

iPod Touch Review: â??January Upgradeâ?• Applications

Apple released a firmware update (v1.1.3) providing some system tweaks and bug fixes, but it also came with a controversial upgrade that included 5 additional applications and some enhanced system functionality. What made it so controversial was that Apple charged $20 for the applications and enhanced functions. Some of the applications are simple, and some are full-featured, but they all add excellent functionality. I think they give us a great taste of what is to come. Read on to see the details of these new applicationsâ?¦.

jimstips.com

Here is a brief rundown and commentary on the new applications and enhancements:

iPod Touch - Mail

Mail

This is a surprisingly feature-rich and very useful POP/IMAP/Exchange multi-account email client. I use Gmail, and it auto-configures, connects, and syncs to my Gmail account very well. What's most useful is that it maintains a (user-selectable) number of messages offline, so you can read, reply to, and manage these messages while offline. All changes or sends get updated the next time you go online. Though it is not without its quirks, it is a very solid application. To me, one of the most useful feature is that the Mail app will download and let you view a number of attachment types including .PDF, Word, and Excel files in a viewer component that provides Multitouch zooming, panning and screen rotation. Can't wait for an eBook application to be developed? Just Email yourself a document, and you can read it offline.

iPod Touch - Maps

Maps

This is an amazing application. It is a standalone Google Maps application that has some offline capabilities. You can view the map, satellite, and hybrid views as well as traffic if (available.) It uses Multitouch to zoom in and out of maps, and you can search for destinations as well as define routes. And

once you have a route set and downloaded, you can easily and quickly step through the route while offline. It displays the route text as well as the map surounding each route point. Though Maps only provides for one offline route, it's still a very elegant and impressive application.

iPod Touch - Notes

Notes

To me, this one application was worth the price of the cost of the upgrade (with a couple minor caveats.) Being able to quickly and easily add information into the iPod Touch on-the-go is very important to me, and is an essential PIM component. The Notes application is simple, yet very functional and fun to use. Its animation, though not necessary for function, was unexpected and is very pleaseing. Editing uses the fingertip keyboard entry, but it's very usable.

So far, I only have two complaints with the Notes application: The first one is minorâ??I would like to be able to control the sorting of the notes, specifically being able to sort alphabetically. Notes are sorted by last modification date which is really not a big deal, but as you get more and more notes, this could become cumbersome. My second complaint is that Notes does not sync with anything through iTunes. The files may be backed up, but they are not editable or accessible. I think this is a huge oversight on Apple's part, and I hope that Apple releases a version that will sync with Outlook or some such. (Hmmmâ?¦how about WiFi syncing with Google Notes?) I'd also like to see it optionally sync to and from .txt text files through iTunes. Being able to enter notes on a computer using a real keyboard is really essential for long text entry, and could leverage Notes as an extremely useful reference tool.

jimstips.com

iPod Touch - Weather

Weather

This slick little weather application is simple: Define one or more locations, and when you open the application while WiFi is connected, it pulls in the current and forecasted weather conditions for the location. The weather data comes from Yahoo, and is presented in a very clean graphic format.

iPod Touch - Stocks

Stocks

This little application will let you define several stocks to track, and like the Weather application, it will go out onto the Internet via WiFi and pull in the latest stock and index quotes with corresponding graphs.

Web Clips

This is an integration enhancement that lets you save a Bookmark of a Web page in Safari as an icon on your iPod Touch's Home page. This means that, for example, next to your Calculator icon, you can have a tappable link directly to the CNN home page. It works on any Web page, and makes access to your desired Web pages a snap.

Customized Home Page

This system enhancement lets you move around and order the icons on the iPod Touch's Home page. It supports up to nine pages of icon groupings, so you can more logically organize your applications and Web Clips. You can also customize what icons appear on the Dock.

Bottom Line

So the bottom line is that Apple has provides some excellent applications and enhancements. Is it worth your $20? That completely depends on your needs and wants, but for me, it was well worth it.

jimstips.com

Category

1. iPod Touch Tips

Tags

1. Apple
2. Gmail
3. Google
4. import
5. iPod Touch
6. keyboard
7. review

Date
11/10/2026
Date Created
02/26/2008