

# Sony's Major Strategic Shift: MP3 Format Support

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[Sony](#) Corp., an electronics giant, said on Thursday that in future some of its new MP3 player models will feature direct support for MP3 format in addition to its own proprietary ATRAC (Adaptive Transform Acoustic Coding) codec.

Support for MP3 will first appear in solid state players based on flash memory Sony plans to release this year.

Sony has long insisted its digital music players support only its proprietary ATRAC format, but MP3 format is far the most commonly used digital music format and it's supported by most major device manufacturers. Sony claims ATRAC's compression scheme, that made its debut in 1992, is more efficient than other more commonly used setups, although it requires special software and an extra conversion step.

*About MP3:*

*The name of the file extension and also the name of the type of file for MPEG, audio layer 3. Layer 3 is one of three coding schemes (layer 1, layer 2 and layer 3) for the compression of audio signals. Layer 3 uses perceptual audio coding and psychoacoustic compression to remove all superfluous information (more specifically, the redundant and irrelevant parts of a sound signal. The stuff the human ear doesn't hear anyway). It also adds a MDCT (Modified Discrete Cosine Transform) that implements a filter bank, increasing the frequency resolution 18 times higher than that of layer 2.*

*The result in real terms is layer 3 shrinks the original sound data from a CD (with a bit rate of 1411.2 kilobits per one second of stereo music) by a factor of 12 (down to 112-128kbps) without sacrificing sound quality.*

*Because MP3 files are small, they can easily be transferred across the Internet.*

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