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Sony NC-50 noise cancelling headphones

Can Sony compete against the likes of Bose when it comes to noise cancelling?

by Stuart Miles published on 21 July 2006

Sony has set its sights on Bose with a new pair of noise cancelling headphones - the MDR-NC50, but can the cans promise to give you a slice of silence? The flagship model of the range, the MDR-NC50 headphones are Sony's top of the range model and come in at £145 making them £100 cheaper than Bose's QuietNoise sets but over £100 more than Creative's Noise Cancelling HN-700 set. Out of the packaging and the headphones are typical of any noise cancelling set we've seen. Big padded cans to cover your ears and an over the head strap to keep them on your noggin. Sony promise that the NC50's will reduce ambient sound by around 14dB and cleaning up 4/5 of the background noise. However in our tests while performing well to reduce ambient noise they didn't perform as well as either the Creative or Bose models we've tested in the past. That's not to say that sound wasn't reduced, far from it, and to prove that they are working Sony even include a monitor button that you can press to prove to yourself that the room is quieter with them on that off. It is just we could still hear people talking and other noises fairly clearly when we tested them on the train, around the house and in the office. The NC50s also come with a standard stereo jack and a dual jack in-flight plug for enjoying in-flight music services.



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VERDICT

While the NC-50s do an admirable job, compared to both the cheaper Creative headphones and the more expensive set from Bose, the Sony set loses out to both.

At a glance

What is it?

Noise cancelling headphones

Good

Monitor button so you can hear it working

Bad

Not as noise cancelling as Creative or Bose's efforts

Verdict

While the NC-50's do an admirable job they just don't match up to the competition

Price £149

Our score

5/10

Your score

?/10