

# Latest iTunes Release Ejects Palm Pre Users

by Jason Lomborg, Technical Editor



Palm Pre users who enjoy syncing music and video with iTunes are in trouble—version 8.2.1 of the software locks out the Pre. Previously, Pre users were able to use rival software on their Palm smartphone, a most unusual arrangement.



Hear that? That's the collective sound of Pre users screaming D'OH!

It's not that archrivals don't ever do business together. After all, there is much cross-pollination between Microsoft and Apple products. But arguably, the iPod's greatest asset is its intuitive iTunes software. The hardware itself is somewhat ubiquitous. The iPod/iPhone's multi-touch feature is no longer unique. That's why Apple has zealously guarded its iTunes software.

According to Apple spokesman Tom Neumayr, the update "disables devices falsely pretending to be iPods, including the Palm Pre." Palm expressed disappointment, noting that Apple's move is a "direct blow to their users, who will be deprived of a seamless synchronization experience." Palm suggests three alternative options: download an older version of iTunes, sync music using the USB cable, or use third-

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party music applications. Actually, there's a fourth option they haven't mentioned—buy an iPhone.

This brings to mind Panasonic's recent lock out of third party batteries from their digital cameras. Both involved downloadable updates (though presumably, this feature will be pre-loaded with future Panasonic cameras). In the case of Panasonic, I thought they were cynically expressing concern for customers' safety, when their real concern was the bottom line. But I defended their right to do so as a business practice.

In similar fashion, I defend Apple's right to do whatever they feel is necessary for the sake of business. But I feel their case is different. For one, iTunes is a free download (and batteries aren't). iTunes is a great product; it makes the iPod superior to other music players (because it certainly isn't cheaper). Finally, Apple never made any attempt to hide their intentions—they wish to lock out a rival. There's something to be said for honesty in the business world.

Do you agree? Disagree? Think I'm crazy? Leave a comment below or e-mail me directly.

*Note: The preceding represents the view of the editor and not necessarily ECN.*

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