

Setting up an iTunes server

You will need:

1. A spare computer, running Mac OS X Tiger or better.
2. A home network.
3. Some music.

The Computer

This doesn't have to be a powerful computer. Any Mac 667 MHz or better will do. A PowerMac would be best. RAM of 1 GB or more is recommended. Storage is up to you, but make it significantly more than your library.

The Network

I recommend a gigabit ethernet connection, but for music only, 802.11g or better is fine.

Setting up Sharing

First, if you don't have it already, get [iTunes 8](#). Install it on all the client computers. It isn't necessary for the server, but can be useful.

Do the following for all computers.

Go to System Preferences -> Sharing.

For Tiger, turn on "Personal File Sharing." If you have Windows computers on the network, turn on "Windows Sharing" as well.

For Leopard, turn on "File Sharing" and share the whole hard disk. Click "Options..." Turn on AFP sharing. If you have Windows computers on the network, turn on SMB sharing.

Setting up iTunes

Do the following for all of your client computers.

In Finder, do Command+K. Type “afp://<serverIPaddress>.” No quotes or period.

In iTunes, do iTunes -> Preferences. Click the “Advanced” tab. First, if it isn’t checked already, check “Keep iTunes Music folder organized.” Do not click the turn on the item beneath that. Then click “Change” next to the library location area. Find your server’s name, and go down to <harddisk>/Users/<username>/Music/iTunes/iTunes Music. Click “Open.” Next, File -> Library -> Consolidate Library. Click consolidate. Get a snack or something, this takes awhile.

Cleanup

Once the copy is done, go to ~/Music/iTunes/ on a client computer. Delete the “iTunes Music” folder, but not anything else.

Dynamic Updating

iTunes doesn’t do this on its own, but we can change that somewhat.

First, go to <harddisk>/Applications/AppleScript. Open AppleScript Utility. Turn on the Script Menu. Uncheck “Show Computer Scripts.”

Open Automator. Choose Custom Workflow.

Drop a “Find Finder Items” in. Change the location to your server’s “iTunes Music” folder. Add criteria Kind is: Audio and Date Modified: this week.

Drop an “Import Files into iTunes” in. Change it to Existing playlist: Library.

Do File -> Save As... Save it as a Workflow in ~/Library/Scripts. Name it “Synchronize Library.” If you want, make a new folder called “iTunes” in the Scripts folder and save it there. Quit Automator.

Now in the Script Menu, you have your Workflow to update your iTunes library.

I don't use Quicksilver, but I'd imagine you could set a key command to launch that workflow.

Imperfections

These are little things that aren't perfect. If Apple were to create a server version of iTunes, chances are these problems would be resolved. Solutions are listed in the next section.

1. Things you subscribe to, i.e. Podcasts, don't carry over from one computer to another.
2. For some reason, occasionally iTunes changed the library location back to the default location.
3. For some reason, iTunes forgets the location of media.

That's all I've observed, but if you notice any more, contact me somehow.

Solutions

1. Subscribe to the same podcasts on all the computers.
2. Transfer the media from the folder at ~/Music/iTunes/iTunes Music to your folder on the server, then change the library location back to the one on the server.
3. Play the media and locate it on the server.