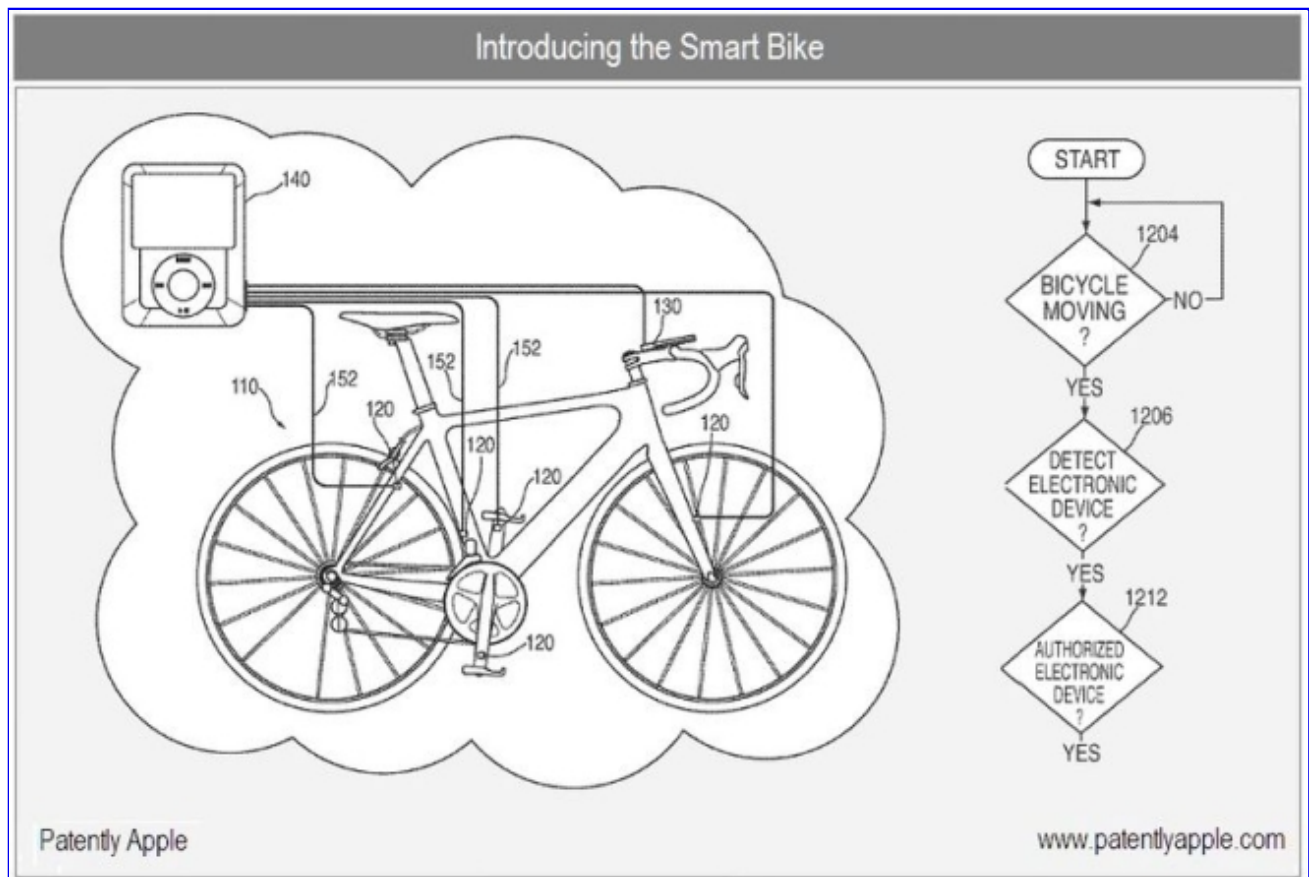


[Previous post](#)[Next post](#)

# Apple Files Patent for a Smart Bike

By [Gadget Lab Staff](#) ✉ August 6, 2010 | 3:02 pm | Categories: [Transportation](#)



If we saw a patent for an iPod Touch with a camcorder, we wouldn't bat an eyelash. A Mac with a touchscreen? Unremarkable. But we did a double take when we read that Apple filed a patent for a [smart bike](#).

The company, known more for its must-have consumer gadgets than any niche products, has imagined a smart bicycle system that would let users communicate electronically with other cyclists, sharing such data as speed, distance, time, altitude, elevation, incline, decline, heart rate, power, derailleur setting, cadence, wind speed, path completed, expected future path, heart rate, power, and pace.

If that sounds totally un-Apple, it's worth noting that this system would require an iPhone or iPod Touch, so it's not a complete departure from the kinds of

products Apple usually makes. In fact, it's not unlike Nike + iPod, which combines Nike sneakers and an app installed on iPod Nanos and Touches to monitor runners' distance, time, heart rate, and other key stats.

To bicyclists, this idea might not seem novel; they can buy attachable computers now. But they also have to be pretty serious about the sport: high-end models can cost upwards of \$200. Even the [LiveRider iPhone bike computer kit](#) costs \$100.

However, it's unclear how tricked-out a smart bike would be, much less how much it might cost. Part of the mystery is that any number of sensors could be attached to the bike itself, to monitor how it's moving, and in what direction. For instance, it could come loaded with GPS, an accelerometer, or a magnetic sensor, to name just three types. The patent does indicate, though, that regardless of the combination of sensors, the general concept of a smart bike would apply to any kind of bicycle, whether it be a mountain bike or BMX.

Then there's the question of display. The patent indicates that an iPhone or iPod Touch, coupled with an armband, is possible, but so is a display (either fixed or removable) that's attached to the handlebars. (We think a cradle for the iPhone sounds like the most elegant solution, allowing users to easily view data without having to spring for an additional piece of hardware.)

In terms of how intrusive such a system could potentially be, the patent suggests that users could also set a threshold (say, for speed) after which the system alerts the bicyclist to changes in their stats. It might even be possible for users to use voice commands to communicate with the app, which we'd prefer too if we were riding on a fast-moving bike.

We're still stumped as to how a smart bike, applicable to far fewer customers than, say, an iPad, fits into Apple's broader strategy. But if this is going to be the bicyclists' version of Nike + iPod, we sure are intrigued.

*Photo Credit:* [Patently Apple](#)

91 [retweet](#)

Tags: [Apple](#), [Apple Smart Bike](#), [bicycles](#), [patents](#)  
[Post Comment](#) | [Permalink](#)