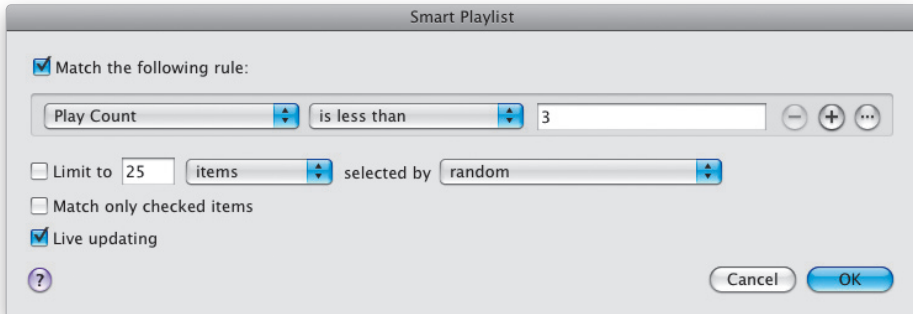# Smart Playlist Idea: Use Genres

Once you've assigned custom genres to your iTunes songs, you can make some wicked smart playlists. For example, I wanted to create a car mix that would be the equivalent of a radio station that played nothing but my songs, in random order, with no commercials, but I didn't want it to include my son's songs, or my daughter's songs (I let them have playlists on my iPod), or any Christmas songs, or…well, you get the idea. So I made a smart playlist by pressing-and-holding the **Option (PC: Alt) key**, then clicking on the **Create a Playlist button** at the bottom-left corner of iTunes, which brings up the Smart Playlist dialog. At the top, under Match the Following Rule, I chose Genre from the first pop-up menu; from the second pop-up menu, I chose Is Not; and then in the text field, I entered the genre I didn't want ("Christmas Songs"). I then clicked on the + (plus sign) button to the right of the text field to add another rule. I chose the same pop-up menus, but in the text field, I entered "My Son's Music." I did it again for "My Daughter's Music," "Conference Music," and "Radio Disney Music." Then I made sure the Live Updating check-box was turned on, and when I clicked OK, my Car Mix smart playlist was created, without any of the songs I didn't want. Now when I add a new song (that's labeled with any other genre than the ones I blocked), it's automatically added to my Car Mix smart playlist.

Smart Playlist Idea: Your Least-Played Songs

Smart Playlist

☑ Match the following rule:

| Play Count | ⬍ | is less than | ⬍ | 3 | ⊖ ⊕ ⋯ |

☐ Limit to 25   items ⬍   selected by random ⬍

☐ Match only checked items

☑ Live updating

?   (Cancel) (OK)

If you have thousands of songs on your iPod (or even hundreds, for that matter), there are probably tunes on there that you haven't listened to much. Want a great idea for a smart playlist? Have iTunes create one made up of songs you haven't played recently (or at all). Start by pressing-and-holding the **Option (PC: Alt) key** and clicking on the **Create a Playlist button** in the bottom-left corner of iTunes. When the Smart Playlist dialog appears, under Match the Following Rule, from the first pop-up menu, choose Play Count; from the second pop-up menu, choose Is Less Than; and then in the text field, type "3" (or however many times you'd like, but keep it a low number). Make sure the Live Updating checkbox is turned on, then click OK. A new smart playlist will be created of your least-played songs, and as you hear these songs more than three times (or however many times you specified), they'll automatically drop off the playlist thanks to the Live Updating option. You could also do a variation on this by choosing Last Played from the first pop-up menu, Is Before from the second, and then in the text field, entering a date from a few months back. When you click OK, iTunes will create a smart playlist made up of songs you haven't heard in months.

Smart Playlist Idea: An Hour's Worth of Favorites You Haven't Heard in a Week
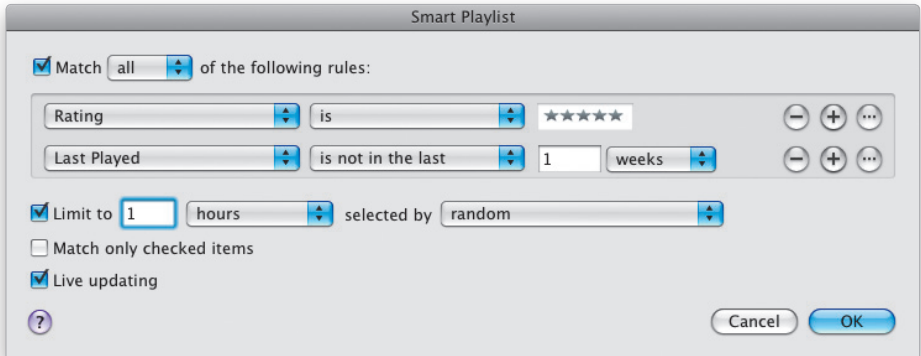
Here's how to create a one-hour-long smart playlist of the best songs you haven't heard in the past week, and best of all, it's constantly, and automatically, updated. Press-and-hold the **Option (PC: Alt) key** and click on the **Create a Playlist button** in the bottom-left corner of iTunes. When the Smart Playlist dialog appears, from the first pop-up menu, choose Rating; from the second pop-up menu, choose Is; and in the Rating field, choose five stars. Click the + (plus sign) button to the right to add another line of criteria, and from the first pop-up menu, choose Last Played; from the second pop-up menu, choose Is Not in the Last; in the text field enter "1," and choose Weeks from the last pop-up menu. Then turn on the Limit To checkbox, enter "1" in the text field, and from the pop-up menu to the right, choose Hours. Now, make sure the Selected By pop-up menu is set to Random and the Live Updating checkbox is turned on. Click OK and you'll only hear an hour's worth of your very best songs that you haven't heard in the last week, and it'll automatically update each week.

Smart Playlist Idea: Your Best Album Tracks
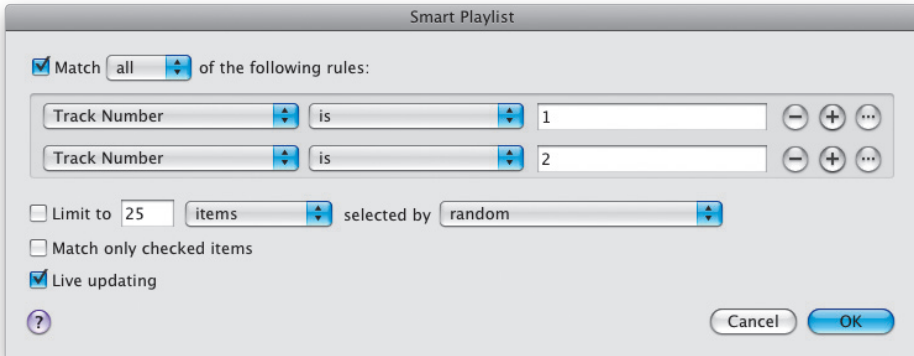
Wouldn't it be great to have a smart playlist of just the best songs from all your albums? Absolutely, but how do you know which songs on an album are the best? Well, traditionally, record companies put the best songs as the first few tracks (Track 1 and Track 2, usually). So, you could create a smart playlist filled with all Tracks 1 and 2. Start by pressing-and-holding the **Option (PC: Alt) key** and clicking on the **Create a Playlist button** in the bottom-left corner of iTunes. When the Smart Playlist dialog appears, from the first pop-up menu, choose Track Number; from the second pop-up menu, choose Is; and in the text field, type "1." Then, click the + (plus sign) button to add a second line of criteria. Choose the same rules for the pop-up menus, but in the text field, type "2." Make sure the Live Updating checkbox is turned on and click OK. Now you'll get a smart playlist made up of what are most likely the best songs from every album you've got.

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iTip: Rating an Album

*Besides just rating individual songs (as you learned in the book), you can also assign ratings to albums by going under the View menu, choosing View Options, then turning on the **Album Rating checkbox**, which adds a new Album Rating column to your main window. If you use this column to rate an album, any songs you have that are on that album will now all share that same rating. If you rate your songs individually, it will automatically calculate an average rating based on the individual songs you rated.*

Smart Playlist Idea: Your Best Albums

In the iTip on the previous page, I showed you how you can turn on a feature that displays the average rating for an album (or lets you rate entire albums at once if you like). Well, you can use this feature to create a pretty slick smart playlist of just your top-rated songs from albums with an average rating of four stars or higher. This is slicker than it sounds, and here's why: entire albums that have lots of high-rated songs will be added to your smart playlist (because there are enough high-rated songs on that album to give it a four-star or higher average rating), but if, like most albums, there are only a few good songs on the albums, then for those albums, only those high-rated songs will be added, and not the ones you always skip over anyway. Press-and-hold the **Option (PC: Alt) key** and click on the **Create a Playlist button** in the bottom-left corner of iTunes. When the Smart Playlist dialog appears, from the first pop-up menu, choose Album Rating; from the second pop-up menu, choose Is Greater Than; and in the Rating field, choose three stars. Then, click the + (plus sign) button on the right to add another line of criteria. From the first pop-up menu, choose Rating; from the second pop-up menu, choose Is Greater Than; and in the Rating field, choose three stars. Now, here's the key thing: from the Match pop-up menu at the top of the dialog, choose Any, then click OK to create a smart playlist of the best songs on all your albums (and nuthin' else).

Smart Playlist Idea: For DJs
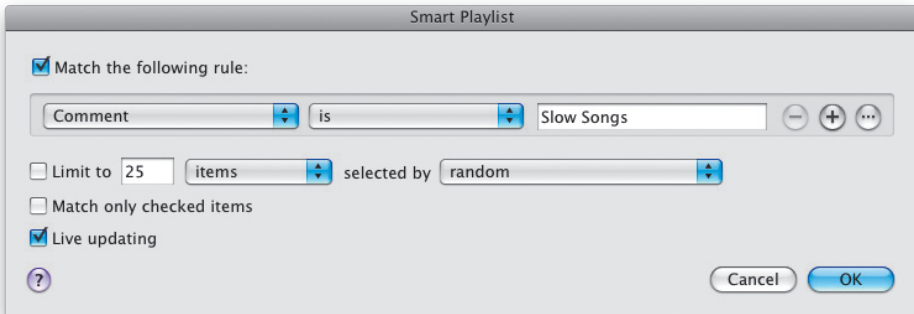
Let's say you're going to be the DJ at a party next week using your iPod. Obviously, you're going to need a lot of dance songs, but you're also going to need a playlist of slow songs. Using a smart playlist, you can gather all the slow songs you need pretty quickly. Just go through your Music Library and Command-click (PC: Ctrl-click) on every slow song you think you might want to use. Once all the slow songs are selected, press **Command-I (PC: Ctrl-I)** to bring up the Multiple Item Information dialog. In the Comments field, type in the words "Slow Songs" and click OK to add that comment to each selected song. Now, press-and-hold the **Option (PC: Alt) key** and click on the **Create a Playlist button** in the bottom-left corner of iTunes. When the Smart Playlist dialog appears, from the first pop-up menu, choose Comment; from the second pop-up menu, choose Is; and in the text field, enter "Slow Songs." Click OK and all the slow songs you added the comment to will be in their own smart playlist. Now do the same for all your dance songs—add the comment "Dance Songs" to each one, and then make a Dance Songs smart playlist the same way.

Smart Playlist Idea: No Explicit Lyrics
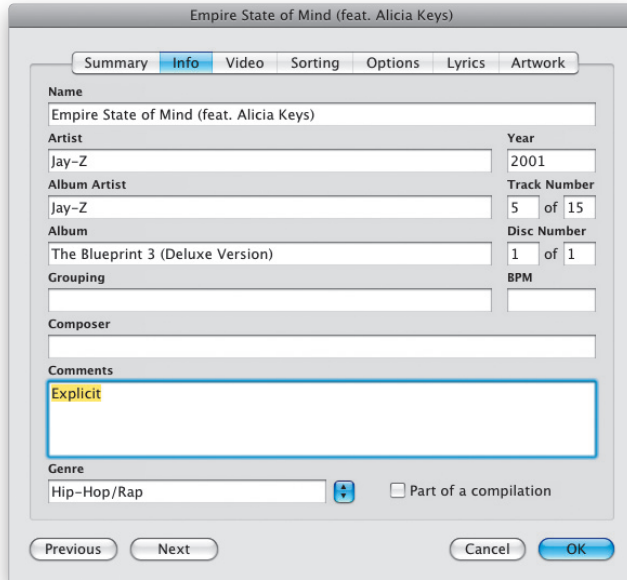
If you have a playlist that holds a lot of current music, you can almost bet that some songs are going to have explicit lyrics (Apple warns which iTunes Store songs have explicit lyrics by putting the word "Explicit" in red beside the song's name). For example, there are explicit lyrics in songs from albums by well-known artists like Korn, Mötley Crüe, Eminem, Jay-Z, and Justin Timberlake, and if some of these artists are your favorites, then it's likely you've downloaded some songs with explicit lyrics. Now, although you might enjoy these lyrics (sicko), you might not want these explicit songs blaring from your car stereo when your 7-year-old is in the backseat. The solution? Create a smart playlist of your favorite songs that automatically excludes any song with explicit lyrics. The first step is "tagging" your songs with a keyword when you download them. So, when you download an explicit song, immediately click on the song, press **Command-I (PC: Ctrl-I)** and, in the Get Info dialog, click on the Info tab. In the Comments field, type the word "Explicit," and then click OK. Now, press-and-hold the **Option (PC: Alt) key** and click on the **Create a Playlist button** in the bottom-left corner of iTunes. When the Smart Playlist dialog appears, from the first pop-up menu, choose Playlist; from the second pop-up menu choose Is; and from the third pop-up menu, choose the playlist with all your favorite songs (including the ones with explicit lyrics). Then, click the + (plus sign) button on the right to add another line of criteria. In the first pop-up menu, choose Comment; from the second pop-up menu, choose Does Not Contain; and in the text field, type "Explicit." Now click OK to create a new smart playlist with all your favorite songs, except the ones with explicit lyrics.

Smart Playlist Idea: Good '80s Songs
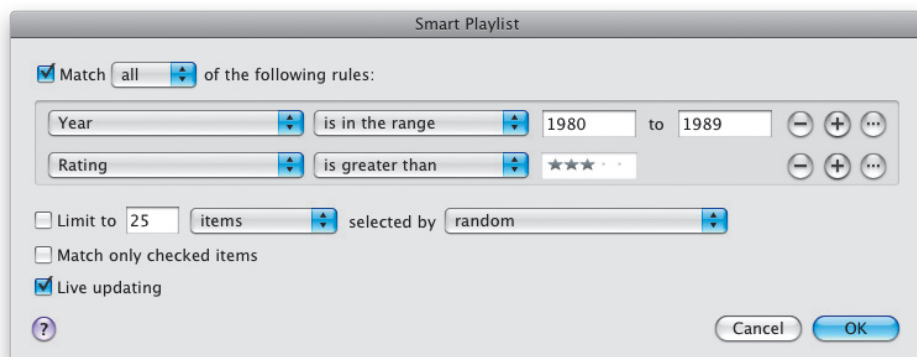
Okay, so you want a playlist of nothing but your favorite songs from the 1980s. Here's what you do: Press-and-hold the **Option (PC: Alt) key** and click on the **Create a Playlist button** in the bottom-left corner of iTunes. When the Smart Playlist dialog appears, from the first pop-up menu, choose Year; from the second pop-up menu, choose Is in the Range; and in the two text fields to the right, enter "1980" and "1989." Then, click the + (plus sign) button on the right to add another line of criteria. From the first pop-up menu, choose Rating; from the second pop-up menu, choose Is Greater Than; and in the Rating field, choose three stars. Click OK and now you've got a smart playlist of just the songs in your Music Library published during the '80s, but since they have a four-star or higher rating, it's just your favorite songs. Not bad, eh?

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iTip: A Playlist of Your New Music

*Want to hear a smart playlist of just your latest music? **Option-click (PC: Alt-click)** on the **Create a Playlist button** in the bottom left of iTunes. In the Smart Playlist dialog, from the first pop-up menu, choose Date Added; from the second, choose Is in the Last; and in the text field, enter "30." Choose Days from the fourth pop-up menu, click OK, and you've got a new smart playlist with only your new songs. If you want to tweak it even more (so it's made up of only your highest-rated new songs), click the + (plus sign) button on the right to add another line of criteria, and from the first pop-up menu, choose Rating; from the second, choose Is Greater Than; in the Rating field, choose four stars; and then click OK.*

Smart Playlist Idea: Your Real Top 100
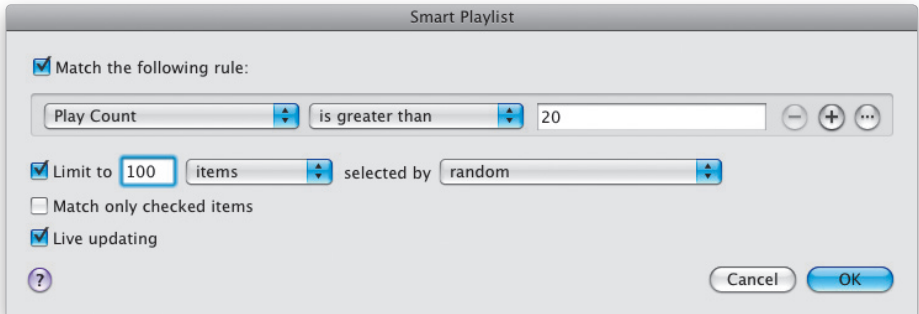
Here's a great way to put together a real list of your favorite songs (which may even include songs you didn't know were your real favorites). Press-and-hold the **Option (PC: Alt) key** and click on the **Create a Playlist button** in the bottom-left corner of iTunes. When the Smart Playlist dialog appears, from the first pop-up menu, choose Play Count; from the second pop-up menu, choose Is Greater Than; and in the text field, enter "20." Turn on the Limit To checkbox, enter "100," and from the pop-up menu to the right, choose Items. Click OK and now you've got a smart playlist with only your most frequently played songs—your real top 100.