



Artifact Showcase:

Rocket Radio

In the 1950s a Japanese company began marketing the "Rocket Radio," a low-cost small crystal radio in the shape of a rocket. It was called a "crystal radio" but it actually used a semiconductor diode rather than a crystal detector to extract the audio signal. Different versions of the rocket radio continued to be sold for some years afterwards. Then in 2002, the Rocket Radio shown here, a new version of the earlier Rocket Radio, was introduced. The one in our collection is still in its original plastic shrink wrap.



Neither the original version nor this later model worked well. Each came with a single earphone. The rod protruding from the tip of the rocket is the self-contained antenna. The included alligator clip allowed a wire antenna to be attached to the set. If you lived close enough to a powerful AM station, you might have heard it on this radio, but you could not expect to pick up any weak stations. Why would anyone purchase a radio like this when, for not too much more, you could purchase a low-end battery-operated transistor radio that would have worked better? It was probably marketed as a kid's toy that a child might have fun playing with.

We appreciate your support of the museum so that historical artifacts like this one, and the stories that go with them, can be preserved for future generations. THANKS!