

The iPods Have Landed

This summer John Elliot Yates and Chris Simmons joined the ranks of happy iPod owners that seem to be sweeping the nation, if not quite yet the Ole Miss campus.

Both were winners in a drawing sponsored by Apple Computer and held at the Information Technology Helpdesk. Yates, who is a freshman math major, was the registrant selected, and Simmons won for being the IT student worker who got the most students to register.

With its distinctive styling and compatibility with both Mac and Windows, the iPod is currently the hot item in the digital music market. But it has other features which may make it more than just a fun tech toy. These include large storage capacity (20 and 40 gigabyte versions are currently sold), PDA functions (contacts, calendar, to-do lists), recording capabilities with an

optional microphone, and even an alarm clock.

It's this versatility which has prompted some educators to consider how the iPod might be used in the classroom and beyond.

Duke University made headlines this fall by distributing iPods to all incoming freshmen as part of an initiative to encourage creative uses of technology in education. The devices are preloaded with university-related content, such as the academic calendar, and students can download individual course materials onto them through a special Duke web site.

In 2002, Apple, the maker of the iPod, donated 50 of the devices to Georgia College and State University for experimental use in their academic programs. Instructors and students in two courses, "The Gothic Imagination" and "Politics, War, and Shakespeare," utilized the iPods in several ways, including playback of audio and music files and the recording of spoken assignments.

Response was so positive that one of the instructors concluded in a report to GC&SU's Board of Regents, "Give me about a hundred more iPods and I'll transform interdisciplinary studies in the humanities at this school!"

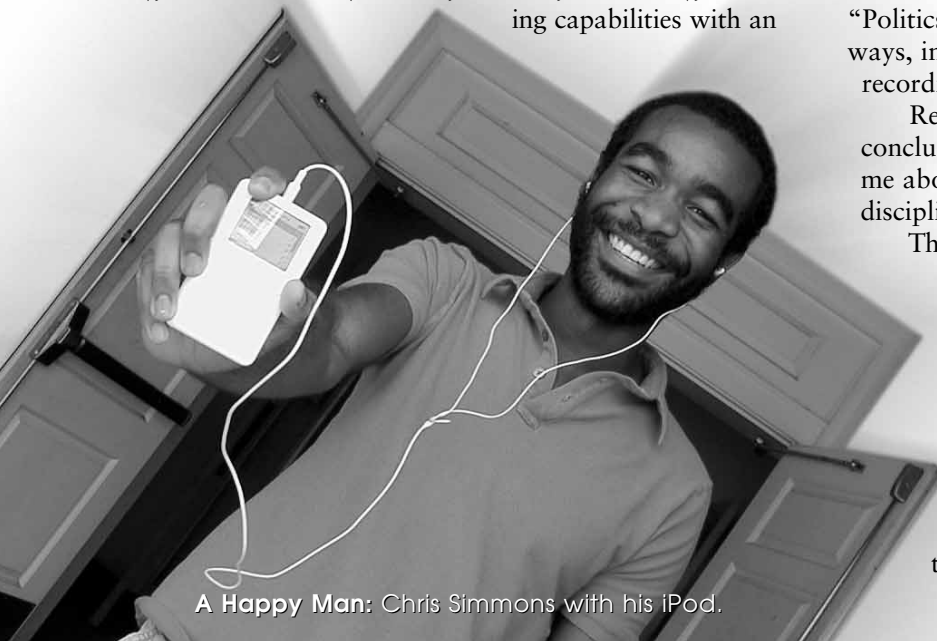
The full project report can be found at <http://ipod.gcsu.edu>.

Carroll Hightower, Director of the University of Mississippi's Language Resource Center (LRC), sees the potential for using iPods here.

"Dartmouth's LRC has loaner iPods for students who have to be away from campus," she says.

"They have an 'iPod filling station' that synchronizes the loaners to the complete libraries of MP3 files in the various languages taught there. I'm convinced we could make good use of them, too. They can be equipped with microphones,

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A Happy Man: Chris Simmons with his iPod.

It's Time for an SAP Upgrade!

Beginning on Thursday, **October 14**, at 5:00 p.m., the SAP PRD system and all dependent applications will be unavailable for use as Campus Management is upgraded to version 4.72. The system will come back up sometime on Monday, October 18.

Please note that online services for students, faculty, and staff will not be available during this time! For example, no one will be able to download class rolls, view grades, or check payroll stubs until the system is up and running again.

"This upgrade will provide a lot of new functionality in the areas of admissions, booking, and registration," explains Tim McCreedy, IT Systems Analyst III. "It will automate some tasks that currently have to be done manually in the system, making things a bit easier for the people who work with those areas. I know they and we in IT appreciate everyone's patience as we do this upgrade."

Anyone encountering problems with the system after the upgrade should call the SAP Support Line at 915-5556.

For Grant Wall

Music and Technology a Match Made in Heaven

Grant Wall plans to complete a master's degree in music theory next May and has his eye on a career in church music.

"I approach music as being a gift from God," he explains, "and the passion for music that is in me is part of that gift. I've always used computers, but the combination of the two didn't happen until I came to Ole Miss. Technology is a tool, and if you keep it in perspective, you can use it in a spiritual sense in so many ways."

Wall is part of a new generation of musicians whose primary instrument is a digital workstation, usually consisting of a computer, keyboard, and various other modules that produce and enhance sound. MIDI, short for musical instrument digital interface, is how these components communicate.

"MIDI is simply computer data and carries no audio by itself," says Wall. "This makes MIDI files small and easy to move. And it's a universal language, so it can be interpreted by any device that is MIDI compliant. Depending on the hardware you're using, you can get a diversity of sounds from a MIDI file, anything from a piano to a trumpet to a violin."

Beginning this year, all undergraduate music majors will be required to take a music technology course. Wall, who assists in teaching the course, thinks this is a very good thing.

"Every musician needs to be able to produce a clean score," he explains, "and learning computer notation makes that so easy to do. And I think it's important to have a basic understanding of what sequencing is and how digital audio is produced."

"Grant's knowledge of various platforms and programs is astounding," asserts Dr. Steven Brown, Chair of the Music Department, "especially given the constant change in these areas. His assistance with technology has been invaluable to both students and faculty. It is our great fortune to share in Grant's abilities, at least for a while!"

Wall also works at the Information Technology Helpdesk and is Music Director for the New Prospect Baptist Church in Oxford.

"Churches often run into personnel shortages," he notes, "and this is where technology can really help out. You may want to orchestrate a hymn arrangement, and you've got a phenomenal keyboardist but no violinist. You can write a violin part and mix it in to the live performance, giving that performer an opportunity to add a new dimension to his or her music. To me, that's smart use

of the available technology."

Wall acknowledges there is a delicate balance in navigating the transition from analog to digital, particularly in a church setting.

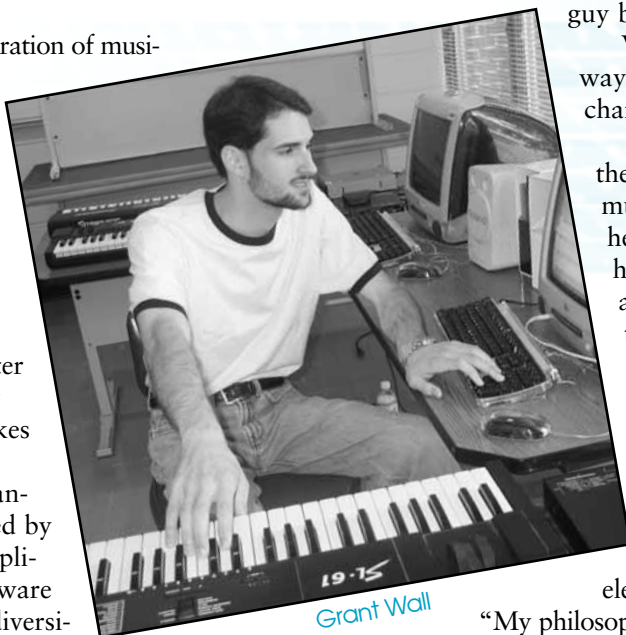
"You have to be careful not to get too carried away," he laughs. "You can make it too big and busy, with too much for people to take in, especially if they see just one guy behind the keyboard."

Wall points out that, throughout history, the way music is produced and played has been ever changing.

"One of the big things that happened during the Renaissance was the growing availability of musical instruments, education, and literature," he notes. "By the Victorian era, many homes had pianos and everyone would stand around and sing the latest songs. In this day and age, technology gives access to professional and amateur alike, and you can produce and record your own music at home. I think this has the potential to promote even more musical development and a deeper appreciation of music for so many people."

While Wall is a big fan of technology, he is quick to point out that the human element is always critical in making music.

"My philosophy is this," he states. "The person sitting behind the keyboard and computer has to be both a musician and a technician. You have to understand how instruments work and which ones blend together well, dynamics and all the things that affect music, otherwise you can't create something that sounds realistic. When you hear digitally produced music that is really, really good, then you know the person behind it is a true musician."



Grant Wall

"E-mail Heaven"

This is how Provost Carolyn Ellis Staton describes the status of her inbox since the August installation of PureMessage, an integrated spam and virus protection software, to the University's e-mail system.

"It has made all the difference in my use of e-mail," Dr. Staton notes. "I had literally hundreds of spam messages a day, and in deleting them I often accidentally deleted something important as well!"

"I am thrilled by how well the spam filter works," says Dr. John Juergens in the School of Pharmacy. "It has reduced my trash messages by at least ninety percent and is very accurate in doing so. I reviewed over 200 filtered messages, and there wasn't a single legitimate message among them."

According to Robin Miller, Director of Technical Services, the filter captures over 200,000 spam messages and close to 11,000 viruses each day.

Pomp and Circumstance Online

On August 23, Matthew Stanislav Aufman, a senior in the School of Engineering, clicked a new link on the student services web page and became the first Ole Miss student to apply online for his diploma.

"We ask students to fill out several forms at the end of their academic careers with us," explains Dr. Maurice Eftink, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School. "I thought we could pull much of the information needed from the Campus Management database, such as name, major, address, etc., so students wouldn't have to fill those in over and over again."

In addition to the application, students complete surveys with variable sets of questions depending on the degree. All this was formerly done on paper, requiring manual entry of the information by staff members processing the forms.

"Now it's only three steps and BAM! you're done," says Regina Pitts in the Graduate School. "I think this is an excellent tool."

Bernice Herod, Senior Administrative Secretary in the School of Engineering, agrees.

"I can keep better track of the students applying for graduation," she notes, "because I can always see from my computer who has completed the diploma application. I don't have to worry about papers getting lost in the mail or not making it to the Registrar's Office."

Information Technology's Anil Vinjamur, whose hard work made the new system happen, reports that in the first month after its debut, 190 students joined Matthew Aufman in submitting their diploma applications online.

Photo Feature a Crowd Pleaser

Ever have trouble putting a face with a name, or vice versa? Well, imagine trying to do that when you teach several sections of students. Now, thanks to a joint project between the Office of Information Technology and the University ID Center, instructors can access thumbnail photos of students in a section and print out a report with those photos to use in class as they learn students' names.

Dr. Laurel Lambert, in the Department of Family and Consumer Science, is especially appreciative of this new service.

"I'm a new faculty member with 55 students in class, so it can be difficult to learn their names," she notes. "This makes it much easier, and I think students really appreciate when you call them by name."

"Having student pictures available is one of the greatest uses of faculty web services," says Dr. Bobbie Krapels in the School of Business Administration. "As I grade a paper, I can look at that student's picture. By putting names and faces together, I am learning who students are much faster than in previous semesters."

Instructors can access this feature by visiting the faculty services web page, clicking on "Class Rolls and Grades," entering the term and year, and then selecting "View Photo Report."



Changes Make webID More Powerful

In the past, faculty and students had to remember up to four passwords in order to access the online services available through webID, Blackboard, sunset (e-mail), and Campus Management (CM).

Recent changes by the Office of Information Technology (IT) have cut that number to two. A user can now access online services, Blackboard, and e-mail by simply using his or her webID and password. Registering for classes and other CM functions still require an additional code, but that, too, may eventually be done just using webID.

Tiffany Stewart, a junior in her second year working at the IT Helpdesk, sees the consolidation as a very good thing.

"Resetting passwords was always a big hassle for people," she comments, "because there were four you had to change. We had a lot of students come in who couldn't remember which one went with which account. They would get confused between things like webID and WebMail."

IT's Veena Mantena worked to simplify the process of webID activation for new students and employees.

"There used to be several steps involved," she explains. "A user had to start the process by entering their University ID or Social Security number. They would then get a temporary password and would have to check their e-mail to get a confirmation number sent there. Then they would use both that number

and the temporary password to go back and set up their webID password. All this before they could do anything else!"

Now new users simply sign in to the online services web page with their University ID number only, not their Social Security number, and then set their password (and a question and answer to help them remember in case they forget it). Once they do that, they can immediately access their e-mail and all online services.

According to Whitman Smith, Director of Orientation, this provides incoming students with an immediate connection to the University well before they arrive on campus.

"The new process makes things so much easier on our students by giving them ready access to all their information," he says.

Stewart notes that, while the new system is more convenient, users should take great care to protect their logon information.

"If someone gets hold of your webID and password," she warns, "they can get into everything, from personal information to e-mail to Blackboard assignments."

For Rufus Stokes, a senior in computer science, a little extra vigilance is worth the benefits.

"The fact that everything is more centralized now really helps," he notes. "In my four years here, I've seen the whole process of everything going online, so I really appreciate how easy it is now to access all these services."

Viruses, Hackers, and Worms, Oh My!

In September, the Microsoft Corporation provided a free two-day course to University of Mississippi personnel focusing on enterprise security issues. Topics included security patch management, server security on Windows 2000 and Windows Server 2003, network and perimeter security, client security on Windows 2000 and Windows XP, and application and data security and other related issues.



iPods *continued from front cover*

so students could record themselves in the target language and then upload those files for their instructors to retrieve.”

“We’ve discussed the feasibility of getting iPods for our students,” says Dr. Douglass Sullivan-Gonzalez, Dean of the Sally McDonnell-Barksdale Honors College. “We send students throughout the nation to interview people, and the five recorders we have now have proven somewhat difficult to use. The convenience and accessibility of the iPod might help us bridge the gap.”

Dr. Brian Reithel, Interim Dean of the Business School, can think of many ways the iPod and related accessories might be used for both personal and educational purposes.

“You could record class lectures, keep a personal journal, view or listen to your e-mail, capture news clips, track the weather, use it for GPS navigation, play games, listen to books on tape, and even back up family photos or keep your car maintenance records on it,” he muses.

The Music Department might seem a likely place to find devices like the iPod in use, but some faculty members there are concerned about compression rates and

how they affect sound quality. While MP3 files can be stored and played on the iPod, Apple does offer AAC (Advanced Audio Coding) and Apple Lossless formats which have uncompressed CD sound quality in much smaller file sizes.

“Certainly in the future, most music will be played as some kind of file format, with audio CDs becoming obsolete,” surmises Dr. John Latartara, Assistant Professor of Music.

“But what I feel is most critical, for the consumer and definitely for teachers and students of music, is that the ‘quality’ of the sound remains high.”

Even if everyone isn’t sure where this new technology is leading, there is a certain amount of “iPod envy” on campus, as Chris Simmons can attest.

“All my friends were glaring at me when they found out I won one”

he says laughing. “That was probably the best part, because I wanted to get one anyway. I’ve really seen an increase in the number of people with iPods around town, and considering their capabilities, I think the popularity is just going to grow.”

The convenience and accessibility of the iPod might help us bridge the gap.

—Dr. Douglass Sullivan-Gonzalez

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