The iPad offers new ways to interact with your media. The iPad provides a magnificent
dedicated music player, and with just a few touches, you can access that same audio
from a wide variety of other applications, allowing you to enjoy your tunes as you play
and work. When you watch a TV show, a movie, or a quick video on your iPad, its wide-
screen video playback capabilities and superb television integration provide beautiful,
clear images that are larger than ever before. What’s more, the iPad’s wireless Internet
capabilities allow you to access a huge range of content—from YouTube to embedded
video on the Internet to your own personal computer—and to share the content already
on your device out to external players. This chapter introduces the primary applications
that let you enjoy music and video on your iPad: Videos, YouTube, Safari, and Music.

Watching Video on the iPad

Video forms such a basic component of your iPad that you shouldn’t think about it as
just a single application. Apple provides the base technology used by several built-in
apps that support video playback of third-party media. The following list provides a
quick overview of those Apple-supplied apps (see Figure 7–1).

NOTE: Chapter 15 discusses how you can record and play your own homebrew video using the
iPad’s built-in camera system.
Videos: The Videos application appears on the Home screen of your iPad. The icon looks like a traditional clapperboard, with a black-and-white striped top over a blue base. This application plays back the TV shows, movies, podcasts, iTunes U lessons, and music videos you've synchronized from your home iTunes library.

YouTube: You'll find the YouTube app icon next to the Videos app icon in Figure 7–1. The icon looks like an old-fashioned TV, complete with a greenish screen and brown dials. YouTube connects to the Internet and allows you to view videos from YouTube.com. You can navigate to www.youtube.com in Safari on the iPad and browse YouTube videos that way, but the iPad’s YouTube app wraps www.youtube.com in such a nice and easy-to-navigate package that you’ll find it’s leaps and bounds better than using YouTube in a web browser.

Safari: Safari, which you read about in depth in Chapter 6, offers a third way to view videos. Like its computer-based equivalents, the Safari app allows you to watch embedded movie files. Safari’s icon looks like a light blue compass with a needle pointing to the northeast.

In addition to the three apps that play video that ship with the iPad, thousands of other apps play video. You can discover all these apps in the iTunes Store. Some of my personal favorites are YXPlayer, which allows me to view videos from my family’s personal camcorder (it records in AVI format), the BBC News app to view news footage, and the Weather Channel app to watch weather-related news stories and Doppler video.

For all that the iPad brings to video, it has limits. Your iPad’s built-in applications play files using H.264 MPEG-4 video and its immediate family, and that’s pretty much it. You cannot use your iPad’s standard apps to view Flash/Shockwave videos or animation or play AVI videos or DivX, Xvid, Matroska video, or any of the other dozens of popular formats. If your video isn’t in MPEG-4 H.264 format, by default, your iPad won’t understand it without help.

Fortunately, the App Store helps you work around this limitation. Some third-party apps enable you to watch videos using formats that the iPad does not officially support. Video-playing applications include such titles as CineXPlayer, yxplayer, and Azul Media Player. These viewers work with a wide variety of content including WMV, AVI, DivX, and Flash FLV formats, among others. Because these applications work outside of Apple’s