




Sony Walkman NWZ-W202


Sony pulls an Apple: lack of screen presented as a 'feature'

Sony 

www.sony.com.au 

\$119 

Cool ZAPPIN feature; compact design; decent sound quality. 

Pricey; rarely gets the chorus right. 

SPECIAL FEATURES

Drag and drop file loading

Flexible headband

Emphasis base



Apple introduced a new way of navigating through music sans screen on its latest iPod shuffle by using text-to-speech software. Sony is going for a different approach on its Walkman W series, with its funky 'ZAPPIN' technology.

Rather than tell you what the song is while it's playing, the NWZ-W202 treats you to a quick snippet of the track. When you activate the function (by pressing and holding the jogwheel), it traverses your music library and plays four or 15 seconds (depending on whether you're 'ZAPPIN long' or 'ZAPPIN short') of each track's chorus. Once you find the track you want to listen to, you simply press the jogwheel again and the song starts from the beginning.

In practice, it works well, although it rarely got the chorus right. Sony has made the liability of not having a screen into something fun by using lots of cool, if not slightly cheesy, sound effects. Turning the function on results in a futuristic-sounding 'ZAPPIN in'

announcement, and likewise turning it off gets you a 'ZAPPIN out'. There's also a video game-style sound effect in between each song snippet.

The NWZ-202's hardware design is no less interesting. Available in pink, white, black, yellow or purple and with a 2GB storage capacity, it consists of a flexible headband that wraps around the back of your head and two hard earpieces that look exactly like Bluetooth headsets. We took it for a jog and found it very comfortable to wear for extended periods.

We were able to get 9.5 hours of battery life. It comes with a USB cradle for charging, and it mounts as a hard drive for simple drag and drop of music files.

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