

## Talk to your stereo and it might respond

*Updated: Tue Aug. 26 2008 4:38:31 PM*

*ctvottawa.ca*

Nick Deeble talks to his stereo system. He tells it which song he wants to hear and how loud he wants to hear it.

The interesting part is that his stereo system listens.

Deeble uses a PDA equipped with a wireless hook-up and voice recognition capabilities from an Ottawa firm called Avoca Semiconductor.

When Deeble talks to his stereo, the voice commands are sent to an electronic box that contains all the music on a large hard drive holding thousands of songs.

It takes 10 minutes to load a full CD of music into the machine. Once it is uploaded, a handheld controller lists all the CDs and tracks. You can use the touch screen or simply talk into the device.

"I was very skeptical, and you're right it does miscue now and then, you know, it echoes, whatever, but this is by far the best recognition," Deeble told CTV Ottawa. "And it doesn't have to be trained, and the kids, my wife, strangers can come into the house, pick it up and use it. "

Iain Scott is the man behind the machine. His company, Avoca Semiconductor, developed the voice recognition technology and put it inside the PDA. It has taken well over two years to refine all of the technology. Now, Scott says, the machine is as good as a human at understanding spoken commands.

"Once you realize that you just push the button, say what you want and things happens, it's very, very simple," Scott said. "This is intended for people who are not into deep technology, but simply want to enjoy their music collections."

It's not cheap to use voice commands; a unit sells for more than three thousand dollars. Deeble calls it the best money he's ever spent.

"It gives you a lot of freedom and flexibility, it gives you a lot more use and utility out of your system than anything else you can buy," he said.

The launch of this product is set for the first week of September. Due to the high cost of the unit, you are likely going to see it first at high-end specialty stores. Scott says the next version of the machine will include a way to hook up your iPod so it can become another source of your music.

*With a report from CTV's Paul Brent*