

## Module 3.2 Enquiry 2: Musical product life cycles

Learning outcomes	
1	Understanding of product life cycle.
2	Application of theory to a familiar product.

Key skills	
IT3.1 and IT3.2	Practice with use of database to provide supporting evidence.

Resources	Nuffield Investigations.
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Time	1 hour plus possible investigation time.
Running the activity	This activity can be used as a straightforward data analysis opportunity or extended into a study of the links between the product life cycle and marketing strategies.

## Module 3.2 Enquiry 2: Music product life cycles



The market for recorded music is dynamic. Research, development and innovation in the industry have resulted in new products being continually developed. Recording media are constantly changing and so is play-back equipment. The original vinyl records have had to compete with cassette tape, CD, Digital Audio Tape (DAT), mini disk, MP3 and doubtless the next technology has either already been launched or is just around the corner.

Until the 1970s music was supplied almost exclusively on vinyl records. The advent of cassette tapes and compact disks (CDs) changed the market in a number of ways. These two new recording media captured most of the previous market for vinyl, but they also created specialist markets of their own. Cassette sales were boosted by the introduction of the Sony Walkman. CDs initially attracted buyers who were prepared to pay higher prices for better recording and play-back quality (although there are still people who prefer the playing qualities of vinyl to other media). As the price of CDs came down, they quickly overtook competing media in the market place. Innovation has brought constant change in the recorded music market but, despite this, not one form of recorded music has disappeared from the market place. Each medium has found that it is strong in a particular segment of the market.

### Database Investigation



Load Nuffield Investigations, and select:

- Module 3 Change
- 3.2 Which way forward?
- Activity 3.2.3: Music product life cycles.



Work through the activity which involves analysing the data on product life cycles in the recorded music market and producing product life cycle graphs. Work through the questions and take a print-out of your answers. You may also want to print off a product life cycle graph showing the trends in the sales of vinyl records, cassettes and CDs.

Follow-up ideas:

- 1 What problems do technological cycles cause for retailers like HMV?
- 2 How might such a company vary its marketing mix at different stages of the product life cycle?
- 3 Plan and carry out some market research to assess the likely success and effects of a new recording technology such as MP3.
- 4 Carry out a study of a music shop in your locality. Examine such issues as its location in the town, the market segment it is attracting and its marketing strategy.