

# Truth About iPods

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# Truth About iPods

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## Purpose of this document

This document is intended to teach you the things that nearly no one talks about regarding the contraptions manufactured by Apple called iPods and iMovie devices. The concepts talked about here equally apply to any contraptions that sync with the software called iTunes.

I hope that you read this document BEFORE you waste your money on one of these devices, and instead choose to research the multitude of other options out there serving the same need and a MUCH less total cost of ownership.

I also hope that you educate yourself fully regarding any piece of technology BEFORE you purchase it. If you feel you cannot support the thing entirely yourself, you should contact your normal IT support and ask their opinion on the prospective purchase. Keep in mind that no one is an expert in all categories. So ask many people before you make the purchase.

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## Revision history

Date of revision	Changes	Made by
28-Jan-*2007	Initial release	Felicia King

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## Definitions

MP3 player	any device that will play MP3 format music
MP3	a standardized music format that all music players will play
MP4	Apple's proprietary format of music. Only an iPod will play this format.
TCO	total cost of ownership
DRM	digital rights management

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## Warning!

This document is intended as information only. It is not intended to be a step-by-step guide on how to do stuff with your iPod contraption. If you use a procedure in this document, you do so at your own risk. If you do not feel comfortable with any procedure in this document, contact competent IT support and GET HELP.

**YOU have ALL the liability for any actions you take on your own with your iPod or computer equipment.**

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## Credibility

### Who am I?

I am a full-time information technology consultant serving mid-sized business to the home user. You may wonder who I am to make such statements about iPods. I fully admit I have never personally owned one. I have never found the purchase to be cost-effective considering the alternatives that are completely trouble-free. I have owned several other brand MP3 players, PDAs including advanced Palm, Windows Mobile 2003, and Windows Mobile 5.0 devices. These all play MP3 and various standard video file formats.

In servicing a large number of clients over many years, I have had numerous unpleasant encounters with iPods. My latest adventure was with an iMovie player.

At the time of this writing, I have 15 years of experience in the IT industry and am considered an expert in the field. You can catch my weekly radio show, Breakfast Bytes, on the radio or the Internet at <http://www.wgtd.org/breakfast.asp>

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## Concepts

In this section, you will find the "features" of iPods that make them most frustrating and expensive contraptions. Real-life stories will be used to explain the points where appropriate.

### TCO

Defined in the definitions section, TCO is really what you should consider when making any purchase. If you bought a beater car that you then had to sink \$3000 into for repairs, then the car is not really a deal anymore, is it? The same thing is true with any piece of electronics or software. If the device is too complicated or if it has some dangerous features, your TCO just exploded through the roof.

The cost of support from competent information technology consultants is worth it, but is also MUCH more expensive than if you could have figured it out on your own.

Remember this concept when reading the remaining concepts as it will be illuminating in perspective.

## How do I move my library?

Let's say you get a new computer. You install iTunes. You connect your iPod to the PC thinking that all the music on your iPod will magically sync back into the iTunes library on the new PC. You get a prompt telling you that your iPod is not set up to synchronize with your new PC. It asks you if you would like to ERASE your iPod and cause it to sync with the new PC.

If you are paying attention to the screen, you will rightly have a moment of panic and pause. Yes. It said it was going to ERASE your iPod. So you better move to plan B for how to get your music into the new PC.

If you are not paying attention to what the screen says, you can kiss your content goodbye. Say sweet goodbyes to your music and movies and whatever else what on that pod. Now go find the phone number to your local IT support to ask for help.

### ***The solution***

Obvious answer is to never buy one of these contraptions. But let's assume you already have it. What do you do? Buy CopyPod. Use it to back up your iPod on your old PC. This is your disaster recovery plan.

Also, get an external USB 2.0 hard drive. Copy your whole iTunes folder from your old PC onto it. COPY not MOVE. Once it's on your external hard drive, connect that hard drive to your new PC. COPY, not MOVE, the iTunes folder into the appropriate place on the new PC.

Open iTunes and verify that your music files are in the library. Also verify that any other content that used to be there is there now. You may need to login to iTunes Store if you purchased content from that store before. This will download a certificate that says you are licensed to play the DRM-protected music.

NOW, you can sync your iPod with your new PC with confidence. Note that it will still ERASE your iPod. But that's OK because you have a backup of the pod using CopyPod, AND you have all the music files in the library on the new PC. If things go well, your pod will get a new sync of the content from the iTunes library on the new PC.

## What happened to my music???!?

I've received many frantic emails and phone calls over the years related to this issue. Some little tiny thing changed on the person's computer and they synced their iPod as they always had. No warning or anything was presented to them. But now they have no music on their iPod anymore.

What happened?

The answer is that iTunes happened. iTunes is a sassy little application that expects everything to be perfect with your computer at all times. It doesn't know how to handle hard drive corruption issues. What happens when you get a new computer? This issue was addressed in the [How do I move my library](#) section.

It is CRITICAL that you understand this concept that iTunes is the master. The sync relationship between iTunes and your iPod is not bi-directional. iTunes is the master. So be prepared to kiss your content goodbye each time you sync, OR buy CopyPod as a pod-backup tool.

I've had clients that got a virus that changed some sectors on the hard drive. We cleaned the machine and had to run a chkdsk to fix the sectors. Suddenly, iTunes doesn't think it's synced with the pod anymore. All the music is there, but the sync doesn't work anyhow. So the poor folks are left with iPods that have NO music on them. **So even if the music shows up in your library, your pod may still be erased.**

## **My purchased music is not accessible anymore**

As mentioned in the previous section, iTunes is a sassy application. If your computer ever loses the certificate for the music you purchased through iTunes, you may find yourself unable to play any of that music anymore. Additionally, the music will be erased from your iPod. It's like one big evil conspiracy from Apple to steal more of your money.

## **Why are other MP3 players better?**

- There's no one-to-one relationship with a library.
- Your music will never magically disappear from your player.
- No special software is required to put or organize music on your player.
- Making playlists is easier.
- Many have a built-in FM radio.
- Many of them have a built-in voice recorder.
- The Zen Vision has a much bigger screen than the iMovie player and costs the same.

## **But mom, everybody has one**

Let me tell you the story of Sally. Sally is no one in particular, but rather all the moms who tell me the same story over and over.

This is the one that irks me the most. Sally spends \$300+ of her hard-earned money and then has to pay for IT support later to support some contraption that was supposed to be a plug-and-play appliance.

She could have spent \$300 and gotten an even better device made by a company called Creative. They make phenomenal MP3 and movie players that beat the socks off of iPods any day of the week. But Sally got sucked into the "everybody at school has one" mentality.

Remember that YOU are the adult and it is YOUR money. I know you don't want your child to feel left out or be the only one at school that doesn't have one of these things. Consider that it may actually be better for your child to be the one that has the COOLER player because it has a 4.3" color widescreen, FM player, and does all the stuff that the iPod does, but MORE and for less money than an iMovie player.

You will have the peace of mind knowing that no software will ever blow up the content on the Zen Vision. You won't have to call IT support for it. You have just mastered the TCO for that product.

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## Handy tips

### Convert DVD movies to MP4

If you do have one of these iMovie players, don't waste your money buying movies through iTunes Store. Instead, buy Cucusoft Suite of tools to convert your DVD movies to MP4 format. Link these files into your iTunes library and make sure that the synchronization of movies is selected. Now you will be able to watch your DVD movies on the iPod.

### Backup your iPod

Since iTunes is sassy software and the iPod is a mysterious little contraption, you should give yourself peace of mind by backing up your iPod. Google CopyPod and buy the software.

Also backup your iTunes folder on your PC to an external hard drive. This folder is typically in the My Music folder inside of My Documents.