

Digital and minidisc



Being Digital, MiniDisc offers the best in sound quality. Only crisp, clean precise sound comes from digital sound technology. Minidisc has advantages over conventional tape, there is no hiss, no distortion, no need to set record levels and no degradation of quality over time. Analog equipment such as standard cassette tape, suffers from all of these drawbacks and more. The way MiniDisc works lends itself perfectly to portable formats. First, the technology allows for incredibly small equipment.

The smallest of Sony's MD players is barely larger than the 2.5" disc it plays. The discs themselves are easily handled. Housed in small plastic casings, they cannot be scratched like compact discs and are more difficult to break. Also, the MD's Shock Resistant Memory (SRM) system makes it virtually shock proof, eliminating the troublesome skipping which can be caused by rough handling of CD players. Over all the MiniDisc is easy to transport and handle, making it an excellent choice over CD. The MiniDisc was the first form of digital audio technology which users could record on.

All of the convenience of tape recorder became available, but with the added benefits of digital sound quality that were previously available only from un-recordable compact discs. Now that recordable CD technology is available to consumers, MD still offers many benefits. One of these is a faster recording time. While compact disc recorders take much longer to record than the actual length of the source, MD recorder can create a recording in realtime, much like a cassette recorder.

Another benefit which is unique to MD is the ability to program titles for discs and songs which are read out on a digital display on the unit. On many units,

these titles can be typed in alphabet as well as Kanji and Hiragana characters for Chinese and Japanese speaking users. The overall benefits of the MiniDisc will likely continue to give it a niche in the market for quite sometime, despite new developments in compact disc technology. Throughout its history, Sony has demonstrated an ability to capture the imagination and enhance people's lives.

Sony innovations have become part of mainstream culture, including: the first magnetic tape and tape recorder in 1950; the transistor radio in 1955; the world's first all-transistor TV set in 1960; the world's first colour video cassette recorder in 1971; the Walkman personal stereo in 1979; the Compact Disc (CD) in 1982; the first 8mm camcorder in 1985; the MiniDisc (MD) player in 1992; the PlayStation game system in 1995; Digital Mavica camera in 1997; Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) player in 1998; and the Network Walkman digital music player in 1999.

The phenomenal strength of the Sony brand worldwide is surely a testament to the company's reputation for producing innovative products of exceptional quality and value. Sony has the brand recognition and marketing savvy to create new product categories and revitalize mature ones. For years, music lovers everywhere have been waiting for a recording format that will give them better sound convenience and durability. This format -digital and compact- is MiniDisc. Its success lies in its ability to combine the advantages of both tape and CD - all in a compact and durable format.

MiniDisc shares the recordability of tape, making it popular for creating your own music compilation. And because it is able to record a million times over

without any quality loss, MiniDisc is well suited for heavy-duty use. For purists, MiniDisc's fantastic digital audio reproduction is a delight as it rivals the quality of CDs. MiniDisc does not replace the use of CDs. MiniDisc allows for personalization of music! The MD was created to compete with the Philip-Matsushita-backed DCC format. The mini disc was smaller and recordable (and re-recordable) - it would prove to be more attractive to consumers than DCC.

The 'smallness' of the unit was a major consideration. Japanese consumers were considered to be driven by size and power consumption (more important than price), so the aim was to reduce the size and power consumption as much as possible to appeal to the Japanese market. The creation of the MiniDisc system began in 1986, it was developed to meet the increasing demand for a portable recordable high-quality digital audio media. This required the refinement of several technologies. Formats have been used simultaneously, exploiting the strengths of each medium.

Since the introduction of the compact disc, the " dual-format" has, for the most part, consisted of the CD and the analog cassette tape. CD provides superior audio reproduction, while cassette is recordable. As a portable medium, neither is ideal. MD was introduced as the next step in this evolution. MD combines the strengths of both CD and cassette into a single format. Designed to be durable, reliable and virtually unaffected by external magnetic fields, it retains its high quality despite repeated recording and playback.