

Walkman outsells iPod in Japan for first time

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A Sony employee poses with the company's digital audio player "Walkman S-series", engraved with designs of Disney characters Mickey and Minnie Mouse at the company's showroom in Tokyo in March. In a rare victory for Sony over arch-rival Apple, the Walkman portable music player outsold the iPod in Japan in monthly sales for the first time in August, a survey showed Thursday.

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Sony's share of the Japanese market for portable music players stood at 47.8 percent last month, ahead of Apple which had 44.0 percent, according to the Tokyo-based marketing research company BCN Inc.

Sony has faced stiff competition in recent years from the huge popularity of the iPod and other products that rival its own, such as Nintendo's [Wii](#) video game system that has challenged Sony's PlayStation console.

"This is the first time that the [Walkman](#) outsold the iPod in monthly sales" since the 2001 launch of Apple's music player in Japan, BCN analyst Eiji Mori said.

The result demonstrated "consumers' reluctance to buy [iPods](#) ahead of the launch of a new iPod range in the United States," he said.

"Sony's strategy to market relatively affordable products may have also contributed to the turnaround in the ranking in market shares," he added.

Apple on Wednesday unveiled a slick new iPod line along with a music-centred social network in iTunes, as well as Apple TV streaming gadgets in the United States.

The launch of the Walkman three decades ago revolutionised the way people around the world listened to music and helped transform Sony into a global electronics powerhouse.

But in recent years it has struggled to match the success of [Apple](#), which sold 100 million iPods in less than six years after its 2001 launch, making it the fastest selling music player in history.

Apple's Japanese unit said last month it has offered to replace its first-generation iPod nano [music player](#) in the event of it overheating after reports of fires led to criticism from the government in Tokyo.

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