

Title:

iPods in the Workplace: Diligence or Distraction?

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Summary:

The most wonderful and irritating thing about iPods in the office, says author Barbara Pachter

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Article Body:

Aplet, 32 and a former rock musician, rarely separates himself from his iPod, and that include

When he's not enjoying his downloaded music, from Bob Marley to the White Stripes, he listens

"My iPod's a lifesaver," says Aplet. "If I'm coding a Web site and I need to be focused and no

[Tuning Out to Get Cranking](http://www.ipods-world.com)

Office drones everywhere have been doing the same thing for years, and their ranks seem to be

A recent survey by Spherion, a recruiting and staffing company, found that nearly a third of U

"I am in favor of any technology that can be used for entertainment while looking exactly like

However, what do bosses and colleagues think about the iPod invasion? That's where things can

Closing Doors

Is listening to music at work really a boost to productivity, they wonder, or is it a distract

Does plugging into an iPod isolate listeners from their coworkers, shutting down natural commu

What about security issues? Is it possible for a disgruntled worker to download sensitive corp

Some companies, typically smaller, tech-oriented firms, are fine with their employees firing u

['You've Got to Be Careful'](http://www.ipods-world.com)

However, not all companies are excited about the invasion of the iPod people.

Asked about iPods at Intel (Nasdaq: INTC) in Folsom, Calif., company spokesperson Teri Munger

"I have never seen anyone with an iPod in the workplace," at least in her building, she says.

The tiny players are not as innocuous as they look, some companies insist, and raise some seri

"They're wonderful devices," says Barbara Pachter, an office-etiquette and communications spec

The Spherion survey, conducted by Harris Interactive (Nasdaq: HPOL), found that younger worker

Those iPods, MP3 players and the like seem to be most commonly used among workers with "more m

"In that kind of niche situation, the music seems to keep people motivated and moving," Wiatre

Not All Workplaces Right for iPod

Daniel Robin, a workplace consultant in Santa Cruz, Calif., agrees that the devices have their

www.ipods-world.com>However, at others? Not so much.

"It seems fine if a person is flying solo, like an information-technology technician who spends

"What if you can't hear a forklift approaching?" Robin asks.

Or a colleague complaining?

The most wonderful and irritating thing about iPods in the office, says Pachter, is their ability

"The 'pro' part of it is that their music doesn't really bother other people, and it may help

"The downside is that people get so caught up in what they are listening to that they don't hear
iPod iSolation

"Dilbert" creator Adams, who has poked fun at the phenomenon in his wildly popular comic strip,

"Still, anything that makes your coworkers less likely to talk to you has to be a good thing,"

Dale Carnegie Training takes the matter a bit more seriously. The company advises caution when

"Even if your office sanctions iPod use, first consider your specific position and goals," Dal

"The iPod may isolate you and discourage interaction with others."

www.ipods-world.com>Setting Policies

At Intel, the decision about whether using iPods is appropriate is up to individual managers,

Wiatre of Spherion says some companies are setting policies about when and how iPods can be used

"Some of our clients ban them," he says. "Others are setting policies specific to the job and

Folsom startup SynapSense has no such policies. Most of its 40 employees, who hail from such firms

"We have a very diverse set of people, and they listen to all kinds of different music," she says

For software developers or code writers, anyway. Nealon herself leaves her iPod at home.

"I'm a marketing person, and I love interacting with people around me," she says. "I only use

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