

# Apple's iPod

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## Computing News

### Apple's iPod



On October 23, 2001, Apple introduced the iPod, a significant advance in portable MP3 and music players. Lightweight (6.5 ounces), small (about the size of a deck of playing cards), fast, and easy to use, the iPod offers a superior music listening experience, along with real and usable features such as a 1,000+ song capacity and up to 10 hours of battery life.

#### Features & Specifications:

- Support for MP3, variable bit rate MP3, AIFF, and WAV format music files
- 5 GB storage, usable in FireWire (IEEE 1394) disk mode
- Built-in 6-pin FireWire interface for data transfer and recharging battery
- Up to 10 hours of life from a built-in rechargeable lithium-ion battery
- Skip-free, 20-minute data buffer
- Upgradeable firmware for bug fixes, future music formats, or added functionality
- 2-inch, 160 by 128 pixel, 102 dpi backlit display
- 6.5 ounces; 2.4 by 4.0 by 0.8 inches

#### Interface & Battery

With the iPod's scroll-wheel you can access your music collection by artist, title, and song. Through one-handed operation you can navigate through menus, choose your song, stop, reverse, or fast-forward through the song, or set preferences such as turning on the shuffle mode or the backlight. The bright backlight illuminates a high-resolution, easy-to-read display.

Not only can you store lots of your music on the iPod (1,000 or more MP3s), but you can play that music for up to 10 hours from the built-in rechargeable lithium-ion battery. The iPod recharges completely in about 3 hours through the FireWire cable while connected to your computer, or you can plug it in directly to a two-prong power outlet through a special included adapter.

## Works With iTunes

The iPod is designed to work with [iTunes 2.x](#), Apple's free music software. With iTunes, you rip MP3s from your CDs and add them to your music library. You can create custom playlists and then transfer the music from iTunes to your iPod through the FireWire interface at high speed (the equivalent of an entire CD in about 10 seconds). Currently, the iPod is only compatible with Mac OS 9.x and Mac OS X version 10.1.x, although support for other operating systems such as Windows or Linux, may be forthcoming either from Apple or from third-party developers.

## More Than Just An MP3 Player

The firmware in the iPod is upgradeable, so Apple can implement bug fixes, support more music formats, or provide new and/or improved interface features. In fact, Apple has already released several minor [updates](#).

You have 5 GB of storage space when you connect your iPod to your FireWire equipped Macintosh, offering room for your presentations, graphic files, digital pictures, or movies.

Finally, the iPod is a fairly powerful handheld device, with 32 MBytes RAM, and a PortalPlayer microprocessor with an ARM7TDMI core - similar to that used in recent Pocket PCs.

## The Bottom Line

Even though the iPod's cost may seem a bit steep for a MP3 player (best price is \$369 at the [Computer Connection](#)), it is well worth it for some users. Unlike most MP3 players, you are really getting two products in one: a leading-edge music player, and a portable hard drive you can take anywhere. The upgradable firmware leaves the door open for iPod to get even better.

**Note:** during the Winter 2001 holiday season the Computer Connection has made available [holiday bundles](#) combining Apple laptops and the iPod.

Information Systems & Computing (ISC) does not recommend or support peripheral devices such as the iPod, but suggests that only Mac OS 9.x and Mac OS X version 10.1.x users whose workstations meet the iPod's hardware requirements purchase this device.

--Vern Yoneyama & Kristen Zborowski, ISC Client Services Group



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