

Learning the in's, out's of iTunes a must

The most popular music management software for both PC and Mac is iTunes from Apple. If you have an iPod, iPhone or iPad, then iTunes is the software interface to those devices.

If you just bought a new iPhone or iPad then download this latest version of iTunes and install it if you have not already done so. To verify that version of iTunes you may already have, start it up, click on Help, and then About iTunes. You will have to let the window scroll a

little while for the version number to show up.

To get the latest version go to iTunes.com which redirects you to www.apple.com/itunes. There you will see the iTunes download button on the left and by clicking on it will begin a 92 MB file download of the latest 9.2 version which will take about 15 minutes to complete on a regular DSL link.

Take all the defaults during the installation and let it discover all of your music and videos. After the installation and initial setup processes have completed it will be up to you to perform the music management with iTunes.

Before you connect any iDevice (iPod, iPhone or iPad) to the PC or Mac with the newest version of iTunes, you need to do some setting modifications first. One critical step is to login to your iTunes account with the proper e-mail address and password by clicking on Store and then Sign In.

Next you will want to authorize your computer for use of the iTunes account. You can have five computers using one iTunes account to house your music library.



John Deans

As you sync your iDevices, iTunes will upload the purchased songs from the iDevice into the PC or Mac running iTunes. It also works the other way by pushing down to the iDevice the songs purchased on iTunes while at the PC or Mac via checking "All Music" or the specific Playlist.

iTunes has Digital Rights Management (DRM) to protect music from being illegally copied. This is why there are limitations to the number of

computers and devices the music can be stored in legally.

The location on the PC or Mac where all the purchased music files are kept is important to know since you will want to include those areas in your backup list so all your music will be safe. Use the list below to find your music library file path location:

- Mac OS X: /Users/username/Music/iTunes/iTunes Media
- Windows XP: C:\Documents and Settings\username\My Documents\My Music\iTunes\iTunes Media
- Windows Vista: C:\Users\username\Music\iTunes\iTunes Media
- Windows 7: C:\Users\username\My Music\iTunes\iTunes Media

As long as you are running backups of the user trees under either MacOS or Windows, the music libraries should be getting automatically backed up. But, verify this just to be sure.

After you plug in your iDevice for the first time it may ask you if you want to sync music to your

device and it will erase all songs on the device just before downloading all specified music from the PC or Mac to the iDevice.

Be careful here since this is where many people wipe out music they have already purchased on the iDevice but the computer was not authorized for.

If your iDevice is synced with another account or computer, you may want to first transfer your iTunes purchased music from the iDevice to the authorized computer. If you are not prompted with this option you can right-click (Windows or Mac) or Control-click (Mac only) your iDevice in the iTunes Source list, then pick "Transfer Purchases."

For more elaborate legal music sharing options like for your whole family, check out the Home Sharing utility on the left side of iTunes. This will enable you to share music across multiple computers with multiple accounts.

Be careful here also since it can get tricky. The more computers, iDevices and accounts you mix, the more complicated things get and the higher risk of losing purchased music.

You can also import music from old CDs or even MP3 digital music files on external hard drives. To import a CD just stick it in the CD player and iTunes will prompt you to import all music.

To import MP3s under iTunes you just click on "File" and "Add Folder to Library" then browse to the music folder on the external hard drive.

Just before you do that MP3 import you first may want to choose whether iTunes makes a copy of every MP3 file from the external location and

puts them all in the iTunes music library locations we described earlier. If you are importing thousands of old MP3 songs that add up to hundreds of gigabytes there may be a disk space issue.

Album artwork from all music legally purchased through iTunes is downloaded and imported into the display features with no problem. I have had older music that was not found via the iTunes artwork search engine so I had to do it manually. This can be done by a few clicks and it is nice for all music to have its related album artwork so it will be displayed on the iDevice while you are playing the song or scrolling through the cover flow.

To import album artwork for MP3s and other external music you first must make sure the digital music files are not read-only. Right click the files, verify the properties, and uncheck the 'read-only' box if that is checked.

Next under iTunes, right click on the song that is missing the artwork and then click "Get Info." On the window that pops up check the right-most tab that says Artwork.

From there you can click on the Add button, search for an image, select it, and it will now be associated with that song. I get all my old album cover artwork from Google Images.

Bottom line: Since we cannot get around using iTunes with our iDevices, we need to learn the in's and out's of Apple music management system.

Next week's column: E-books.

John Deans of DeansConsulting.com is a Brenham area computer networking consultant who can be reached at 289.2233 or John@DeansConsulting.com for questions and comments.