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By:

[iPod: where will it stop?](#)

Will it stop?



iPod ... I don't think a single day goes by without an article about the innocent player from Apple to be published. In 2001, iPod revolutionized the music industry, hard-disks and took Mac sales with 5% higher on the desktop market. But how much of this success is because of the player's technical characteristics and how much is because of marketing? iPod has undisputable advantages: it's easy to use, has a high capacity (it was the first player with a hard-disk), has an innovative design and the list could go on. Critics say that is heavy, fragile compared to other flash players, with a limited number of functions compared to the capacity of the hard-disk, lacks a FM tuner and again the list could go on. The controversy can go on for days, but after all the technical issues are exhausted, iPod supporters will bring the final argument: good or bad, iPod has 85% of the MP3 player market and what's more, since 2001 no company succeeded in dethroning it. iPod's secret is marketing. iPod won its first battle in 2002 when it surpassed Creative's hard-disk based MP3 player which even had a smaller price. The secret weapon? The marketing team behind iPod managed to promote the idea that iPod is not just an equipment for playing music, but a whole concept. In December 2002, iPod launches models that bear the signatures of stars like Madonna, Beck, Tony Hawk and No Doubt. All the celebrities fell in love with the little player, which made a career in video clips, music magazine, even at Oprah's shows. Where could you get a better marketing? iPod's second secret was Microsoft's Windows. The first iPod models launched in October 2001 only worked with Macs and iTunes program which copied CDs and then transferred to iPod. Apple thought then that this combination will be enough to ensure the player's success. By July 2002, 150,000 units had been sold. People were not ready to buy a Mac for the sake of a MP3 player. In July 2002 realized that and launched Windows compatible models which used as transfer software MusicMatch. In less than two years, iPod sales reached 2 million units. Microsoft found out too late what had happened and HP declared that is too late to think about an alternative and prefers to launch an iPod version together with Apple. iTunes Music Store and the download revolution owe iPod their celebrity and not the other way around. **What has the future installed for iPod?** Since 2001 until the end of 2004, iPod sales didn't stop for a month. Apple switched from one production line to another and released mini iPods. Regardless of color and dimension, the iPod label and center wheel will take the charts by storm. But iPod reached its limits and Apple has to come up with something new if they want to maintain the leading position. Apple is already looking for video compression experts and there are speculations that iPod Photo was just a test to see if users would accept a model that knows more than to play music. iPod failed when it tried to move away from the business that made it famous. The recent cell phone Apple and Motorola threat to launch proved that you cannot label iTunes or iPod everything and expect it will sale. Hence, if iPod enters the video streaming and rendering domain, things will be very delicate. The next iPod will have to come up with new performances or to transform itself into a gadget that does everything. As for competition, although producers are launching in the "MP3 race", iPod has nothing to worry about, at least this year. In conclusion, Steve Jobs' restless genius has at least one year at his disposal to see what else he can teach iPod to do. But what he shouldn't forget is that even if you run alone, you can still lose!