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## [Creative Comes After Apple's Shuffle with Zen Stone](#)

### *Attack of the clones...*

It looks like Apple's Shuffle has made enough waves to start being replicated by Apple's competitors. Creative has just introduced their own version of the small media player, calling it the 'Zen Stone'. Very similar to the second generation Shuffle in both size and functionality, the new Zen Stone comes in black, white, red, blue, pink and green.

The similarities between Apple's Shuffle and Creative's Zen Stone are striking, but the original betters the new arrival in all aspects but one. Apple's device is smaller, but slightly thicker because it has a built-in clip, which the Zen Stone does not. They both have the same capacity, but the Shuffle has a longer battery life. The only point where the Zen Stone trumps the Shuffle is the price: US\$39.99.

While being twice as cheap as the Shuffle, those who want to have the same degree of portability will need to pay extra for a silicon skin that has a clip, which will add another \$9.99. The price of the Zen Stone is what makes it attractive to most customers; however, the extra cost of the clip and the lack of iTunes integration or AAC support could be deal breakers.

Considering what Creative CEO Sim Wong Hoo said about the original Shuffle when it came out, it is surprising that the Zen Stone is shipping as a product.

*Actually, to me it's a big let-down: we're expecting a good fight but they're coming out with something that's five generations older. It's our first generation MuVo One product feature, without display, just have a (shuffle feature). We had that -- that's a four-year-old product. So I think the whole industry will just laugh at it, because the flash people -- it's worse than the cheapest Chinese player. Even the cheap, cheap Chinese brand today has display and has FM. They don't have this kind of thing, and they expect to come out with a fight; I think it's a non-starter to begin with.* said Creative's CEO Sim Wong Hoo, on January 12, 2005.

While it is still too early to tell, it is unlikely that Apple will lose any business over to Creative because of the Zen Stone. It might be cheaper, but it also lacks features that the Shuffle has.