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PORTABLE MUSIC

The History of Portable Music

by [Felix Richter](#) May 11, 2022

As the world says goodbye to the iPod, which [Apple officially discontinued](#) more than 20 years after its introduction, we are looking back at more than 40 years of portable music. From the first Walkman to wireless earpods, technology has shaped the way we are consuming music in 2022: anytime, anywhere.

When [Sony](#) introduced [the first Walkman](#) in 1979, the portable, if clunky, cassette player was a total gamechanger. It freed music lovers around the world from the shackles of only being able to listen to their favorite tunes at home or while driving a car and brought music everywhere. Much to the disdain of some people that saw [the Walkman as "a potent symbol of an antisocial electronic future"](#) and "worried about the fate of humanity".

More than 40 years later, people are used to listening to music (or podcasts – welcome to the 21st century) wherever they go. And critics of more recent innovations such as Apple's AirPods bring forward the same arguments as ever, claiming that listening to music while roaming the earth is in fact antisocial, dangerous and overall obnoxious.

Thanks to smartphones, streaming services and wireless headphones, music is now more portable than ever. The following chart shows several milestones on the journey that started with the first Walkman in 1979 and seems to be nearly completed in 2022: the total liberation of music.

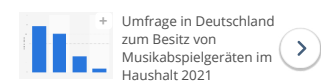
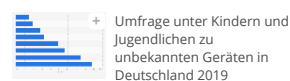
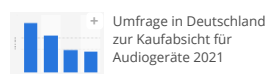
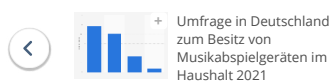
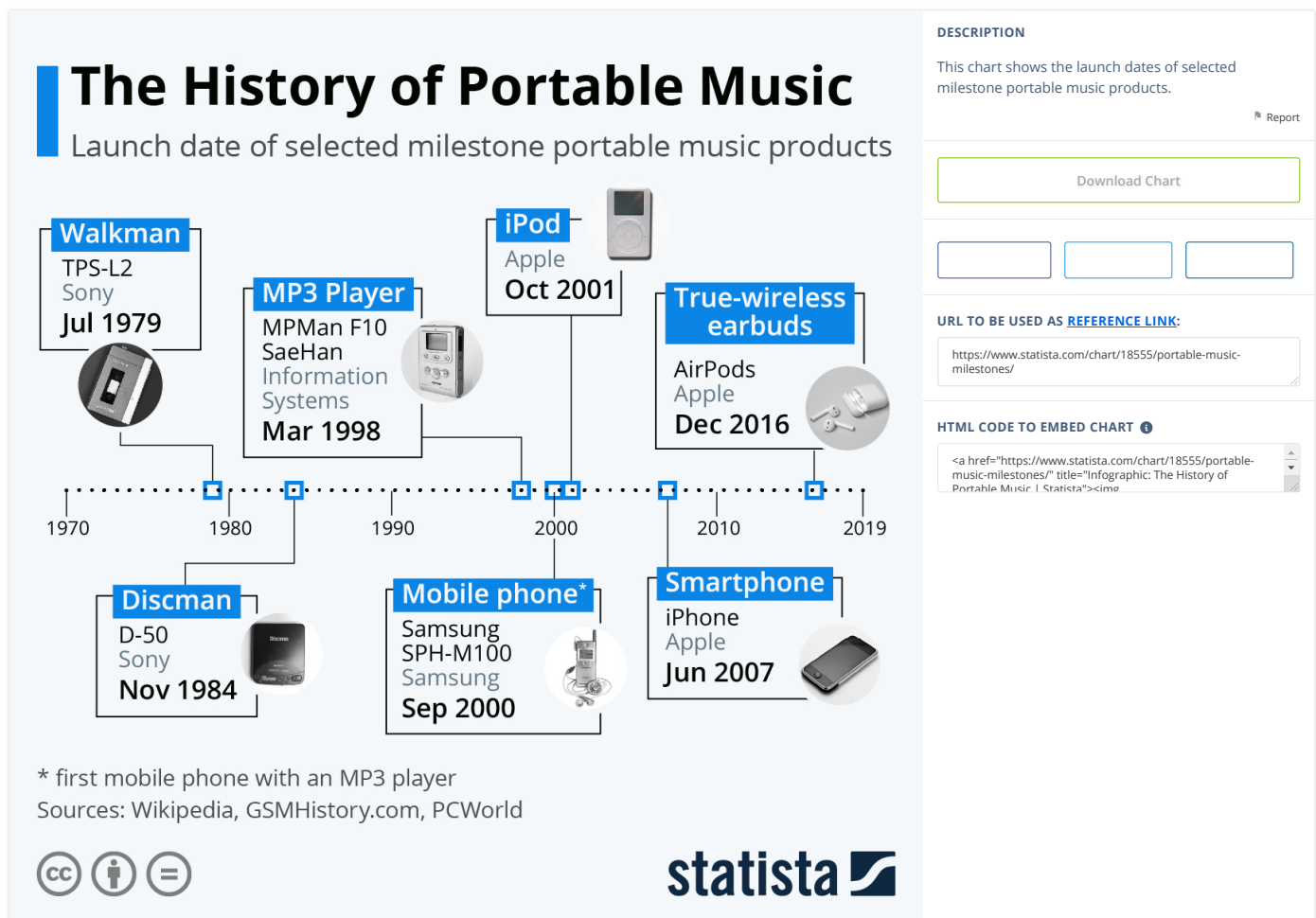


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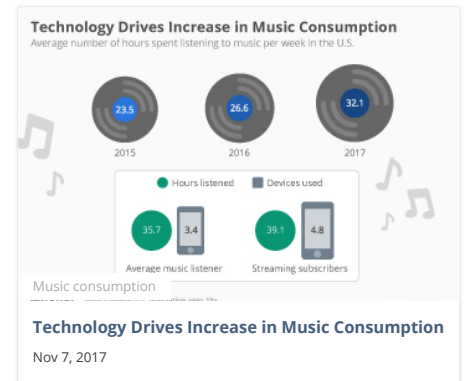
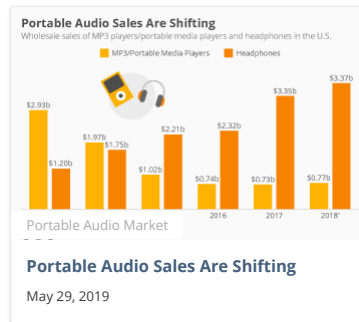
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