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Subject: The Death of the Cassette Tape

Posted by [GuitarStrings](#) on Sun, 06 Mar 2011 20:59:18 GMT

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Would you call the cassette era officially dead and buried at this point? I haven't seen them in the stores for so long, and the only places it seems possible to get them would be from garage sales.

I know that vinyl records came back for a while, do you think cassette tapes will have that chance as well?

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape

Posted by [Kaleb](#) on Mon, 07 Mar 2011 16:52:28 GMT

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No, I believe they are dead and gone and for good reason. Vinyl records have a unique sound that makes them retro and cool. Tapes have no purpose.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape

Posted by [Adveser](#) on Fri, 11 Mar 2011 02:32:47 GMT

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Magnetic Tape is wonderful, but not cassettes. They were made with such poor quality that dubbing your own tape from a CD is a much better quality recording.

Tapes are still very popular in some regions, for some reason.

Actually, thier worth is debatable because whichever version of the album the mastering engineer spent the most time with and was best at doing is going to sound superior. That is the reason, other than using the vinyl masters, early CD's sucked. The mastering engineers hadn't figured it out yet and were likely spending more time on the much more popular cassette format in mastering. The CDs were often just the cassette master thrown on a CD, which is why a lot of the CDs early were missing a lot of highs. A lot of Remastered CDs were released as a tape too in the early 90's and unfortunately I firmly believe they mastered for the tape and threw it on a CD. I think Aerosmith did this, or they hired the worst mastering engineer to do their disco in 1993.

A lot of bands only sold well through tape. There was NEVER a time where CD simply took over from Vinyl. Tapes outsold CDs I believe until the late 90's and were always more abundant than Vinyl in the 80's, not necessarily by amount, but you couldn't find a lot of albums on Vinyl but were everywhere on Tape. When I was heavily involved in a record store I always asked why certain albums he never seemed to have on vinyl were unavailable. He started in 1987 and told me that certain records just never came out that way. I wanted the first Skid Row album on Vinyl and was basically told it didn't exist as far as being obtainable in any real sense. That album in particular sold very well and his store was opened and established by the time it came out, so I'm inclined to believe that.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [RadioDinosaur](#) on Sun, 27 Mar 2011 01:32:46 GMT  
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I actually had some cassette tapes around until recently. The problem with them seems to be the felt pad falls off or dry rots. They can be problematic with warping as well. Yep, in a few more years they will likely be long forgotten.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [audioaudio90](#) on Sun, 10 Apr 2011 16:22:09 GMT  
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No, I don't think cassette tapes will come back like vinyl did. They do not have comparable durability or sound quality that prompted the return of vinyl.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [Clueless](#) on Mon, 11 Apr 2011 02:35:41 GMT  
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I still have a whole bunch of cassette tapes, but mainly for nostalgic reasons. Every time I do Spring cleaning, I get rid of a couple. One day I will have to let them all go. There is no way they will make a comeback. Their deterioration is like a voyage with no return.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [Adveser](#) on Mon, 11 Apr 2011 04:31:03 GMT  
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Clueless wrote on Sun, 10 April 2011 19:35 I still have a whole bunch of cassette tapes, but mainly for nostalgic reasons. Every time I do Spring cleaning, I get rid of a couple. One day I will have to let them all go. There is no way they will make a comeback. Their deterioration is like a voyage with no return.

I've not found records to be any better. Accidentally drop the needle or anything else at all during the playback will destroy it. It's gonna happen. Compared to Vinyl, Cassettes are workhorses that offer every ounce of analogue and none of the hassle. They don't have that beloved specific tracking noise and commercial tapes were notoriously awful. The bottom line is a high quality high bias tape straight from the mixing board is very very good. I only had one tape ever break on me and it's probably the machines fault or the fact I didn't know to wind up the tapes if they get a little too loose. I have tapes that are 20 years old that still work. They could make a return if someone can make them small and exceedingly high quality. Like if they could support the analog equivalent of 256-bits per sample of resolution (digital is at 24bits at best, 32 being an internal rate) and and could support every frequency in the audio spectrum flat. Make them play without any degradation after 5000 plays and it you'd only have to hear one before you ran out and replaced everything again. Either way, music is going to be hyper-realistic in the near future.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [Wuzajock](#) on Tue, 19 Apr 2011 13:11:52 GMT  
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I agree Kaleb, vinyl records are cool but they do have a different sound. Every serious audiophile I've ever asked has told me that there is no sound comparable to vinyl. I don't know the specifics but analog wins over digital apparently.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [audioaudio90](#) on Tue, 19 Apr 2011 19:24:26 GMT  
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Analog often sounds better because you don't have the data losses that digital does. The higher the sampling rate, the closer digital gets to analog, but you will always have some loss.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [Adveser](#) on Wed, 20 Apr 2011 18:21:47 GMT  
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audioaudio90 wrote on Tue, 19 April 2011 12:24 Analog often sounds better because you don't have the data losses that digital does. The higher the sampling rate, the closer digital gets to analog, but you will always have some loss.

This is negated by the poor S/N ratio though.

Analogue rounds off it's inability to capture a sound and digital does not "round" numbers, but represents them through errors very very high in the frequency range.

Analogue will not be able to beat digital in any respect once those errors only appear in the 80-96Khz range.

If one wants to argue that sampling is the problem, they won't get that far in my opinion because tape and vinyl have their own limitations that are analogous and perform worse compared to 44.1Khz digital.

Analog rounds off numbers and presents errors as mucicially as possible and digital does not, even though it is far far more accurate.

Just my 2 cents.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [gofar99](#) on Wed, 04 May 2011 01:19:53 GMT  
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Hi, Not quite dead, but well on the way. I suspect that there will always be some applications for tape. I still have a Harmon Kardon HK391. It is circa 1977. That was back before they went downhill. It has Dolby C, Metal and HX Pro. With a metal tape the S/N is really quite good. I bought a whole bunch of tapes before they got hard to find and keep them in a cool place. The sound is hard to tell from an analog recording. Slight effects of the Dolby systems are give aways. Slight changes to the leading and trailing edges of high frequency sounds, but IMHO better than many of the MP3s I've heard. BTW I use 320K MP3s and they sound better than the HK. Still 34 year old tech is still pretty amazing. One thing for sure if anything breaks I'm SOL.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 04 May 2011 06:17:28 GMT  
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I have a pretty good cassette deck. It's a Sony KA1ESA - Not real expensive and it has a bias adjustment so it can make a pretty good recording on decent tape media. I'm not talking about the CrO2/Fe/metal switch - I'm talking about a potentiometer to fine tune the bias. I use the deck mostly to record tapes for my Cutlass. I could have put a CD player in it, but I kinda wanted to keep it old school.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [gofar99](#) on Wed, 04 May 2011 15:09:40 GMT  
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Hi, The HK has bias adjust and a calibrated dolby tape to check it by. Also it allows matching of the gain independent of the level controls for adjusting for what ever type and brand of tape you are using. Several neat features, search, by track, counter number etc. Dual capstans.... At the time it was a high end deck. Right after I got it, the bias osc coil failed and I contacted HK in New York for assistance. The VP for engineering called me directly and made arrangements to get it fixed. It would be nice to have that kind of customer care now. The decks were individually calibrated and tested and I believe I still have the hand signed calibration sheet. Works perfect still.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 04 May 2011 18:22:47 GMT  
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That's a good deck. I kind of like tape decks like that, actually. Good stuff.

And I hear you about the customer service. Seems like that has totally gone away in the larger companies. This generation seems to be fine with real bad service, as long as the price is low.

If you want support, you have to go to the niche markets where it's still a mom & pop operation. Quality still matters at that level because it's not just about lowest cost.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [brian21](#) on Thu, 12 May 2011 05:26:10 GMT  
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To the main question of this topic, I think it depends on what you consider "dead". Do you think VHS video tapes are dead? I'd imagine many people do, and I think cassettes are basically at the same level. I personally don't think VHS video tapes or cassette tapes are dead though. As others said, there are still some useful applications for tapes, and there will always be those who appreciate them for historical and nostalgic reasons.

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Subject: Re: The Death of the Cassette Tape  
Posted by [cogent](#) on Sat, 25 Jun 2011 19:18:59 GMT  
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Cassettes were really a convenience format. They weren't that great of a format sound-wise. I believe cassettes have been surpassed in every possible way. We shall never pass this way again.

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