

NEWS WATCH: AUDIO

Convert Stacks of Wax Into Digital Music Files

By J.d. Biersdorfer

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If you've been putting off the task of converting those dusty LP's in the hall closet into digital files that you can play on your MP3 player, you need wait no longer. The Instant Music analog-to-digital audio converter box from ADS Technologies quickly bridges the gap between vinyl and digital.

Linked to an analog sound source like a turntable or cassette deck and a computer, the device converts the music being played to an audio format (choices include MP3, AAC, WAV and WMA) for use with just about any digital music player. The Instant Music box connects to the computer's U.S.B. port (either the older U.S.B. 1.1 or the newer, faster U.S.B. 2.0 variety) and includes a six-foot cable with the standard RCA plugs and a turntable grounding wire for connection to the stereo. (A pre-amplifier may be needed for connection to a turntable by itself.) The converter can also connect the computer to a compatible audio system with a digital TOSlink cable. The Nero Mix, Nero SoundTrax and NeroWave Editor programs are included for recording and editing the digitized music tracks on a PC running Windows 98 SE and later.

The converter, which will be available soon in stores, also works with the GarageBand music-creation program in Apple's iLife '04 suite for Mac OS X. With its \$59 price tag, the Instant Music is less expensive than replacing your record collection with digital equivalents from music stores. J.D. Biersdorfer

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