

## Getting to Know iPod Video

You have heard it all over--Apples iPod Video is the best video player there is. You dont question it anymore because a lot of people claim it is so. But is it, really? Not quite. That honor rightfully belongs to Zen Vision, a Creative Labs product. Zen Vision is every good thing iPod Video is, and more. The size of the screen for video playback in Zen vision is a whopping 3.7 high-resolution screen, which is a lot of steps ahead of the iPod Videos 2.5 screen. On paper, 1.2 may not seem to be such a huge difference, but it really does matter once you are in front of the screen.

Aside from that, Creative Lab players--in which the Zen Vision is included--have something very useful that iPod players dont have--a feature that allows listening to and recording FM radio. In this way, you can catch up on your favorite radio shows any time you want. Creative Lab players also have a built-in voice recorder which is great for taking notes in classes or work; it is also very helpful in giving yourself some reminders every now and then.

Of course, there are some areas wherein the iPod Video reigns supreme. In terms of battery life, iPod Video has 20 hours, while Creative Zen Vision only has 13 hours. To make up for this weakness, Creative Lab offers the option to purchase extended-life batteries, but this will cost you extra.

If you are torn between the Creative Zen Vision and the iPod Video, here is something to consider--the iPods screen is smaller, but it offers better views even when looked at from different angles. The Creative screen, though larger, is best viewed straight on; when viewed from other angles, the pictures are not as clear. If your priority is storing music over video, get the iPod Video. However, if your main concern is storing video, and storing music is only a nice additional feature for you, then you are better off buying Creative Zen Vision.

Nowdays, a digital audio player is not enough. People are looking for a player that can do so much more than churn out music. As a result, manufacturers are in stiff competition with each other to come up with the latest innovation. As of this moment, the latest is the video player. iPod has one, Creative Lab has one. iRiver also jumped on the video player bandwagon with it U10 video player. iRivers U10 is a bundle of contradictions. Sometimes, it seems to be the perfect choice for all digital media lovers; sometimes, you just dont have any idea what iRiver folks were thinking when they were designing the player.

Lets begin with the positive. iRivers 2.2 screen, though smaller than those of iPod video (2.5) and Creative Zen Vision (3.7), has a higher resolution and quality. The battery life is also something to rave about at 28 hours. That in itself is a good thing, but it is made even better by the price--\$199.99 and \$249.99, depending on the disk size.

Now lets move on to the negative. The U10 come in two sizes--512MB and 1GB. For music files, these sizes are adequate, but for video files, they mean nothing. Unlike Apple and Creatice, iRiver does not offer video players with a disk size of around 30GB.

Aside from the dismaying disk size, iRiver also has a hard-to-use navigation system which can not hold a candle to iPods clicking wheel system. You need to have a bit of a techie in you to find your way around iRiver U10. However, most people dont want something that is hard to operate, so in this aspect, iRiver fails to appeal to the pop culture market.

As of now, the iRiver U10 feels like an experiment, something which iRiver will use to decide what the market really wants--is it disk space, battery life, or extra features? Perhaps iRiver is just biding its time, waiting for the perfect moment to release a player that can surpass iPod and Creative. This remains to be seen.

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