

MP3 Players Too Loud? EU Acts

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by DavidMorris

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The EU proposals come after a new report released within the last months that warned that up to 10 million citizens in the EU are in danger of permanent hearing loss as a result of listening to loud music for sustained periods

Experts at the EU Commission are pushing for the default maximum volume to be at 85 decibels. However consumers would be able to bypass this default limit and increase the volume to a maximum threshold of 100 decibels.

Last month, a two-month consultation of all EU standardization committees started on these volume limit proposals. The commission hopes that a final agreement could be reached within 12 weeks

Perturbing results were brought to light at research facilities where some MP3 players were tested by researchers. A number of the MP3 players had a maximum volume level of 120 decibels, which is equal to a jet aircraft taking off. This is the issue that the EU intends to tackle, as currently no set safety default volume level applies.

However personal media player manufacturers are required to publish information about risks in their player instruction manuals. For all practical purposes though, users do not read these, and it doesn't prevent the consumer from increasing the volume to maximum. What's more, a study has shown that hearing loss amongst younger people is increasing as a result of the use of listening to loud music on earphones.

MP3 players are perceived as being more dangerous than CD players or the 'Walkman' because they can store many hours of music and have a long battery life, which allows users to listen to them continuously for long periods without a break. Often while driving when the volume is very high to drown out outside noise. Over time the resulting injury to hearing can be similar that seen in previous years caused by industrial noise.

About the Author:

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