

There once was a time when the release date of an album was exciting. For our favorite artists we knew when the last album came out and when the next album was due. If you loved the artist you bought it. If you didn't you either bought the single or you listened to the album with your friends and then decided.

As the price of records and then CDs increased year by year, spending 20 bucks for a CD became a purchase you needed to be sure of rather than a no brainer or impulse buy.

Then free became an option.

Then aggregating almost unlimited free music on a PC and then an IPOD became easy.

So here we are in 2008 and the only given in the music industry is that CD sales have and will fall. And fall. And fall.

Reading last weeks billboard, something interesting popped out at me. The song Low Rider by Flo Rida sold 467,000 units in a single week. There were 27 digital singles that sold more than 100k units in that week. The obvious trend continues that people are ready, willing and able to buy singles of songs they like.

So the question arises, why don't artists serialize the release of songs ? Why not create a "season" of release of songs, much like the fall TV season and promise fans that Flo Rida is going to release a new single every week or 2 weeks for the next 10 weeks ?

Sure, its not easy to come up with a great song every 2 weeks. But isnt that exactly the same problem you have with an album ? Maybe thats not the "creative process" for certain artists. That's a problem for them.

What we do know is that music fans will spend 99c and that its easier to ask them for 99c a week than it is to get 9.99 at one time from them for 10 songs.

Serializing the release of music also allows for the marketing arms to be in constant touch with sales and radio outlets. Rather than having to initiate marketing plans and hope to reinvigorate the interest in an artist, it becomes a digital tour that never ends.

If an artist commits to release music on a weekly or bi weekly basis, then consumers can make a commitment knowing they are going to get something new and hopefully exciting for their 99c. If the commitment is strong enough its feasible that artists could sell subscriptions to their serialized releases. My guess is that consumers will feel better about subscribing to an artist and getting a song a week or every 2 than dropping 10 dollars at a time for an album.

In reality thats exactly how I buy my music right now. I dont do it by artist. I go to iTunes and I go through the top 10 lists and listen to samples and thats how I determine what music im going to buy.

If there was an option when I bought a single to subscribe to an RSS feed that would send me a sample of that artists song when they released a single, I would add that RSS feed to my browser. Add a 1 click to buy, and chances are Im going to buy a lot more music.

Is this idea so great Im going to start a music label ? No chance. I wouldnt get in the music industry if you paid me. However, as a customer and a buyer of music , if I knew that my favorite artists were releasing music weekly, i would certainly check by every week or listen to what was in my RSS aggregator to see what new stuff they had for me.

Consumer are buying music 1 track at a time. I think people will pay 99c to get a single rather than steal it. I think people would rather steal a full album rather than pay 10 dollars or more for it.

Labels need to make the effort to get artists to deliver in a manner that realizes these perspectives.

The album is dead