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## Music technology still on the rise

Compact disc players have revolutionized the music industry, dealing a fatal death blow to vinyl. Consumers are now able to buy discs that reproduce sound at levels of accuracy never before available on vinyl records and tapes, but the music revolution isn't over yet.

Approximately four years ago, a new sound format was introduced. Digital audio tapes, as they were called, record sound just as accurately as a CD, but instead of laser writing, the method of recording is binary, similar to that of a computer disc.

Now, there is yet another format in the making: digital compact cassettes. With all these possibilities available to the consumer, which format is the best?

The CD format has become extremely popular in music sales. CDs priced between \$10 and \$15 are available in almost every music store, and most record labels are now producing many artists on CD. At Face the Music, 886 E. 13th Ave., CD sales have surpassed tape sales two to one.

While this is not an industry-wide reflection, it is a good indicator of the popularity of CDs. CD players are available for home, car or portable usage, and prices start near \$130 and go into the thousands for a complete sound system.

Recently, manufacturers have produced machines capable of recording on CDs. It sounds great, except there is a

drawback — a major one. The list price for a recording CD player is \$28,600 and a blank CD costs a mere \$60 to \$70.

Then there are the new and improved DAT tapes. DAT machines are a much more economical alternative to recordable CDs, with an average machine list price of

\$2,000. However, unlike CDs, the only thing you can do with a DAT player is record because there is no pre-recorded music available in the U.S. on DAT.

Artists' unions have blocked pre-recorded DAT tapes being

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# Sundance

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## How do they compare?



### Compact Disc

**Strengths:** The material on a compact disc is a better representation of the musical performance. Also, a CD player never makes contact with the disc, except by way of lasers, and so wear and tear problems are minimal.

**Weaknesses:** Although technological advances are anticipated, one still cannot record with the CD format, at least not without a lot of money.

### Cassette

**Strengths:** Cassettes are widespread, cheap and easy to use. They are portable, and regardless of any advances in CD technology, cassettes will be the major part of the recording market for years to come.

**Weaknesses:** Although record companies guarantee lifetime use, a cassette can be worn out through excessive play. Even the dearest cassette recordings have some trace of background hiss,

which increases as the cassette ages.

### Vinyl Record

**Strengths:** LPs have their devotees, who believe they give a musical performance a more realistic sound.

**Weaknesses:** Today, the price of a name brand CD player is often lower than that of a turntable. LPs are bulky and difficult to store, and needle/record wear and tear problems frequently arise.

### Digital Audio Tape

**Strengths:** By combining a CD's digital technology with a cassette's recording ability, DAT gives a listener the best of both worlds.

**Weaknesses:** DAT still occupies a small part of the market, and can be difficult to find. Because DAT is still a cassette, some shelf life and wear and tear problems can result.

Source: Dave Dolby, Video Audio Systems

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