

Newsletter

[Prevent iTunes from unnecessary clutter and cruft](#)

Written by: Scott Haneda on Friday April 18th 2008, 5:41 am

Filed under: [Applications](#), [Finder](#), [Misc](#), [iTunes](#)



iTunes has gone from a simple music management application to a full-fledged media management tool. Gone are the days of just managing your music files, iTunes now takes on the roll of managing video, audio, and can even help organize pdf files.

With all the power iTunes offers, it can become overwhelming. iTunes desires to be your default player for near all media types. An amusing audio clip from Family Guy or The Simpsons ends up getting imported into iTunes. This audio clip then relentlessly follows you around and makes its way to your iPod and iPhone on your next synchronization.

Let's see what we can do to keep iTunes clear of cruft, and only contain the data you want imported into it.

iTunes auto import and hijack of all media files

Every file has a default application that will open it when you double click on it. In the case of audio files, that default application is iTunes. Let's take an example case, and step through how the process will work.

A friend emails you an mp3 to check out. You download it, and double click on it. Immediately, iTunes is launched, and the file is imported into iTunes. iTunes has now become the method by which you listen to this mp3 file.

If you have not made any changes to the default settings in iTunes, you now have a copy of the mp3 in your downloads folder. In addition, a copy of the file has been carried into iTunes as well. What most people do not know, is it is more than safe to delete the file from your downloads folder, as iTunes has made a copy of the file.

The trouble is, in many cases, users will not want to keep the file at all. They delete the file from the downloads folder, and a copy still remains in iTunes. You now have to delete the file from iTunes to get rid of it. This is an awful lot of work to just sample an mp3 a friend thought you would be interested in.

For me, this is even worse, as iTunes was launched, which takes time, and now I am burdened with cleaning up iTunes as well as the local copy in my downloads folder.

A much better default media player

OS X comes with a second media player, you know it as QuickTime. The good news is, if iTunes can play the file, so can QuickTime. What would be nice, is a method that allows you to open your media files in QuickTime, and bypass iTunes. QuickTime can provide this feature, and act as a small, simple, and fast player for you to sample you audio and video files.

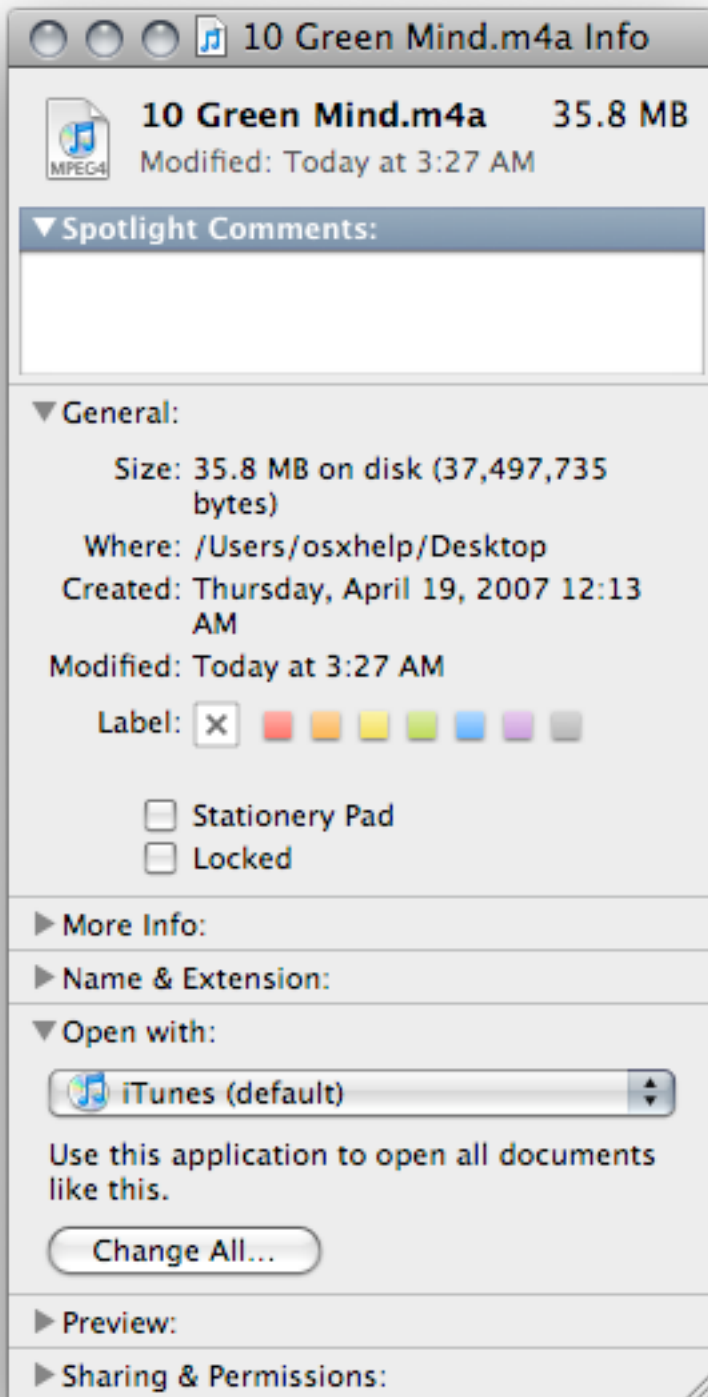
If you decide you like the file, then you can take the steps to drop the file into iTunes and import it. 99% of the time, I do not want that 10 second clip of Homer Simpson saying "mmmmmmm donuts" ending up in my iTunes music library.

Forcing a new default media player

The solution is simple. The next time you download an mp3, or any audio or video file that would otherwise get opened in iTunes, hold of on the usual double click you are used to performing.

Instead, select the file and press command-I on your keyboard, or select the file and go to the File menu, and navigate down to Get Info.

This will bring up an information window as seen below:



If you look at this information window, you can see, the "Open with" section is set to iTunes.app. This means, that any time you double click on the file, it will open in that application by default.

We want to change that, from iTunes.app to QuickTime Player.app. Once you change the menu, click "Change All". Now, any time you download a file of the same type, and double click on it, it will open in QuickTime.

QuickTime is a slim and fast player, which will allow you to evaluate your file before making the decision of wanting to keep it, or toss it.

You will only have to perform this change in the get info window once per file type. So, if someone sends you an mp3, you will need to make the change, and the next time, if someone sends you an aiff file, you will want to make the change for that file type as well.

There really are only about four or five types of files, once you set them, you will no longer need to worry about it, as QuickTime will now be the default player for testing files you download.

Saving your files back into iTunes

If you decide you do in fact want to keep the file and manage it within iTunes, it is a simple matter of dragging and dropping the file right into the iTunes window. You can also drop the file onto the iTunes icon in your dock and it will be imported.

If you have not changed your iTunes preferences, your files will be copied into iTunes. Since the file is copied, you are now safe to delete the original file you downloaded, as iTunes has stored it's own internal copy of the file.

I find this method of managing audio files very useful. iTunes tends to get a good deal of junk imported into it, much of which cannot even be played on an iPod or iPhone. If you want to just use iTunes as a media player for data you want to save over the long term, this method of changing a files default launching should alleviate most of your organization issues.



Tip of the Week

by Matt, matt@smalldog.com

While I find alphabetical sorting of items in any given Finder window most convenient, it's sometimes necessary to view by date modified, size, or another attribute. I wish there were two sorting pull-down menus like Google Video's

sorting feature with one for duration and another for relevance, popularity, rating, and date. It'd be wonderful for Apple to apply this principle across the operating system, particularly in Spotlight.

In the Finder you can “scroll” alphabetically, regardless of the sorting you choose for a given window, by pressing option-tab. It works in Tiger and in Leopard, but is pretty weird to look at if you have cover flow enabled!



Software Updates

NetNewsWite 3.1.6

Parallels 3.0 - 5600.0

NoteBook 2.1

Freeway 5 Pro.app 5.1

President- Brian Lackey		Secretary- Pat Davis
Vice President- Pamela Stevens		Apple Ambassador- Robert Poland
Treasurer- Paul Carlstedt		Member @ Large- Gordon Richardson