TOYOTA is trying to boost its appeal to younger buyers by making its car audio systems capable of playing MP3 discs.

The move to have MP3 compatibility on most of its range is part of a strategy to be a technology leader in the Australian car market, says divisional general manager of marketing Stott Grant.

MP3 compatibility is standard on Echo, Celica, MR2, Corolla, RAV4, Land Cruiser Wagon, Prado, Tarago and Avensis Verso. It is optional on Camry and Avalon.

Toyota was slower on the uptake of the CD, only making that standard in 2000. Its slowness there appears to be a lesson learnt.

"Toyota's strength as a brand lies in its reputation for innovation and adopting new technology," Grant says.

MP3 files have become an accepted medium for music storage, particularly with 18-to-25-year-olds, he says.