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APRIL 5, 2009

- HOME
- POLITICS
- MEDIA
- BUSINESS
- ENTERTAINMENT
- LIVING
- STYLE
- GREEN
- WORLD
- CHICAGO
- COMEDY 23/6
- VIDEO
- BLOGGER INDEX
- ARCHIVE
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## New York Times' iPhone Music Video Goes One Step Too Far

Posted July 6, 2007 | 05:50 PM (EST)

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You'd be hard-pressed to find a media outlet that didn't do a fluffy iPhone-mania story within the past two weeks. That doesn't mean you have to like it. And when the *New York Times* crosses a line and starts shilling for a product instead of reporting on it, it's dismaying.

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David Pogue is a technology reviewer for the *New York Times* who got to play with an iPhone for days before it came out. Besides the news articles and blog posts he spun off from this opportunity, Pogue also delivered a video about his experience.

Essentially comic, "[The iPhone Challenge: Keep It Quiet](#)" delivered some real-world critiques of the phone. But it's overall tone was so goofy and "fun," it should have raised concerns. (The finale shows Pogue in an office where co-workers realize he has an actual iPhone in his possession and chase after him like a frenzied mob.)

Now Pogue has blurred the line even more and taken the *New York Times* with him. His newest video is "[iPhone: The Musical](#)," a goofy tribute to the phone set to the tune of "My Way." (Not "I'll Do It My Way" as Pogue, who has worked on Broadway, erroneously refers to it.)

It's a silly piece showing Pogue throwing his old cell phone into the water and even getting people in line at the Apple Store in Manhattan to join in. You could say it has "balance" since Pogue mentions some of the phone's drawbacks, including a pointed dig at AT&T (lyrics [here](#)).

But essentially it's nothing more than a glorified ad Apple would be delighted to post on their website. If Pogue were a kid in Oklahoma who put this video on YouTube, I'd say he was clever. But he's not a kid in Oklahoma. He's a reporter for the *New York Times*.

Not only is the *New York Times* devoting time and money (and their reputation) into producing comic bits, they're doing so in service of promoting a product from another company.

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But is the *Times* angry? I doubt it. They're desperate -- like all newspapers -- to figure out how to make money out of their website. Original content like this -- however divorced from their mission as the paper of record -- is one way to do it. So what if it devalues the *Times* as a news outlet and turns it into a cheerleader for Apple?

The video could air on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* after all. And who wouldn't want that sort of cachet? Of course the danger is that Pogue could also be hired away by *The Daily Show*, but that's a risk you have to take. Up next week: a *New York Times* online sitcom dreamed up by the sports department. Guess they'll have to close that bureau in Hong Kong to pay for it, but tough times call for tough choices.

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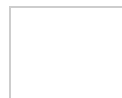


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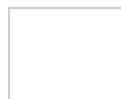
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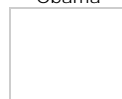
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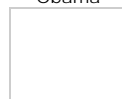
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- [HOME](#)
- [POLITICS](#)
- [MEDIA](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
- [LIVING](#)
- [GREEN](#)
- [STYLE](#)
- [WORLD](#)
- [CHICAGO](#)
- [COMEDY](#)
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