

# Recorded Music Technology Timeline



1877 The human voice was recorded on tin foil by Thomas Edison.

1888 Invention of the gramophone, a device that recorded sound onto a disc, allowing recordings to be mass produced.

1890s The nickel jukebox, which used bulky cylinders, became popular.

1906 The Victrola was introduced. It was designed to fit within the home, and used 10 inch discs referred to as 78s, because the record rotated 78 times per minute (rpm).



1920 Radio Corporation of America (RCA) began mass producing commercial radios. KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania became the first commercial radio station to receive call letters.

1930s Free radio broadcasts during the Great Depression led to a decline in record sales.

1933 Frequency-modulated (FM) radio was introduced. Although it did not become widely available to consumers at this time, this type of radio offered higher fidelity sound.

1943 Old style disc records were replaced by vinyl ones. Vinyl records were sent to entertain troops abroad during World War II, and remain the material of choice for recordings long after the end of the war.



1948 Columbia introduced a new 12 inch, 33 1/3 RPM record format referred to as LP, long play records. Rival company, RCA introduced a 7 inch “single” 45 RPM format that quickly became the standard choice for the jukebox.

1950 Records were made in both 78 RPM and 33 1/3 RPM versions. The 78 RPM format eventually disappeared by 1960.

1964 The cassette tape cartridge, which was invented in 1930, became commercially useful when the first portable audiotape recorders were manufactured in the early 1950s. By 1964, a 30-minute cassette could be purchased for \$1 more than a vinyl album.

1966 The 8-track tape cartridge was first sold. This format was designed to reduce a problem with tape jamming. The Ford Motor Company included an 8-track player in its 1966 models. Even though it produced higher quality sound, the 8-track player lost popularity to the cassette player, which could also record sound.



1979 The Sony Walkman was introduced about the same time the sound quality of cassette tapes improved. This small portable, battery operated device could work at home or in the car, and it fit in a pocket.



1980s Music industry manufacturers agreed on the design of the Compact Disc (CD) in 1982. Three years later, the electronic industry sold one million CD players. By 1988, the CD surpassed the sale of LPs.

1990 The combination of digital audio and the Internet led to the invention of the Moving Picture Experts Group-1, Layer-3 (MP3) in 1990. this format compresses digital audio files to a size that can easily be sent from computer to computer.

1995 Streaming Internet audio was introduced. A company called RealAudio launched the first streaming audio service, which reduced the long wait associated with downloading a music file.

1997 Record companies began to release recordings via the Internet when a record became available in stores. This led to greater use of the Internet for purposes of music downloading and file sharing, some of it legal, and some that violated copyright laws.



2001 Apple iTunes digital jukebox software was introduced. Its companion device, the iPod was advertised as “1,000 songs in your pocket.”

2003 Apple Computer launched the iTunes online music store. In its first year, it sold 70 million songs at \$.99, creating nearly \$70 million in legal Internet music sales.

2005 YouTube was launched as a video sharing website on which users could upload, share and view videos. By 2013, the Internet site documented one billion individual visitors.

2007 Apple iPhone was introduced, which included an iPod and a camera. It was the first smart phone to use a touch screen system rather than a stylus or keyboard for commands.

2008 The B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center opened its doors in Indianola, Mississippi. It contains many examples of the types of music technology that B.B. King has used to record and play music throughout his life. It also has state of the art video and interactive stations for its visitors to explore.

