

## **Snap. Crackle and Pop!**

11 January 2003

Robert A. Green

[www.robertgreen.org](http://www.robertgreen.org)

Okay, I must have missed something along the way. A few days ago I read a story about some software that allows the user to add noise, noise as in scratchy sounds, to digitally recorded music. So there is now software that allows you to take crystal clear digital music and add scratches, pops, and crackles. Unbelievable! Why would anyone possibly want this?

Somewhere, hidden behind several layers boxes and even more layers of dust, is my collection of albums; those twelve inch diameter disks of vinyl that I collected as a teenager and as a young adult. I certainly recall the pops that came from scratches and the hiss that came from static electricity and dust. I hated it, and it seems most everyone else hated it as well, for in that same box of albums you would also find a collection of sprays, cloths, static discharge devices, brushes and even specially coated sleeves, all designed and purchased with the intent of reducing the effects of dust and static on the records.

I remember that when cassette tapes first became popular I couldn't wait to switch to them because they would not suffer from the same static and scratch problems as did the vinyl records. Of course there were problems with cassette tapes too which were soon to be reduced by Dolby technology to eliminate that incessant hiss.

Compact disks were a godsend. Now I could truly listen to music without the hiss, without the pops, and not have to worry so much about the scratches as I once did. The CD's were also easier to store and carry than either tapes or vinyl disks. I can convert them to mp3's and listen to them on my computer and even download them to my Nomad II mp3 player which is much smaller than the once popular Sony Walkman, of which I had several.

But now people want to add noise to their clear digitally recorded music? I may have missed something along the way but I certainly have not missed the crackle and pop of music recorded on vinyl or the hiss of music recorded on tape. I'm just waiting now for someone to come up with the software that will add the *click-click* that happened when the 8-track players would change tracks (usually in the middle of a song). I'm afraid that before long someone is going to develop a device that you can add to your television so that you can watch shows in black and white with snowy and wavy pictures.

Well, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to listen to some mp3's and if I get an urge to hear some snaps, crackles, or pops, I'll go for fix myself a bowl of Rice Krispies.