

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/3667/sad-istudio-3-ipod-converter>

SAD iStudio3 - PC

Will this convert your video for iPods?

by Paul Lester published on 1 December 2008

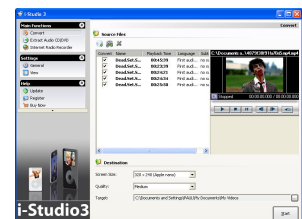
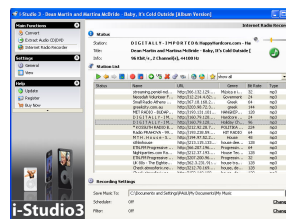
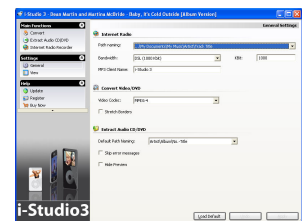
As successful as the iPod and subsequent devices like the iPhone and Apple TV have been for the world's most infamous innovator, it certainly knows how to frustrate by tying users to iTunes and in the case of video, the MP4 format.

Getting your favourite video clips onto a device or into a library is often unnecessarily frustrating, with iTunes itself taking a remarkably long time to convert and transfer content. A more effective solution comes in the form of iStudio3, which claims to offer total media conversion for movies and music.

At heart it's a media converter that reformats any video files that can be viewed on a PC to the appropriate format and resolution for the iPod nano, iPod video, iPod touch or Apple TV. You can choose between three quality settings with the highest intended for clips that are liable to suffer from distracting pixilation, such as fast-motion video. There isn't a lot here in terms of editing features but one useful tool allows you to set a start and end point for a preloaded clip, allowing you to choose exactly what part of the video to save or to cut out end credits, for example.

Conversion is pretty fast, particularly at lower quality settings which for most will still be perfectly acceptable, and holds clear benefits from a speed point of view over iTunes. Unfortunately it can't transfer converted content for you, so you'll still have to use Apple's software to shift files across.

Video files can also be ripped and converted from unprotected DVDs, during which you'll need to select a chapter to convert but can still use the cropping features to pick out specific parts of the video. This obviously takes quite a bit longer but it's still quicker than most other methods.



...cont.

Generally we were impressed by the quality of the video, the fact that it can be automatically stretched to fill the device's screen without distorting the image and the option to choose between MPEG4 or H.264 formats for newer devices.

In addition to video conversion you can also rip audio from CDs, which is nothing new, but if you so desire can also rip audio from DVDs, with similar cropping features available here to specify which parts of a file you need.

The final area of the suite covers internet radio and offers a large browsable station list with the ability to add URLs, filter results, search for specific stations and populate a list of favourites. The software is able to record a station to your hard drive and innovatively can split up songs in to folders labelled by artist and tracks labelled by title. Like other software and hardware that's capable of doing this, tracks are rarely perfect and are often incomplete with remnants of DJ chatter at the start or end, but since this is all but impossible to get spot on we were still quite pleased by the results.

VERDICT

iStudio offers a handful of settings to tweak important areas like file formats, save destinations and some context-sensitive behaviour but generally there's not a lot of in-depth control. The software really is designed to offer a fast and easy solution to managing audio and video files with Apple's devices and in this light it does very well.

If you know your way around audio and video ripping software and free editing tools you may find that there are other solutions available that cover most of what's on offer from iStudio, in which case the software is unlikely to add anything new. For beginners who want a fast, easy and effective way to convert video or rip audio from CDs, DVDs and internet radio stations though, it's a capable if rather basic solution.

At a glance

What is it?

Video and audio conversion for Apple players

Good

Fast and easy to use with good quality results

Bad

A little limited in terms of features, can be done with free tools

Verdict

iStudio3 would be a good solution for beginners who are either unwilling or unable to use iTunes and other free alternatives

Price £24.99

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10