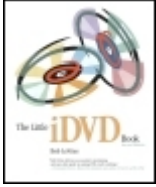
 Add to Project



[Little iDVD Book, Second Edition, The](#)

By Bob LeVitus

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Part 2. A Little Bit Beyond the Basics

Chapter 7. Adding Audio

The finishing touch for your DVD is to add sound. If you included sound in the original movie file, you already have sound playing with your movies. But you can also add sound that will play while viewers flip through the images of your slideshows and sound that will play while viewers consider which menu button to click next. In other words, we're going to talk about the background music that plays when a menu is on-screen.

Getting sound into iDVD is the simple part. But preparing it takes a little more thought and action. There are many different sources for sound—CDs, clips that Apple supplies, or your own recordings. Preparing each one requires slightly different steps, so I'll lay out those steps for you first, then we'll do the easy part—get them into iDVD.

Once you've added sound to your DVD, all that's left to do is preview and burn your DVD.

Gather Your Sound Clips

Just as there are many sources for finding images, there are probably even more for free sound clips, starting with the umpteen files Apple gives .Mac members on their iDisk. It's a great resource that can add a lot to your production, and if you're already a .Mac subscriber, it's free.



The hundreds (thousands?) of music files alone are not worth \$99 a year (the price of a .Mac subscription). But, if you're already a .Mac subscriber, now you know where to find it. They're darn good and worth finding. If you're not a .Mac subscriber already, the music files are yet another reason I think .Mac is a good deal.

You access these iMac files through your iDisk. Choose iDisk from the Finder's Go menu, then you'll find the music in iDisk> Software > Extras > FreePlay Music.

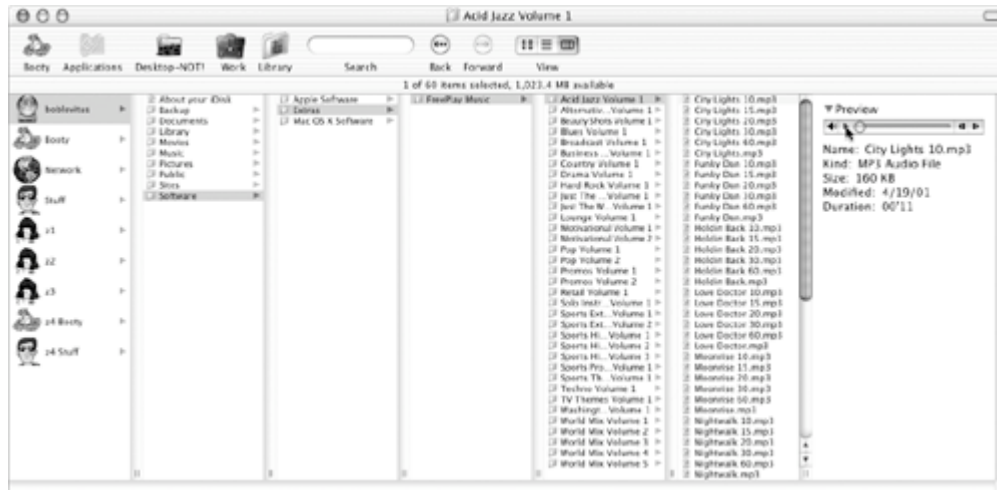


Make sure your computer is set up for Internet access. Visit the Network pane in System Preferences and enter the settings supplied by your Internet service provider. Then go to the Internet System Preference pane and enter your iDisk account information.



You should see many sound clips that are yours for the taking, as shown in [Figure 7.1](#).

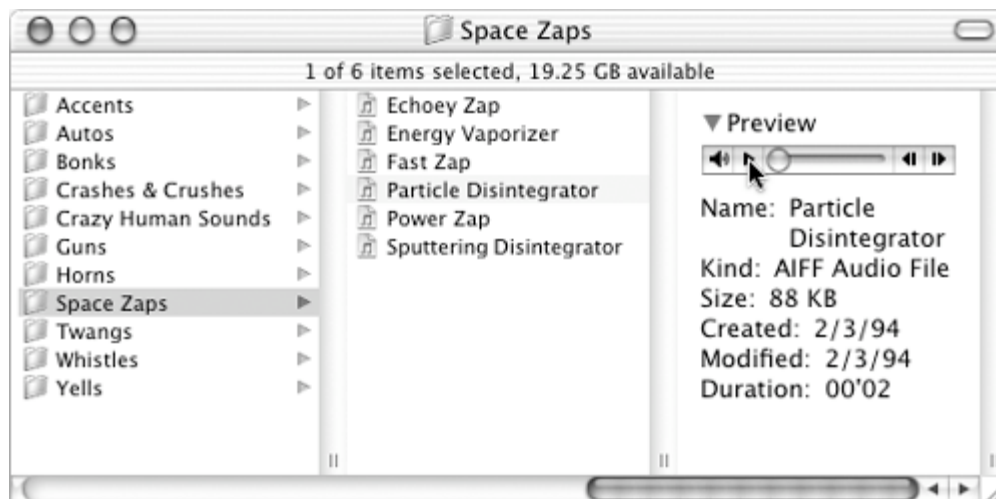
Figure 7.1. You'll have more files than you know what to do with after opening the FreePlay Music folder in your iDisk.



Drag the sound files you'd like to sample onto your hard drive. If you try to play them from within the FreePlay Music folder it won't work as well, because you'll have to wait as the music is sent over the Internet. Once they're on your hard drive, double-click the sound clips one at a time to listen to them.



If you choose the Column view in the Finder you can play the sound clips by clicking the Play Sound button in the Preview pane, like this:





The previews take longer to begin playing from your iDisk than they do once you've copied them to your local hard disk.

It's a good idea to put the sound clips you want to use for your project in your iTunes Music folder, so they'll be available in iDVD's Audio pane.



If you want to access the FreePlay Music folder frequently, make an alias and put the alias on your desktop or in your Dock. When you open the alias file, you'll go directly to the FreePlay Music folder. This shortcut saves a lot of time; you won't have to navigate through several folders, each of which takes a while to open.

Apple also supplies one sample audio clip with iDVD. It's called Slideshow audio.mp3 and it is in the Media folder (inside the iTunes Tutorial folder). It's a snappy little Latin number that's sure to make your DVD viewers want to dance.

Another source of free music is your audio CD collection.



Beware the long arm of the law, though; chances are you're borrowing copyrighted material if you take songs from a commercial CD. Be sure to get permission or a license to use the songs if you're making the DVD for commercial purposes.

That precaution noted, it's perfectly OK to nab your favorite tune to use on the DVD you're making for the grand-folks.

Here's how to grab music from any audio CD to use on your DVD:

Although, you can import audio directly into iDVD from a CD (choose Import > Audio from the File menu) this doesn't do you any good, because iDVD doesn't import until you click the Burn button. And you can't put a blank DVD-R in the SuperDrive, because the program won't let you eject the audio CD, which is the source of some of the files it needs to burn the disk. It's a classic catch-22.... Therefore, you must extract the audio from the CD before you import it into iDVD. The easiest way is with iTunes.

To extract a track with iTunes, launch iTunes and insert an audio CD. iTunes might connect to the Web to look for title information (you can tell it not to in Preferences). If the CD icon isn't highlighted in the Source list, click it to highlight. A list of the tracks on that CD will appear on the right. Click the checkbox for any track you want to import and then click the Import button in the upper-right corner of the iTunes window.



Be careful...iTunes' default is to import all the songs on the disc. So make sure you have selected the checkbox for only the song or songs you want.



To turn all the checkboxes on or off, Command-click any checkbox.

iTunes will now extract the track from the CD, create a sound file, and place that sound file on your hard drive in the iTunes folder inside the Music folder in your Home folder.



iTunes will import the file in whichever format you've set in the Import tab of the Preference window. By default it will import the file as an MP3. You can change this to AIFF or WAV. If you want the best sound possible, change the setting to AIFF. Be aware that AIFF files are 10 times bigger than MP3 files.



OK, now that you have the sound file on your Mac's hard drive (again, I'd recommend transferring it into your iTunes Music folder for ease of use later), you can import it into iDVD, along with any other sound files on your hard drive.

Import Sound

There are two different ways you can use sound in your DVD, either playing in the background of a menu or in the background of a slideshow.

Musical menu background

It's nice for viewers to have music to listen to while they decide which of your slideshows and videos to look at. So why not add some ambiance to your opening menu.

First, navigate to your DVD's screen menu. Click the Customize button to open the drawer, then click the Settings button to activate the Settings pane. Now drag a sound file from your hard drive into the Audio well in the Background section of the Settings pane.



If you followed my earlier advice about storing your music files in the iTunes Music folder, there's a second way: Click the Audio button to activate the Audio pane, then drag an item from the song list right onto the DVD menu screen.



Don't forget—iDVD will only play the first 30 seconds of the music (or whatever value between 0–30 seconds you set in the Motion Duration slider).



One other thing: You can drag a sound file from the Finder directly onto the menu (rather than onto the Background Audio well).

If you don't hear the sound, that probably means you don't have motion turned on. Just click the Motion button (or press Command-J) to get the sound effect.



With background audio, it doesn't matter if you drag an audio file onto the main menu or the Drop Zone (if the theme has one). Either way the song will play whenever this menu is on screen.

Musical slideshow background

And why not have a little music to accompany your slideshows? Let your viewers dance to a little samba music while they watch or soothe them with something symphonic. No matter what your choice, all you need do to add accompaniment to a slideshow is double-click a slideshow's button on any menu screen to open the slideshow editor. Now drag the audio file into the Audio well in the lower-right portion of the editor, like this:



And again, there's a second way to add audio: Click the Audio button to activate the Audio pane, then drag a song from the pane onto the DVD menu screen.



Fit To Audio is my favorite choice because it makes your slideshow last exactly as long as the audio clip so there won't be any awkward breaks or stops. (iDVD does have its limits, thank goodness—the minimum slide duration is one second.) But if your audio clip is short and you have a lot of slides it's better to let the sound loop and choose Manual or 1, 3, 5, or 10 seconds from the pop-up menu. If you choose Manual, the sound will loop until the end of the slideshow and then stop abruptly. Not the most elegant solution, but it's your only option if you want to use sound and also let your viewers control the speed of the slideshow.

Add sound to each slideshow and menu you want to have sound. And—you're not going to believe this—you're just about finished. Congratulations. You've completed all but one last step: You should preview your entire project before you burn your DVD, to make sure there are no glitches (make sure motion is on, then press the Preview button).



Refer back to [Chapter 3](#), "Introduction to Making DVDs," if you need a quick reminder on how to burn your project to disc.