

Vizio Mashes Portable Audio with Android

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American TV and soundbar maker Vizio presents an interesting twist on portable audio at CES 2014-- Smart Audio, wireless music players armed with a touchscreen, quad-core processor and Android to bypass streaming entirely.



Available with 7- and 4.7-inch displays, the Smart Audio players connect to home networks and mobile devices via wifi and Bluetooth but are potentially more usable than competitors such as Jambox and Bose. The inclusion of Android 4.4 provides apps of the Rdio and Spotify variety (from the Google Play app store) as well as playback of music saved on built-in storage.

"After looking very closely at the audio space, VIZIO decided it needed to be disrupted with a combination of our leading audio and smart TV technologies," Vizio claims. "Our new portable smart audio line-up reinvents the category by combining class-leading audio performance with a full touchscreen Android platform, delivering a first-class device capable of streaming music, playing games and watching video directly from the cloud or local storage."

The 4.7-inch model is the more portable yet less powerful option, while the 7-inch number features a built-in handle and a bass module handling frequencies as low as 60Hz. Both carry built-in mics for voice chat over Skype or Google Hangouts, and can run just about any Android app.

Vizio should start shipping the Smart Audio sometime during H2 2014.

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