

## **Still using your iPod for music? How to use your portable media player in your litigation practice**

By David W. Mykel

### **Introduction**

*Apple's iPod has taken the world by storm. Everywhere you look, you see people wearing the signature white earbuds. But amidst this storm, Apple has inspired competition from other companies that have come up with new uses for their media players in hope of taking some of Apple's market share. In this article, trial consultant David Mykel explores several portable media players (including the iPod) and how you can put them to use as a litigation support tool when you gear up for your next trial.*

Every year, lawyers look for more ways to increase their efficiency, bill more hours and make life easier for themselves overall. Imagine you're working from your laptop at 35,000 feet: reviewing video deposition testimony, reading over transcripts and documents, and viewing case photos. Now imagine doing all of this without having to carry around a bulky laptop, mouse, power source, and a bag. Can you? Probably for an expensive price tag, right? What if I told you that you could accomplish this with something you already own? Now imagine doing all these things as well as recording your "on-the-fly" ideas, proofing PowerPoint presentations, and listening to some relaxing music. How, you might ask? I have three letters for you: PMP (portable media players).

### **For beginners**

It's estimated that nearly 75 million people in the U.S. have an iPod or a competing product (though Apple's infamous iPod owns nearly 80 per cent of the market share). These days, you can't walk in any city, let alone a metropolis, and not see at least half of the people on a given street with wires coming out of their ears. But most people aren't aware of what an iPod or other portable digital media player can do for not only you, but your practice as well.

As technology advances, PMPs have taken on more and more tasks for the digital user – for example, the majority of players out there can now display pictures and videos.

Just take a look at your basic [iPod](#). It enables you to listen to music and store thousands of MP3s, view photos, and watch it all on a 2.5" screen. The iPod structure is one of the easiest and most user-friendly interfaces out there.

How can you use this for your litigation practice? The iPod would suffice if you wanted something simple and user-friendly to view case photos or even deposition video, although the smaller screen may cause problems with paying attention to detail. In addition to this, you will need to convert your videos using QuickTime Pro (Apple's all-in-one media player) to resize for playback on the iPod.

## **Intermediate players**

There is also a list of devices like the iPod for very competitive prices. These include the [Samsung Yepp YH-999](#) and the [iRiver PMC-120](#).

These two devices will play Windows-encrypted media, such as .wmv and .wma (the iPod cannot play these files) and have a larger screen (3.5") for viewing. These players may prove a better investment over the iPod if you prefer Windows media.

If you would like all of this functionality plus an FM tuner, then you should take a look at the [Toshiba GigaBeat S Series](#), [the Zen Vision M](#), or [Microsoft's Zune](#).

The Toshiba offers all the same features as the above, but integrates an FM tuner so you can listen to radio stations. Although it does have this extended feature set, it sacrifices screen size (a mere 2.4").

Even though these devices cost a lot, they remain on the lower end of the scale when it comes to versatility and function.

## **The big guns**

Some of the more recent and advanced devices can also push an audio or video source out for viewing on a TV or computer, and even act as a PDA. The even higher-end players can record from **any** source, whether analog or digital (television, DVDs, VCRs, other audio players, cassette tapes, and computers), in addition to acting as a storage device for all your files and documents.

First off is the [Zen Vision W](#). On this player, you can listen to music, view photos and videos on a 480x272 resolution with a widescreen 4.3" display (16:9 aspect ratio). This device also enables you to push out your photos, music, and video to a projector or television, and functions as a voice recorder, personal organizer, and an FM radio. One of the features that stands out on this player is the ability to directly transfer photos from your digital camera.

The [iRiver PMP-140](#) also plays music (.mp3, .wav, and .wma), videos, displays photos on a vivid 3.5" screen, has an FM tuner and voice recorder, can push out audio and video to an external source, and can directly transfer photos from your digital camera. Features unique to this device are the built-in speaker and the ability to record audio from any external source, as well as to transfer any file type from your PC or Mac.

The last and final product is the ultimate, at least for now, portable media player. Archos has engineered media players for years and still continues to lead the pack in progressive, all-inclusive technology. Its latest and greatest players are the [Archos AV 500](#) and the [Archos AV 700](#).

These players are identical in features but differ in screen size, either a modest 4" or a much wider 7". Both devices contain all the features of the above-referenced players (ability to play all audio and video files, display all photo files, and directly transfer photos from your digital camera, and more). In addition to this wealth of features, it also has a replaceable battery (which the iPod lacks), plays video back at near-DVD quality, has downloadable and upgradeable firmware and games, and has the ability to record audio and video from any external source.

### **Picture this**

Imagine having the ability to walk into a deposition, hand the videographer your Archos AV, record the deposition as it progresses, then hand your Archos to the court reporter, have her download the transcript, then hand it to the other side and have them download all their exhibits onto it as well. As you're waiting for your cab, you take some beautiful pictures of the city skyline at sunset and download them directly to your Archos to share with your family. Now you're sitting in the cab on the way to the airport, listening to your favorite MP3s to unwind for the plane ride. Once you board the plane, you can now review the deposition, read the transcript and review the exhibits without having to worry about your battery dying (five-plus hour battery life). Once you finish with the deposition, you can look at the scenic pictures you took on your vivid 7" screen, all with one handheld device.

### **Conclusion**

Now, stop imagining, and go out there and get a PMP for yourself!

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