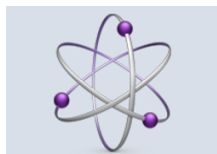


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'Genius' icon
Apple

[iTunes 8 - First Look](#)

iTunes 8 is a huge leap from previous versions of the media player application

One of the biggest announcements coming from Apple this week is, undoubtedly, [iTunes 8](#). The updated media player application boasts some impressive additions, among which a [Genius feature](#), new browsing methods and grid view, and a breathtaking visualizer. Read on for a more detailed overview of each new addition.

Genius

With the introduction of iTunes 8, the first feature Apple emphasized was "Genius." The simplest way to describe it is this:

- while playing a song, click the Genius button;
- Genius then sends information about your iTunes library to Apple, learning of your musical tastes, while keeping track of others people's preferences;
- Genius answers back to you by telling iTunes to create a playlist of other songs from your library that go great together;
- additionally, the Genius feature can be set to suggest songs of similar genres that aren't available in your iTunes Library, but that can be purchased from the iTunes store.

Genius can also be set to create a playlist of 25, 50, 75 and 100 songs. Playlists can be refreshed at any time. It's a good tool for audiophiles who forget to rate some of their songs, and lose track of them.

On the downside, you need a valid Apple ID (complete with credit card information) in order to use the feature, even if you're not planning to make any purchases in the nearby future. So, until you do that, the Genius button on the bottom-right side of iTunes' window is inactive.

So that's Genius for you. Personally, I find the feature simply sublime.

New Grid View, Advanced Browsing

With the new Grid View introduced in iTunes 8, users are able to see their iTunes library using cover art. When you select Artists, Genres, or Composers, iTunes automatically creates groups of albums based on your selection.

#1 - View by album

#2 - Browsing TV shows in the iTunes Store

As you can imagine, movies, TV shows, podcasts, and audiobooks can also be browsed much easier and more intuitively in Grid View. (Image #2). So you can hit Genres, for instance, and here's what you get.

Apple decided that even more people should find iTunes accessible for them. Therefore,

the company has added new options for users to manage their iTunes library using VoiceOver in Mac OS X Leopard, or Window-Eyes for Windows XP and Windows Vista.

Superb New Visualizer Effects

If Apple doesn't care about looks, who does?

Making iTunes 8 a big release, Apple couldn't just roll out a revamped version of the media player without adding some visually-pleasant enhancements as well. The Cupertino-based Mac maker thus included new visualizer effects, boasting a 3D-scape of constantly-colliding spheres (your own LHC inside iTunes), ribbons, and lights that move to the beat of the song that's currently playing. A few samples are available below (click to enlarge).

In conclusion, the new iTunes deserves the "8.0" name and status. Now that you've seen what iTunes 8 is made of, all that remains to be done is to [upgrade to the new version](#) (free to download, install and use), and try it out. After you do, share your thoughts with us.

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