All about iPods and organizing music, Part 2

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*Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the **North Orange County Computer Club**, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at noccc.org. And don't forget to stop by the Gadgetress' home for the PC Club, at ocregister.com/link/pcclub, to find out how to ask a question and read past answers.*

This is Part 2 of a 2-part article on iPods and managing your music, pictures and videos. This covers copying of music, pictures and videos to and from your iPod. Read part one: "All about iPods and organizing your music library, Part 1."

How to copy music to your iPod

There are a few ways to get music on an iPod. Here are two methods:

Use the iTunes library

1. Open iTunes and click File, Add Folder or Add File to Library

2. Browse to any location on your hard drive or external hard drive and click Add Folder (or select files)

3. Plug in your iPod now or prior to step 1, it doesn't matter

4. Select the Music link under your Library

5. Create a new Playlist if desired and drag the newly entered songs to the new or existing Playlist.6. You can now drag songs from the
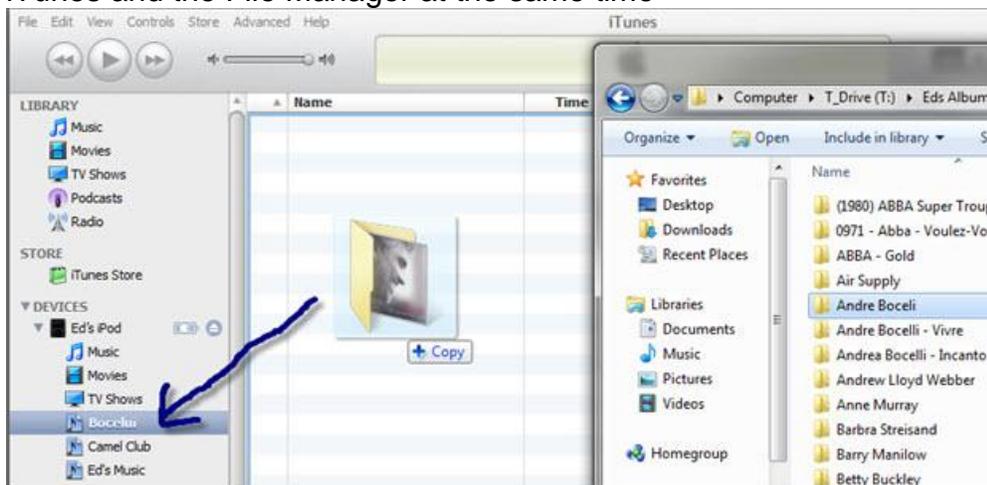
Library onto your iPod. You may want to create a new Playlist first. Just right-click you iPod icon and select New Playlist.

The above method assumes that you are managing your iPod manually.

Skip the iTunes library

The second method is the one I use. I have my iPod setup to sync manually and add songs directly to my iPod bypassing the Library. You can do this as follows:

1. Open iTunes and plug in your iPod

2. Open a file manager of your choice and arrange your windows so you can see both iTunes and the File Manager at the same time

3. Drag a folder or several files and drop them directly onto the desired Playlist on your iPod in iTunes. That's it, you're finished. This does not add files to your Library.

The advantage of this method is that you can plug your iPod into any PC and drag and drop music directly onto your iPod without having to use the Library. Why would you want to do this? For one thing, if you get a new PC or have to restore your current one, you only have to worry about what's on your iPod and what's on your external hard drive assuming you back up your music. Your Library plays no role in the process.

Copying Videos to your iPod

This can be done with iTunes but a free program called Videora iPod Converter (download at bit.ly/JCUS) can both convert videos to the iPod format and automatically add them to your iTunes library at the same time.

Backing up your music to your PC

iTunes does not allow you to do this. You need a third-party utility such a Sharepod (free download at www.getsharepod.com) or Media Widget, which is available for $25 at bootstrapdevelopment.com.

Backing up your Pictures to your PC

Placing pictures on an iPod is possible with iTunes but backing them up is not. It is possible with a third-party program such as Media Widget or Sharepod.

Backing up your Videos to your PC

Media Widget can do this but not Sharepod.

Special notes:

   If you have your iPod plugged in when your system boots up, it may hang up. If this happens, just unplug it.

   All utilities mentioned here have been tested with the latest version of iTunes and Windows 7. Be sure to try a trial version of any utility and test it with your PC prior to purchasing.

   If you're not sure how your iPod is set up, perform the following if you wish to change to Manual:

1. While connecting the iPod to the computer, hold down the Shift + Ctrl keys. This will stop the iPod from auto syncing with iTunes. Wait until you are sure the iPod has mounted and iTunes appears. Many a user has lost all of their music through auto syncing with an empty Library.
2. Select the Summary tab, and then check the box that says "Manually manage songs and playlists" and click Apply. You can now manage your library manually without losing any songs on the iPod.

   Be sure to get a copy of a 142-page free iPod book at iLounge (link: bit.ly/1trxA8).

Summary

I recommend using iTunes to place media on your iPod and the free SharePod for music and pictures, or Media Widget for videos. iTunes has been blamed for using significant resources but it is the safest and one of the best programs for managing your media and copying it to your iPod and is fully compatible with all versions of Windows including the Windows 7 64-bit versions. *~Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his Web site at www.edwardns.com.*