

The iPod Is Dead

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Editor's Note: There is a difference between a current feature-laden iPod and other media devices that are laden with features. Not only does Apple integrate the functionality almost flawlessly, the iPod added its functionality in stages as it was ported to the iTunes/iPod experience so that users ability to use that functionality migrated with the devices' incorporation of it.



Why the days of the dedicated music player have come and gone.

([Slate](#) [1]) - One sign that Steve Jobs is back to his old self: He's already sniping at rivals. After Apple's iPod launch event on Wednesday, the New York Times' David Pogue asked the CEO whether he has doubts—as he's expressed in the past—about the market for e-readers, especially Amazon's Kindle. Jobs said he was still skeptical. Amazon, he pointed out, has never released sales numbers for the Kindle, and "usually, if they sell a lot of something, you want to tell everybody." More importantly, Jobs doesn't think people want to buy a device just to read books. "I'm sure there will always be dedicated devices, and they may have a few advantages in doing just one thing," Jobs said. "But I think the general-purpose devices will win the day."

Jeff Bezos could rightly call Jobs' theory bogus: Really? People aren't willing to pay for a device that only does one thing? Have you heard of a little thing called the iPod, Steve? On the other hand, it's been a long while since the iPod did only one thing. Sure, way back in the early 2000s it just played music. Then Apple added support for audiobooks. Next, some models began to display photos. Photos became videos. Then iPods got a new name, a touch screen, a phone, Web browser, GPS, compass, and, through the App Store, basically any other function developers can think up. On Wednesday, the iPod Nano, whose capabilities had been limited to playing music and videos, got a video camera, too. Now the Nano has two completely different uses—it plays media, and it makes media. People who still want a dedicated music player can get the iPod Classic (which also does video) or the iPod Shuffle, but these products are clearly not the apple of Apple's eye or the

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source of its revenue. (The Nano and the Touch are Apple's best-selling iPods.)

The new Nano signals an inevitable, though still remarkable, transition: The iPod is dead. I don't mean the name won't stick around or that people will stop buying Apple's devices. Rather, the sun is setting on what the iPod once was—a device you bought to play digital music. Nobody knows when Apple will add Internet connectivity to the Nano, but you'd be a fool to bet against it happening in the next three years. And with that, the floodgates: Once the Nano gets the Internet, why not the App Store? And why not GPS, a compass, and a touch screen? At the moment, these options are too expensive to add to a tiny device, but tech is always getting cheaper and smaller. The video camera is just the start—it won't be long before the Nano, like the iPod Touch and the iPhone, turns into what Jobs calls a "general-purpose device." The rest of us have another name for such a machine: a computer.

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