

Grundig G2 Reporter Portable

By Larry Van Horn, MT Assistant/Technical Editor

When I first opened the box of the Grundig G2 Reporter portable, I was immediately impressed with the size of the radio (less than 1-inch thick) and I thought that I had finally found a portable with a lot of neat features that would be the perfect traveling companion for me.

First, before I get into this review, let me say that I have been a fan of a few of the Eton Corp (makers of the Grundig line of radios) portable radios over the years. I have owned more than my share of them.

Unfortunately, as I dug deeper into the features and performance of this radio, my thoughts of a traveling companion quickly evaporated and I was not as hopeful in the end as I was when I first started my testing. This is not one of my favorite Eton portable radios.

❖ The Unit Basic Features

The G2 Reporter is an AM, FM, FM stereo and continuous shortwave portable with shortwave frequency coverage from 2.3 to 23 MHz (no SSB capability) and 5 kHz only tuning steps. You can select specific shortwave broadcast bands (60m, 49m, 41m, 31m, 25m, 22m, 19m, 16m, and 13m bands are available) by repeatedly pressing the SW button. The radio also features three FM tuning ranges – North America (87-108 MHz), Japan (76-90 MHz), or School (64-108 MHz) bands. The tuning range for AM goes from 520-1710 kHz with either 9-kHz or 10-kHz spacing.

The unit has a dual sound speaker system and a line input jack (on left hand side of the radio) that gives you the capability to play your personal audio device such as a Smartphone, iPod or tablet through the G2. You can also use this to record from another source; just plug in, press record, and start playing whatever you want to record. A built-in MP3/WAV recording system lets you make verbal notes via the built-in microphone, external microphone or even record radio programming directly off the air.

Radio can be recorded in either a 129-kbps WAV format or 40-kbps MP3 format. The MP3 format does sound pretty bad on playback. The built-in card slot on the bottom panel can be used with microSDHC cards up to 16-GB in size for playback of MP3 or WMA files. This function will let you play your own music library through the G2. There is an eight preset electronic audio equalizer you can select when playing your MP3 and WMA files.

Via the internal audio system, you can set it to your music file tracks, repeat a track, or repeat all. The tempo can be adjusted and if you have lyrics in LRC format with your music files, it can display those.

There is a 248 channel memory system for storing radio frequencies with memory scan,

auto tuning storage as well as keypad entry.

The G2 can be set to operate in English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Czech, Polish, Russian, Turkish, Hebrew and Thai.

Other features include a clock timer, lock, rechargeable 3.7V 1050 mAh lithium battery, tuning indicator and backlit LCD with adjustable contrast. The mini USB 2.0 jack facilitates charging and field upgrades.

The radio includes the following accessories: a USB cable, mini stereo to mini stereo audio cable, cloth carrying pouch and printed multi-language owner's manual.

Here is one of the first caveats I must pass along regarding this radio. This radio requires a USB port, such as can be found on a PC to recharge the built-in battery. If you do not have an available USB port, then you will have to purchase the USB charge adapter. The USB port is merely for charging the radio and not powering the radio.

❖ The Good

I like the small, slim, and light weight of this AM/FM/SW radio. I also like the expanded audio feature set with the 4-GB of internal storage and the microSD slot for recording as well as playback of MP3/WMA files. The line-in jack is also a neat function so I effectively have an audio-only type docking port for personal audio devices. I was very impressed with the FM reception of this radio. It was very good when I compared it with several other portables in the shack head-to-head.

There is support for RDS (radio data system) information, but you have to turn it on every time you switch to FM (the same goes for changing from mono to stereo).

❖ The Bad

This radio runs on a rechargeable lithium ion battery pack that charges by the USB cable

only (USB charger not included). You can't just pop in some AA batteries and continue operating the unit. Since its battery pack is not something you can pick up anywhere, you're stuck when you are out and the battery dies. Another problem that our unit had was once the battery was removed and then put back into the unit again, the unit was completely inoperative due to two of the three spring clip connectors being sprung.

Bottom line on the battery: no computer, no charging the battery and no firmware updates.

This unit also has a flimsy stand; and operating it can be confusing. For instance, the radio has built-in alarm and sleep timer functions, however, setting up these alarm function requires much more effort than it probably should.

The owner's manual is another area of concern and probably the cause of most of the operating issues associated with the G2. It is a typical Chinese to English translation-style manual and is very difficult to follow.

❖ And The Ugly

There is no external antenna jack, so you can't improve the shortwave reception using that method. Also the AM broadcast band reception is acceptable for local and regional station reception, but is next to useless for distant radio reception.

The G2 can also display text documents on its tiny screen; a feature Grundig calls an "e-book function." I own a couple of devices that I use to read e-books on, but this e-book function is, well frankly, a joke. While it would be possible to read an entire book four lines at a time, it's nothing I would want to do.

I have seen several reports that the audio system has an issue with serious intermittent MP3 player dropouts and/or skipping. While I did not observe that with the unit I tested, I do have a concern that quality control or component issues may be a problem associated with this unit.

There are a lot more small items I could point out, but available space doesn't permit me to point all of them out.

❖ The Bottom Line

The Eton Grundig G2 Reporter is more than just a little portable radio, but it does have some serious drawbacks you need to be aware of before you consider buying it. Grundig squeezed quite a bit of functionality into its ultra compact body, letting you do things like record radio and play MP3s. However, if what you're most interested in is shortwave radio, you'll probably want to invest in one of Grundig's larger models simply because using the G2 can be frustrating. Grundig G2 Reporter MSRP is \$150.



MT RATING: 2 STARS

