

---

## Portable Recorders

Posted by doug - 2008/03/31 20:19

---

Post your additions below and I'll integrate them into this post

In addition to the links below, check out these sites for ongoing resources and reviews:

Transom.org's Tools section and also their great Comparison page. While you're there, check out their multiple microphone articles and studio setup tips.

Brad Linder's blog has many useful posts about digital recorders and he also did his own comparisons of newer and older models

O'Reilly provides many in-depth product reviews and articles about audio recording, blog posts, and a forum (see this post for an overview).

The GRC (Grassroots Radio Conference) listserv is a great one to subscribe to -- you'll connect with like-minded community radio folks. The web archive is clunky, so to review past posts about recorders it's easier to use Google.

Subscribe by sending an email with the subject "intro grc" to [majordomo@peak.org](mailto:majordomo@peak.org)

The TapersSection forum is a great resource, just keep in mind that most of these folks are recoding music or nature vs. radio interviews.

Via InsideHomeRecording.com, a blog and podcast, I found this exhaustive list of portable recorders (includes links to reviews).

Several units are reviewed here. I wouldn't weight their comments too heavily since its a vendor, but they do provide sound samples and a sense of what the units' limitations are.

### Flash Recorders

Sony PCM-D50 - \$450 + accessories

Transom review

Digital Content Producer review

Marantz PMD 620

Transom review

Sounds great except for the delay while monitoring recording... first rule in field recording is wear your headphones so this is a dealbreaker for me. Maybe Marantz will fix that with a firmware revision?

Marantz PMD 660

Zoom H2 - \$200

Brand Linder links to several reviews

Here's a forum for H2 and H4 users

I bought a couple of these for the youth producers I work with, and consider them a good value.

Pros: Great internal microphones; Sturdy; Easy-to-read screen; Take AA batteries; Uses cheap SD flash storage format; Comes with useful accessories like windscreen, stand, and handle for unit's built-in tripod mount; Useful Limiter and Compressor settings; Mono recording (combined left and right channel of stereo mic)

Cons: External mic input is hissy; battery hog; Confusing UI (you need to hit record twice to record, and only the record button stops recording)

Zoom H4

Edirol R-09

O'Reilly review

Very popular among live music recordists, but doesn't play nice with external mics.

Olympus LS-10 - \$400

This thread on TapersSection has comments and sound samples.

Much more expensive than most of Olympus' digital recorders, but with much better built-in microphones, the ability to record not just to .wma or .mp3, but .wav, and a SD memory slot. Somewhere there are sound samples using an external mic; will see if I can hunt them down.

See this O'Reilly post for other lower-price Olympus models of interest.

Tascam DR-1

This thread in the Minidisc.org Forums

M-Audio Microtrack 24/96

### iPod Recording

---

In my research, I've found that none of the plug-in microphone products for iPods yield broadcast-quality sound, being more appropriate for lecture recording. That said, Belkin seems to be preparing something more professional for later this year.

O'Reilly: iPod Mic Shootout

#### Other MP3 Players

Wouldn't it great if you had a recorder and mp3 music player in one? Unfortunately even though many mp3 players have a 'voice recording' feature - either it's a crappy built-in mic, or a line-in jack only (which won't support a handheld mic without a separate amplifier).

However iRiver used to make a few models that were a big hit with podcasters; sometimes you can get these cheap on eBay. You'll find some info about these iRiver units online if you Google it.

#### Mini-Disc Recorders

This format was the standard for most radio journalists until recently. Now mostly overpriced models are available retail in the U.S. However because MD units have high-quality preamplifiers and an excellent compression scheme, if you can pick one up used go for it. Just make sure the unit you're buying has Mic In (not just Line In!).

=====