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MP3 players swap songs with strangers

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Adding new songs to your digital music player could become as easy as passing someone in the street. Push Music, designed by Lars Holmquist and his team at the Viktoria Institute in Gothenburg, Sweden, automatically transfers copies of songs between Wi-Fi enabled MP3 players when they come within 20 metres of each other. "We have developed a way for music to find the user, instead of the user always looking for the music," says co-creator Maria Håkansson.

When two or more Push participants come within Wi-Fi range, their MP3 players set up a "conference" that allows them to exchange music files. To ensure people end up with songs they are likely to enjoy, each MP3 file is accompanied by a data file containing information about the song and how often it (and all the other tracks) are played. This allows the Push software to build up groups of songs that ...

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