

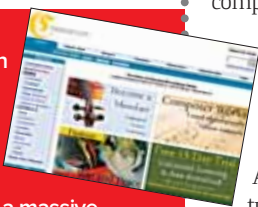
5 ways to save on music and DVDs to help these dark winter nights pass more quickly

1 Try eBay for cheap CDs and DVDs. Also check Amazon's Marketplace or zShops where you can buy both new and used goods for prices often cheaper than in Amazon's main store.



2 Amazon may be one of the most high-profile names in the online shopping world, but don't assume it's always the cheapest. We found both our CDs cheaper at www.play.com. Justin Timberlake's was £8.95 and the Beatles CD £8.45, both delivery free. You can compare CD prices at www.pricerunner.co.uk.

3 If you are interested in classical music, visit www.classical.com which has prices starting at 93p and a massive range of music. You could try www.tescodownloads.com but it offers a smaller choice.



4 The Fopp chain of stores has a 'suck it and see' exchange policy in which it claims you will never have to pay for a CD you don't like. See www.fopp.co.uk for more details.

5 Renting DVDs costs £1.99 each from easyCinema.com and there's no time constraint. At Blockbuster, you'll pay £3.95 for new releases or £2.75 for older titles (renting one DVD at a time for two nights).



Rip-off Britain?

We look at the cost of buying CDs and downloading music

Download music from popular online shops and you'll pay Rip-off Britain prices. Buy CDs from the British high street, and you're more likely to get a bargain. That's the message of our snap-shot of music costs in six countries.

First the good news. Which? compared the cost of two albums: Justin Timberlake's *FutureSex/LoveSounds* and the Beatles' *Revolver* at Virgin high-street stores in capital cities. The favourable exchange rate meant the US was cheapest overall, but the UK was cheaper than other countries.

Genarro Castaldo of HMV said CD prices have been falling for years in the UK. He told us: 'This is due to the very competitive UK market for entertainment products and promotions such as "buy one, get one free", which have brought down the price of CDs in a discernible way.'

High-street music stores face increasing competition from supermarkets, where more than one in four CDs is sold.

Shoppers are also increasingly looking online for CD bargains (more than one in ten UK sales), so we also compared prices at online retailer Amazon's sites in the different countries that we surveyed.

The US Amazon site was again cheapest, at £7.56 for the Justin Timberlake CD (£10.45 in the UK) and £9.25 for the Beatles (£10.45 UK). If prices on American websites (or any based outside the EU) tempt you, bear in mind that if the goods

BUYING CDS – A BARGAIN



	Ireland	£13.83
	Germany	£12.45
	France	£11.16
	UK	£9.99
	Australia	£8.32
	US	£8.17



	France	£16.54
	Ireland	£13.83
	Australia	£12.53
	Germany	£12.45
	US	£10.35
	UK	£9.99

Prices checked week beginning 13 November 2006

Exchange rates (15 November 2006) £1 = US\$ 1.83, € (euro) 1.43, AUS\$ 2.39

The favourable exchange rate meant the US was cheapest overall

are worth more than £18, you'll pay import VAT at 17.5 per cent. Customs duty will also be levied (it's 3.5 per cent on CDs). This will be waived if total duty payable is less than £7.

Our verdict

Competition from online retailers and supermarkets has driven down CD prices. The less-developed download market has yet to see a price war this fierce, and we appear to pay over the odds.



DOWNLOADING MUSIC – A RIP-OFF?

Downloading music from the internet is convenient, but UK shoppers pay more than other Europeans for the privilege.

Apple's iTunes online store, the biggest player in the market, charges 79p a song (around €1.13) in the UK. In the Eurozone,

it costs about 69p (€0.99), but UK consumers can use only the UK store. Which? complained to the European Commission about what we think is an unfair practice that excludes UK shoppers from the benefits of the single market. Our

complaint has been under investigation for nearly two years. Apple will not comment while the case is ongoing.

The download market is rapidly

expanding. Only this year, Gnarls Barkley's 'Crazy' became the first single to get to number one on download sales alone. If Apple has to align iTunes UK and Eurozone prices, others may drop prices to compete. Its main rivals also charge 79p a track, currently.

