

**Title:**

The History of Dolby Audio

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**Summary:**

These days, Dolby is a household name. The infamous "DD" symbol can be found on almost every piece of modern audio equipment out there. This includes gaming consoles, HDTVs, home theaters, both home and car stereos, cinemas, and personal computers. Here is the brief history of how it came about and the man behind it all.

**Keywords:**

dolby, audio, surround sound, stereo, home theater

**Article Body:**

These days, Dolby is a household name. The infamous "DD" symbol can be found on almost every piece of modern audio equipment out there. This includes gaming consoles, HDTVs, home theaters, both home and car stereos, cinemas, and personal computers.

It all started in 1949 when a man named Ray Dolby went to work for Ampex Corporation part-time while still in high school. He worked on an assortment of ventures in correlation with audio instrumentation. He continued to work for Ampex while attending college at Stanford University. During this period, he branched off to unite with a small team of Ampex engineers who were determined to invent the world's first video tape recorder. Dolby centered in on the electronic aspects of the project. The team succeeded with their introduction of this new technology in 1956. Ampex then sold its first video tape recorder for \$50,000.

Dolby graduated from Stanford in 1957 and was awarded the Marshall Fellowship at Cambridge University, England. He studied at Cambridge for 6 years, earning a Ph.D. in physics. In 1965, Ray Dolby started his own company, Dolby Laboratories, Inc. His first product from this new and innovative company was identified as Dolby A-type noise reduction. It significantly reduced the amount of background noise or hissing sounds found in professional tape recording without jeopardizing the original content of the material being recorded. This was the beginning of the many advances Dolby would make in the complex world of audio compression and expansion.

Ray Dolby developed an ingenious method of noise reduction by separating soft signals from loud ones, then simply not processing those loud signals. He then split up the spectrum into several bands to avoid clashing or pumping, therefore generating white noise. This method would become integrated in numerous aspects of society's rapidly growing fascination with electronic entertainment. Early on, consumers weren't satisfied with the 'flat' mono sound ordinary radios and cassette players emitted. Everyone wanted to hear music in stereo.

This new sound also found its way into movie theaters. Dolby sound made its debut in the original recording of Star Wars, and continues to revolutionize the audience's experience even today. The sound is both more spectacular and more natural at the same time. Because of this technology, even video games are more realistic; the sounds are more powerful as they are not only heard, but also felt. The sound is so tangible it is as if fantasy has in fact become reality. More people are staying home instead of going to movie theaters since Dolby surround sound was introduced into the home theater system.

Recent advancements include Dolby 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, and 9.1 (that's right, nine full-range channels), Dolby Digital Surround EX, Dolby SR, Dolby TrueHD, and countless others. It is obvious that Dolby is the reigning "King of Sound" and most likely will be for generations to come.