

Tellurium Q

Blue USB cable

CABLE POLITICS ARE funny.

Most people can hear the difference, and willingly factor them into the overall budget when buying a hi-fi system. Some can't and scream "the emperor's new clothes", or suchlike! Others recognise that speaker cables and analogue interconnects make a difference, but can't see how digital ones would. If you think about it, digital cables – which work at far higher frequencies – should be more susceptible to quality variations than analogue ones. After all, they're a tougher engineering challenge.

Tellurium Q has a new range of digital cables. The Blue USB tested here is the company's entry-level product, designed to connect your computer to a USB-equipped DAC. Unlike a great many rivals, the company doesn't reveal any of its design characteristics, as it is worried about loss of intellectual



property. I suspect this is more about marketing than plagiarism, as any self-respecting cable pirate could quickly reverse engineer it. But what's not in dispute is that it's a well-made wire with decent quality plugs. The cable's tacky rubbery outer sheath is well damped, so it won't transmit vibration into either DAC or PC.

Here's to Blue

Hooked between an Apple MacBook Pro and a dCS Debussy digital-to-analogue converter, the Blue USB gives an obvious improvement in sound quality to a stock, generic USB cable. Admittedly the latter costs pounds, not hundreds, but

there is an appreciable improvement in the general smoothness and ease of the sound. For example, Kate Bush's *Snowflake* at 24/96 comes over with slightly less grain; it seems to lose a slightly mechanical quality to it, the dCS DAC being able to flow better and conjure up a more natural sounding recorded acoustic. Pianos sound fractionally less brittle, and appear to have less of generic texture to them. If you have a decent DAC, this should prove a genuinely worthwhile upgrade, and thus represents fine value for money despite the profusion of cheap and (not so) cheerful USB cables for far less money. **DP**



DETAILS

PRICE
£186 (1m)
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OUR VERDICT

