

73. Rediscovering the iPod Hi-Fi

00:00

[Opening piano music]

Martin Feld 00:14

Hi, I'm Martin, and this is *Lounge Ruminator*; thanks for joining me. If you've ever listened to me jabbering on with Andrew and Jason, my two friends over at *Hemispheric Views*, you've probably heard us bring up iPods before. I love iPods; Jason recently really jumped on the whole iPod Hi-Fi bandwagon. It's been great, and it reminded me just how much I love the iPod Hi-Fi. If you're unfamiliar with this device, it was released back in 2006, right? This is a while ago. And so the story goes that Steve Jobs was a little bit pissed off at the time that people were releasing speaker systems like those iPod docks (of sorts). These are third parties, and people were profiting off the iPod, and they didn't have, at Apple, something like this product where you could dock your iPod and just start playing. So he said, 'You've got to make this thing'.

Martin Feld 01:03

And then, the whole thing was released, and they had this whole interesting product launch where they apparently had some sort of simulated teenage guy's bedroom with the iPod Hi-Fi in it. Anyway, it ended up being discontinued in 2007, some people thought it was too expensive or it was weird to just stick it in the top and have it hanging out there. Whatever issues you might have thought the product had back at the time, whether it was expensive or too big, whatever—I love the product and it's something that I still keep in my house today.

Martin Feld 01:29

I wanted to talk a little bit about it, because it's something that I've had since I was a teenager, fortunately, and I mean, fortunately, just because my parents were thrilled at the time with the particular school report that I had, my dad said, 'Yeah, let's go and get something that you want', and we went out to the local Mac reseller that was open at the time. Funnily enough, I ended up working there later as a university student—that's a whole separate story. But we went in there and he was like, 'Oh, yeah, you like these iPod docks and speaker systems and stuff', and of course, there were cheaper alternatives, but I gravitated towards the iPod Hi-Fi, and he was generous enough to let me have it, and he bought it for me, and I've kept it in pretty good condition ever since.

Martin Feld 02:07

And I used it over the years, we had it in like the downstairs rumpus room. I loved putting my iPod in it, because you got these little iPod adapters as accessories at the time. And I'd stick my little iPod Mini in there, family would stick their iPod nanos and stuff, and we used it. But of course, the family space was always upstairs; that's where we mainly played our music. So over time, I played it, but never really thought that I used it as much as what I wanted, and then down the track, using a Mac mini well after I moved out of home, it actually became my Mac mini's speaker system, which is probably a bit over the top given how booming this thing can be. But yeah, used to sit to the side, and I used to have stereo sound from one side (just being the left), which was a bit bizarre.

Martin Feld 02:48

And then, you know, I upgraded things and saved up enough money to buy a Studio display, which I'm looking at right now; I feel very fortunate to have that rather expensive Mac accessory, but yeah, and then iPod Hi-Fi just kind of sat there again, and it kind of made its way into a bedroom, but it was too big for a bedside table. Anyway, fast-forward to reorganising things in the study, and two kids have come along, my son and daughter, and it's just been this realisation that, 'Oh, this is a really fun way to play music', just on an old iPod with my restored music library—since leaving Apple Music, there's another *Hemispheric Views* reference for any listeners.

Martin Feld 03:25

And it's just been this great way of playing music with the kids. And of course, my younger daughter, who was only born late last year, she has no idea, she's just a baby, but my son, who's now four, he loves the thing. And, you know, I stick on music by The Cat Empire, and OK Go and artists like, you know, Madonna, and he just loves exploring all of this older music and these favourites that we have in this really cute, although beefy form-factor on the study desk. You know, you're not relying on Internet, you're just sticking this thing in the top, playing and having a great time.

Martin Feld 03:57

It is almost like this nostalgic trip into the noughties with the equivalent of what people would feel nostalgic about with records, you know, cracking vinyl out. So, it's amazing to me that this thing, which was discontinued relatively quickly, I think it was only around for a year-and-a-half, if I if I'm correct, there has just become this home-furnishing fixture in my life, away from the stresses and ongoing subscription cost of digital services and just brings joy to my kids' life now. So really, the rumination point of all of this, the agenda that I have for this brief, little episode, is: if there's something that you have that has been sitting around or maybe hasn't gotten as much love, or maybe you love it as much as I've loved the iPod Hi-Fi, but could find a new use for it that brings joy to yourself and others, get stuck into it, have a go! Because I'm fortunate enough to be able to afford certain digital technology—I can't buy as much as I'd like, but that's probably a good thing sustainably—you know, if you have something cool that you can share with others or give a new lease on life, give it a go and share it and make people happy.

Martin Feld 05:03

Because too often these days, technology becomes a little bit too much about the scandal, and the data collection and the invasiveness, you know? Take a step back, use something simpler and something that brings you joy, and use technology for what it's supposed to be... it's supposed to be assistive and make your life easier or better in some way. So, thank you for listening. Maybe if you have an iPod Hi-Fi, and you happen to download podcasts and put it on your iPod, which seems totally ridiculous in the year 2025 when I'm recording this, go for it! Play my voice in your iPod Hi-Fi and go, 'Wow, how meta'. Of course, no one's doing that, but I feel dorky enough that I should bring it up. So, thanks so much for joining me for this brief update on *Lounge Ruminator*, and catch you next time (whenever that will be).