

Sony Expands Hi-MD Format

March 2 2005

Adding greater versatility to the Hi-MDTM format, Sony Corporation today announced the adoption of MP3 direct playback and the new Hi-MD PHOTO standard, which extends the potential of Hi-MD to serve in a new role as a medium for digital still cameras.

The adoption of MP3 and the introduction of Hi-MD PHOTO enhance the Hi-MD media that is renowned for its combination of high capacity, low cost, extreme durability, and removability, which make it ideal both for archiving and sharing.

The new features enable users to access a wider range of music than ever, and allow simultaneous enjoyment of digital images and music. Hi-MD continues to expand the possibilities for the development of innovative products that will cross audio and visual boundaries.

Playback of Multiple Audio Formats

The Hi-MD AUDIO standard launch in 2004 maintained music playback compatibility with MiniDiscs recorded using conventional MD devices while adopting uncompressed LinearPCM (Pulse Code Modulation) and ATRAC3plus - an audio compression format that delivers high quality sound even at high compression rates. Now, users have an additional choice: MP3 joins LinearPCM and ATRAC3plus to offer a wider choice than ever.

Hi-MD PHOTO: A Transformation into a Medium for Digital Still Cameras

Sony developed the new Hi-MD PHOTO standard to enable the recording and storage of digital still images on Hi-MD formatted MiniDiscs or on 1GB Hi-MD discs. The picture recording system is based on the DCF/EXIF format, which is the standard for most digital still cameras. To provide fast retrieval of saved images via an index display, the format also adopts thumbnail cache file system. Applied to devices such as the new MZ-DH10P Walkman(r), Hi-MD PHOTO delivers more than the sum of a digital music player and a digital still camera. The MZ-DH10P Walkman takes photos, plays back music, and runs a slideshow of pictures to accompany songs on the full color LCD, among other features. And because MiniDiscs and Hi-MD discs cost a fraction of flash memory media, users can easily share their photos, data, and music with friends and family.

The new Hi-MD PHOTO compatible Walkman will be launched on March 10th in Japan, and will be available, together with other new Hi-MD Walkman products that support direct MP3 playback, in other regions during Spring/Summer 2005.

Sony launched the MiniDisc format in 1991, and has continued its evolution, since. In 2000, the MiniDisc adopted "MDLP"(MiniDisc Long Play) to quadruple the recording time. The following year, MiniDisc took the first steps into the networked era with "Net MD" and made the leap to "Hi-MD" in 2004. Today, including Sony, approximately 80 companies support the MD format. Approximately 100 million MD devices and 1.6 billion MD media have been shipped cumulatively since 1992 (according to Sony Corporation).

Hi-MD PHOTO Format Specifications

Recording System:

DCF/Exif standard compliance

Directory name/File name assignment

Note: Thumbnail cache file recording, in addition to the DCF/Exif standard

Recording Media:

Hi-MD 1GB Disc, 80-minute MD, 74-minute MD and 60-minute MD

* "Hi-MD" "Hi-MD AUDIO" "Hi-MD PHOTO" and "ATRAC3plus" are registered trademarks or trademarks of Sony Corporation. * Walkman(R) is the registered trademark of Sony Corporation.

Citation: Sony Expands Hi-MD Format (2005, March 2) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-03-sony-hi-md-format.html>

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