iTunes Extras/iTunes LP Development:

Navigation Best Practices v1.0

11-18-2009

Contents

Navigation Overall

In general, navigation on both the computer and Apple TV should be consistent and intuitive. Below are examples of what has been done for both iTunes LPs and iTunes Extras, on both the computer and on Apple TV.

Each iTunes LP and iTunes Extras has one code base only; conditional code must be used to differentiate the user interface between use on the computer and Apple TV.

Three states of buttons are recommended to communicate various states of navigation: hover, pressed, and selected.

Navigation On a Computer

iTunes LP On a Computer

iTunes LP - Overall

Navigation of iTunes LP on a computer should require the fewest amount of clicks to access any given item. All top line items should be laid out potentially on a main page, so that at a glance the user understands what a given iTunes LP has to offer.

Having persistent navigation on content pages is not recommended as it takes up valuable real estate from the content.

iTunes LP - Home

The main page should remain consistent, buttons and links should not disappear, shift, or change in appearance after a user has visited sections and returned to the page.

iTunes LP - Visualizer

On pages such as the visualizer, photo slide shows, or anywhere users will want to focus on elements of the page that are automatically changing and not be distracted by navigational elements, it is recommended to make buttons such as Home, Back, or Next buttons disappear when there is no mouse movement.

iTunes LP - Song List/Lyrics Pages

Song lists should either allow playing of songs from the list, or drill down into lyrics pages that contain obvious play buttons to play the songs. It is recommended that lyrics pages link to other lyrics pages using left/right arrows, potentially in track order, instead of forcing a user back to a song list to select a new page. Scroll bars are a good method for keeping lyrics on one page as opposed to causing the user to click and refresh several pages.

iTunes LP - Bonus Content Pages

It is recommended that if several pieces of content (video, photos, memorabilia, album chronology, etc.) are available in a content section, that there be an indicator to display how many items there are and where a user is in the span of available content.

iTunes LP - Credits and Liner Notes

As with lyrics, scroll bars are a good method for keeping credits on one page as opposed to causing the user to click and refresh several pages.

# iTunes Extras on a Computer

iTunes Extras - Overall

As with iTunes LP, navigation of iTunes Extras on a computer should require the fewest amount of clicks to any given item. All top line items should be laid out potentially on a main page, so that at a glance the user understands what a given iTunes Extras has to offer.

Having persistent navigation on content pages is not recommended as it takes up valuable real estate from the content. Rather, implementing a Home or Back button on all pages is recommended. Additionally, a Resume button can then appear globally on all pages of the iTunes Extras that picks up where a user left off on the film.

iTunes Extras - Home

The main page should remain consistent, buttons and links should not disappear, shift, or change in appearance after a user has visited sections and returned to the page.
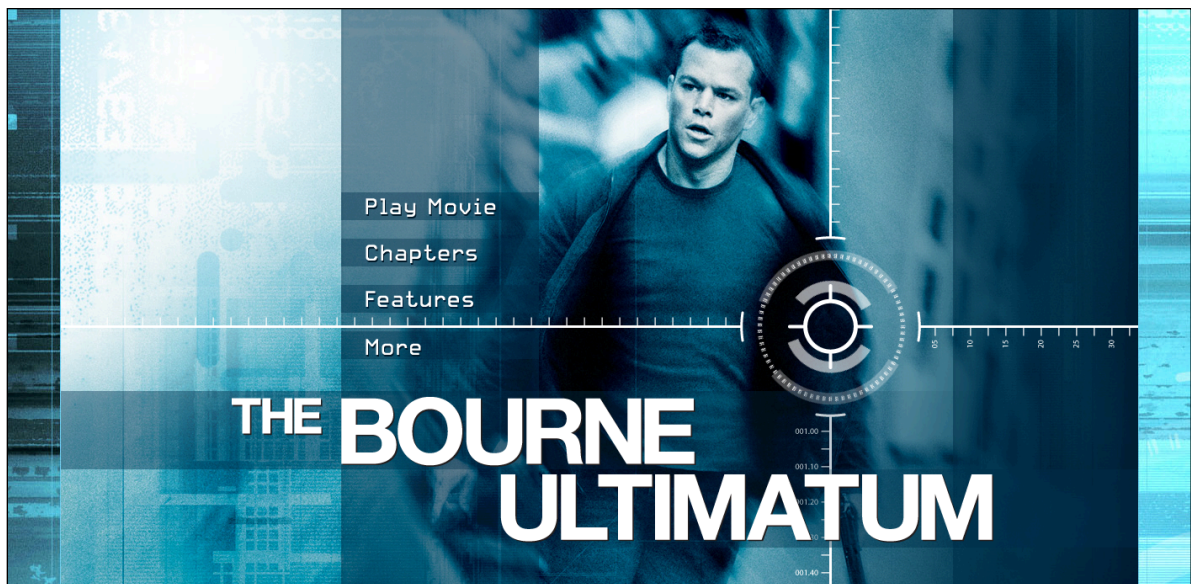
iTunes Extras - Chapters

Like iTunes LP Bonus Content pages, chapters should be accessible via a scrub bar, left/right navigation buttons, or clicking the images to the left and right of a focused chapter thumbnail, and there should be an indicator to display in general how many chapters there are and where a user is in the span of available chapters. Once a chapter has been selected and the movie has played, returning to the iTunes Extras Chapters page should jump to whatever chapter a user last watched.
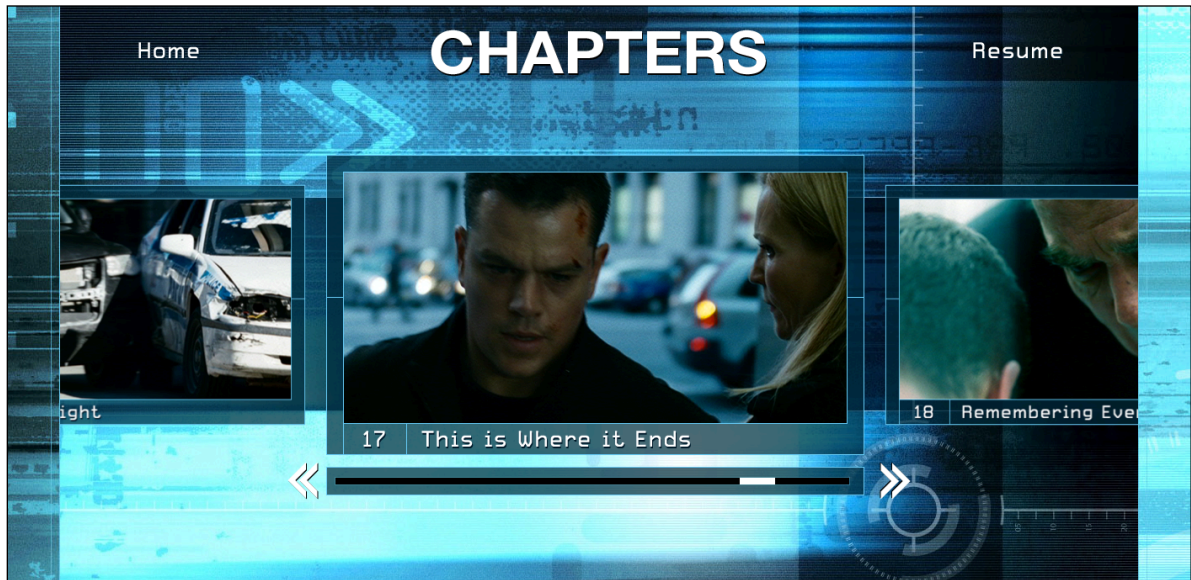
iTunes Extras - Special Features

If using thumbnails to represent special feature content, they can be used as indicators only, and have text or descriptor buttons cause the video or audio features to play, or they can be used as buttons themselves. If being used as buttons, it is recommended to add a play button state when mousing over them for clarity.

If there are multiple pieces of content for a given content type (e.g. four Deleted Scenes) then a good way to present the content is to implement a sliding view with a state indicator, as utilized in Chapters.

iTunes Extras - More
The More page is a place for ancillary content related to, but not integral to, the movie that the iTunes Extras is a part of. Common items for this page would be movie sequels, soundtracks, web links to non-competing studio, or movie web sites. For more detailed information, see the Development Guide.

Navigation on Apple TV

iTunes LP on Apple TV

iTunes LP - Overall

To best support usability on Apple TV, the design should consider that a user has a 6-button remote (UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, PLAY/SELECT, and MENU/BACK). This means that all pages should have elements that are on horizontal planes rather than vertical or staggered structure of sub menus, so that it is very clear to the user that clicking Up or Down will go to the first item on the far left of a horizontal list, and scrolling left or right will cycle through content on the same plane. Also recommended is that the left-most item in any horizontal list, or the top-most item in any vertical list, is default selected.

So when coding for Apple TV, take advantage of the remote buttons and don't force a user to navigate to elements on the page to click on, but rather allow them to experience the iTunes LP with these directional buttons on the remote, unless absolutely necessary. Below are some best practices to achieve this. As mentioned previously, iTunes LPs have one code base only; conditional code must be used to differentiate features/functions between use on a computer and Apple TV.

Also recommended is to remove all Back/Home navigation between pages and to use the Menu button instead to take advantage of the remote and the more natural flow of use on Apple TV, differentiating it from the mouse-and-click function of a computer.

iTunes LP - Visualizer

To avoid burn-on in televisions, it is recommended that a visualizer cause every pixel to change frequently. Otherwise, it's better to remove the visualizer and simply play the album from a Play Album button. Apple TV will then play the album using its default album screen saver, which is used throughout Apple TV when playing music. Clicking Menu from this mode will bring users back to the iTunes LP.

iTunes LP - Song List

Using the Up/Down buttons to scroll the song list pages should be linear, and if two columns are necessary, it is recommended that when hitting the Down button from the last song on the first column, the first song in the second column is highlighted, and when hitting Up from the first song in the second column, the last song in the first column is highlighted, to achieve a numerical browse effect through the song list. When hitting Up from the first song in the track listing, or when hitting Down from the last song in the track listing, the expectation would either be that those do not allow the user to go further, invoking the Apple TV "bonk" tone, or that they continue in a circular fashion, with the first song in the list leading to the last song when hitting Up and vice versa from the last song when hitting Down.

iTunes LP - Lyrics Pages

If a song list is leading to a detailed song page with lyrics, the recommended functionality is to arrive at the page with the play element on the page highlighted, and hitting the Play button on the remote should play the song. This results in a user being taken out of iTunes LP and into the same Apple TV song playback screen with screensaver of the album cover and song title. Hitting Menu takes a user back to the iTunes LP. It is recommended to allow pagination between lyrics pages using the Left and Right remote buttons. You can keep arrow indicators on the page to show that further exploration in those directions is possible, but do not make the arrows navigable. A custom scrollbar is a good way to take advantage of the Up and Down remote buttons. For more detailed information, see the Development Guide.

When hitting Left from the first lyric page in the track listing, or when hitting Right from the last lyric page in the track listing, the expectation would either be that those do not allow the user to go further, invoking the Apple TV "bonk" tone, or that they continue in a circular fashion, with the first lyric page leading to the last song when hitting Left and vice versa when hitting Right from the last lyric page.

iTunes LP - Bonus Content Pages

It is recommended that if several pieces of content (video, photos, memorabilia, album chronology, etc.) are available in a content section, that there be an indicator to display in general how many items there are and where a user is in the span of available content. Hitting Left and Right on the remote should cycle through these items, arrows and sliders can be used as indicators only but are not navigable. When hitting Left from the first bonus item in the section, or when hitting Right from the last bonus item in the section, the expectation would either be that user is not allowed to go further, invoking the Apple TV "bonk" tone, or that they continue in a circular fashion, with the first bonus item leading to the last bonus item in a section when hitting Left and vice versa when hitting Right from the last item in a section.

If using thumbnails to represent bonus content, they can be used as indicators only, and have text or descriptor buttons cause the video or audio features to play, or they can be used as buttons themselves. If being used as buttons, it is recommended to add a play button or other obvious highlight state when selected for clarity.

iTunes LP - Credits and Liner Notes

As with lyrics pages, a custom scrollbar is a good way to take advantage of the Up and Down remote buttons . For more detailed information, see the Development Guide.

iTunes Extras on Apple TV

iTunes Extras - Overall

To best support usability on Apple TV, the design should consider that a user has a 6-button remote (UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, PLAY/SELECT, and MENU/BACK). This means that all pages should have elements that are on horizontal planes rather than vertical or staggered structure of sub menus, so that it is very clear to the user that clicking Up or Down will go to the first item on the far left of a horizontal list, and scrolling left or right will cycle through content on the same plane. In the below example, notice that the Featurettes and Deleted Scenes are immediately next to each other on a horizontal plane. This is a clean and easy-to-use interface that works well on both a computer and Apple TV. Also recommended is that the left-most item in any horizontal list, or the top-most item in any vertical list is default selected.

So when coding for Apple TV, take advantage of the remote buttons and don't force a user to navigate to elements on the page to click on, but rather allow them to experience the iTunes Extras with these directional buttons on the remote, unless absolutely necessary. Below are some best practices to achieve this. As mentioned previously, iTunes Extras have one code base only; conditional code must be used to differentiate features/functions between use on the computer and Apple TV.

Also recommended is to remove all Back/Home navigation between pages and to use the Menu button instead to take advantage of the remote and the more natural flow of use on Apple TV, differentiating it from the mouse-and-click function of the computer.

iTunes Extras - Chapters

Landing on a Chapters page should have the first chapter default selected, unless the movie has already been played, in which case the chapter that reflects where a movie has left off should be selected. Navigating to other chapters should be achieved by clicking Left and Right on the remote there should be an indicator to display in general how many chapters there are and where a user is in the span of available chapters, although this bar should be for indication only, and not be navigable. It is recommended that a Play button or highlight state be used on the chapters to show which is selected at any given time. Hitting the Play

button on the remote plays a chapter. Hitting Menu from the remote when a movie is being watched causes the user to go back into the iTunes Extras to whatever chapter a user left off on.

iTunes Extras - Special Features

It is recommended that if several pieces of content (deleted scenes, photos, etc.) are available in a content section, that there be an indicator to display in general how many items there are and where a user is in the span of available content. Hitting Left and Right on the remote should cycle through these items, arrows and sliders can be used as indicators only but are not navigable. When hitting Left from the first bonus item in the section, or when hitting Right from the last bonus item in the section, the expectation would either be that user is not allowed to go further, invoking the Apple TV "bonk" tone, or that they continue in a circular fashion, with the first bonus item leading to the last bonus item in a section when hitting Left and vice versa when hitting Right from the last item in a section.

If using thumbnails to represent bonus content, they can be used as indicators only, and have text or descriptor buttons cause the video or audio features to play, or they can be used as buttons themselves. If being used as buttons, it is recommended to add a play button or other obvious highlight state when selected for clarity.

iTunes Extras - More

The More page is a place for ancillary content related to, but not integral to, the movie the iTunes Extras is a part of. Common items for this page would be movie sequels, soundtracks, web links to non-competing studio or movie web sites. For more detailed information, see the Development Guide.

When arriving at the More page, the left-most item in the first plane should be default selected. When clicking Up or Down from the remote, the left-most item should always be default selected, to avoid any guess work about where the closest item is to items on other planes. Items available on the iTunes Store should link through to those items on Apple TV. Items that link off to a web site should either be conditionalized out for Apple TV, or left in, and they will result in a message displayed on Apple TV that they are not accessible from that device.