

Title:

A Buyers Guide to Dictaphones and Digital Voice Recorders

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Summary:

Dictaphones or Digital Voice Recorders (DVRs) are ideal for recording voice memos, interviews, conferences, meetings and phone conversations. This article explains in plain English how they differ and the advantages each offers.

Keywords:

dictaphones, digital voice recorders, dvr, business machines

Article Body:

Dictaphones or Digital Voice Recorders (DVRs) are ideal for recording voice memos, interviews, conferences, meetings and phone conversations. The term Dictaphone is a brand name that refers to the version that uses cassette tapes to record, as opposed to the newer Digital Voice Recorders (DVR) that save the audio to memory.

Digital Voice Recorder (DVR)

- Use your USB port to save typing time by directly transferring audio files from your DVR to your computer
- With the DVR there is no need to rewind; when you finish recording you simply press the play button to playback immediately
- Each audio file you record to your DVR is automatically saved under a number with a time-and-date stamp
- The DVR usually has between 2 to 5 folders to separate audio for better organization
- Some DVR's allow you to move messages between folders and split or delete messages
- You won't cause a distraction during meetings or conferences changing tapes and you won't miss anything important whilst doing so
- Some DVR's come with software that automatically converts the voice file

to text for easy transcription

- Newer DVR's have expandable memory and come with external memory cards. Look out for this as it gives you more flexibility with recording time and makes it easier to download audio to your computer
- The DVR is normally powered by 1 or 2 AAA alkaline or rechargeable batteries

Cassette Tape/Dictaphone

- Choose between Mini, Micro or Standard; Mini cassettes (15min per side) hold half of the content of Standard and Micro (30mins per side)
- Cassette Tape Dictaphones can be played on any player that takes the respective size
- With digital you only have a limited amount of space to store recordings (if you have no external memory card) - whereas with a cassette tape Dictaphone you can simply exchange tapes if you run out of room
- Battery life is longer in a Dictaphone than a Digital Voice Recorder
- A Dictaphone is a cheaper alternative
- There is no digital storage on a Dictaphone cassette tape
- Reuse the cassettes - you can buy a machine that automatically erases micro and mini cassettes
- Many come with equipment specifically for recording phone conversations

Desktop or Portable Voice Recorder?

Desktop DVR's or Dictaphones are generally cheaper and are ideal for recording phone conversations or are used in conjunction with transcription software. There are numerous models of portable Dictaphones varying in size and ability, but are all ideal if you are on the road or need a Dictaphone or DVR for times of inspiration.

Push Button or Thumb Slide Recorders?

Push Button Cassette Recorders usually have the ability to insert dictation but

it can be very difficult to find the point you want. With the Thumb slide switch it is much easier to review and control with rewind review capability, rewind, insert, play and stop.

Which Mode?

There are three levels of recording quality and differing recording times. The longer the recording time the lower the quality.

High Quality (HQ) - 43 mins approx.

Short Play (SP) - 65 mins approx.

Long Play (LP) - 121 mins approx.

Advertisers usually display the longest recording time, so keep in mind that the Dictaphone or DVR will record at less than half of that on high quality. This is particularly important for DVR's, as the higher quality mode uses much more memory and you don't want to be halfway through a meeting or interview and find you are out of memory.

There are usually two levels of sensitivity available on a Dictaphone or DVR. LOW is the best for dictation, as the microphone tends to be uni-directional in this mode and will focus on your voice. HIGH sensitivity picks up sound in all directions along with unwanted background noise.

Dictaphones and Digital Voice Recorders: Other Features to Consider

- Voice Activate System (VAS) - Dictaphones or DVR's with VAS will automatically record when they hear your voice (or other sound) without having to push any buttons. Great for when your hands are tied up.
- Alarm - to remind you when to record or a timer that you can set to automatically record between two times
- Tie clip microphone - for hands free recording
- Earphones - for play back when you do not want to disturb others
- Rechargeable batteries and a battery level indicator
- Microphones can either be built in or detachable. If you want your Dictaphone or DVR for a higher quality of recording such as music, then look for one with a microphone jack
- Speakers - most are built in but some models have detachable speakers

that can be used for presentations.

- Digital storage - some come with more than others
- Hands free or foot control - keep your hands free for typing or playing an instrument
- Automatic backspace - automatically reverse the desired number of seconds for input or playback

Transcribers and Docking Stations

All digital transcription systems require you to use a foot pedal connected to your computer. This enables you to transcribe files from your Dictaphone or DVR from audio to text by listening and typing a few seconds at a time.

Docking stations make it very easy to download the files you have recorded to your computer. Some docking stations also recharge the batteries on your recorder, which is ideal if your Dictaphone is in high use.