

Album apps the 'future of music'

The reduction in sales of CD music has been attributed to the emergence of downloadable digital music - and piracy. But will album apps take off in South Africa?



Digital music apps are rocking the music industry.
Image: Goodluz [Fotolia](#)

Industry expert Jonathan Shaw certainly thinks so claiming that "album apps are the future of music."

"Methods for distributing and promoting music are changing; it's going where the people are and that's on Internet-enabled devices," he said.

"Will app views and so on play a role in the future? Yes, customers are already using them to judge what's hot and what's not. Content discovery is the next biggest challenge for the music industry as traditional media are not making hits but following them," said Shaw.

South African singer Danny K followed in US rapper Jay-Z's footsteps and sold 20,000 copies of his new album Good Look to Samsung, which handed it to its smartphone users free on an app.

Jay-Z's deal reportedly netted him about R51.5m.

Last week it was announced that Idols SA Season Nine winner Musa Sukwene would release a four-track mini-album that would be available exclusively to Samsung users to download and keep.

Though he won't disclose how much Samsung paid for Good Look, Danny K said smartphones were the smart move to push an album.

"The music industry has changed dramatically over the past decade. Shrinking sales due to illegal downloads and piracy have made artists explore new ways of making money from their music."

"About 5,000 copies of his album were downloaded in a week by Samsung users," he claimed.

Shaw said: "Once Samsung has people hooked on the content, they will offer premium content that will recoup the costs of the licensing arrangements they have with labels and artists."

PricewaterhouseCoopers, in its South African entertainment and media outlook for 2012 to 2016, predicted that digital music will account for 13% of the domestic music market - up from 6% in 2011. It also forecast that music recordings will fall from 60% to 37% in the same period.

Former SA Music Awards chief executive Nhlanhla Sibisi said digital music is the best thing that has happened to the industry, although he conceded that piracy levels had risen.

"The downloading of music is part of the artist's value chain in terms of success," Sibisi said.

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