

Why the iPod shuffle is a Winner

Monday, 31 January 2005

The iPod shuffle isn't the new Macarena for 2005, though Apple hopes otherwise. Apple's Achilles heel in digital music dominance is price. The most affordable iPod pre-shuffle came in at \$250 making it quite a financial commitment for some. The shuffle drops in at \$99 for the 512MB version and \$149 for 1GB.

When I first saw the shuffle, I said that this was Apple's first big mistake in quite some time. It felt cheap, has the same boring white color, and lacks a display didn't bode well when similar devices from Creative offered more for just a few extra bucks.

After much consideration, I realized that the shuffle isn't a mistake at all. It's not that there are some miraculous hidden features that changed my mind. The reason Apple released another winner is the iTunes Music Store and nothing else. With more than 250 million songs purchased, Apples foray into online music is a success. Where Creative might win on design, it fails simply because the songs from the iTunes Music Store are an Apple exclusive. An exclusive feature found in the shuffle.