The SOS team choose some of their highlights from the history of modern music technology.

**Tascam Portastudio 144** (1979)  
the world’s first 4-track recorder based on a standard compact audio cassette tape

**Atari ST** (1985)  
the first computer with a built-in MIDI interface

**AKG C1000** (1986)  
affordable capacitor stage microphone with a convertible polar pattern and alternative phantom or battery power

**Steinberg Pro 24** (1985)  
the first widely adopted MIDI sequencer for Atari

**Fostex B16** (1983)  
the world’s first half-inch 16-track

**MIDI** (1983)  
the communication protocol that changed everything!

**Yamaha DX7** (1983)  
a new palette of synth sounds via frequency modulation

**Roland TR808** (1980)  
popular programmable drum machine that sounded nothing like drums

**Fostex X-15** (1983)  
the battery-powered ‘portable studio’

**Fostex A8** (1981)  
the world’s first quarter-inch 8-track

**Linn LM-1** (1980)  
the first drum machine to use digital samples

**Emu Emulator** (1981)  
8-bit keyboard sampler

**Digidesign Sound Designer** (1985)  
the precursor to Pro Tools

**Akai S900** (1986)  
12-bit multimbral sampler with 11 seconds full-bandwidth sampling time

**Yamaha DMP-7** (1987)  
the first ‘affordable’ digital mixer — with motorised faders


Alesis HR16 (1987) the first 16-bit drum machine.

Akai MPC60 (1988) MIDI sequencing and sampling hardware with performance pads — designed in conjunction with Roger Linn.


Focusrite Forté (1988) arguably the pinnacle of analogue console design.


Steinberg Cubase 1.0 for Atari (1989) a new paradigm that all sequencers/DAWs would follow.

Korg M1 (1988) keyboard workstation that became the top-selling digital synth of the era.

EastWest (1988) high-quality commercial drum samples collection.

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**1990**

- **Novation Bass Station** (1993) compact monophonic bass synthesizer
- **Yamaha DMR-8** (1990) integrated digital mixer and tape-based digital multitrack recorder
- **CEDAR system** (1990) digital de-noise processor
- **Opode Studio Vision** (1990) first integrated MIDI and audio recording software

**1995**

- **Fraunhofer Institute** releases first MP3 encoder (1994)
- **Digidesign SampleCell** (1994) first computer-based sampler
- **Waves L1** look-ahead limiter plug-in (1994)
- **Sony release MiniDisc format** (1992)

**GENERAL MIDI**

- **General MIDI standard (GM)** established (1991)
- **Roland JD800** (1991) a synth with knobs and sliders once again!
- **Genelec 1031A** (1991) compact active monitors
- **Alesis ADAT** (1992) 16-bit 8-track digital recorder using Super VHS video cassettes
- ** Broadcom CR-1 Decrackler** (1993) rackable high-quality analogue mixer
- **Roland SC55** (1991) first General MIDI ‘Sound Canvas’ module
- **Alesis SR16** (1991) the world’s best-selling drum machine
- **Novation Bass Station** (1993) compact monophonic bass synthesizer
- **Pro Tools III** (1994) with 888 interfaces and TDM plug-ins
- **Studio Electronics SE-1** (1993) first new analogue synth since 1984
- **Creamware TripleDAT** (1995) computer-based recording system
- **Roland ADAT** (1992) 16-bit 8-track digital recorder using Super VHS video cassettes

**Mike Lewin**

- **Digidesign Pro Tools version 1** (1991) 4-track computer-based digital recorder/editor
- **Genelec 1031A** (1991) compact active monitors
- **Mackie CR1604** (1991) rackable high-quality analogue mixer
1995

- EastWest Ultimate Piano Collection (1995) - the first multi-velocity sampled pianos
- Yamaha CD-R100 (1995) - first affordable (4x speed) CD burner
- Fostex DMT8 (1995) - hard-disk-based digital multitracker
- Focusrite d2 equaliser & d3 comp/limiter (1995) - the first software plug-ins to emulate both the processing and look and feel of a piece of hardware
- TC Electronic Finalizer (1996) - multi-band digital compressor
- Steinberg VST Software Development Kit (1996) - for VST plug-ins
- USB developed (1996) by Compaq, DEC, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, NEC and Nortel
- Native Instruments Generator (1997) - modular software synth
- ASIO low-latency driver (1997) - format established
- Yamaha 02R (1995)
- Yamaha CD-R100 (1995)
- Yamaha DSP Factory & SW1000XG (1998) - 02R digital mixer & AWM synths ported to PCI card format
- Yamaha CD-R100
- Yamaha DSP Factory & SW1000XG (1998)
- Sony DRE-777 (1999) - convolution reverb

1999

- EastWest Ultimate Piano Collection (1995) - the first multi-velocity sampled pianos
- Propellerhead Rebirth RB338 (1997)
- Antares Auto-Tune (1997) - digital pitch correction software
- Mackie HUI (1997) - control-surface protocol established by Mackie & Digidesign
- Royer R-121 (1997) - spearheaded the revival of the ribbon mic
- Yamaha DSP Factory & SW1000XG (1998) - 02R digital mixer & AWM synths ported to PCI card format
- Yamaha CD-R100
- Yamaha DSP Factory & SW1000XG (1998)
- Sony DRE-777 (1999) - convolution reverb
- Nemesys Gigasampler (1998) - first software sampler to stream from hard drive
- Sonic Foundry ACID (1998) - Audio loops containing tempo and key information for pitch transposition and time-stretch/compression
- Yamaha CD-R100
- Yamaha DSP Factory & SW1000XG (1998)
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- Yamaha CD-R100
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- Sony DRE-777 (1999)
Digidesign Pro Tools HD hardware (2002) — Pro Tools HD took advantage of the continuing advances in DSP technology, better converters, higher sampling rates and improved clocking techniques to become the most widely used hard-disk-based digital audio workstation in music and post-production.

Mac OS 10 (2001) — Apple operating system launched

2001

Ableton Live (2001) — a DAW with a different approach

MOTU 828 (2001) — first FireWire multi-channel audio interface

2002

Apple acquire eMagic (2002)

CEDAR ReTouch (2002) — spectral editing software

Spectrasonics Trilogy (2002) — the first virtual instrument dedicated to basses

TC Electronic Assimilator (2003) — 'match EQ' plug-in for TC's Powercore DSP platform

MOTU 828 (2001) — first FireWire multi-channel audio interface

2003

EastWest Symphonic Orchestra (2003) — first surround-sound virtual orchestra

Core Audio (2003) — introduced in Mac OS 10.3

Acustica Audio Nebula (2005) — native-powered 'dynamic convolution' processor

2004

SSL AWS 9000X (2004) — integrated analogue mixing console and DAW controller

2005

TC Electronic Assimilator (2003) — 'match EQ' plug-in for TC's Powercore DSP platform

Focusrite Liquid Channel (2004) — a combination of analogue and digital technologies to emulate classic mic pre and compressor designs

2005 Waves Q-Clone (2005) — plug-in to capture/impose the EQ response of outboard gear

2000

iPod & iTunes launched (2001)

Sound On Sound USA Edition launched (2001)

2001

Ableton Live (2001) — a DAW with a different approach
These are some of the SOS editorial team's personal highlights from the last 35 years or so. Of course, home recording existed before the Portastudio came along, but in terms of wider participation in the activity, that’s not an unreasonable place to start.

The list is not intended to be, and in practice could not be, exhaustive, and we acknowledge that many other manufacturers and products made a significant contribution to the world of music technology. A big ‘thank you’ is due from us to all of you.