

9 September 2008

By: Filip Truta, Apple News Editor

Let's Rock
Ars Technica

[Coverage â€™ " 'Let's Rock' Apple Event](#)

Apple has announced new iPods, iTunes 8.0, HD TV downloads (viewable on your Mac) and the highly anticipated iPhone 2.1 software update

Apple is set out to unveil... well, only Apple knows what it is planning to unveil during its event at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (San Francisco) today. One thing is certain, though - Apple has something pretty important to showcase today, and there is strong evidence for that. We're going to update this post with every new detail revealed by Apple at the "Let's Rock" event, as soon as the information becomes available. But first of all let's see what we should expect.

Apple has been telling reporters that this event will be a ["big deal"](#), urging them to come. We reckon the giant iPod maker wouldn't stir things up for anything less than iTunes 8.0, a new iPod touch ([iPhone 2.1 perhaps](#)) and other enhancements occurring with the iPod line, since the banners set up for the "Let's Rock" event strongly suggest we're dealing with an iEvent only, this time around (meaning no Macs).

Recent rumors surrounding Apple's plans of revamping the iPod line also include a new version of the iTunes media player application. [iTunes 8.0](#) is said to include a "Genius" feature, Digg's founder Kevin Rose revealed, "which makes playlists from songs in your library that go great together. Genius also includes Genius sidebar," Rose pointed out, "which recommends music from the iTunes Store that you don't already have." Rose continued by explaining on his blog that, with iTunes 8, you will be able to "browse your artists and albums visually with the new Grid view; download your favorite TV shows in HD quality from the iTunes Store; sync your media with iPod nano (4th generation), iPod classic (2nd generation), and iPod touch (2nd generation); and enjoy a stunning new music visualizer." It will be interesting to see how many (if not all) of these aspects materialize.

Besides the major facelifts for the entire iPod line, it is also believed that iTunes 8.0 will be accompanying these changes. Also worth noting is that "a couple of good sources" have allegedly told Rose that Apple's upcoming version of OS X Leopard (10.5.6 - [Snow Leopard](#)) is likely to have integrated Blu-ray support, while upcoming MacBook Pros are said to be equipped with Blu-ray playback capabilities. However, few people expect Apple to make Snow Leopard the focus of an event called "Let's Rock," featuring iPod advertising material. Plus, Snow Leopard isn't something you just "mention," but rather a subject that deserves its own event.

Alleged 4G nano cases have been popping over the Web for the past two weeks also, while various Mac-based publications suggest that Apple is inevitably launching a revamped version of its popular portable player. Generally, major hardware changes are accompanied by software changes, so a new version of the iPod would (implicitly) lead to a new iTunes version. All this being said, be sure to stick around for the latest news coming from Apple's Let's Rock event.

UPDATE

Apple announces HT TV Shows on iTunes

Steve Jobs took the stage at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts announcing the arrival of HD TV shows. Not surprisingly, shows will cost \$2.99 a piece. "...we're adding new content to iTunes. HD TV shows," Jobs [said](#). "You can buy them for \$1.99 in SD, HD will be \$2.99... and you can watch them on your computer." Yes, HD TV show episodes can now be watched on a computer, not just on an Apple TV.

Apple also [revealed](#) that NBC is returning to the iTunes Store with its most popular shows (in HD, of course).

That's pretty much all that matters about HD TV coming to iTunes.

iTunes 8.0 Confirmed - Available

As rumored, a Genius feature (including a new button) generates playlists of songs "that go great together." The Genius Sidebar anonymously sends your library information up to the iTunes Store cloud making smarter recommendations of new music for a certain type of customer.

iTunes 8.0 is already available for you to download and install [right here](#).

Revamped iPod Line Apple has officially discontinued the 160GB iPod classic. "No one buys the thick" one, said Jobs; **New iPod nano** Apple introduced a new iPod model, "the thinnest iPod we've ever made," according to Jobs. "You'll be blown away with how thin it is," he added. The oval-shaped device sports the same large screen, boasts voice recording capabilities, and, best of all, is equipped with an accelerometer just like the iPhone and iPod touch. Thanks to the built-in accelerometer, users will be able to shake the device to shuffle their playlists, view Cover Flow album art and video when turning the device sideways (hope you're still breathing), and generate Genius playlists on the go, without having to connect to iTunes. A new (iPhone-like) headphone set has also been announced to accompany the new iPod line. The headset sports a new clicker, volume control, and microphone. The new iPod nano boasts "great" battery life, according to Jobs, with 24 hours of music and 4 hours for video. The new iPod nano will cost \$149 for 8GB and \$199 for 16GB. **New iPod touch** Jobs was happy to announce that "for the holiday season" they're making the iPod touch "even better." The new device sports: - integrated volume controls on its side - built-in speaker, which was "really hard for something this thin, for casual listening," Jobs noted. - Genius playlist creation - 36 hours of music and 6 hours of video The new iPod touch is already available in sizes of 8GB, 16GB and 32GB for \$299, \$299, and \$399 respectively.

iPhone 2.1 (available Friday)

In what was a natural move on behalf of the Cupertino-based electronics giant, Apple also confirmed iPhone OS 2.1 at the "Let's Rock" event. The update should "significantly" improve battery life, according to Apple, while problems with dropped calls, and backing up with iTunes should be resolved also. Other bugs are said to be addressed as well. The new iPod touch model will ship with the 2.1 update pre-installed. iPod touches still running firmware 1.x require a \$9.99 fee for the upgrade. iPhone users are granted the new software version for free, as usual. The update will be made available this Friday. Steve Jobs called it a wrap after inviting Jack Johnson up on stage to hit a few notes on his guitar. Happy with Apple's new announcements? We reckon you are, but just to be on the safe side, leave a comment with your impressions.