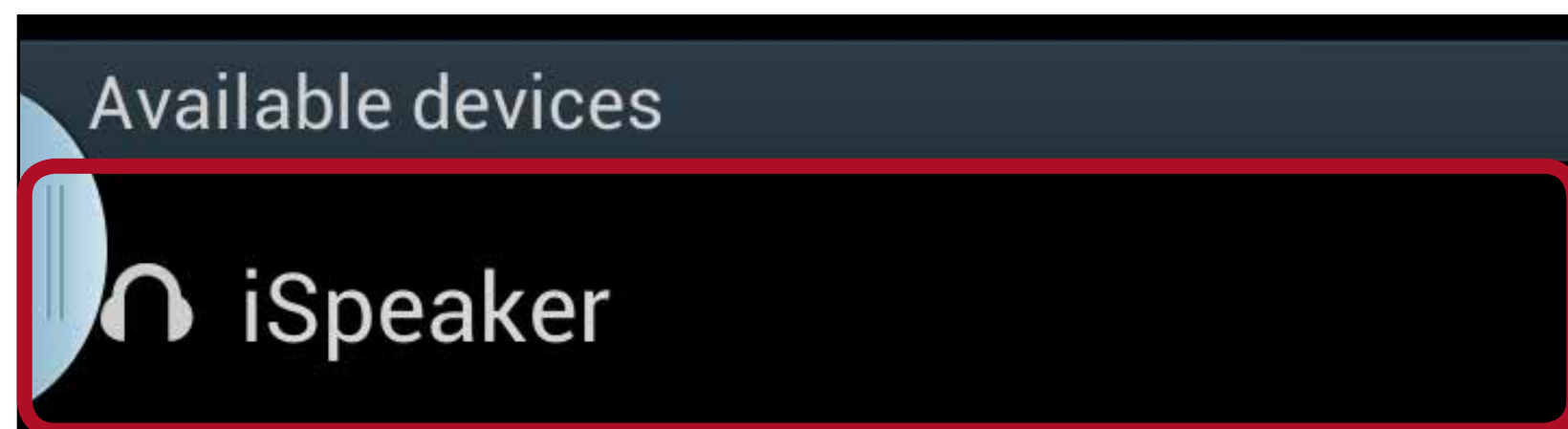
Tapping this button will cause your device to become "discoverable." Very quickly, a new entry will appear in your list of bluetooth devices.



4. Wait for it.

When I tapped the Scan button on my Samsung Galaxy phone, I didn't see **iSpeaker**. What I saw instead was a hexadecimal code for the newly detected Bluetooth device.

Within 15 to 20 seconds, though, my phone translated the code and displayed the **iSpeaker** label I was hoping to see.



Speaker Placement

Without wishing to over-explain things, I think it's best if the speakers are up and away from everyone.

The normal computer speaker arrangement finds them near the computer. That's because the headphone jack coming from the speakers need to be plugged into the speaker port on the computer. And since the speaker cord is normally 6' in length, the speakers are somewhat restricted in their placement.

But now that you have a wireless system, you're free to find a more optimal location for the speakers.

Here are a couple of shots from a sixth grade classroom. The teacher was using a boom box that had an auxilliary input. He was able to use the patch cord that came with the music receiver to connect it to the AUX input.

The speakers, which were detachable, were then placed on top of a tall cabinet. All in all, it made for a really dynamic—and thus more effective—sound system.

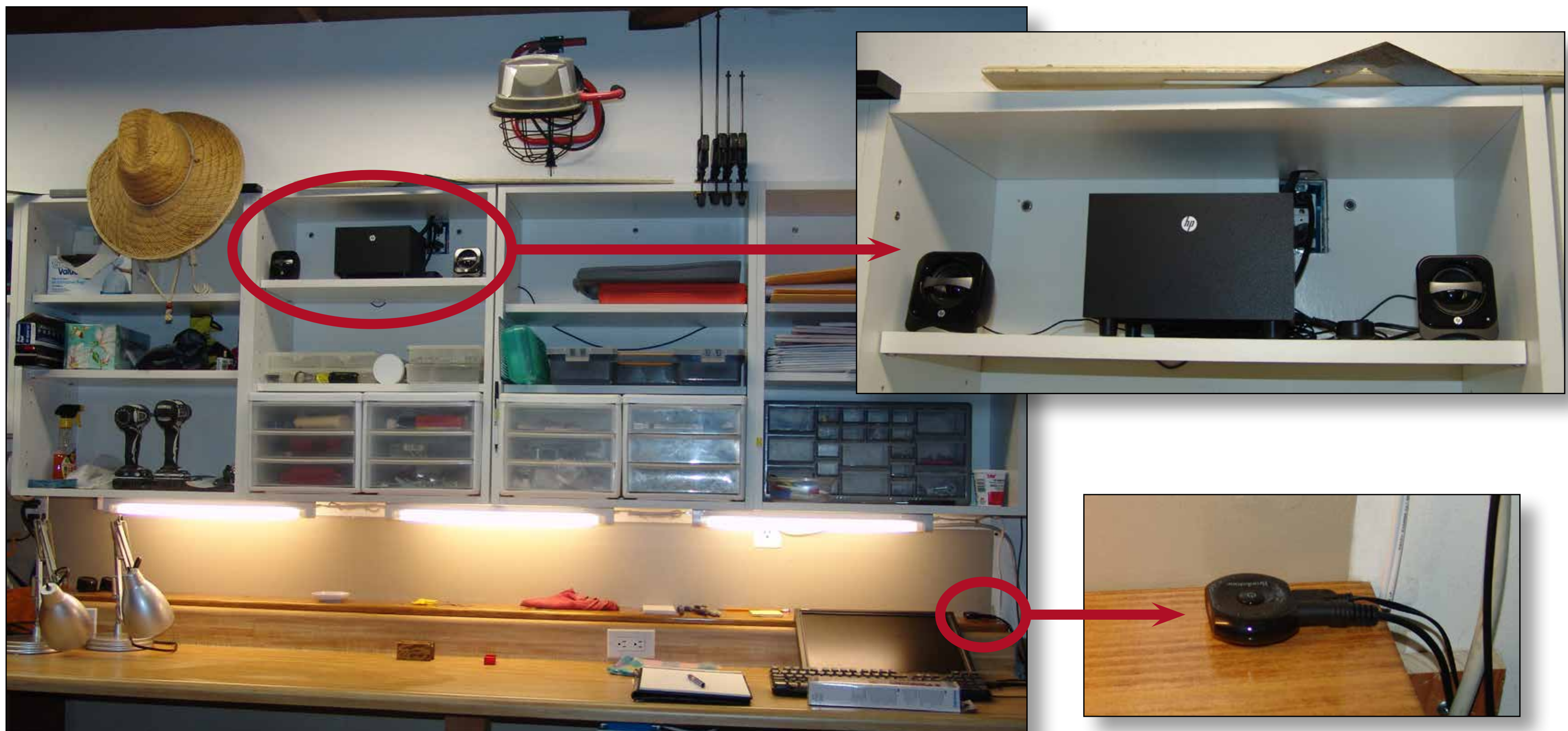


The speakers were placed on top of a tall cabinet so that the music didn't blast the students who were sitting near the boom box.

Beyond the Classroom

The first Bluetooth music receiver I bought was from Brookstone. Normally \$40, it was on sale for \$30. The only thing I don't like about it is that you have to power it up if it hasn't been used for a while. The music receiver from Monoprice is always on.

So I took the one from Brookstone out to the garage and connected it to a nice set of HP computer speakers. (Forty bucks at Fry's Electronics.) And although I have to press and hold the power button on the top of the receiver to fire it up, it sure is great having music when I'm in the man cave.



What's in Your Room?

Email me some photos of your classroom sound system, and I'll add them to this how-to guide.

You can reach me at: rickmgmt@gmail.com

Last Thought

If you'd like to know when the next tech guide is available, just sign up for the Rick Morris Remind Feed.

And if you aren't using Remind to send notifications to parents, I recommend you take a look at the service they offer for free.

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