



iTunes U Guidelines

Creating your iTunes U site

Contents

Overview	1
Collections—the basic building blocks	2
Why metadata matters	3
Site art and design	5
Additional resources	7

Overview

Welcome to iTunes U, an innovative way to distribute lectures, lessons, podcasts, and more. iTunes U is accessed by millions of people around the world using Mac computers, PCs, and iPhone and iPod touch devices. iTunes U in the iTunes Store distributes over 200,000 audio and video assets from hundreds of colleges and universities, plus respected museums, libraries, and public broadcasting stations, covering almost every topic imaginable. And you are now part of it.

These guidelines are designed to help you build and launch a clear, well-branded iTunes U site.

iTunes U sites are streamlined and straightforward. A *site* is comprised of pages that are interconnected and managed by the iTunes U content provider. Each institution has its own branded home page and secondary pages. Each site contains downloadable audio, video, or PDF files called *items*. These individual items—lectures, speeches, demonstrations, exhibits, etc.—are grouped together in *collections*. Collections are the basic units, or building blocks, for organizing content in iTunes U. A collection page represents a single concept or focused main idea.

You want your institution's iTunes U site to be a popular destination. The content you create will have a lot to do with that—and so will the design decisions you make along the way.

By following these guidelines, you will be able to create an iTunes U site that is well organized and engaging for your audience.

Collections—the basic building blocks

The first principle in creating an iTunes U site is to start with good collections.

A collection contains courses, series, or tracks that are associated with a main topic. Some examples are a lecture series, a museum walking tour, or a group of resources, like birdcalls.

With clearly named, specifically defined collections, visitors can easily navigate your content and find what they are looking for, making them more likely to view more of your content.

Avoid putting too much content into a single collection page. Instead, look for opportunities to split groups of items into more specific collections. It's the difference between an unwieldy collection of 300 items labeled "Science" and smaller, easier-to-navigate collections labeled "Plant Life" or "Organic Chemistry."

On the other hand, don't get too granular. A collection page should never be used just for a single item. Instead, look for similar items that could be combined into a new collection (e.g., "Authors Discussing Authors"). This makes it easier for people to discover related or sequential content. And if your content expands over time (with additional lectures, for instance), a learner can subscribe to the collection and automatically receive new items as they're posted.

Elements of a Collection

The screenshot shows an iTunes U collection page for "Tutankhamun: The Golden King & the Great Pharaohs" by the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University. Annotations identify the following elements:

- Collection Name:** Tutankhamun: The Golden King & the Great Pharaohs
- Collection Author:** Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University
- Collection Description:** November 15, 2008 - May 25, 2009. The Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University presents Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs, opening on November 15th, 2008, at the Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center. This awe-inspiring exhibition spans the greatest eras of Egyptian History—from the Old Kingdom to the Late Period—between 2600 - 660 BC.
- Highlights Table:**

Name	Time	Artist	Album	Price	Comment
Philip Glass - Conversation in ...	53:37	Philip Glass and Sh...	King Tutankhamun	Free	Carlos Museum, Philip Glass, Shalom C
The Shock of the New: Akhnat...	15:10	Shalom Goldman, P...	King Tutankhamun	Free	A lively conversation about the radical
Philip Glass on the origins...	7:46	Philip Glass and Ro...	King Tutankhamun	Free	Philip Glass. Creativity. Collaboration. A
Tutankhamun Exhibit Pres...	51:52	Atlanta Mayor Shirl...	King Tutankhamun	Free	Atlanta Civic Center, King Tut, Michael
Philip Glass - Conversatio...	53:59	Philip Glass and Sh...	King Tutankhamun	Free	Carlos Museum, Philip Glass, Shalom C
Tutankhamun Press Releas...		Michael C. Carlos ...		Free	
The Michael C. Carlos Mus...	8:30	Michael C. Carlos ...	King Tutankhamun	Free	art, sculpture, discovery, science, mumm

Do: Organize content into specific categories. **Don't:** Make a collection that consists of only one item or includes too much content.

Look for similar items that could be combined together for a new collection.

Why metadata matters

Metadata is basic information about a digital file that's embedded in the file structure. Because most people look for iTunes U content via search, you need to be thorough and precise when entering your metadata. Metadata tells people what your content is about, so it typically includes the name of the item, the name of the collection it belongs to, the name of the instructor or lecturer, its category (e.g., a broad subject or the department that created it), and additional information (e.g., assignment details, upload instructions, and historical background). For more information, view the File Metadata Reference Chart in the Additional Resources section of this document.

Naming your collection

The title you give a collection can be critical to its success. An intriguing title can make your collection stand out from similar collections offered by other institutions. A clear title instantly communicates its relevance to time-pressed learners. A provocative title can arouse interest in casual passersby. The best collection names are specific and easy to understand. Titles that are vague or generic are less likely to attract subscribers, no matter how compelling the content may be. A collection called "Lecture Series" is easy to ignore, while "Lectures from Technology Innovators" is anything but.

If the collection is a college course, use the entire name instead of just the course abbreviation. People are less likely to click "Bio 101" than they are "Bio 101: An Introduction to Biology." Remember that prospective subscribers will often see your collection title while scanning iTunes U. Overly clever titles that don't describe the content are likely to be ignored by users. Below are some examples of successful collection titles:

"60-Second Lectures"

"Einstein and the Mind of God"

"Roy's Writing Tools"

"Wired Study Tips"

"Medieval Islamic Medicine"

Describing your collection

Every iTunes U collection page allows space for you to describe the purpose, scope, and subject matter covered by the content or items within the collection. You should also include anything else that people might find interesting (how the content was created, for instance). Consider this description from the collection "History of Jazz":

"These programs are created by Dr. Gordon Vernick, Associate Professor of Music at Georgia State, and produced by WMLB 1690 Atlanta 'Voice of the Arts.' Each segment is intended to shed light on important individual creative jazz musicians and specific movements/genres within the jazz canon. They are intended for jazz lovers and those who are merely interested in this important American musical art form."

Naming your items

The best item names include important information about the content, with the most vital words early in the title. For example, consider the following title:

"The Trojan War—Myth or Fact: Recent Excavations at Troy"

Keep a close eye on the user interface for iPod and iPhone mobile devices—you'll want to be sure that enough of the title shows when the podcast is being played. Put important information at the beginning, because long titles will likely not appear in full.



Choose your words carefully.

All the information you write into a collection's description is searchable. Maximize awareness by including relevant words in your description.



Try, then try again.

Experiment with your item's metadata to see what works best for the content. You can change the metadata at any time, and iTunes will recognize the changes within 24 hours.



No need to duplicate keywords.

Words already used in an item's title or summary automatically appear in searches, so you should use additional keywords that are associated with the item.



Put RSS to work for your site.

With RSS you can add or delete content from your iTunes U site, keep your audience informed, describe a collection's subject matter and media format, and more.

Generating keywords

Keywords, another important component of your metadata, are words that are pertinent to your collection. For example, if you have a podcast titled "Darwin's Journey to the Galapagos Islands," you would include keywords that users are likely to search for, such as "Beagle," "tortoise," "origin," "species," "evolution," and so on.

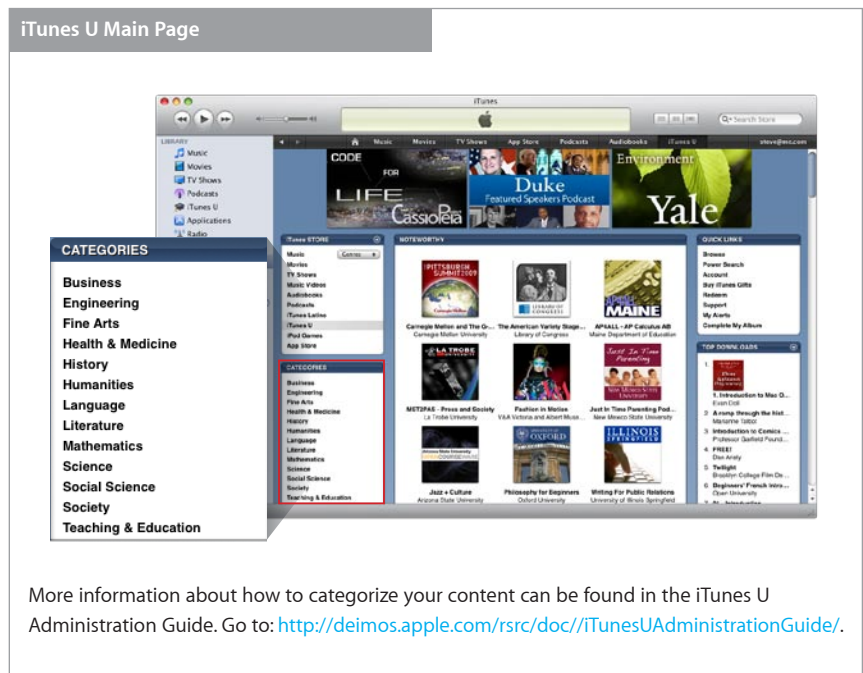
To prevent abuse of the keyword feature, iTunes will index only the first 12 keywords found in an item's tag, so be sure to prioritize carefully. Each keyword should be separated by spaces or commas. Also, know that listing a keyword twice will not increase its search relevancy.

RSS feeds

When populating your collections via RSS feed, pay attention to the title, author, description, and keyword tags at the channel level of your collection feed. This metadata, along with your collection artwork, is your product packaging. It will determine whether your item appears in relevant searches and whether users who find it are likely to subscribe to it. Please note—users do not see the collection's subtitle until after they have downloaded the content to their computer, iPod touch, or iPhone, which means they make their initial decision to download your item based solely on your title, art, and description.

Categorize your content

The main page of iTunes U includes a set of categories. These categories give users the ability to browse topics such as business, science, and history. Categorizing your content allows it to show up in the categories on the main page of iTunes U. This gives your content additional exposure. While many people use search words to discover content, others prefer to browse by category. For example, if you categorize your collection of "Author Talks" under "Literature," users will have the ability to find it while browsing that category. When categorizing your content, you also have the opportunity to choose a more specific subcategory, such as "Fiction."



More information about how to categorize your content can be found in the iTunes U Administration Guide. Go to: <http://deimos.apple.com/rsrc/doc/iTunesUAdministrationGuide/>.


Site art and design

Artwork for site banners

Site banners are the large image areas that appear at the top of your iTunes U home page. They are your best opportunity to create a distinctive look and feel for your site. There are banners on the home page of your iTunes U site and on each of your secondary pages.

For the sake of clarity, Apple recommends that your site's banner contain only the name of your institution (and possibly a motto or icon). Imagery should represent your institution's identity, incorporating its proprietary colors and logo. Bear in mind that your design will transition from your imagery to a solid background color.

Example of Site Banner Artwork



Your site banner should feature the name of your institution and an image that represents your institution's identity. Take into consideration that your design will transition from your imagery to a solid background color.

Collection artwork

Every collection has its own page on your iTunes U site, and one of the most important elements of that page is the collection artwork—an image that appears next to the collection title. (A smaller version of that artwork will also show up in search results.) The artwork can help build an audience for your content, so be sure to make it as clean and appealing as possible.



Be a familiar face.

Not all the visitors to your podcasts will arrive through your iTunes U home page—many will get there through search inquiries or by browsing categories. All the more reason to design strict brand consistency into every page of your site.

Collection artwork should illustrate the central idea behind the collection. Simplicity is key. If the artwork is complicated, you'll make it difficult for people to understand what the collection is about. Some of the best examples rely on no more than a simple picture and a few words against a plain background. Collection artwork needs to be created at 600 by 600 pixels with a resolution of 72 dpi. Do not exceed this size, as the artwork will not render in smaller versions. Using this "master art," the iTunes Store will automatically generate the various smaller versions that people will see within iTunes U. When a collection appears in a search, its artwork will be presented at 55 by 55 pixels, so it's prudent to test your artwork for legibility at this size.

Some institutions like to include their badge, crest, or logo in collection artwork. Though not required, it can distinguish your content from that of other institutions when it's featured on the iTunes U home page or in an iTunes Store search.

Another reason to invest time and thought in your collection artwork is that collections with high-quality artwork are most often chosen to be featured on the iTunes U home page. This artwork also supports your content on iPhone and iPod.



Learn from the best.

Before you finalize the artwork for a collection, review the current Top Downloads in iTunes U. You can learn a lot by studying the artwork and titles that show up there.

Examples of Collection Artwork

Do: Use simple artwork that communicates the central idea. Create collection artwork with a maximum size of 600 by 600 pixels at 72 dpi. Make sure artwork reads well at 50 by 50 pixels at 72 dpi, the smallest size used on iTunes U.

Don't: Imitate Apple advertising or communications in your artwork, nor create images that show Apple products, such as a Mac, iPod, or iPod earphones.

Artwork for individual items

In addition to collection artwork, you can also assign artwork to individual items within a collection. Once an item is downloaded into someone's iTunes library, this artwork will appear on their iPod or iPhone whenever the item is played. This artwork will also represent the item or content if it's selected to be featured on the iTunes U home page.

To see high-quality examples of artwork for individual tracks, download content from these courses:

"Say It Plain: Great African American Oratory," American Public Media
<http://deimos3.apple.com/WebObjects/Core.woa/Browse/americanpublicmedia.org.1349360431>

"Eat and Be Eaten," Liberty Science Center
<http://deimos3.apple.com/WebObjects/Core.woa/Browse/lsc.org.1551828169>

Content considerations

Never forget that the audience for your iTunes U site goes far beyond the walls of your institution. People everywhere—on your campus, in your community, across the country, and around the world—browse iTunes U every day, looking for something new and thought provoking. Your site should include courses, lectures, and special events that are likely to inspire the most interest. Your institution makes the best impression when your site launches with a critical mass of content that appeals to a broad audience. To be included in the iTunes Store, your site must have a minimum of 150 high-quality audio or video items or media files available for public access. Your site will grow over time, but having a sizable quantity of content at the beginning will position your institution as a significant addition to iTunes U in the iTunes U Store.

Going live

By following these guidelines, you will be able to create a successful site for your institution. The time it takes to build your iTunes U site will vary based on how much content already exists and how large you want your initial site to be.

As you get ready to launch your site, notify Apple of your desire to go live by clicking “Consider this site for inclusion within iTunes U in the iTunes Store” on the Edit Site Settings page. To help ensure that your institution makes the best first impression with millions of iTunes U users, Apple will review your site and provide specific feedback based on best practices.

Additional resources

For more information and technical support, please refer to these relevant resources:

iTunes U Glossary: http://deimos.apple.com/rsrc/doc//iTunesUAdministrationGuide/Glossary/chapter_999_section_1.html#

iTunes U Discussions forums: <http://discussions.apple.com/category.jspa?categoryID=211>

Marketing iTunes U: http://www.apple.com/support/itunes_u

File Metadata Reference Chart			
iTunes U Name	Field Metadata	Suggested Usage	Where Content Displays in iTunes Store
Collection name	Album	Name of the lecture series, course name, or chapter name/number	In Album column
Item name	Name	Descriptive name/title for an individual item	In Name column
Item author	Artist	The author of the individual item—whether the name of an individual speaker or name of an organization	In Artist column
Item year	Year	Year the content was published/created	In Year column
Item comments	Comments	Long description for an individual item; for K–12, include state standards and descriptions	In Comment field of file, go to In File > Get Info > Info panel
Item lyrics	Lyrics	Include a transcript to support alternative access to content, a summary, a list of support resources, transcript, or other information	In Lyrics field of file, go to In File > Get Info > Lyrics panel
Keywords	Grouping	This field can be used for comma-delineated keywords; for K–12, include grade level(s)	In Grouping field of file, go to In File > Get Info > Info panel

Use this reference chart to help quickly identify the fields for populating file metadata on your iTunes U site. To help identify where specific items are on a collection page, see the “Elements of a Collection” diagram on page 2.

RSS Element Reference Chart

iTunes U Name	Element Name	Suggested Usage	Where Content Displays in iTunes Store
Collection name	channel <title>	Descriptive name for the collection of content	In Collection page and in Album column
Language	channel <language>	Accepted values are those in the ISO 639-1 Alpha-2 list (two-letter language codes, some with possible modifiers, such as "en-us")	In Collection page
Collection author	channel <itunes:author>	Name of the content creator; e.g., Prof. John Smith or School of Business	In Collection page
Collection short description	channel <itunes:subtitle>	Short description of the collection	In Description column
Collection description	channel <itunes:summary>	Description of the collection; should include a description of what the content is and why a user should download it	As collection description on Collection page and when the "circled i" in Description column is clicked
Item name	item <title>	Descriptive name/title for an individual item	In Name column
Item author	item <itunes:author>	The author of the individual item—whether the name of an individual speaker or name of an organization	In Artist column
Item time	item <itunes:duration>		In Time column
Item short description	item <itunes:subtitle>	Short description of an item	In Description column
Item description/summary	item <description> or <itunes:summary>	Long description for an individual item	When the "circled i" in Description column is clicked
Item category	item <itunes:category>	Classify based on iTunes U fixed categories	In Category column and in iTunes U in the iTunes Store browser
Keywords	item <itunes:keywords>	This field can be used for comma-delineated keywords; for K-12, include grade level(s)	Not displayed but can be searched

Use this reference chart to help quickly identify the RSS fields for populating content on your iTunes U site. To help identify where specific items are on a collection page, see the "Elements of a Collection" diagram on page 2.

For more information on how to create an iTunes RSS feed, please see iTunes Podcast Technical Spec: <http://www.apple.com/itunes/whatson/podcasts/specs.html>.

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