THE CULT OF iPOD

LEANDER KAHNEY

NO STARCH PRESS

Now Playing

5 of 8

iPod, uPod,
Everybody iPod

0:00   -5:46

MENU

TURN **UP**

TUNE IN

DANCE OUT

(THIS PAGE & PREVIOUS SPREAD)
B.Y.O. iPod: Dancers are the DJs
at Holland's iDJ iPodparty in the
GEM museum in The Hague in
November 2004. **CREDIT:** EBBERT
OLIEROOK

MP3Js

In cities all over the world, dancers are becoming DJs, thanks to the iPod. Instead of hiring a DJ, clubs and pubs are setting up simple mixing desks with a pair of iPods loaded with thousands of tracks. Patrons then take turns selecting songs for everyone else to dance to. You-are-the-DJ iPod party nights started in New York shortly after the iPod was first released and have since spread to most major cities—and to a lot of smaller ones.

London's weekly Playlist party, for example, is held every Saturday at the trendy Nambucca club on Holloway Road. "Playlist celebrates digital diversity," the club proclaims on its website. "The principle is simple: if you want to share your music, just turn up, sign in, and play out. If you want to judge other people's music, turn up, sign up, and speak out. If you simply want to party, just turn up, tune in, dance it out.

WITH AN iPOD, WHO NEEDS A TURNTABLE?

One of the first clubs to swap DJs for iPods was New York's APT. (pronounced A-P-T), a trendy lounge in Manhattan's Meat Packing District. The club resembles an upscale Manhattan apartment—but much bigger. Next to the bar is the DJ table. The set-up revolves around a standard mixer connected to a pair of iPods.

Everyone gets to play. Would-be DJs take a numbered ticket from a deli-style dispenser. Printouts of all the songs are available to help DJs prepare a set list. "Playing of any heavy metal ballads will result in immediate expulsion from the premises," the printout warns. With thousands of songs to choose from, patrons play everything from Black Sabbath to Basement Jaxx. Sets last seven minutes; the remaining time is counted down on a big digital clock.

(LEFT) Connect a pair of iPods to a standard mixing console, and you have an easy-to-use mix desk with thousands of songs at the DJ's fingertips. **CREDIT:** iLOUNGE; **(ABOVE)** Team Pod: New York's trendy APT. bar allows patrons to be the DJ. The nightclub has set up a pair of iPods. Patrons take a ticket, deli style, and when their number comes up, they get seven minutes of dance floor fame. **CREDIT:** APT

The iPod setup provides hours of boozy, gregarious fun. Half the bar crowds around the mixing desk, offering advice or criticism or just dancing away. "It gets pretty crazy," said Sai Blount, the lounge's music promoter. "We have people yelling. Some people boo. A couple of girls came in here three or four weeks in a row. They got really good. They were like professional."

Matt Maland, a 27-year-old part-time DJ, is a semiregular. He's even figured out how to make the iPods scratch. By pressing the center button twice in quick succession, the music backs up a fraction. "It's fun," he said. "It's different. It's a challenge. You have to think what songs go together more than vinyl because you can't beat-match."

(BELOW) Digital DJ: The iPod is increasingly becoming a tool for DJs. Why lug around a big box of vinyl records when an iPod can hold thousands of songs? CREDIT: NIELS HARTVIG; (FACING PAGE) Listen Up: Andrew Andrew are a pair of New York DJs who spin tunes with Apple iPods instead of vinyl. The pair not only have matching iPods, they dress alike, eat alike, and read the same books—simultaneously. When they met, the first question Andrew asked Andrew was, "Mac or IBM?" CREDIT: ANDREW ANDREW

ANDREW ANDREW (THEY WALK ALIKE, THEY DJ ALIKE)

Andrew Andrew, a pair of New York DJs, were among the first club DJs to swap bulky boxes of records for Apple's compact iPods. The pair tote a pair of iPods to gigs at galleries, parties, and clubs all over town. They host a regular Tuesday night event, the iParty, at APT.

Even by New York standards, Andrew Andrew are eccentric. They dress identically, have the same haircut, and wear the same glasses. The pair met at Disneyland about three years ago. Andrew approached Andrew and asked him, "Mac or IBM?" "It's the pivotal question of our time," Andrew said.

They look like twins but are, in fact, merely business partners. Their company, Andrew Andrew, is a registered partnership with a diverse line of products. They DJ, play in a band, curate art shows, have a clothing line, and design home furnishings. Wherever they go, heads turn. They attract intense curiosity. Once, someone actually got mad, accusing them of *impersonating* twins.

For attention seekers, they are quite reserved, almost shy. They refuse to divulge any distinguishing information—last names, birthdays, backgrounds. They always wear the same outfits. Their haircuts are cropped short. They drink the same vodka tonics, and when they smoke, Andrew lights two cigarettes. Like twins, they finish each other's sentences. They carry identical iPods, cell phones, Palm handhelds, and wallets. "When you're with someone a lot, you start to talk alike," explained one of the Andrews.

Andrew Andrew live together in an apartment on Staten Island that doubles as their office. Their wardrobe contains two of everything, arranged by color. They've discarded everything that doesn't match. Their toiletries are paired. Their library contains two of each book, which they read simultaneously. They have the same tattoo of Mario, the Nintendo game character, on their right arms. They eat the same food. "In seven years we'll be chemically exact," the other Andrew said.

The pair work as DJs at art galleries and nightclubs. They used to dress as mad scientists in white lab coats to match the iPods, but switched to black iPods and black lab coats when the black U2 iPod came out.

They play an eclectic set. They choose a word—say *sex*, *work*, or *world*—and play songs containing the word in the artist's name, song title, or lyrics. It makes for a diverse mix: opera, pop, rockabilly, techno, and dozens of other styles. It doesn't always go over too well with the dance crowd. In fact, this brand of DJing works best at art galleries, where the crowds are more tolerant of eccentricity. At one nightclub gig, in fact, Andrew Andrew were asked to leave after just 30 minutes. But, as they've become better known, people have started to catch on.

Naturally, the Andrews' iPods contain the same songs. Before the iPods, they DJed with 15 to 20 preburned CDs and a hand-written set list. The iPods have vastly simplified the process. "We've been DJing differently from other DJs from the get-go," said Andrew. "So for us, the iPod is perfect. A lot of people don't like the songs, but for the DJ, it's perfect."

Over time, Apple has transformed the iPod from a simple audio player into a general-purpose digital assistant, capable of storing contacts and calendars, games, email, and even entire novels—as well as gigabytes of music. It's possible that Apple had planned from the start to make the iPod into an ersatz PDA, but it's also possible the company took its lead from iPod hackers, who, almost from the minute the gadget hit store shelves, were busy figuring out clever ways of making the iPod do more than just play music. In the first few weeks after the iPod's debut, hackers figured out how to store not only names and addresses on the iPod but calendar items, news stories, song lyrics, and phrases in foreign languages. One enterprising teen even worked out a way to steal software using his iPod. (See the section "Have iPod, Will Secretly Bootleg," later in this chapter.)

Some inventive iPod owners even got their players to work with Windows before the release of Apple's sanctioned Windows-compatible version. Joe Masters, a student at Williams College in Massachusetts, wrote a free program called EphPod to connect iPods to Windows machines.

It took Apple six months to catch up with the hackers. Half a year after its initial release, Apple updated the iPod's software to let it store contacts. The iPod software has the ability to download thousands of contacts from applications such as Microsoft's Entourage (the Macintosh version of Outlook), Palm's desktop, and the Mac OS X address book. But hackers also figured out how to make it work with other contact databases, including Yahoo's online address book.

Jean-Olivier Lanctôt-David, a 14-year-old hacker from Canada, figured out a way to display online news headlines on the iPod. Lanctôt-David whipped up Pod-News, a program that fetches headlines from the Web in XML format and displays them on the iPod's small screen. It's quite an achievement, especially for a young teen.

After Apple added contacts, iPod hackers turned to calendar functions. A French hacker created K-Landar, which displays calendar events, such as a list of meetings, as an iPod playlist. Events can be set by time, category, comments, or description.

Michael Zapp, an instructor at the University of Manitoba in Canada, created a pair of AppleScript applications to take data from Microsoft's Entourage and transform it into vCard file format, which can be displayed using the iPod's new contacts feature. One of Zapp's scripts extracts events, allowing the iPod to display schedules; the other extracts text notes, which can display any kind of information. "I've had people say that they may just retire their Palm since they can now do everything they use it for with the iPod and my apps," said Zapp. "I think people are tired of carrying around lots of gadgets and are looking for anything that can reduce the load." The only problem, Zapp said, is that information can't be entered when the iPod is away from a Mac; all data has to be typed into a Mac and transferred manually.

(FACING PAGE) iParty, iParty: Every week, Andrew Andrew host iParty in NYC. **CREDIT**: LEANDER KAHNEY; **(RIGHT)** Versatile: The iPod has many uses, as Apple discovered by watching iPod hackers. Although Apple initially sold the device as a music player, hackers turned it into a general-purpose digital assistant. Apple soon followed suit with a software update that added contacts and calendars. **CREDIT**: iLOUNGE

EphPod creator Joe Masters said the iPod had great potential as an organizer, particularly because it's much easier to program than Palm devices. "It's got so much space, and it's very easy to hack," he said. "Apple's done a great job. It's very simple. Synchronizing it is very easy. It's just a hard drive. You just copy files over. There are no weird synchronization protocols like the Palm. And you don't have to worry about space, like on a Palm. It's enormous. Who cares how much space you use?"

iPod hackers also figured out all kinds of undocumented tips and tricks, including a diagnostic mode that checks the iPod's internal hard drive, among other things. VersionTracker, a popular software-download website, lists more than several dozen hacks for the iPod. The hacks provide clues to the future direction of the iPod. "No doubt Apple is taking its cue from some of these hacks," said Blake Patterson, who runs the iPodHacks website. "Apple is seeing that a lot of users want these kinds of organizer functions." Apple didn't respond to requests for comment.

…ALMOST FROM THE MINUTE [THE iPOD] HIT STORE SHELVES, [HACKERS] WERE BUSY FIGURING OUT CLEVER WAYS OF MAKING THE iPOD DO MORE…
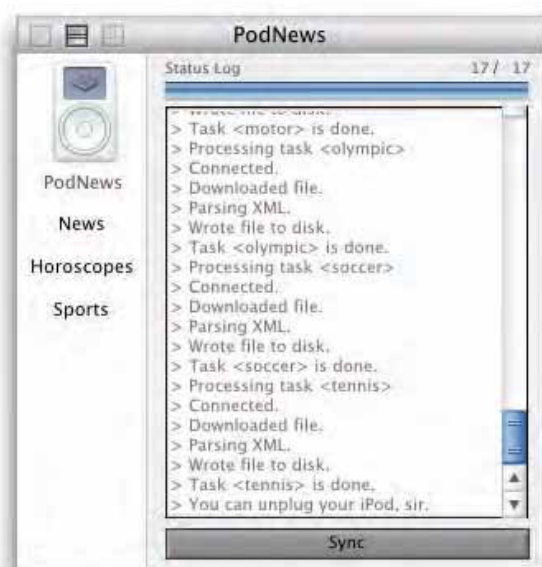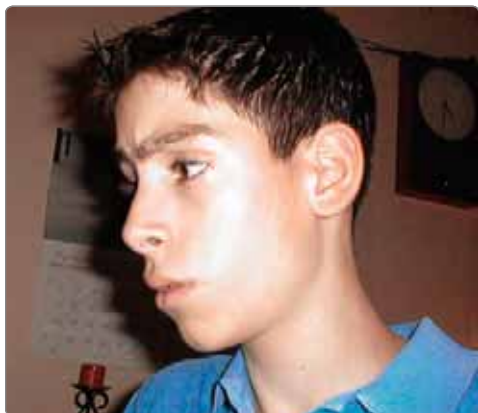
(THIS PAGE) Pod Person: Jean-Olivier Lanctôt-David, a 14-year-old hacker from Canada, and a screenshot of his PodNews program, which fetches headlines from the Web in XML format and displays them on the iPod's small screen. CREDIT: LANCTÔT-DAVID

(FACING PAGE) iPod Nut: Joe Masters (on the left in photo) and his college buddies enjoy some doughnuts. Masters wrote EphPod, which connects iPods to Windows machines (screenshot to right). CREDIT: JOE MASTERS
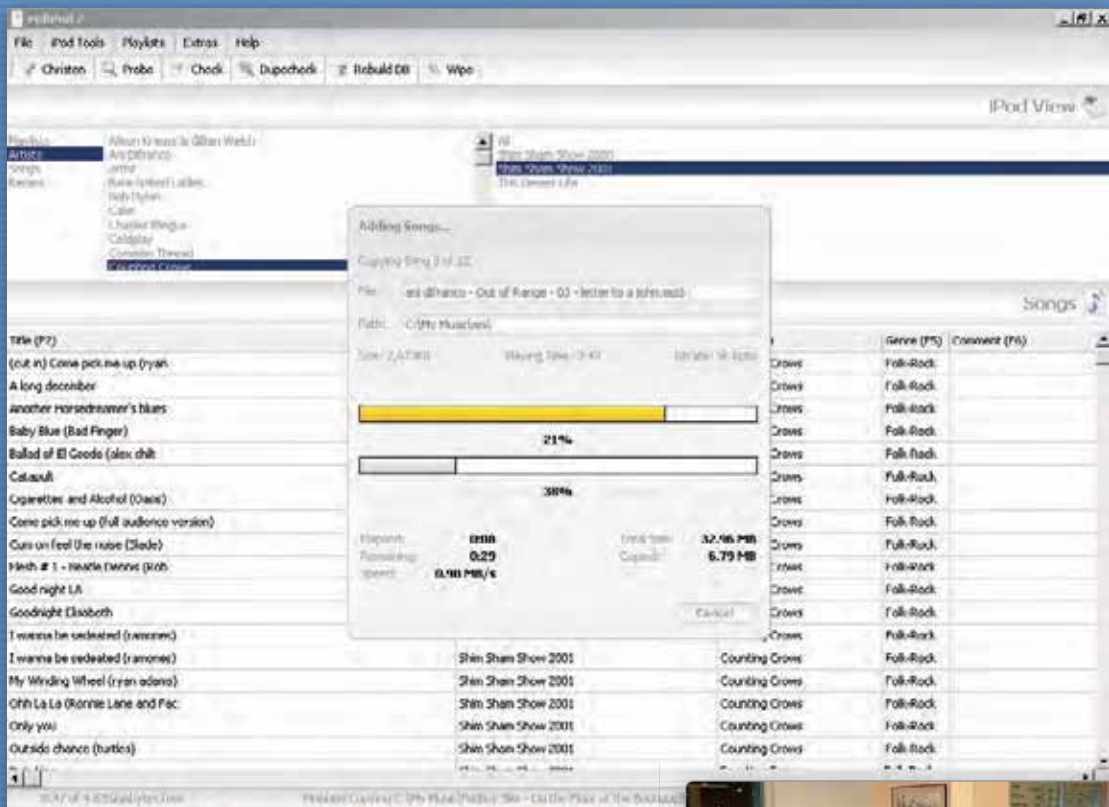
iPod Shuffles Make

Shuffle Drive: Connect four
iPod shuffles to a USB hub,
and what do you have? A
very slow USB storage drive.
CREDIT: JIM WRIGHT

World's Slowest RAID

Jim Wright has four friends, each of whom own an iPod shuffle. Wright persuaded them to pool their resources to make a 4GB RAID (Redundant Arrays of Inexpensive Disks) storage device. Wright connected the shuffles to a four-port USB 2 hub and formatted it with disk utility software. The setup worked, but it's no speed demon. It took nearly 11 minutes to copy just under 2GB of data.

Double Vision: Astrophysicist Paul Bourke updated an antique stereoscope with a pair of iPod photos. **CREDIT**: PAUL BOURKE

World's First (and Only) iPod Stereoscope

Australian astrophysicist Paul Bourke has constructed what must be the only stereoscope made from a pair of iPod photos. The stereoscope is an Edwardian invention that conjures a 3D image from two photographs of the same scene taken from slightly different angles. When each image is presented to a different eye, the brain fuses them into a 3D scene: it's the principle of stereo vision. Bourke's iPod photo stereoscope uses iPods instead of photographs to present images to each eye. Naturally, he has to take two slightly skewed images of a scene with a digital camera and be sure to load the correct image onto the correct iPod.

Homemade Shuffle Shades

Oakley, a popular sunglasses brand, sells eyewear that doubles as a music player: the MP3 Thump. Tinkerer extraordinaire Phillip Torrone, an editor with *Make* magazine, created his own variation using an iPod shuffle. They look better and are cheaper too.

CREDIT: PHILLIP TORRONE

HAVE iPOD, WILL SECRETLY BOOTLEG

When Apple introduced the iPod, the company was aware that people might use it to rip off music. Each new iPod, in fact, is emblazoned with a sticker that warns, "Don't Steal Music." But it is unlikely that Apple imagined people would walk into computer stores, plug their iPod into display computers, and use it to copy software off the hard drives.

This is exactly the scenario recently witnessed by computer consultant Kevin Webb at a Dallas CompUSA store. Webb was browsing when he saw a young man walk toward him listening to an iPod. Webb recognized the iPod's distinctive ear buds.

The teenager stopped at a display Macintosh nearby, pulled the iPod from his pocket, and plugged it into the machine with a FireWire cable. Intrigued, Webb peeped over the kid's shoulder to see him copying Microsoft's new Office for OS X suite, which retailed for $500.

When the iPod is plugged into a Macintosh, its icon automatically pops up on the desktop (if it's set up as an external hard drive, which is easily done). To copy software, all the kid had to do was drag and drop files onto the iPod's icon. Office for Mac OS X is about 200 MB; it copies to the iPod's hard drive in less than a minute. "Watching him, it dawned on me that this was something that was very easy to do," Webb said. "In the Mac world it's pretty easy to plug in and copy things. It's a lot easier than stealing the box." Webb watched the teenager copy a couple of other applications before going off to find a CompUSA employee. "I went over and told a CompUSA guy, but he looked at me like I was clueless," Webb said. Unsure whether the kid was a thief or an out-of-uniform employee, Webb watched as he left the store. "I thought there's no point in getting any more involved in this imbroglio," Webb said. "Besides, this is Texas. You never know what he might have been carrying."

(THIS PAGE LEFT) Saints and Sinners: If only the pious had iPods. Apple foresaw how the iPod could be used to steal music, but the company may not have expected users to steal software from demo machines at computer stores. **CREDIT**: ONEBISHOP@MAC.COM; **(THIS PAGE RIGHT)** Mona iPod. The Mona Lisa whiles away the hours in the Louvre, listening to some killer tunes. **CREDIT**: UNKNOWN; **(FACING PAGE)** Drag and Dash: Copying software onto an iPod is as easy as drag and drop. **CREDIT**: LEANDER KAHNEY

The iPod's fast interface—an important but undersold feature—allows huge files to be copied in seconds. The iPod doesn't even have to leave the user's pocket. And although the iPod has a built-in antipiracy mechanism that prevents music files from being copied from one computer to another, it has no such protections for software. Ironically, Microsoft pioneered an easy-to-use installation scheme on the Mac that makes its Mac software relatively simple to pilfer. When installing Office, users simply drag and drop the Office folder to their hard drive. Everything is built in, including a self-repair mechanism that replaces critical files in the system folder.

By contrast, a lot of software for the Windows platform relies on a bunch of system files that are only loaded during an installation process. Simply copying an application from one machine to another will not work on Windows. "This is the first we have heard of this form of piracy," said Erik Ryan, a Microsoft product manager. "And while this is a possibility, people should be reminded that this is considered theft."

Although the iPod may be ideal for a software-stealing spree, a number of other devices on the market could also be used by virtual shoplifters, including any number of external hard drives, such as tiny USB key-chain drives. However, except for those with new USB 2 ports, most key-chain drives are a lot slower than FireWire, requiring the virtual shoplifter to hang around while the ill-gotten loot is transferring. Dennis Lloyd, publisher of iPod fan site iLounge, said he was shocked to hear of an iPod put to such use. "It's a shame someone has stooped this low to bring bad press to the insanely great iPod," he said.

Serial No.: JQ453TQSKK
Designed by Apple in California. Assemb
Model No.: A1051 EMC No.: 1984 Rated 5
TM and © 2004 Apple Computer, Inc.

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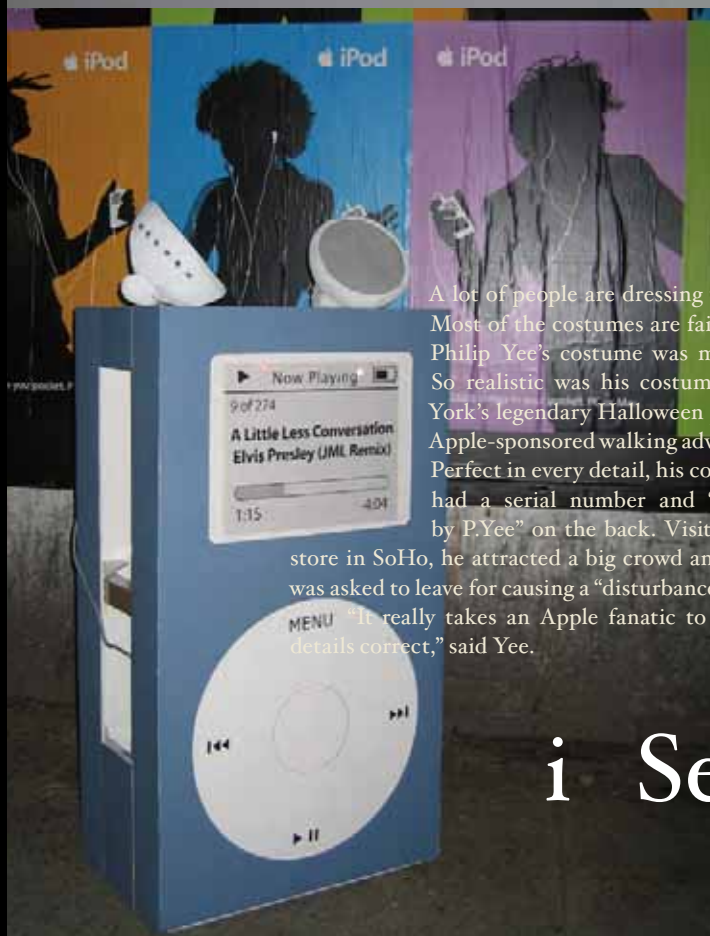
A lot of people are dressing up as iPods at Halloween.
Most of the costumes are fairly basic, but New Yorker
Philip Yee's costume was more elaborate than most.
So realistic was his costume, other revelers in New
York's legendary Halloween parade thought he was an
Apple-sponsored walking advertisement.
Perfect in every detail, his costume even
had a serial number and "Assembled
by P.Yee" on the back. Visiting Apple's
store in SoHo, he attracted a big crowd and was soon
was asked to leave for causing a "disturbance."
"It really takes an Apple fanatic to get all the
details correct," said Yee.

i See

iPod

iPod Man Philip Yee at New York's Halloween parade, where he partied with some silhouette people. **CREDIT:** PHILIP YEE

People

Proposal by iPod

Forget diamonds. Popping the question by iPod is the way to go when proposing marriage these days. Take a Norwegian guy called Yoak, who bought his girlfriend an iPod and had this special message laser-etched on the back:

Ana my love
Will you marry me?

After he presented her with the iPod, she said yes, of course.

Yoak reported an Internet forum: "She looked very confused for a few seconds, before she said yes. It all took place during the most fantastic sunset over a snow-covered Oslo." Unfortunately, he couldn't be reached for further comment.

iPod Proposal: A Norwegian called Yoak inscribed a marriage proposal on the back of an iPod. **CREDIT**: LEANDER KAHNEY

iPology

Following the reelection of U.S. president George Bush in 2004, lots of disappointed American voters apologized to the world with a website called Sorry Everybody. The site featured digital pictures of voters—mostly Democrats, presumably—holding up hand-drawn signs expressing regret for the results of the closely contested election. Most read, "Sorry, I tried," or "49 percent of us didn't vote for him." One entry to the website was this clever iPod-inspired apology, or iPology. Note the track number, 1 of 55,949,487, which is the number of U.S. voters, and check out the number of minutes the song has played and those remaining, which translates to four down, four to go.

iPod FM 95.9

An FM transmitter is a popular iPod accessory that allows an iPod to play songs through a car radio. Most are powerful enough to play not just in the owner's car, but also in the vehicles around it. Several people have been broadcasting their own microradio stations from their cars — some even without knowing it. One of these, Brian Johnson, told the BoingBoing website: "I've been running around for the past several months with this bumper sticker on my car,…I figure that anyone that can read the bumper sticker — on the I-5, at a stoplight — if intrigued could tune in and listen to whatever I'm listening to. No, I don't take requests."

CREDIT: LEANDER KAHNEY

II Now Playing
1 of 55949487
**America apologizes
Especially Ohio.
Visit only blue states.**
4:00   -4:00
menu

CREDIT: BRIAN JOHNSON

iPod-FM
95.9

Oregon

iPods

Customized

(ABOVE) This customized iPod displays the Hello Kitty logo while the battery charges. CREDIT: PHILLIP TORRONE; **(RIGHT)** The various fonts used by the iPod. CREDIT: APPLE

An iPod hacker called The Wizard wrote a piece of software that allows custom images to be added to the iPod, like the Hello Kitty logo above. The Wizard's editor can customize the images and fonts in the firmware contained in Apple's iPod software updates. The editor allows users to customize the graphics and then load them onto the iPod when updating the device's software. The editor can also be used to extract all the fonts and images used on the iPod.

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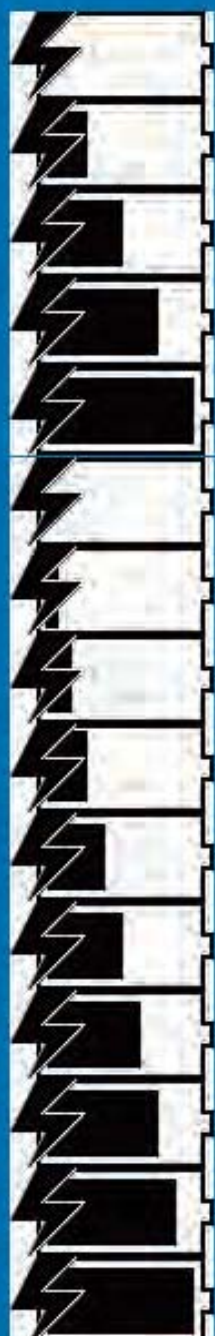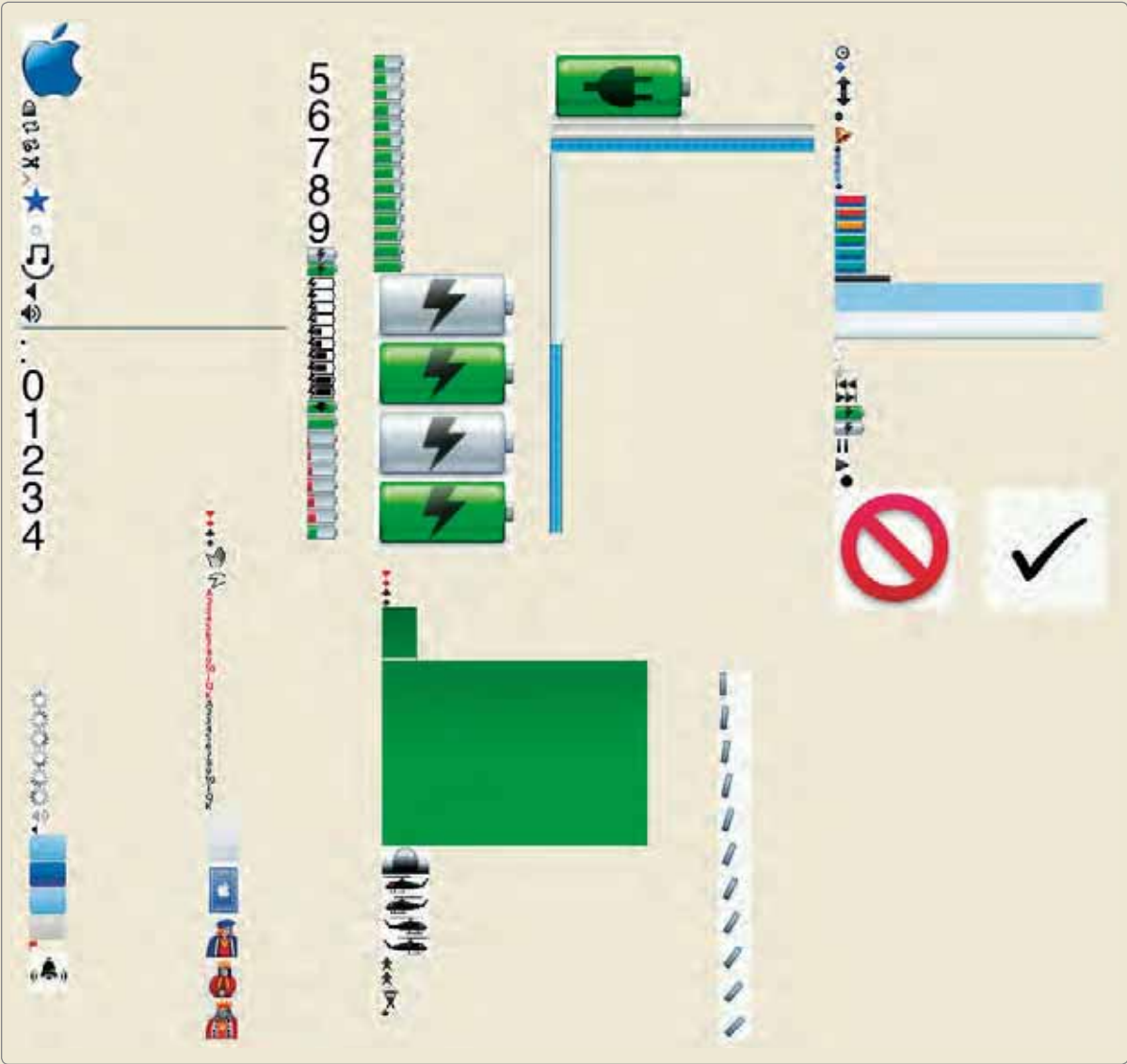
(FACING PAGE) The iPod's graphics. CREDIT: APPLE; (BELOW) Graphics from the iPod photo, which has a color screen. CREDIT: APPLE

iPod Cozies and Socks

Craft hobbies such as knitting and quilting are sweeping the United States, so it's no surprise that needle workers are crocheting cozies for iPods. The one in the previous illustration was made by someone called Kdka, a 26-year-old woman from Pittsburgh. Her design includes openings for the scroll wheel and LCD screen and even a little pouch in back for storing earbuds.

Another needle worker, LAWebChick, lined her cozy with felt, but the idea needs work. "I found out that felt in combination with an iPod is slippery, and the 'Pod slides right out even if I just have it on the car seat and hit the brakes," she reports.

So popular are iPod cozies that Apple introduced its own. Calling them iPod "Socks," Apple sells a six-pack for $30.

CREDIT: KDKA

iPod Identity Thieves Face the Music

A gang of British identity thieves used an iPod to store digital copies of the documents they needed to buy luxury cars fraudulently, the BBC reported in 2004. False documents and phony identities were used to buy cars under assumed names that were later sold for "pure profit," the BBC said. Apparently, the thieves thought the police wouldn't find the documents if they were stored on an iPod. But the scam came undone when a police officer noticed expensive cars parked at a low-income housing project in London. When police raided a flat there several weeks later, they found the incriminating evidence on the iPod. The gang was sentenced to jail. A police spokesman said they "ended up facing the music."

Says Alaina, "I took the photo after I finished sewing on all their eyes. I love the little guys and wanted to capture a photo of them all together before they were released into the wild and sent to their owners." **CREDIT:** ALAINA BROWNE

Cephal-iPods For squid lovers, San Francisco design house Mule Design made a unique cephalopod-shaped iPod case, the Cephal-iPod. Made of felt and costing $20, Mule Design's site says: "Your iPod's glaring whiteness is relaying signals back to the humans. Protect yourself from harmful rays in style with this hand-crafted hip cozy made of (possibly) organic felt."

The market for iPod accessories has quickly bloomed into a multi-million dollar industry, supplying everything from FM transmitters to iPod socks. **CREDIT**: PHILLIP TORRONE