

# Technology Review: iPod Touch [1]

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On Friday, September 28th, the new iPod Touch officially hit shelves. To give an accurate review, The Wake attempted to contact Apple's PR department about testing the new iPod but they failed to respond to any emails or calls. So, like lowly reporter scum, I was forced to saunter into the Apple store at Rosedale and demo the iPod Touch guerilla style: popping in every few minutes to quickly test a feature, and then slinking out of the store unnoticed, avoiding any unnecessary forced conversation with the commission-fed sales associates.

The Touch is an achievement in both its design and its technology. Like the iPhone, the Touch relies on what Apple calls "Multi-Touch" technology. The seemingly innocent 3.5 inch widescreen display is actually a stunning piece of engineering, harboring a host of hidden features. The "Accelerometer" in the Touch allows the iPod to know when it's being rotated, signaling it to correctly rotate the image on the display. It also includes an "Ambient Light Sensor" that adjusts the brightness of the screen depending on exterior lighting. The actual "touch" aspect of the display allows certain innovations like onscreen keyboards, which create the obvious need for programs like Safari to browse the web with. Yes, the new iPod has wireless capabilities. You can now look at pornography wherever WiFi is available without even opening a computer or using more than one hand. They don't call it the Touch for nothing.

What the iPod is really about, however, is music. The iPod Touch still provides a clean and easily accessible menu system for organizing music files. Apple has revamped all iPods to include cover flow, a visually satisfying way of flipping through cover art onscreen. Of course, if your cover art collection is as intermittent as mine, all you'll see are hundreds of sad blue question marks, in which case you can always use the classic style of browsing.

There are three main criticisms of the Touch. The Internet capabilities are great,

but trying to navigate websites or fill in forms is kind of clunky. Anyone with fingers thicker than a stylus will run into trouble typing sooner or later. The second is the lack of hard drive space in the Touch. 16 gigabytes doesn't seem like it will satiate the legions of music sluts Apple has created with their 80-gigabyte iPods. In a world where culture and taste are manifested through gigabytes of music, 16 measly gigs are laughably small. What's 3,500 songs compared to the nine trillion found on the average UMN hub junkie's external hard drive? The third problem concerns the display. According to a variety of complaints online, the Touch's display isn't as vibrant as the iPhone, though the two are marketed as exactly the same.

In due time, Apple may very well upgrade the hard drive space and fix a few of the other flaws, remarketing the iPod Touch as something new, making millions in the process. Until then, at least we have a beautifully designed, nifty gadget to store our music on. With so many user-friendly ways to check email and receive phone calls, it's amazing Apple never responded to The Wake. Oh well.

1. <http://www.wakemag.org/minds-eye/technology-review-ipod-touch/>
2. <http://www.wakemag.org/author/joetting/>