

Portable Media Players - UK - November 2010

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What is this report about?

The portable media player (PMP) market is under major threat from smartphones. In order to stay competitive, PMP companies are incorporating a widening array of features and functions into their devices. They now compete across a spectrum that includes portable games, video, audio recording and mobile internet. But to what extent are PMP companies simply running to stand still?

This report examines strategies and methods for PMPs to stay relevant in the coming smartphone era. It explores how companies can broaden the appeal of PMPs to reach audiences outside the core market of 16-25s. It examines the impact of Apple's iPod product range on the overall market, and assesses how Apple's dominant position can effectively be challenged.

What have we found out?

- Apple is by far the most popular PMP brand, with over one in three Internet users owning an iPod. The nearest competitors are Sony (15%), Creative (5%) and Samsung (4%). In each case, PMP devices released by these companies have not yet been able to replicate the iPod's mass market appeal.
- Londoners are more likely to own PMPs, with Apple being the most popular brand. Exactly one in two Londoners own an iPod, compared to about one in three overall. High usage is indicative of the stylisation of the market in recent years, and a tech fashionista culture often more prominent in urban communities.
- Only 55% of PMP owners use their device at least once a week, however 16-24s are far more active users with nearly three in four using their device at least once a week. By contrast, over-55-year-old owners are the group most likely to use their device less than once a month.
- Amazon.co.uk ranks as the most popular outlets for buying PMPs, with one in four PMP owners buying via the site. The Argos store (12%), eBay (8%) and Currys (6%) rank as the next most popular outlets.
- Nearly two in three PMP owners rank capacity and brand as important factors when choosing a PMP. Over one in two see brand as important. Less than one in five place importance on good video quality, touch screen controls and Wi-Fi connectivity.
- Over half of PMP owners say they will only replace their device if it breaks, and about one in three don't care about added features as long as the music sounds good.

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