

2007: An iTunes Odyssey

SIMON KIRSCH

Staff Reporter

With the new release of Apple iTunes 7, iTunes is better than ever. The Sept. 12 update includes an abundance of new features along with some major bug fixes. It also presents a few minor bugs, but these are minor compared to many competitors' programs.

iTunes has managed to top itself. It is more user friendly, and for the experienced user, is a worthwhile download.

Since its introduction in January 2001, iTunes has become the dominant music player worldwide, topping Window Media Player; standard software included with all PCs. The feature that pushed iTunes to the top was its accessibility. To rip CDs, all one must do is press the easily accessed bottom right; for iPod users, loading songs is as simple as turning on the computer. CD burning now has the option of Mp3, data or normal CD formatting, something which was only previously available in the

importantly a new design titled "Cover Flow."

The "Cover Flow" look is going to get the most press, for it differs so much from previous versions of iTunes. Instead of the normal columns, this version has three options; normal, adapted and "Cover Flow" which uses album covers to create an old style jukebox look.

When coupled with the automatic downloading of covers, it creates a very user friendly experience for even those with the least computer knowledge, and enables you to see the cover art at all times.

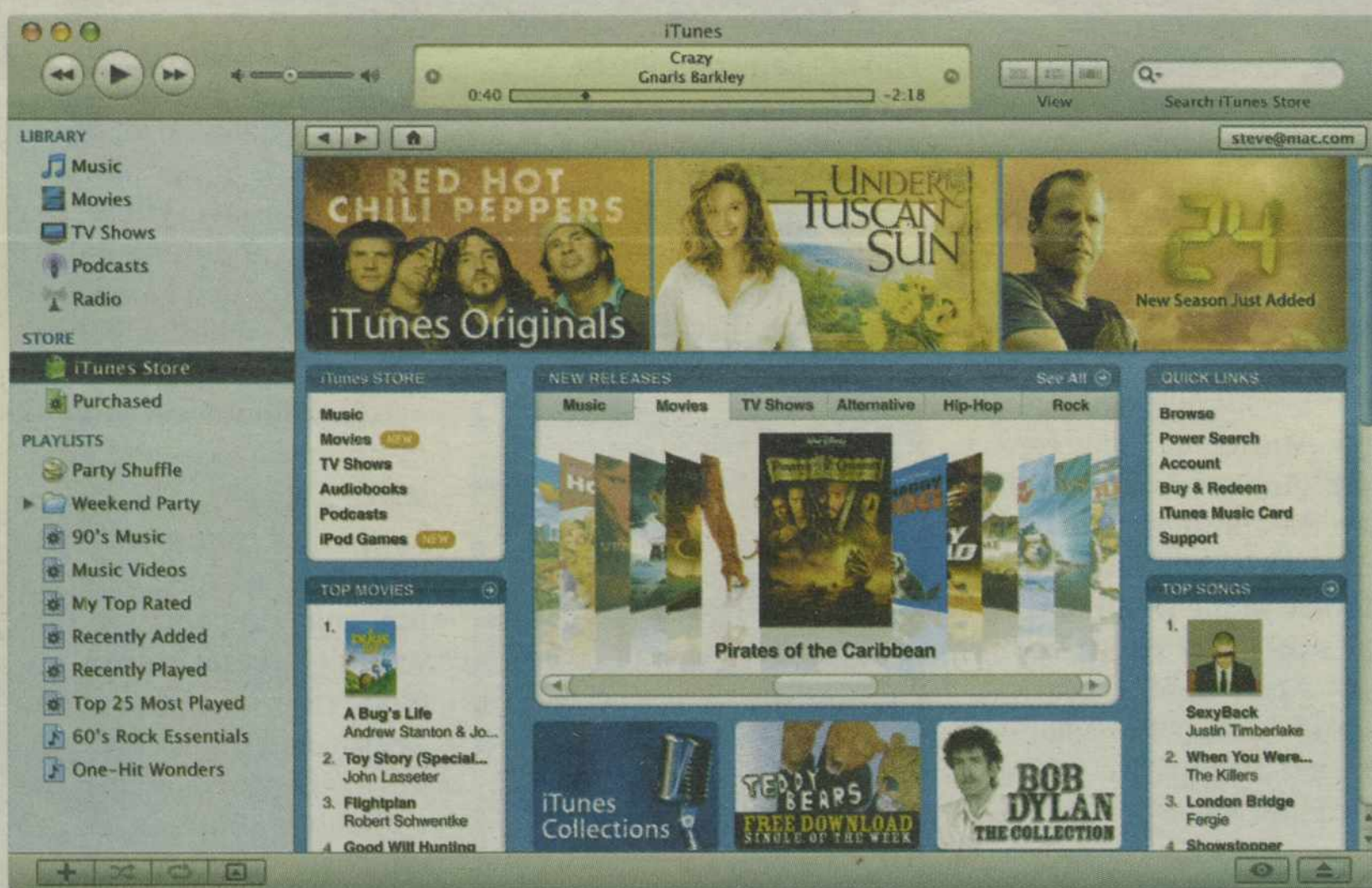
I found the "Flow" look to be really easy to use, but

games and feature movies to the iTunes store, which enables iTunes to back up purchased music on



"Cover Flow," a new feature in iTunes 7, allows users to browse their music libraries the old fashioned way.

Photo Courtesy Apple



The front page of the new iTunes Store.

Photo Courtesy Apple

options menu.

The new features of iTunes 7 are: support for 64-kbs ripping, the addition of feature films and games to the iTunes Store, the ability to save and download purchased music in multiple locations (this feature is key), gapless playback which enables seamless playing of files, automatic downloading of cover art, and most

a bit glitchy at times; this was on my Mac and PC computers. It never froze, but occasionally it would not load the artwork, and in turn not load the song. Also, it took much longer for iTunes to open initially when using this look.

There are two other features to iTunes 7 that make it much better than predecessors: adding

multiple computers. Also, it allows iPod users to copy purchased music back from their iPods to their computers.

A common complaint (and ammo for negative reviews) was the problems with purchased music. No CD comes with downloaded music, so after a computer crash, there is no way to re-rip those files from CD. iTunes 7 fixes this problem, by letting you recover these files from outside drives such as iPods up to five times each on five different computers.

I think that's a pretty good deal, since there is no company in the world that will send you 24 free CDs if you lose them. For more information about backing up your library check out the Apple support: <http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=302392>.

The movies and games, while really neat, are something that I've been expecting since the iPod video was released. It didn't make sense to have a video player without some way to get the videos onto it. In the new update, videos

are formatted at a clearer higher resolution so that the playback is much faster and cleaner both on iPod and the computer.

For \$4.99 an iPod owner can buy vintage games like Pac-Man and Tetris for their Mp3 players. Sadly these games do not play on anything other than video iPods, including iTunes itself—a huge drawback. I don't have a video iPod, but from the reviews in the store, they seem to work well, and are quite fun.

As an overall program, iTunes 7 is far from perfect. It can be glitchy and occasionally will have trouble locating songs. But when compared to constant trouble that ensues with Windows Media Player or Real Player, there is no reason not to get it. And since it is completely free to all computer owners, price is not an excuse for poor programming. The way I see it, everyone needs iTunes 7, ASAP.

And for you listening enjoyment...

MARGARET ADAMS

Staff Reporter

You have all seen featured playlists of music artists, but now you can see the playlists of West Linn High School Staff. New to each Amplifier issue, we will have a featured staff member's favorite songs. This month, Andy West tells us his favorite 15 songs.



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