

# The Mid-Atlantic Macintosh User Groups Team (MaMUGs)

The Leaders' List • April 2004

## What's Hot!



### Real People Reviews

by Daniel M. East

**Product:** Titanium Powerbook External Whip Antenna - Rev. 2

**Manufacturer/Vendor/Developer:** Quickertek

**MSRP:** 89.95

**Review date:** April 5, 2004

PULL QUOTE: "this second revision doesn't disappoint in the slightest"

**DESCRIPTION** (What's it do? What's it got?): This is THE product you need if you own a titanium Powerbook G4 or later (two versions with one for aluminum) and use Apple's AirPort and/or AirPort Extreme. This is an external antenna that mounts easily on the back side of your PB that will astound and amaze your WiFi savvy friends when you get signal where they do not.

**MIN. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:** Apple Powerbook G4 or later, AirPort or AirPort Extreme card.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS:** So, this is my "Quickertek whip revisited" piece. The truth is that I was so happy with my Revision 1 Quickertek whip that I didn't know how good I had it until it was gone. After nearly a year of relentlessly abusing my trusty TiBook, I finally managed to rip the connector out (no small feat, I assure you) in such a way that it was irreparable. Returning to the internal antenna was nothing short of totalling your Corvette and having to rent a Pinto for a few weeks. I was simply delighted when my call to Quickertek revealed their plans for a new and (can it be true) improved version for my beloved Ti. Yes, they do; yes, it is improved and it works beautifully.

**LIKES :** Ok, three syllables, re-cep-tion. I was stunned by the instant gratification of seeing not only full strength from my own AirPort base stations (ABS), not only the five additional WiFi networks in my neighborhood, but also a sixth new one added to the list (on my software of choice for locating WiFi, MacStumbler).

Quickertek reports a 10% increase in performance over their own Rev. 1 version and this second revision doesn't disappoint in the slightest. In addition to working better, the Rev. 2 antenna addresses some issues I'd had in Rev. 1. The cable now sits nicely in your choice of mounting options -- Velcro® or adhesive guides -- and the overall appearance is now cleaner with a strain relief for the cable that doubles as a snug mount under the whip, itself.

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**DISLIKES** : The only negative thing I can say is hardly negative at all. The folks at Quickertek have put their name on their terrific product; however, instead of their logo, it appears as large text (a la Telex so this is not inappropriate in some circles) on the mast. Personally, I wear it proudly given how many people continue to ask me what the curious looking thing on my Ti might be, but some may prefer something slightly less stark looking.

**HOW DOES THIS PRODUCT COMPARE?** : While I can only compare it to its predecessor and just going without, the data sizes up nicely. Data is in signal strength as reported by MacStumbler (L) and menu bar (R 10.x) under identical conditions:

	ABS indoors	ABS @ 200ft	ABS @ 350ft
Apple internal antenna	68/3	22/1	0/0
Quickertek Whip Rev. 1	85/4	77/2.5	21/1
Quickertek Whip Rev. 2	97/4	85/4	50/3

This antenna is better tuned for the specific bandwidth and frequency range for maximum performance. If you need better reception from your Powerbook, it is important to remember that base station antennas really can't be effective without the benefit of a nice "open window" that you get from this product. In other words, imagine peeking out a small kitchen window at your landscape (like your internal antenna) -- if you have a nice, wide, colorful scene to admire, great -- however, if you have big floor-to-ceiling panoramic windows (like the ones from Quickertek's Rev. 2 whip antenna), imagine how much better your view will be.

**WHO MIGHT ENJOY THIS PRODUCT?** Got G4 or later Powerbook/WiFi? This is calling your name. iChat is better, iTunes is better, Safari is better and everything you do online is just that much faster if a wireless connection is part of your equation. Printing over ABS? Don't get me started!

**TEST SYSTEM:** Apple Titanium PowerBook G4 500 - 1Gb RAM - 10.3.3

**FINAL THOUGHTS:** I hear more questions from people who want to know what "that thing" on my Powerbook might be every day. I am always more than happy to enjoy the bragging rights that go along with my Quickertek whip antenna. I was even challenged by a reseller with a nice new iBook with no reception (iBooks have long been considered the standard for reception) who said that I was "surfing from my web cache" until seeing that I had iChat running just fine. Yes, I love it. Nice new look, great added performance, better installation and cable placement. Go. Get one now. Right now. I can't wait to see what they come up with next.

**OVERALL RATING: 5 out of 5 stars EXCELLENT**  
**For more information, visit:** <http://www.quickertek.com>

*Daniel East is the founder and president of The Mid-Atlantic Macintosh User Groups Team (MaMUGs) - a division of The Apple Groups Team; a member of The Apple Consultants Network (ACN); a member of The Apple Developer Connection (ACN); a panelist on "PC Talk Radio;" a live speaker/presenter and a freelance columnist for several Mac publications.*

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