

**Tellurium Q®**

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## Tellurium Q Statement II - Digital

Everything makes a difference.

\$2,889 ea.  
telluriumq.com (factory)  
toneimports.com (US distributor)

**A**t the upper end of digital sound reproduction, many of the world's finest DACs offer the option of an external word clock to keep the bitstream locked down and in perfect order. This has been a very worthwhile upgrade on every DAC I have auditioned offering this functionality. The better digital gets, the less digital it sounds, and some of the world's finest from Estoteric, dCS and a few others are now resolving enough, I could live without a turntable. Before you get ready to tie me up to a stake and make me pay for my sins, I still have three turntables, so I'm not abandoning you. However, if I had to start from zero again, I'd be awfully tempted to just go digital.

If you are of the mind that everything in a digital system makes a difference, the newest cables from Tellurium Q will be a welcome update to an already great digital system. When I had the four box dCS Vivaldi system, upgrading from the standard digital cables to some Nordost Heimhall cables made a significant change in the stack's overall sound, pushing things again in the same direction that adding the external word clock did, so I approached this with a very open mind.

I've been using various Tellurium Q cables in one of my two reference system for some time now, with excellent result. Principal Geoff Merrigan makes great products that does what he claims - eliminate timing and phase errors that lead to distortion. Every TQ cable we've used from their least expensive to most have proved an excellent upgrade and well worth the price asked.

A quick trip to the TQ site will show you the rest of the TQ range, but a big part of their success is paying careful attention to every aspect of cable construction, rather than just concentrating on ultra-pure (and mega expensive) raw conductors. By optimizing the materials of the dielectrics used, the connector materials/coatings and even the solder used, they create cables that are as free of signal distortion as possible.

While these are available in varying lengths, the Statement IIs are somewhat stiff, so I followed Mr. Merrigan's advice and got a pair of the one meter cables to run between the clock and DAC on my dCS Lina headphone stack.

The experience is as I've had in the past when upgrading this aspect of my digital playback system in the two-channel realm. Everything is cleaner, and less electronic sounding. Listening to very fine acoustic details reveals more information, and of a higher quality. Spatial relationships are more defined too. The three-dimensional space created between my ears feels larger as well. Tonal balance is not affected at all, these cables merely offer a cleaner, less grainy look into your music. Honestly, I prefer that approach, and again, that has been my experience with all of the other TQ cables I use. I was definitely expecting some improvement but was excited by how much more natural everything sounded with these cables.

Listening to the "Fly Mix Edit" of Curtis Mayfield and Ice-T doing the *Superfly 1990* theme song is illuminating where you might not expect. The synth bass line and drums are much more locked down, with ICE-T and Mayfield's voices now having a lot more separation between them, each having more of an individual space. Whether listening to this, Hall & Oates Abandoned Luncheonette, or some hard bop Blue Notes, everything has a better sense of pace and timing with the TQ cables in place. And when listening to solo vocal records, voices are more detailed yet more natural at the same time. Going back to the stock cables sucks, because once you hear it...

So, these are going to have to become part of the permanent headphone reference system, and count on seeing them again in our October awards issue. Just like a pair of relatively expensive interconnects or speaker cables, talking price is always argument fodder. My criteria for cable is pretty simple: can I hear a significant difference? (that reveals more music, not just a tone control) Can a non-audiophile hear a significant difference? (so I'm not psyching myself out) and, what does cable cost as a percentage of total system cost work out to be?

Yes, yes, and yes. Considering the Lina Stack and Focal Utopia 2020s are pushing \$40k as a set, about 15% of retail for cables that deliver more than a 15% improvement in sound works for me. But like any good component, you have to be able to hear (and justify) it. However, if you have a top-notch digital setup, I highly suggest taking the TQ digital cables for a test drive.

Also, please keep in mind that this is TQ's TOP digital cable. It has also been my experience that they try very hard to incorporate as much of their flagship tech in their other range of cables, so you don't *have* to spend this much on a digital cable to get a performance bump. I wanted to try this one with the dCS stack.

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