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EMI offers DRM-free Norah Jones single for download

Record companies must be convinced selling MP3s is not financial suicide

by Amber Maitland published on 7 December 2006

DRM-free music downloads are becoming a bit more palatable to major music companies, it seems.

One of EMI's music labels, Blue Note, is offering the latest Norah Jones single, "Thinking About You" as an MP3 track on Yahoo's music downloading site for 99c.

Yahoo offered a DRM-free Jessica Simpson download earlier this year.

Zach Hochkeppel, the manager of Blue Note, has called it "an experiment" and has said that he had to fight strong resistance within EMI to sell the track this way.

Only one legal MP3-downloading site, eMusic, has found real success, selling almost 100 million tracks from independent labels. Its selection mostly appeals to an older generation, and it has been suggested that this is why there's been less sharing of the DRM tracks via P2P systems.

DRM-free MP3 files can be loaded on to Apple's iPod, so that selling MP3s opens up the music-hungry iPod market to the music labels without them having to use iTunes as a middleman to reach iPod owners.

