

All about iPods and organizing your music library, Part 1

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This is Part 1 of a 2-part article on iPods and managing your music, pictures and videos.

QUESTION: My question is a little complicated but here goes. I want to store all my music on my new external hard drive. It can hold up to 250,000 songs. It has a FAT32 file system. I also want to be able to pull music out of it and put it onto my iPod. My computer is running Windows XP.

My friend has a MAC and has put onto my new external drive 13,000 songs. I have 20 songs on iTunes, 20 songs on My Music and I have 500 songs on my iPod another friend gave me. I want to put all of the songs on the new external drive. iTunes shows that it will erase all the songs that I did not buy. Also, I have downloaded a program called Media Widget. What do you suggest?



PC CLUB: Let's review some of the tasks that you can perform with your music collection:

1. You can back up all of your songs to an external hard drive or to any hard drive
2. You can place any songs from you external hard drive, or from any folder on your PC for that matter, onto your iPod
3. You can copy songs from your iPod to your PC. This does, however, require third-party software such as Media Widget which is currently available from www.bootstrapdevelopment.com for \$24.95. There are other utilities that perform this function also and some are free.

As far as the FAT32 is concerned, some external hard drives have this type of file system to ensure maximum compatibility between PCs and Macs. A more secure and robust file system is the NTFS file system. You can reformat an external hard drive to be NTFS but you will lose all of the data. You can read more about file systems at The Elder Geek's "[FAT32 or NTFS: Making the Choice](http://bit.ly/BIYXS)" (link: bit.ly/BIYXS). This decision is not crucial but should be made before you start using the drive.

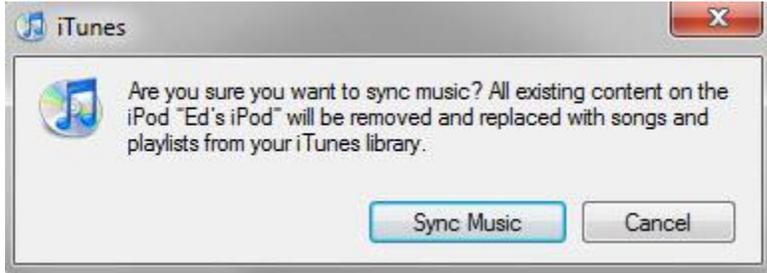
The number of songs that any drive can store is dependent on the type of music file. MP3's for example are 3 to 5 megabytes in size but uncompressed files can be up to 10 times that size. In any case it looks like your drive will hold enough songs for your immediate purposes. If it fills up, just get another one.

Organizing your music

There are many way to organize your music collection and I'll leave that up to you to pick which one to use.

Basically, you can use any file manager such as My Computer or Windows Explorer to copy the music from My Music (or Music on Vista or Windows 7) or your iTunes folder to your external hard drive. You may have received backup software with your external drive which will enable you to backup your music also.

Using iTunes to manage music



There are several methods for managing your music with iTunes. The first choice you have to make involves a setting on your iPod. This setting is labeled "Manually manage music and videos." You can change this setting by selecting your iPod from within iTunes, selecting the Summary tab and checking or unchecking "Manually manage music and videos."

So, you have two options:

1. Manually manage is checked or enabled

This setting does not sync your iPod with your iTunes music library automatically when you plug it in to your PC. You have to manually add and delete music yourself. However, you can select the Music tab and click the Sync button at any time.



2. Manually manage is unchecked or disabled

This setting syncs your iPod to your iTunes when you plug it in to your PC. The consequences of this is that it will sync to the iTunes library of any PC you plug it into. If you plug your iPod into another PC you will usually get a warning before this happens.

Here's what can happen: If you have your iPod set up to automatically sync and you plug it into someone else's PC and allow it to sync, your iPod will be wiped clean and their library will be copied to your iPod. This is not usually the desired result.

Before deciding which method to use, you can read Apple's article on "[Using iPod with multiple computers.](#)" You can also get additional help on iTunes help page at apple.com/itunes/how-to.

For a review of cool things to do with an iPod, check out Lifehacker's "[The 20 Best iPod Utilities](#)" at lifehacker.com/329507/the-20-best-ipod-utilities.

Part 2 will cover the copying of music, pictures and videos to and from your iPod.

~Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his Web site at www.edwardns.com.