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## Omnifi DMP1

written by Hahn Choi on Tuesday, August 10, 2004

**With the Omnifi DMP1, you bring digital music into the car without wires.**

5 out of 5 stars

Who doesn't listen to music in the car? We listen to music on CD's, broadcast, or even cassettes, but how about music in the digital world? By digital, I'm talking about all the MP3's that sit on my computer and can't seem to conveniently find their way into the car. The Omnifi DMP1 painlessly extends my music collection from desktop to car.



### It's All In the Interface

It's been a rough road trying to get my digital music into the car. I've tried pretty much everything. CD-based systems, with the exception of those with large flip out displays, are difficult to navigate especially when 100 or more tracks are involved. My music collection is in the gigabytes anyway and I don't want to burn CD's full of MP3's. Then there are portable hard drive-based systems like the Apple iPod and Creative Nomad series. Great for music on the go, but the displays are too small for navigating while driving.

With Omnifi, navigating through gigabytes of music is simple with the large fonts and bright three line display. But more impressive is the scroll knob that lets you fly through the menus with ease. To select a folder or song, simply press the center of the scroll knob. The controller also has a series of dedicated quick jump buttons for quickly moving from artist to album or genre.

### Mount it Right

Omnifi consists of two major components, a controller and a 20 GB hard drive housing (HDH). The HDH mounts under a seat or in the trunk--just make sure to screw it into a solid surface. In my car, I mounted directly to the flimsy trim in the trunk. With the car's firm suspension, the hard drive periodically ejected when I drove over large potholes or bumps in the road.

The controller mounts in a DIN slot if you have a double DIN opening in your car. Alternately, remove the bracket and surface mount it. For security, you can eject the controller and take it with you. You'll need to tap into power from your stereo and connect audio through RCA cables or an optional FM modulator. Professional installation might be the better option if you're not keen on opening up your dashboard.

### Synchronize Without Wires

Fresh out of the box, you'll need to eject the hard drive and connect it to your computer via the USB 2.0 interface for a one-time setup. The drive is tied to a single machine for copy protection purposes. After the one-time synch, Omnifi is all about wireless synching over an 802.11b network. You'll need D-Link's DWL-121 receiver for \$70 to use the feature, but it's absolutely worth every penny. I added around a gigabyte of new songs (only 500 MB is recommended) and created several play lists too. All were available in the morning, ready for my commute. Omnifi automatically stops looking for access points and shuts down within a few hours during transfers to minimize battery drain.

The only possible issue with wireless synching is the lack of support for WPA (Wi-Fi Protected Access) for the newest access points. DMP1 does support WEP (Wired Equivalent Privacy), but if WPA is your security of choice, you'll run into some issues. Omnifi is upgradeable through firmware updates, so hopefully WPA will appear in future updates.

### Beyond MP3's

Omnifi synchronizes with a Microsoft Windows application called SimpleCenter. SimpleCenter manages and plays your music collection or CD's, rips into MP3 or WMA format, and accesses a variety of Internet radio providers (Live365, Launchcast, SHOUTcast, Virgin Radio). No, you won't be able to capture the stream and send it to your car. A unique Tag button on the controller lets you bookmark songs, then use SimpleCenter (after synchronizing) to look up more information about the album or artist using data from Muze.

Future versions will include Audible.com (for audio books, magazines, and newspapers) and Rhapsody support. Unfortunately, NewsCenter disappears in version 2.0 of SimpleCenter. NewsCenter offered news, sports, and weather

that would synchronize with the DMP1 for listening on the road.

#### **The Bottom Line**

I waited for over a year for the Omnifi DMP1 to hit the streets after seeing it in early in 2003 and it was worth it. It sounds great even with my factory speakers and provides a top-notch, driver friendly experience. Add in the wireless synching and the DMP1 tops my list of gadgets I want for my car. At \$450 (street) plus \$70 for wireless, it's more expensive than hard drive-based portable players and dedicated car units like the Neo Car Jukebox from [SSI America](#). A Neo Car Jukebox with 120 GB can be had for less. But I still prefer the Omnifi DMP1 with its elegant interface between computer, car, and driver.

Pros: Easy Interface, Wireless Synching; Sounds Great

Cons: Drive Sometimes Ejects

**Company:** [Omnifi](#)  
**Phone:** 1.800.366.1619  
**Price:** \$450  
**Available:** Now

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