

Happy 15th Birthday, Apple iPod!

Written by Marco Attard
27 October 2016

Tech industry followers with longer memories should remember a rather special 23 October 2001 Apple event-- the launch of the iPod, arguably the device that moved Apple away from PCs ahead of the smartphone era.



The iPod was the device that helped Apple regain its fortunes, even if its first appearance was not too impressive. It was a Mac-only portable media player with all of 5GB of storage and a \$399 price tag. And the first couple of years validated the sceptics, since the device failed to find an audience aside from the true Apple faithful.

As such, the iPod's true watershed moment happened with the 2003 release of an iPod designed for Windows users-- not to mention the launch of iTunes for Windows and the iTunes Music Store. The result was not only a simple means for the syncing of the music player with PCs (especially when compared with the clunky interfaces employed by Creative and Rio devices of the time), but a secure means for the online purchase of music, no CD ripping or piracy required.

The next few years after 2003 were a golden age for the iPod, with a variety of options fitting all pockets and wallets. Not even Microsoft could beat Apple at the music player game, and its Zune ended up as little more as a joke. In fact, the iPod was so successful it even lent a name to the "podcast," a form of media arguably designed for the iPod.

However, all good things have to come to an end-- and in the iPod's case the end came in 2007, with the introduction of the first iPhone. Steve Jobs did not mince his words around, selling the smartphone as a do-it-all wonder device, and Apple revealed the first iPod Classic just months after the iPhone launch.

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The iPod is technically still around, although sales are so low Apple financials lump them in the "Other" category. The last iPod Classic model debuted in 2014, and in these days of audio streaming we doubt a replacement will be revealed any time soon. Either way, happy birthday, iPod. You're still missed, at least by the owners of large amounts of offline music.

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