

Backgrounder

Philips hdd100 Recording Audio Jukebox

Music stimulates powerful emotions. It can evoke pleasant memories or calm us at the end of a stressful day. It can reflect our moods or it can change them, and it remains a powerful tool for bringing people together and making friends. Put simply, the right music is a moving experience.

Even today, however, ensuring that you have the right music for the right occasion is difficult. And nowhere is it more difficult than when you are on the move. Portable cassette players and CD players were the first truly portable products that allowed us to take music with us and play it wherever we wanted, but both restricted us to the limited number of cassettes or CDs that we could carry with us – enough perhaps for a short journey, but not enough for a long holiday. Even then, the need to change cassettes or CDs largely limited us to listening to complete albums rather than tracks.

With the advent of CD-R, creating your own track compilations became possible, but users were still restricted by the number of CDs they could carry with them. The appearance of MP3-CD playback in CD players extended playback times to more than 10 hours per disk. Meanwhile, solid-state MP3 players offered the alternative of a truly small and light weight ‘jog-proof’ solution, but were either limited in playback time or locked users into buying expensive Flash memory cards. On top of this, the number of different audio compression formats continued to increase, with an increasing number of products unable to deal with all of them.

Today, a large number of users have their entire CD collections stored on the hard disks of their computers, usually in high bit-rate MP3 format, so that they can pick and choose what they listen to at the click of a mouse button. Wouldn't it be great if all that music could be carried with you.

The Philips hdd100 Recording Audio Jukebox

The only way to truly move and be moved by the music you love is to take it all with you. So if your music collection takes up Gigabytes of disk space on your PC, then you need at least as much storage in your portable player. That way, you always have your favourite music with you whatever mood you are in.

The hdd100 incorporates a 15-Gbyte low-profile 1.8-inch hard disk that is capable of storing over up to 3000 CD-quality tracks encoded in MP3 format at 128 kbps. It can also record and play back Windows Media Audio (WMA) files, giving users the benefit of almost double the number of tracks without significant loss of sound quality. To get data onto and off the disk from a PC or other USB connected device it is equipped with a super-fast 480 kbps USB 2.0 (USB 1.1 compatible) interface.

However, this is not the only way of getting audio tracks onto the disk. The hdd100 also has its own internal MP3 encoder, allowing it to record audio tracks from its microphone input, analogue line input and digital-optical line input, at user selected bit-rates up to 32 kbps for the microphone and 192 kbps for the analogue/digital line inputs.

Make your own live session recordings

This versatile product can handle several different audio sources and record them in MP3 format onto its hard disk makes the hdd100 much more than just an audio jukebox. It can be used as everything from a voice recorder with extremely long recording times, to a high-quality portable digital audio recorder for live session music recording and DJ dance track mixing. In between, it allows any type of user to share and enjoy audio tracks from virtually any source imaginable. Even transferring direct ripping from a CD-player is possible using the hdd100's fully synchronized digital audio interface.

Create new play lists on the move

With the ability to store over 3000 songs on the hdd100's hard disk, content management becomes just as important as content storage. And it is about much more than simply being able to locate a track and play it.

Today there is a strong demand from users to create their own compilations rather than listening to complete albums, by combining a number of tracks from different artists to fit the mood they want to create for themselves. Unlike MP3 players that require users to create compilations on their PCs and download them to the player, the hdd100 allows users to create new play lists while they are on the move. Track selection follows a multi-level approach with albums or individual tracks being sortable into genres such as rock, pop, dance, house or jazz. Searching and organizing tracks is made even easier by the fact that the hdd100 supports ID3 tags – additional data that is appended to the end of MP3 files – allowing hdd100 users to identify tracks by song title, artist, album title and genre.

Even with such sophisticated categorization and identification capabilities, playlists can be quite long when you have 3000 songs to choose from. The hdd100 therefore features a patented SuperScroll™ feature that makes scrolling through menus and lists extremely easy. Light pressure on the scroll buttons allows menus and lists to scroll slowly, while additional pressure accelerates the scrolling process so that users can quickly scan entire lists. All buttons are positioned for the familiar thumb-action control that users are familiar with mobile phones and PDAs while the unit lies comfortably in the palm of their hand. For comfort and durability, the hdd100 is housed in an ultra-strong magnesium alloy case with a hardened glass display window, weighs in at 167 g and measures just 10.7cm x 6.5 cm x 2.0 cm. It also features a 5-button remote control that allows playback to be controlled while the main unit stays inside a pocket or travel pouch.

The listening experience

As you would expect from Philips, the hdd100 features sound enhancing features such as Dynamic Bass Boost (DBB) that improve the music experience. However, it also includes advanced new features that make user created compilations fit together much better.

The PC-based software supplied with the hdd100 allows users to download standard graphic equalizer settings such as Rock, Pop, Jazz and Classic to the hdd100, or create new equalizer names and settings to suit their own listening preferences. These equalizer settings can then be linked to the genre information contained in each track's ID3 tag so that the appropriate equalizer settings are selected automatically as each track plays.

Not just audio

The hdd100's hard disk can be used to store much more than audio. Users who want a simple means of transferring large computer files from one place to another can use the hdd100 as a standard USB connected external hard disk accessible via Windows Explorer.

Philips' new hard-disk based Recording Audio Jukebox is yet another example of the lifestyle enhancing convergence products that the company is introducing. All of these products are designed to empower consumers by enabling their creativity, enjoying music and their ability to share quality experiences with others.

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