

PART I

The Basics of Content





1

Remedial iTunes

The Skim

The Very Very (Very) Basics ■ Importing Files into iTunes ■
Organizing Your Music into Playlists ■ Updating Your iPhone or iPod Touch

This is going to sound odd, but I'm going to start the first real chapter of this book by saying mean things about a teacher.

Well, look, the news is still fresh and it sort of stings. I spent the summer helping my niece with her summer reading. She was assigned a pretty interesting and meaty book, and we got together for six half-hour sessions to discuss the characters, the tone, the larger issues, the background, everything. Together, we read the holy *hell* out of that book.

Today was the first day of school. And what do you think happened? The teacher hit everybody with a pop exam about the book. And there weren't any *interesting* questions, either, like "Do you suppose the author approved of the choices made by the lead character?" No, it was full of football trivia, like asking who said a certain line, or what is the French word for *Velcro*?

My beloved niece got rooked and rooked good by a woman who is clearly unhappy with the behavior of her *own* kids but can't bear to inflict suffering on her own flesh and blood. Sad. So very sad.

I bring this up, of course, to make me appear that much more terrific in your eyes. Because here on page one of Chapter 1, it's like it's the first day of school. What's Mr. Ihnatko going to do with his class? Relax. I just want you to relax and tell me how your summer went. Let's spend this first day going over remedial stuff, just to make sure that we all start



off on the same page. Literally.

This introduction has now gone on for so long that I'm fairly certain that it's spilled over onto page 2 or 3. I admit this manfully and openly, accepting the consequences unafraid. Golly, that's yet *another* reason for you to be impressed with me! This is great!

So herewith is a little course in remedial iTunes, since that's the engine that gets most of the cool stuff on your iPhone or iPod Touch.

After this chapter, if I glibly end a long technical process by dismissively saying, "And then drag the video file into iTunes or add it to a playlist," please mentally cut and paste this entire chapter into the space allotted by that short phrase.



TIDBIT

Creating playlists isn't absolutely necessary; your iPhone allows you to idly browse your content by artist, album title, etc.

But as advanced as its technology is, your iPhone has no way of knowing that *these* 11 songs, played in *this* specific order constitute the ultimate make out mix tape.

Without your guidance, *Tony Bennett and Bill Evans: Together Again* always begins with Track 1 and ends with Track 18, and doesn't skip over songs like "You Don't Know What Love Is," which I think you'll agree will totally destroy the mood.

THE VERY VERY (VERY) BASICS

The one slight bummer about the iPhone and the iPod Touch is that you, the humble hard-working user, are never allowed to access the device directly. Those tawdry little players made by vulgar other companies are like little hard drives that let you store music and video files. Whether you're using a Windows PC or a Mac, you just drag files into the device's open folder and, bango, the device figures out what to do with the files.

You can use a desktop app to speed up the process, but really, it isn't complicated.

For a million reasons — some in your best interests, some not — Apple doesn't give you that same courtesy with the iPhone and iPod Touch. The iTunes app always, always, *always* acts as the gatekeeper. The iTunes app acts as a library for all your media (see Figure 1-1). You then selectively tell iTunes what content you'd like to have on your device, and then iTunes does all the sorting and moving for you.

So the path from A File On Your Hard Drive to A Music Or Video File Or Photo That You Can Tap On And Enjoy On Your Device goes like this:

- ❖ You import the file into iTunes, which adds it to its huge and ever-increasing catalogue of music and video.
- ❖ You organize your content into playlists.
- ❖ You tell iTunes which content should be automatically copied to your iPhone's media library.
- ❖ Your iPhone is updated with fresh content when you plug it into your computer. This can happen automatically as soon as iTunes realizes that the iPhone (or iPod Touch) has been plugged in, or if you're the sort of control freak who



Figure 1-1

iTunes: the center of our iPhone passion play

won't let an employee have a pad of freaking sticky notes without filling out a form, you can explicitly tell iTunes to update the thing *right now*.

IMPORTING FILES INTO ITUNES

iTunes isn't a simple music player — it's not just an app that just plays a file off your hard drive and then forgets that it ever existed. No, iTunes is grabby and ambitious: It's a Media Content Library Management System. When you import a music or video file into iTunes, information about the file is added to a master database so that you can locate one song among thousands in an instant (a seven-minute version of "Anarchy

in the U.K." recorded by Buddy Ebsen) and unless you've explicitly told iTunes not to organize your library for you — ah, those control freak issues, yet again — iTunes will also copy the file into its own special music directory.

There are two different ways to add files to your iTunes library:

Method the First: Use the Add to Library Command

1. Choose File ▸ Add To Library.

- ❑ In the Windows edition of iTunes, there are two Add to Library menu items. Add File allows you to select one specific file. If you choose Add Folder, iTunes will scan through



the contents of a selected folder and automatically add any music or video files that it's capable of playing.

- ❑ In the Macintosh version of iTunes, a single command that handles both tasks. Either way, you'll find yourself looking at your computer's standard file/folder browser.

2. Select a music or video file, or a folder containing music and videos.
3. Click the highlighted button. On a Mac, it'll be Choose. If you're selecting a file on a PC, it'll be OK, or Open if you're using the Add Folder command.

iTunes will percolate for a minute. When it's finished, all the selected files that it formats that iTunes understands will appear in the iTunes library.

Method the Second: Just Drag It

If you're in Windows Explorer or the Mac Finder and you can see the name or icon of the files you want to import, you just drag the files straight into iTunes without any further ado. Drag them into the iTunes window, drag them into iTunes's desktop icon or its tile in the Windows taskbar or the Macintosh dock. However you do it, if iTunes



TIP

The scope of the Add To Library command is not limited to just folders. If someone hands you a CD or a DVD filled with MP3 files, for instance, you can use your computer's file/folder browser to select the entire volume.

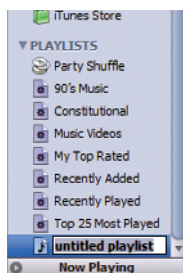


Figure 1-2

A new playlist takes its first breath.

thinks it knows how to handle the file, a plus sign (+) will appear next to your mouse pointer when you enter iTunes's airspace. Release, and iTunes will take it from there.

ORGANIZING YOUR MUSIC INTO PLAYLISTS

Using playlists brings two big boons. Yes, it's handy to be able to instantly access a collection of songs tailor-made for workouts, an evening of romance, or piloting your souped-up Dodge Charger down rural backroads at breakneck speeds with Boss Hogg in close pursuit. But it also helps you manage the problem of having more music and video than you have space for on your device. The goal of this book is to help you stuff that device until it's ready to a-splode; if you have so little content that you have no need for playlists, then I'll somehow feel as though I haven't done my job.

You can create as many different playlists as you like. iTunes offers them in two flavors: (a) the plain-vanilla variety, through which you manually select specific music and video, and (b) synchs, through which you simply describe the *sort* of music you'd like to hear, and trust iTunes to work out the specific details.

Plain Old Playlists

You can create a new playlist either by choosing File ♦ New Playlist or by click-

ing the plus (+) button at the bottom of the iTunes browser window. Either way, an untitled playlist will appear in iTunes's list of music sources (see Figure 1-2).

Untitled Playlist (the default playlist name) is highlighted and awaits your creative genius. Type in something a little more memorable. "Just Drive" is my usual playlist of stuff I want to hear in the car.

And that's really all there is to it. Any songs I drag into Just Drive will be added to the playlist, viz:

1. Click on Library in the iTunes window's Sources list. A list of all the music and video in your iTunes library appears.
2. Select one or more items from your library.
3. Drag them over the playlist's name.

Incidentally, when you copy items into a playlist the only thing you're actually copying is the items' information. All your actual music and video files remain where they were in iTunes's library, which means that a music track or video can be in many different playlists all at once.

Honestly, I mean, what sort of life would it be if we could only enjoy "The Cockroach That Ate Cincinnati" in one playlist at a time?

If you click on the playlist's name, iTunes's browser window will switch to a view of that playlist's tracks. You can change the play order of those items by dragging them around, or remove items by selecting them and then hitting the Backspace or Delete key on your keyboard.

Smart Playlists

There are certain features of certain apps that make me seriously want to stick five

TIP

You can automatically create a new playlist from a group of selected tracks in one step. On a Mac, you simply drag the group into any empty spot in the Sources section of the iTunes window. If you're not dragging 'em into an existing playlist, iTunes assumes that you want to make a new one with these items. In the Windows edition, select a group of items and then choose File ▸ New Playlist from Selection.



bucks in an envelope and mail it to the company. The smart playlist is definitely one of those features.

Smart playlists allow you to create a playlist without being specific about its contents. You describe the *sort* of content you want and iTunes makes the selections for you. iTunes stores a lot of information about all the items in its library — including how frequently and recently you've been playing that stuff — which means that it's easy to get iTunes to make some fairly sophisticated choices on your behalf.

For instance: I buy lots of music through the iTunes Music Store, representing different artists and genres. And every time I take my hour long constitutional — I'd *like* to call it a "morning jog" but that would imply an ability to run faster than the average man can walk on his hands — I want to listen to my latest tunes.

I could either religiously move tracks in and out of a manual playlist or just define a Smart Playlists by choosing File ▸ New Smart Playlist (see Figure 1-3).

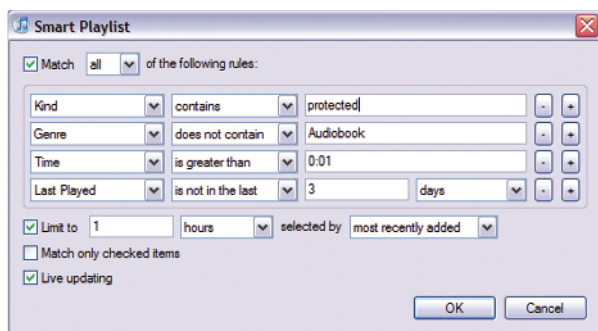


Figure 1-3

A smart playlist that selects music for my morning constitutional

Each line represents a different “rule” to apply when choosing songs; to add a new one, I click the plus (+) button at the end of any rule. This smart playlist says:

- ◆ Kind, Contains, Protected: Chooses only protected songs, meaning copy-protected songs, which means songs purchased through the iTunes Store.
- ◆ Genre Does Not Contain, Audiobook: Don’t choose any spoken-word recordings or books-on-tape. Neither my metabolism nor my enthusiasm for exercise are great enough to keep my legs moving during 45 minutes of Alan Greenspan’s memoirs.
- ◆ Time, Is Greater Than, 6:00: For that matter, don’t select any music over six minutes long, either.
- ◆ Last Played, Is Not in the Last, 3, Days: If I’ve played this song any time in the last three days, don’t bother playing it again. My attention span is desperately short.

Under that list of rules, there’s also line to specify how much music you’d like, and how you’d like iTunes to make the selection. One hour will do me just fine, though you

can alternatively tell iTunes to limit the number of songs or the amount of space the collection will take up. I’ve also told it to select the newest songs. I could have asked iTunes to pick songs at random, songs that I haven’t heard recently, or choose from an abundance of other options.

After I click OK, the new smart playlist will be automatically populated with items that match all the rules I’ve laid out (see Figure 1-4).

And one of the (many) terrific features of smart playlists is that the playlist is “live.” If for whatever reason a track inside a synch no longer meets your list of rules, zap! It’s removed from the playlist and replaced with one that does. My “Constitutional” playlist always contains my newest tracks. If I buy three new songs from the iTunes store, they’ll be added to the playlist automatically and the oldest songs in the playlist will be kicked out to make room for them.

(Just like the oldest cast members on *Survivor*.)

UPDATING YOUR IPHONE OR IPOD TOUCH

When you connect your device to your computer, it automatically appears in iTunes’s list of music sources. What happens after that depends on the iPhone Options or iPod Options you’ve set. (I’ll just call it “iPhone Options” from here on out, okay?)

You can open the iPhone Options window by clicking on your iPhone’s name in the Devices section of the iTunes window. You wind up with a window like the one you see in Figure 1-5.



Figure 1-4

Presto! iTunes is your personal deejay, choosing tunes based on your general likes.

iTunes will update the iPhone's contents automatically every time you plug it in, if you leave the Automatically Sync When This Phone is Connected checkbox checked.

There's another tweak to all this: the Sync Only Checked Songs and Videos checkbox. Each video track in every iTunes window has a checkbox next to it. When this option is enabled, any item that *does not* have its checkbox checked will not be synched to your device, which makes it easy to “point and shoot” certain items that you never want to hear in the car.

Automatic updates only take place when you plug in your device. You can also tell iTunes to update this device *right freaking now* by clicking the Sync button. You'd use Sync if you've added new items or playlist to

your iTunes library since plugging in your iPhone.

You'll note that the Options window is organized into tabs. There's one for each different type of media that you can load up on your device.

Use the Music tab to tell iTunes precisely which bits of your music (or video, or photo,

TIDBIT

Be sure to check out Chapter 2. It contains some simple tricks for making the limited capacity of your iPhone or iPod Touch seem irrelevant.



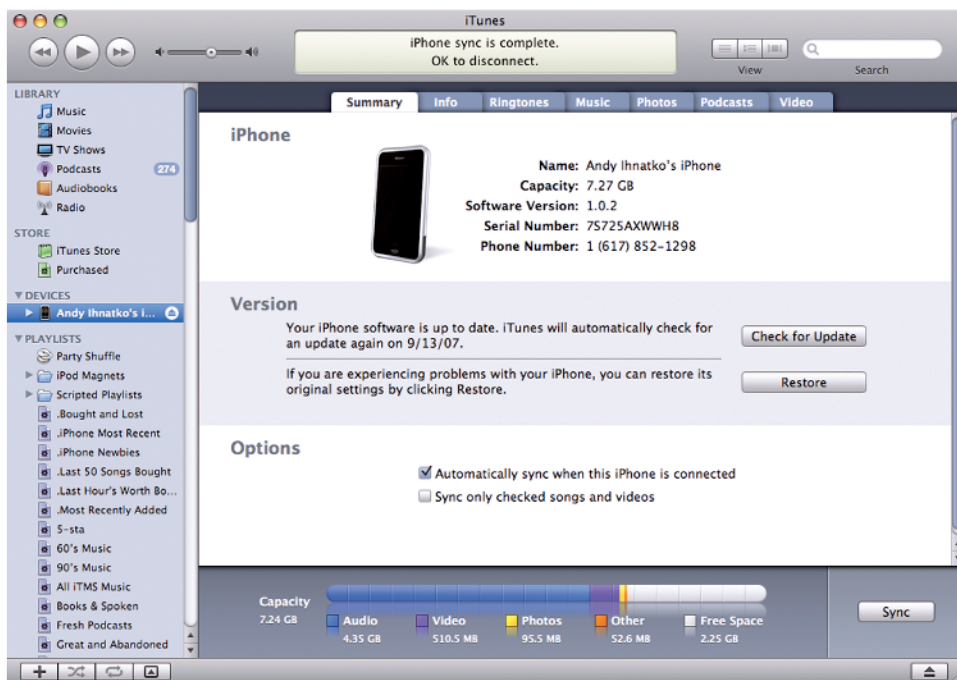


Figure 1-5
The iPhone Options window

or ...) library should be copied to your iPhone (see Figure 1-6).

Take this moment to observe the All Songs and Playlists Option. Click on this and your iPhone will contain all of the music in your library. Take a gooooooong long look at it.

Ha ha! Yes, we all enjoyed a good laugh over that one. Most likely, unless you've only had your computer for 40 minutes, you already have way more music and video on your machine than you have free space on your iPhone. That's why iTunes allows you to narrow down the library to an easily managed subset of playlists.

Each pane of the iPhone Options window is a little different and addresses the unique-ities of that media. Video files tend to be humongous in their own right. An

iPhone can handle a thousand songs, but a half-dozen movies can easily max the thing out. The Video tab lets you select individual shows or movies in addition to managing your content via playlists.

So that's the end of our first day of school. And now you see why we have all your little desks facing *me* instead of each other. This way, when the bell rings and you all flee into the hallways to whip out your phones and check in with Facebook, you can tell each other that this class was so *lame*, that you *totally* knew everything that Mr. Ihnatko discussed, that this is all so *easy*.

Meanwhile I'm the only one who saw the look on your face when I explained something elemental, and watched your eyes and ears go into full spread-spectrum capture



Figure 1-6

Moving tunes from desktop to hiptop

mode. Funny, none of your *friends* seemed like they were learning something new. I bet they'd be really amused if they knew that you've had an iPhone all this time and didn't know how synchs worked.

To put it more simply: Those Hostess cupcakes your mom puts in your lunch come two to a pack. Send one my way from time to time and nobody ever needs to know about this. *Capice?*



