

iPod as eBook Reader and Newsstand

Your iPod's Notes aren't just limited to grocery lists and short reminders—thanks to shareware creators around the world, you can take full-length books, short stories, and Web pages along with you to read on your iPod's screen. Several other programs fetch helpful information, like headlines, weather forecasts, and driving directions from the Internet, and slip it onto your iPod.

Shareware for Macintosh OS X

Macintosh fans have always had some of the most inventive shareware in the land, and iPod-themed programs are no exception. A few of them are listed here, but you can find many more at your favorite Mac shareware site. (And you can find links to all of the following on the “Missing CD” page at www.missingmanuals.com.)

- **NewsMac.** If you're a hard-core newshound, you'll appreciate NewsMac's ability to keep tabs on myriad computer and world news sites in a tidy desktop window. The program, shown in Figure D-1, can also sync news channels to your iPod with a single click. (If you like the software, NewsMac's creators would appreciate a PayPal donation.)
- **Pod2Go.** Pod2Go is great for news addicts who want to keep up with the latest headlines from news outlets like the BBC, CBS, Wired News, and the major iPod news sites. The program, which works with all iPods from the original granddaddy 5 GB iPods to the 2004 youngsters, can download stock quotes, movie listings, local gas prices, song lyrics, weather forecasts, and even headlines from your favorite blogs and other Web sites. The latest version of Pod2Go can copy over Mac OS X Address Book contacts, Safari bookmarks, and iCal schedules, plus messages from Apple Mail and desktop Stickies.

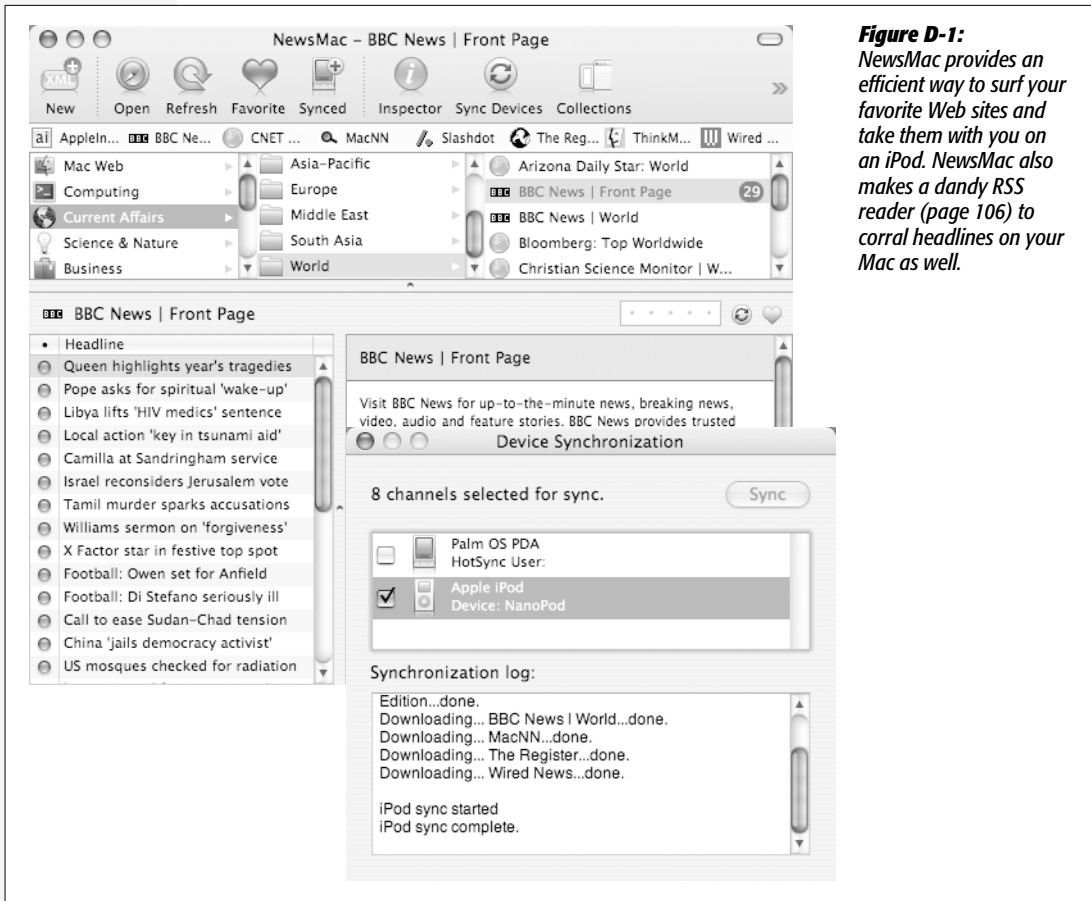


Figure D-1: NewsMac provides an efficient way to surf your favorite Web sites and take them with you on an iPod. NewsMac also makes a dandy RSS reader (page 106) to corral headlines on your Mac as well.

The software can also transfer text files to the iPod to either your Contacts or Notes folder, depending on which model iPod you have. Pod2Go becomes addictive after only a few syncs, and it costs a mere \$12—but you can try it out for free for 15 days (Figure D-2).

- **iSpeak It.** Talk about weird and wonderful: this program is designed to turn any text, HTML, Microsoft Word, or AppleWorks file into a *spoken-word* soundtrack, using the Mac's synthesized voices. The beauty of this idea is that you can now listen to your favorite Web sites, magazine articles, email messages, and other written material as you drive, jog, or work out at the gym.

With the click of a toolbar button, iSpeak It converts the document to an audio file (Figure D-3) and automatically sends it into iTunes, ready for transfer to the iPod. The program can also convert downloaded news headlines and weather forecasts to audio files for the iPod. (You can tinker with the Mac's

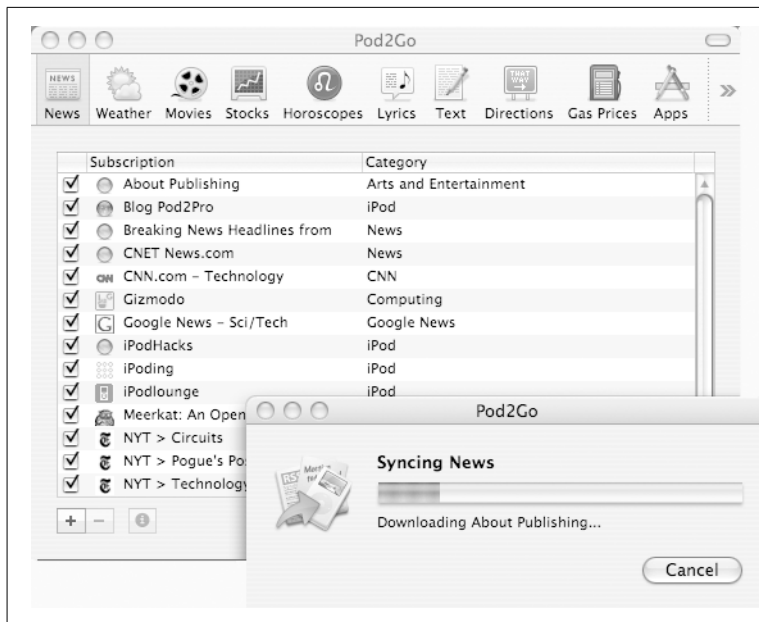


Figure D-2: Pod2Go gives news addicts a steady supply of fresh headlines from around the world. It can also transfer weather forecasts, movie listings, horoscopes, driving directions, and text files of your choice to the iPod's Contacts folder during a syncing session.

built-in voices in the Speech panel of System Preferences until you find a voice that doesn't remind you of the Swedish Chef on *The Muppet Show*.) The shareware, by Michael Zapp, who is also the author of iPod Launcher and iPod It, costs \$15.

- **Book2Pod.** Unless you're a big fan of haiku or extremely short stories, the 4 KB limit of the iPod's Notes program may put a damper on your eBook reading. As its name implies, the Book2Pod freeware program lets you pack a proper novel onto your iPod by automatically linking those little 4 KB files together into one almost seamless scroll. The program works with Mac OS X 10.2 and later and with iPods released in 2004 or later.

Tip: Got lots of time and not much money? Hit up the Project Gutenberg Web site (www.gutenberg.org) and download great works of literature in convenient electronic form, ready for iPod reading. Project Gutenberg has thousands of free, 100 percent legal eBooks in the public domain—things like the works of Shakespeare and the original Tarzan novels from the 1920s—in plain text format that you can slice up into iPod-friendly chunks with programs like Book2Pod and iPodLibrary. You can even download some titles as MP3 audiobooks (see Chapter 6).

Shareware for Windows

Although Mac fans have a few more programs to choose from, Windows shareware for the iPod has also popped up around the Web. You can find links to all these programs on the “Missing CD” page at www.missingmanuals.com.

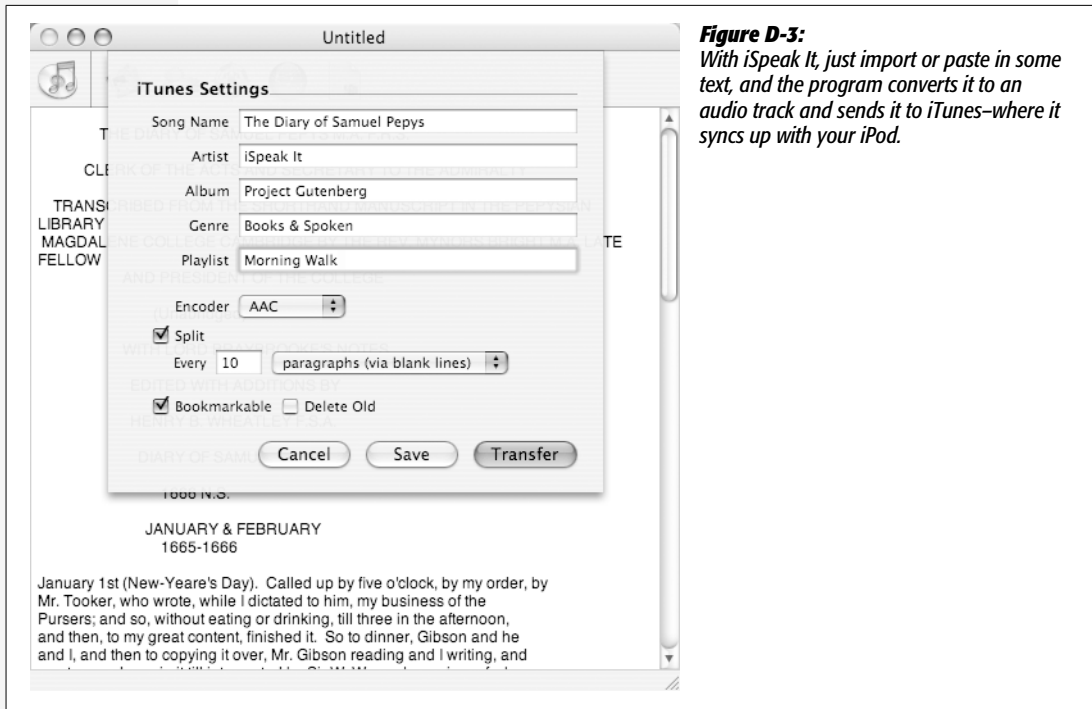


Figure D-3:
With *iSpeak It*, just import or paste in some text, and the program converts it to an audio track and sends it to iTunes—where it syncs up with your iPod.

- **EphPod.** The now-familiar wonderware for Windows does more than copy songs and Outlook contacts to the iPod (page 55)—it can also fetch news and weather updates.
- **iPodLibrary.** Serious eBook readers who juggle multiple formats—like .lit, .pdf, .html, and .txt—can use iPodLibrary (Figure D-4) to get their daily literary fix. This free program can import your existing eBook files, dice them up into Notes-approved 4 KB bites, and link them together for you automatically.
- **iNote.** This small Window program takes great big long text files and crunches them down into the linked 4 KB chunks that the iPod's Notes reader can easily digest and display.

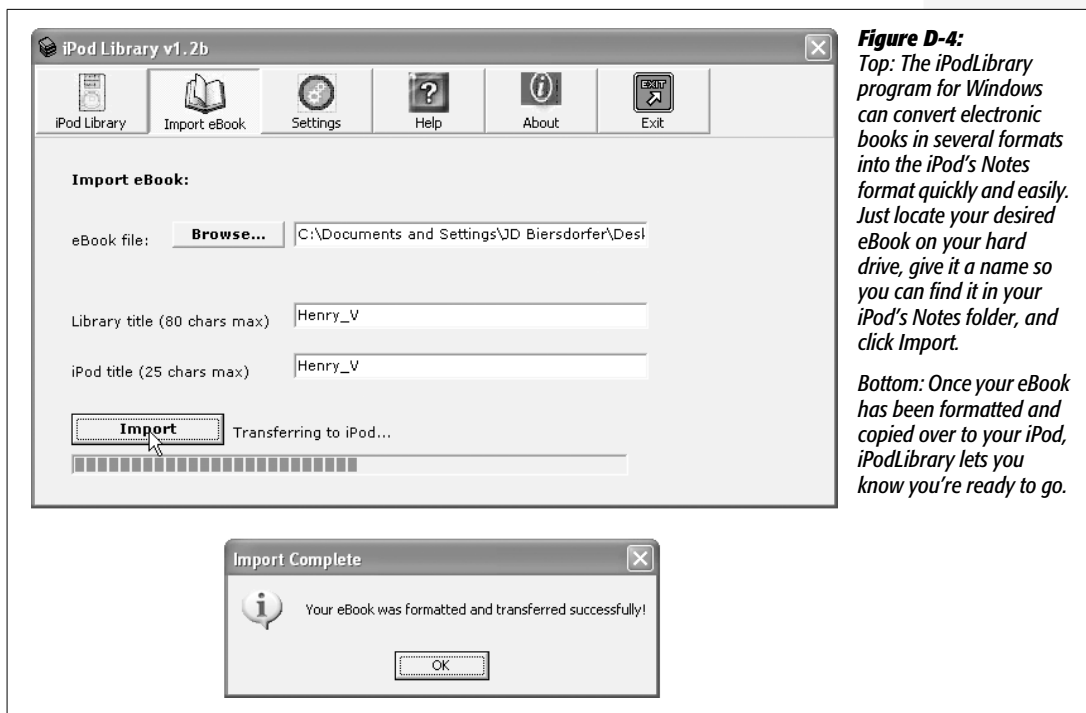


Figure D-4:
Top: The iPodLibrary program for Windows can convert electronic books in several formats into the iPod's Notes format quickly and easily. Just locate your desired eBook on your hard drive, give it a name so you can find it in your iPod's Notes folder, and click Import.

Bottom: Once your eBook has been formatted and copied over to your iPod, iPodLibrary lets you know you're ready to go.

