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pro **CUBE2**
Professional Twin Charger for DSLR Cameras
Reviews

Camera Jabber

HÄHNEL PRO CUBE 2 REVIEW

Posted by **Ali Jennings** | Jan 31, 2018 |

SCORE 95%

PRO CUBE 2 SNAP VERDICT

I've yet to meet anyone who gets overly excited about chargers, (batteries, however, are another thing), but the new Hahnel Pro Cube 2 manages to pique more than a little interest.

Maybe it's the beautiful anodised orange casing (Sony version) or could it be that this is a charger with intelligence, feeding back on the charge progress, maybe.

Ok intelligence may be a bit strong, but it does give feedback, a running graphical commentary on the small LCD that shows the charging progress, that's pretty cool.

The Pro Cube 2 packs in features that offer far more than your average charger. Dual charging slots for a host of manufacturer batteries, USB and AA charging, as well as charge monitoring and battery health check. These features all ensure that the Pro Cube 2 offers a far better and more robust charging solution for your camera's batteries.

FOR PRODUCT PRO CUBE 2	AGAINST PRODUCT PRO CUBE 2
• Compact design	• Health check not instantly obvious
• Dual charging	• Not app enabled
• Battery health check	• No refresh battery option

INTRODUCTION

The original Pro Cube was a very nicely designed piece of kit and at the time of its launch also provided an easy solution to my personal charging needs.

At the time I had Canon and Nikon systems, and for one reason or another had both versions of the Pro Cube. What I found was that the plate from one was compatible with the other which meant, therefore, I could take one Pro Cube and with a quick plate swap charge both sets of batteries, albeit at different times.

The Pro Cube 2 follows the same design principle with interchangeable charge plates that enable you to buy one charger along with additional plates for any other system that you own.

For example, if you own a Sony A7 MKIII and a Canon 5D IV then there's a plate available for each, same base charger just a different plate, this can be placed on top when needed.

The Pro Cube 2 despite being sold version specific is a multi-charger. However, while multi chargers are lifesavers, they can also be fiddly to use, and there's always the risk that you'll destroy a battery by plugging it up to the data port rather than the positive or negative.

The Pro Cube removes this issue by providing a no-fuss approach that's as easy to use as a standard charger, just with the benefit that it will charge two batteries at a time rather than one and will keep you updated on progress as it does it.

FEATURES

Surely you just plug the thing in, slot in your battery and that's it – it's just a battery charger after all.

As mentioned in the intro the Pro Cube 2 does have quite a bit more to it, so let's start at the top.

First and foremost the Pro Cube 2 is available in several different models, Sony, Olympus, Canon, Nikon, Fuji and Panasonic. A full list of compatible models is available on the Hahnel website. www. hahnel.ie.

Although there are several different models, each charger, aside from the colour and interchangeable charging plate, is the same.

Whichever Pro Cube you have the feature list is the same, it's just the anodising and the included plates that differ.

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Firstly you have the Pro Cube 2 charger, this is identical in size to the original Pro Cube and now comes in a stunning anodised finish, this finish highlights the manufacturer version; orange for Sony, Blue for Fuji etc.

On the front of the unit is the now embossed style logo which looks very smart and below this is the small LCD readout.

This readout has been enhanced so now gives a new mAh reading that shows how much capacity (mAh) is added during charging (This is the amount the charger has charged the battery rather than the mAh in the battery).

Hahnel quote that a quick top-up charge should only take around 15 minutes and this is enough to add 300mAh which will be good for 150 photos.

The small LCD, although simple, comes packed with information including the charge left in a battery slotted into the left or right charge slots as a % and the mAh charged.

Of course, for each manufacturer, there are many different battery types, and this is where those interchangeable top plates come it to play.

Using the small release tool (Similar to those used to eject sim cards from phones) the top charging plate can be removed and replaced with another.

For our test, we're using the plate designed for the Sony NP-FW50 but in the box are a further two plates for Sony NP-BX1 and NP-FZ100 type batteries. For each of the other manufacturer versions, you get a similar array for each battery type.

A significant improvement here over the previous generation is that each plate now intersects with the main body of the charger directly without the need to attach a cable first. This makes charge plate swapping that much easier.

Although I have the Sony version on test, if I were to have the Canon version then I could swap over the plates between versions, this is ideal if I want to travel light and only take one charger.

As with the original Pro Cube alongside the camera battery charging the charger also features an AA charger for four batteries.

This is very slickly designed, and the caddy for the AA's sits on top of the charger, again the charge appears on the small LCD.

Round the back of the Cube is the USB port for charging USB devices such as phones and power banks. Next to this is the power adapter socket.

Although the old power adapter for the Pro Cube wasn't exactly big, Hahnel has reduced the size slightly and increased the charge rating from 1200mAh to 1500mAh to increase charging times.

In the box as well is a car 12V adapter meaning that you can charge your camera batteries while on the move.

It is difficult to gauge the quality of the charge without loads of specialist equipment, but suffice to say after 15 minutes of charge the Sony A7R had enough power to fire off a good volume of frames.

I tested the charger with the Sony A7R and made sure that battery was flattened before the test.

I then charged the battery for 15 minutes and popped it back into the camera.

The Sony 7R MKI is notorious power hungry, so I wasn't holding out for the 150 frames as quoted on the Pro Cube 2 packaging. I'm sure this refers to newer generations of camera which generally have better battery life.

Although not a full charge obviously, the fast charging had pushed the capacity to 23% after just 15 minutes and showed that it had pushed 220mAh. Checking the charge in camera and it quoted 25%.

Now for the frame test and shooting single frames with the camera set to capture both JPG and RAW and with the rear LCD screen on for maximum drain, I managed well over 150 shots before the battery once again faded.

Now the great feature about the Pro Cube and Pro Cube 2 is that they're dual chargers, so no need for one-by-one single battery charging.

Here the charging times are again impressive with two NP-FW50 batteries being fully charged from 0-100% in just one and a half hours, a single battery will charge in an hour.

As well as camera battery charging, you can also load AA batteries with the caddy. This works incredibly well with no fuss, and you have

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the readout on the LCD to show you how the charge of the battery is going.

One other feature that is highlighted is the battery health check, although at first, it's not obvious how this works.

After a quick check with technical support and the explanation, it is quite obvious and works by you first fully discharging a battery.

Then pop it into the Pro Cube 2 until the charge reaches 100%. As well as the Pro Cube showing that the battery has reached capacity it will also show how many mAh it has taken to charge fully.

You can then read the mAh that shows on the small LCD and compare it with the mAh rated for your battery.

For example, the standard Sony battery should hold 1950mAh but after a charge of 100% mine was showing only 1250mAh, er, unfortunately, indicating that it's time to buy some new batteries!

VERDICT

Battery chargers for most people only get replaced if they get lost. However, the Pro Cube is one of those devices that sneaks into your kit bag as an everyday essential.

Ok, the chargers that came with my cameras are perfectly good, but firstly they're not dual, so I have to swap out the first battery for the second to ensure they both get a charge, not too much of an issue as long as I remember.

The Pro Cube obviously has two slots for two batteries which just makes the charging process that much more streamlined.

Being able to charge two batteries at once does of course save time, but for me being able to see the progress of the charge becomes equally important.

Knowing that at 25% capacity or near enough is still going to give you 150 shots is handy.

I also like the fact that as well as my Sony Alpha 7R batteries I could if I had one swap the plate and charged a Sony RX100. Although I don't have a compact camera anymore, I can still charge it's replacement the iPhone using the USB port, and of course, there's the AA caddy.

Hahnel does sell the different manufacturer fit plates separately, and this is a major benefit as many of us are making the change from full DSLR systems to the smaller CSC styles of camera. I can, therefore, use the same system to charge both my Sony and Canon batteries.

When it comes to features, I would like to see a wireless app as being able to track the charge and battery health on my phone would be a definite benefit. Some way of logging the charge data would also be good – I know I have a couple of dud batteries and always mean to mark them and only use them as a last resort, but as ever never do – having an app that enables me to log a batteries life would be slightly over geeky but definitely a feature I would like to see.

Those batteries that are coming to the end of their life would be highlighted by the app and would give you some indication as to when they will finally just give up.

As Hahnel make excellent replacement batteries, it would seem joined up that once your batteries health hit's a certain level, it could recommend a suitable replacement.

A refresh function as with some pro-level chargers would also be good. However, these features would probably push the price sky high.

As chargers go, the Pro Cube 2 looks great and offers far more than the standard charger it looks to replace. If you have more than one battery for your camera, then the dual charge feature is an essential.

At a touch under £70, each model of the Pro Cube might seem relatively expensive. But then if you think you would typically spend £10 on a USB charger, £10 on a 4 x AA charger and the Sony brand NP-FW50 charger is £39 it's not a great deal more for a charger that offers everything in one device.

WHO SHOULD BUY THE PRO CUBE 2?

If you own two batteries for your camera, then you need the Pro Cube 2. If you use a flash gun or any other camera accessory that is powered by AA's, then you need the Pro Cube 2 and finally, if you own a mobile or power bank and need a reliable power source then why not go for the Pro Cube 2.

OK it's a charger, and you get one with your camera, but the Pro Cube is so much more – it gives you a mains power boost in just 15 minutes, it's there to tell you how much charge your battery has left and it runs a battery health check that can be invaluable.

Summary	
Reviewer	Ali Jennings
Review Date	2018-01-31
Reviewed Item	Hahnel Pro Cube 2
Author Rating	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

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REVIEW

95%

OVERALL SCORE

95%