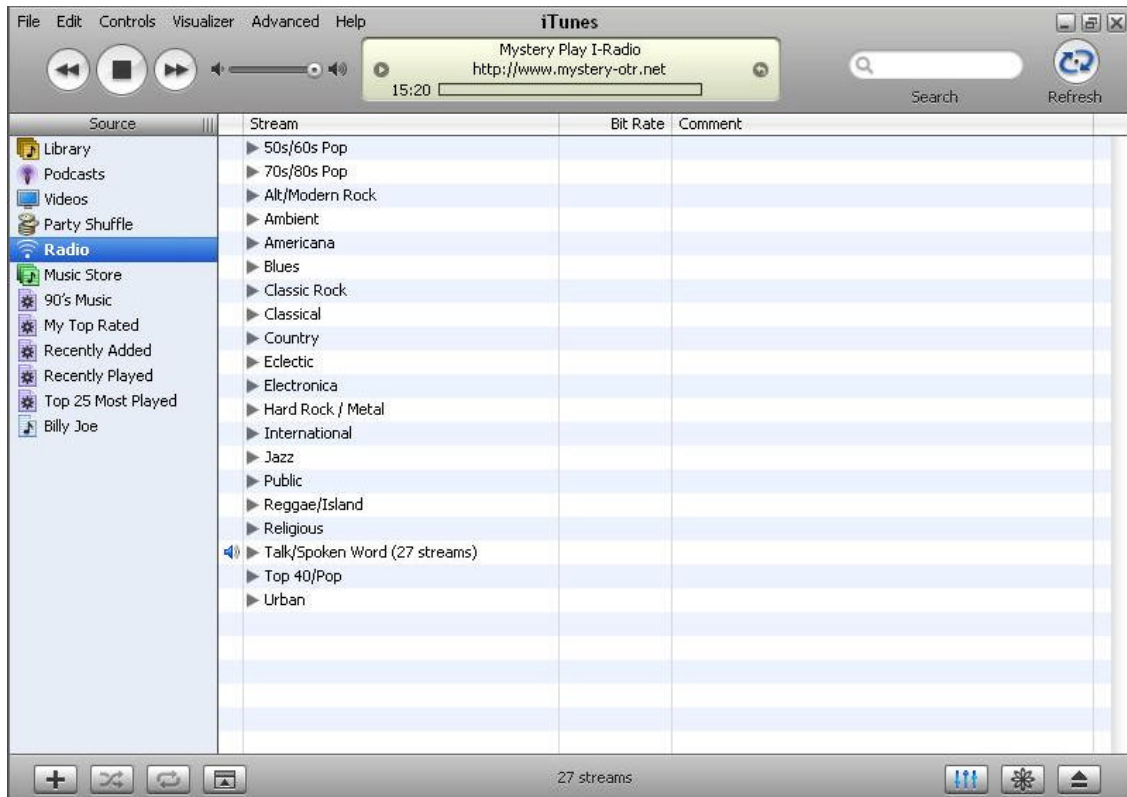


Internet Radio

iTunes
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This is the second article in my review of Internet radio services. If you missed the first article, it is available in the Product Review section of our website at <http://ppcuginc.com/prodrev.htm>.

I have heard a lot about Apple's iTunes player and music sales. I chose iTunes from www.apple.com/itunes for my next review. The service requires the iTunes player which is a free download. Installation went smoothly. iTunes seems well behaved. It asks for access to the Internet when it is launched, but it does not ask each time the computer is started like many players. iTunes has a reputation of being easy to use with a simple interface. I found this to be true. It also does a good job of organizing your music library by genre, artist and album. It supports the iPod player and access to the iTunes music store with music, video and audiobooks for sale to download.



While the function of the player is impressive, I was disappointed in the streaming music service. iTunes has made no effort to create a station to stream music from their extensive database of songs. Instead it is more of a gateway to many Internet

radio stations. The stations are organized by genre in the Radio section. Each station shows the bit rate of the stream. A few show bit rates that support CD quality sound, but most are much lower. Some of the stations showing higher bit rates connect at rates lower than first shown. Many stations have a limit to the number of free listeners allowed. You can get on the preferred list by going to the website of the station and becoming a member for a fee. Other than this, there is no premium service offered by iTunes.

The Blues genre listed only nine streams, but others are included in the Jazz and Public Radio genres. The other genres have a large assortment of choices. There are Public Radio stations from all over the country. There are quite a few foreign stations in all genres.

Scrolling through the many radio streams is very interesting. There is something for everyone. I found the old time radio broadcasts in the Talk/Spoken Word genre brought back many memories. Do you remember Boris Karloff in Inner Sanctum with the squeaky door? There is also Amos and Andy, Abbot and Costello and Fibber McGee and Molly. Some of the program shows include the old commercials. Do you remember Life Boy soap with the special ingredient that can stop B.O.? Maybe we should go back to some of these old products. The bit rates on these stations were as low as 16 or 24. This will work on a dialup connection. It is not necessary to have the iTunes player to listen to these stations. They will work in Windows Media Player or Real Player. Go to www.mystery-otr.net or www.macinmind.com and try them. Some stations listed in the Talk/Spoken Word genre include explicit material. Others are safe for children.

I like the iTunes player for playing MP3 tracks and the stations are interesting. If you can be satisfied with lower quality, the simplicity and ease of connecting may make this a good choice. However, the low quality of the radio streams disqualifies it as the Internet radio service of my dreams.