

Title:

The Urge To Download

Word Count:

559

Summary:

If you've been hearing the buzz on Urge recently, it's not about a deep desire or compulsion - it's about MTV's offering to the world of online music downloads and streaming.

Urge is a subscription based music download service in which its patrons can subscribe for a monthly fee of \$10 and listen to as many of the 2 million songs in MTV's coffers as they like. If they'd like to download that song, then it costs 99 cents each.

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Article Body:

If you've been hearing the buzz on Urge recently, it's not about a deep desire or compulsion - it's about MTV's offering to the world of online music downloads and streaming.

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But it's not just MTV behind the latest addition to the world of online music. Microsoft and MTV are working together on this one. Bill Gates must have seen the success of similar sites like Napster and Rhapsody and decided to jump on the bandwagon. Urge's challenge will be to convince all those music lovers who prefer to buy songs and download them through sites like the incredibly popular iTunes, owned by Apple computers, that subscribing to a site and being able to listen to whatever songs you like, in whatever order and as often as you like is just as good or better than buying them one by one. It's just one more battle to add to the long running conflict between Microsoft and Apple.

Does Bill have anything different to offer through Urge? Anything that makes

this latest venture stand out from similar sites? Not really. Should you choose to become an Urge subscriber, you won't find any music that you wouldn't find on any other download - subscription site. The prices are even pretty much the same.

What they do offer is a aesthetics - their site looks good. Plus, there's the camaraderie. Subscribers can post on blogs and converse with one another. But that's about it.

But with Microsoft powering the marketing and advertising engine behind Urge, it's sure to do well. Even the latest incarnation of Microsoft's Windows Media Player has Urge built in. Everyone with a PC has access to this free player and therefore easy access to Urge.

What PC users won't have is the portability provided by the wildly popular iPod. Current owners of iPods, should they decide to subscribe to Urge, will have to buy songs through the site, download them, burn them onto CDs and then convert the music files to mp3s in order to be compatible. Other portable devices are compatible with the service, however, and those are listed on the site.

This all may change in the Christmas of 2006, as buzz indicates Microsoft plans to release their "iPod Killer". Based on the Xbox brand, and including additional features like gaming, this media player is aimed right at Apple's heart, and could quickly make "Urge" a household name, assuming the two products are closely linked.

Each of the music download sites has their own strengths and weaknesses. Urge fully divides and subdivides genres so that its subscribers can easily find what they're looking for while exploring other bands that they might like. Yahoo Music Unlimited personalizes the start page to include suggestions based on the subscribers previous downloads and offers a cheaper subscription rate. Rhapsody has the best radio services, providing specialized stations that stream a pre-set list of music.

If you can't decide, then try one or try them all. Each of them offers a free trial subscription. You can experiment with all of them and decide which one suits you best.