

# The South Bay Mug

# MAGINTOSH

A Monthly Cupful For South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members, Jan. 2005

## MACHinations

A personal view from Bob

### Streaming Audio

There's a ton of music on the Internet, both as files and streaming audio. iTunes let's you listen to free Internet radio programs. Click the Radio icon in the iTunes sidebar, select from many genres, pick a station and enjoy. It helps to have a high-speed Internet connection for best quality but many stations work at dial-up speeds. Many broadcasts are archived on the Internet and can be played using your browser and a media player. Two of my favorites are "Prairie Home Companion" (NPR) and "Take the Floor" (BBC).

There are several streaming audio (and video) formats. Most popular is Real Audio, followed by Windows Media and QuickTime. We all have QuickTime and you can download the free RealPlayer 10 and Windows Media Player 9.

**Audio Hijack** Once you can listen to streaming audio, wouldn't it be nice to record it. You can hook up a tape recorder, but since we live in a digital age, copy it digitally and add it to iTunes or an iPod or burn it to a CD. There's a couple of programs that do it. I've been using Audio Hijack (\$16), and more recently, Audio Hijack Pro (\$32). (There's also WireTap Pro (\$19). I understand earlier versions were free and still work.) Tell Audio Hijack the application you want to capture (hijack) audio from (e.g. iTunes, Safari, RealPlayer or DVD Player) and it records all audio from that application alone. Audio Hijack Pro can save it as AAC or MP3 as well as AIFF. It can import into iTunes, burn a collection of tunes to a CD or put it on your iPod. Audio Hijack also works as an audio recorder from a line input (tape/records) or microphone, but it's not as full-featured as other audio recording programs.



**On-line Music** Apple is Mr. Big in on-line music sales and uses the "buy it and keep it" model. RealNetworks and others are trying to cash in on music sales using a subscription model. Apple uses AAC encoding, while others use Microsoft's WMA. Each uses different content protection schemes (know as digital rights management, or DRM), and are not compatible.

**Rhapsody.** RealNetworks just announced Rhapsody.com, a browser-based streaming music subscription service for broadband users that now works with Macs. It's "all-you-can-eat" for a monthly fee. Subscribers paying for the Rhapsody Unlimited service can stream as much audio as they like for a \$10 per month, but if you stop paying you can no longer listen. At the present time it doesn't let you save songs to your Mac or iPod. Audio Hijack can record them, but it's in violation of RealNetwork's license agreement.

With the launch of Rhapsody.com, users can, for free, stream up to 25 songs a month on-demand, as well as listen to 25 commercial-free streaming "radio" stations classified by theme and genre. Rhapsody carries over 1.4 million tracks from the five major music labels as well as independent distributors, so RealNetworks has enabled free streaming access to a big library of commercial music. They hope you'll like it and subscribe and that they will earn enough advertising revenue from the browser-based player that they'll eventually come out ahead.

Sign up with an email address, zip code and year of birth but you don't have to give them a credit card number. Install the RhapsodyPlayerEngine.plugin. I signed up using Safari and found the service to work well and to be easy to use.



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