

# INTRODUCTION

If you've seen lots of people with white wires dangling from their ears and wondered if you were missing out on something.... If you have been toying with the idea of getting into digital music.... If you have an iPod and aren't sure what to do with it.... If you wish you could stop messing around with a bunch of CDs when you want to listen to music.... If you've heard about podcasts but don't know what they are or why you should care.... If you think the idea of taking TV shows and movies with you wherever you go is a good one.... If you've heard and seen the iPod hype but wonder if all the fuss is for a good reason.... If you've heard great things about iPods, have seen the commercials for the iTunes Store, and want to know what all the excitement is all about, then welcome to the *Absolute Beginner's Guide to iPod and iTunes!*

## Meet the Digital Triumvirate

In this book, you'll learn about three of the most amazing things to happen to music, photos, audiobooks, radio, and video since the first time someone decided that banging a stick on a rock had an appealing sound and that scratching a drawing of the day's hunt on the cave wall was a good idea. These three amazing things are the iPod, iTunes, and the iTunes Store.

## The iPod Rocks

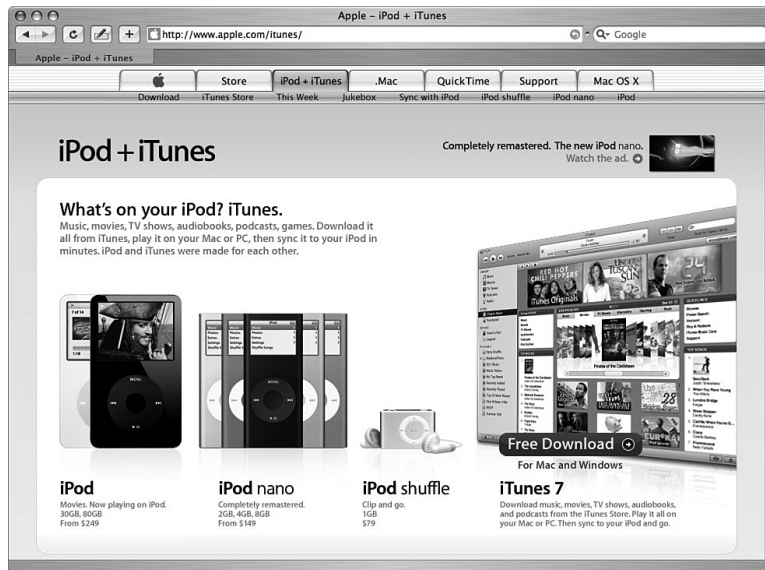
Apple's iPod has taken the portable digital device market by storm—and for good reason. Because most of the iPods include a hard drive with up to 80GB of space, you can take your music collection wherever you go. The iPod's tools enable you to organize, customize, and listen to your music in many ways while you are on the move—in your car, at home, or working at your computer. But wait, there's more....

In addition to music, iPods enable you to listen to audiobooks and podcasts. Some models even let you watch all kinds of video from music videos to TV shows to movies.

With its tight integration with iTunes and the iTunes Store, managing your digital content is both fun and easy. Your trusty iPod can also be used as a portable drive (for example, you can use it to carry files from your home to your office), to capture sound, and to store pictures; there are numerous peripheral devices that expand its amazing capabilities even further. And, iPods are just plain cool (see Figure I.1).

**FIGURE I.1**

Whatever iPod model you choose will rock your world.



If you have never used an iPod before, this book is perfect for you and will help you learn everything you need to know. If you have some experience with an iPod, this book will help you take your iPod skills to the next level. (If you are already an iPod expert, well, you aren't likely to be picking up a book called *Absolute Beginner's Guide to iPod and iTunes*, now, are you?)

## iTunes Jams

With iTunes, you can create, organize, listen to, and watch your entire digital Library from your computer (see Figure I.2). iTunes enables you to build as large a Library as you have space on your computer's hard drive to store it. Then you can customize music, audiobook, podcast, and video playback through playlists and smart playlists, as well as create custom CDs and DVDs in a variety of formats. It also provides other useful features, such as custom labeling and information tools, the capability to share your audio and video on a local network, and more. Because Apple's iTunes Store is tightly integrated into iTunes, you can easily purchase and add audio and video to your Library from within the application. Moreover, iTunes is by far the best software tool available to manage music and other content on your iPod.

Just as with the iPod, if you have never used iTunes before, this book is perfect for you and will help you learn everything you need to know. If you have some experience, my hope is that you will learn how to get even more out of this outstanding program. Even if you have used iTunes quite a bit, you might manage to find some tidbits that will help your iTunes expertise grow.

FIGURE 1.2

iTunes will change the way you listen to audio and watch video.



## iTunes Store

Using the iTunes Store, you can find, preview, and purchase music from a collection of hundreds of thousands of songs and download that music into your iTunes Library. Songs can be purchased individually or in albums, for \$.99 per song (less when purchasing an entire album). Music you buy can be listened to, placed on a CD, and moved onto your iPod. Since its inception, the iTunes Store has rapidly become the most popular source of legal digital music on the Internet. After you have used it a time or two, you'll understand why.

The iTunes Store has a lot more than just music on its digital shelves. You'll also find thousands of podcasts to which you can subscribe and then download. (Most of them are free.) You'll find many audiobooks that you can buy. And, you can access the Store's large and rapidly growing collection of video content, such as movies and TV shows. Even with this variety of content, you use the same set of tools to find and get the content you want when you want it.

## Quick Guide to *Absolute Beginner's Guide to iPod and iTunes*

*Absolute Beginner's Guide to iPod and iTunes* provides all the information you need to get the most out of these amazing digital content tools. From the basics of listening to audio CDs with iTunes to the advanced customizing of music on an iPod and purchasing video online, this book equips you with the information you need.

The book is organized into the following three major parts, each focusing on one of the three components of the iPod/iTunes/iTunes Store triumvirate:

- Part I, “The iPod”
- Part II, “iTunes”
- Part III, “The iTunes Store”

Within each part, the chapters generally start with the basics of the topic and get more advanced as you continue. Within the chapters, the information is presented in roughly the order in which you will typically perform the tasks being described. Speaking of tasks, this book contains many step-by-step instructions—I hope your motto will be “learn by doing.” You should be able to learn how to do a task fairly quickly and relatively painlessly by following the steps while using your own content and your own tools. Although my writing is so utterly fascinating that you will likely want to read this book like a good novel, try to resist that urge because you will probably get better results if you actually work with the tools while you read this book.

Of course, you can read this book from start to finish in the order in which the chapters are presented. This will work fine if you have some experience with iTunes and have some music in your iTunes Library. However, because these tools are so well integrated, you can't really use the iPod or the iTunes Store effectively without knowing the basics of using iTunes first.

If you are totally new to these topics, I recommend that you get a jumpstart on iTunes by reading the core iTunes chapters first, which include Chapters 14–19. Then, you should read the core iPod chapters, which are Chapters 1–6. From there, read Chapters 25–28 to get the scoop on working with the iTunes Store.

After you have finished these core “courses,” read the rest of the chapters as they interest you. For example, when you are ready to burn your own CDs or DVDs, check out Chapter 22, “Burning Your Own CDs or DVDs.” Or, when you want to learn how you can use an iPod for digital photos, read Chapter 9, “Using an iPod to Store and View Photos,” to learn how to view photos and slideshows.

## Going Both Ways

Because the iPod, iTunes, and the iTunes Store all work equally well on both Windows and Macintosh computers, this book covers these topics from both perspectives. So you'll notice that some of the figures are screenshots taken on a Windows computer, whereas others are taken on a Macintosh. Although the screens on these two computers look slightly different, they work very similarly, so seeing a screen on the Mac shouldn't cause a problem for you if you use a Windows computer, and vice versa. When there are significant differences between the two platforms, I explain them in the text.

## Special Elements

As you read, you will see three special elements: notes, tips, and (only rarely) cautions. Also, each chapter ends with a section titled “The Absolute Minimum.” Explanations of each of these are provided for you here.



Notes look like this.

They are designed to provide you with information related to the topic at hand but not absolutely essential to it. I hope you will find the notes interesting, even if you don't find them useful immediately.



### tip

Tips help you get something done more quickly and easily, or they tell you how to do a task related to what's being described at the moment. You might also find an explanation of an alternative way to get something done.



### caution

If something you can do (and probably shouldn't) might end in a bad result, I warn you in a caution. Fortunately, you won't find many of these throughout the book, but when you do see one, you might want to take a close look at it.

## THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM

Finally, each chapter ends with “The Absolute Minimum” section. The contents of this section vary a bit from chapter to chapter. Examples of this content include the following:

- A summary of the key points of the chapter
- Additional tips related to the chapter's topic
- References to sources of additional information

So, now that you know all you need to about this book, it's time to strike up the band....