



# XM vs. Sirius

Consider this the end of conventional radio. Commercial-free and uncensored, satellite radio offers hundreds of music, news, talk, sports, and entertainment programs—all broadcast in digital quality. And starting in 2006, it will be the only place you can hear Howard Stern. So what'll it be: industry leader XM, the first nationwide service—or Sirius, XM's fierce, up-and-coming competitor? **BY JOSHUA GOLDMAN**

HEAD TO HEAD

	Costs (activation; monthly fee)	Hardware Selection	Total Number of Stations	Exclusive Sports Coverage	Big-Name Talent	Sound Quality	Programming
 <b>SATELLITE RADIO</b>	\$10; \$10	A limited number of receivers from a handful of makers	152	MLB, NASCAR	Snoop Dogg	Good overall, but don't expect CD quality	Twenty-one channels of traffic and weather don't make up for the overall lack of variety
<b>vs.</b>	▲	▼	▲	▼	▼	▲	▼
 <b>SIRIUS SATELLITE RADIO</b>	\$10; \$13	A broad selection of tuners from more than 10 companies	120	NFL, NBA, English soccer	Howard Stern	Just a notch below XM—much like streaming Internet	Sirius is the hands-down winner, with a better mix of music, talk, and sports

**WINNER: Sirius** | Sirius is the shining star, 4-3.

## SATELLITE RECEIVERS

XM

Sirius

**PRICE \$350**

@ [shopdelphi.com](http://shopdelphi.com)

Home, car, street—this all-in-one portable XM receiver goes everywhere and includes many accessories and top-notch features, like the ability to save up to five hours of broadcast listening pleasure. It's bulky and the sound quality is average, but the flexibility more than makes up for its few shortcomings.



**PRICE \$100**

@ [getxact.com](http://getxact.com)

The low price makes this the perfect entry-level unit for Sirius subscribers, but its features are anything but cheap. There's a seek feature that hunts down your favorite artists wherever they're playing, and a built-in FM transmitter allows you to listen through your car's radio without wires.



**PRICE \$300**

@ [polkaudio.com/xm](http://polkaudio.com/xm)

Audiophiles, this is a hot-looking tuner you'll actually want in your component rack. Equipped with digital audio outputs—and a video output that lets you display song and artist info on your TV—Polk's unit produced the best sound of all the devices we tried.



**PRICE \$300**

@ [tivoliaudio.com](http://tivoliaudio.com)

Although it has only one speaker, this home component puts out a sound so clean you won't even notice. Our only gripe is the hard-to-read control labels and the lack of volume control on the remote. Nevertheless, the superb audio quality makes this tabletop Sirius/AM/FM radio a work of art. (For even richer sound, you can also invest in the optional matching stereo speaker and subwoofer.)