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Madonna Taps Fans for MP3 Release

Madonna has broken new online ground for major artists. In a truly novel move for a high-profile recording artist, Madonna enlisted fans to help sell her new single, "American Life" on their own websites. The Madonna Project program rewarded sites whose advertisements resulted in sales of the single with credit toward Madonna prizes and merchandise. Madonna is also selling her "American Life" single as a high-quality MP3 file on her own website www.madonnamusic.com, charging \$1.49 per download. This MP3 format allows fans to burn the single to a CD or transfer it to a portable device without the restrictions usually imposed on authorized major-label downloads. This is a significant step for record labels in the arena of online distribution. It is also a remarkable turnaround for Madonna, who has long been vocal about her work slipping onto the Internet before its release date. The single was also released on several online music subscription services, marking the first time Madonna's major-label work has appeared on any legal music service.

Absolutemadonna.com, March 24, 2003 (courtesy of John Borland); <http://www.absolutemadonna.com/news.shtml>

White Stripes Battle Internet Piracy with Vinyl

In an effort to keep their music from leaking out to the Internet, the group White Stripes have used a different approach when sending out advance copies of their new album *Elephant* to critics: they've used vinyl. In an era where bands toy with piracy-prevention methods such as watermarked CDs, the Stripes chose vinyl as the medium for these advances for several reasons: In addition to frontman Jack White wanting people to hear his music the way it was "meant to be heard," V2 Records president Andy Gershon also stated that "it just creates one extra step before someone can put it up on Limewire or KaZaa." In a related story, the band pushed the release of *Elephant* from April 8 to April 1—also in an attempt to battle Internet piracy.

MTVAsia.com, January 31, 2003; <http://www.mtv.com/news/International/Items/0301/0301094.html>

More Beatles Tapes Discovered

Another round of reel-to-reel Beatles tapes have been recovered by Australian authorities. Recorded at Abbey Road studios in London, experts believe the tapes are the stolen masters of *Abbey Road* and *The White Album*. This raid was part of the large-scale piracy investigation that led to the recovery of 500 original Beatles recordings in a Holland raid last month. All of the materials were suspected as stolen from Abbey Road studios over thirty years ago.

(See also GrayZone Digest, 1st Quarter, 2003: ["BREAKING NEWS!! Stolen Beatles Tapes Finally Recovered!"](#))

Rollingstone.com, February 14, 2003 (Andrew Dansby); <http://www.rollingstone.com/news/newsarticle.asp?nid=17579>

Linkin Park Beat Bootleggers

Linkin Park's Meteora was perhaps the most heavily protected CD ever to be recorded. For starters, none of the copies left the custody of the band members, management, or executives at Warner Bros. Also, before the March 25 release date, the band had security guards on hand in the studio 24 hours a day to prevent any leaks. All earlier CD versions of finished tracks were destroyed, and when Meteora was finished, press, radio programmers and retailers could only hear the album in the band's management offices. This level of security will likely set the precedent for new albums released by major artists.

Rollingstone.com, March 14, 2003 (Steve Hochman) <http://www.rollingstone.com/news/newsarticle.asp?nid=17732>

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2Q Busts

U.S. Busts

Be sure to peruse the Recording Industry Association of America's (RIAA) monthly newsletter "RIAA Anti-Piracy Seizure Information," which covers numerous bootleg, piracy and counterfeit raids across the United States. Read about the recent busts at our website: <http://www.grayzone.com/usabusts.htm>

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Legal Beagle

Student Charged in DirecTV Theft

On January 2, 2003, Igor Serebryany, a 19-year-old University of Chicago student was arrested in Los Angeles and charged with stealing from DirecTV. Serebryany was allegedly pilfering proprietary information from the company -- a leading satellite TV service. Using the 1996 Economic Espionage Act, federal prosecutors charged the student with the following: intentional theft of confidential documents describing the technology to control access to DirecTV, and releasing them onto the Internet. Serebryany faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. DirecTV has been plagued by piracy, and estimates that a million households illicitly receive DirecTV signals, compared to the 11 million paying subscribers.

New York Times, January 3, 2003 (Jennifer Lee) <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/03/technology/03PIRA.html?todaysh headlines>

Quick Bits and Bytes

Recording Industry Lobbyist Plans to Leave Position

RIAA chairman/CEO, Hillary Rosen, recently announced that she will resign at the end of this year. A prominent Beltway lobbyist, Ms. Rosen has been quite outspoken against music piracy and copyright infringement. Her successor has not yet been announced.

The sale of illegal sound recordings is expanding beyond its traditional base and now infiltrating small, established businesses nationwide. RIAA investigators have uncovered several retail outlets, including gas stations, convenience stores, grocery markets and some

small music stores selling pirated music on the side. The initial phase of this retail program will target music piracy at retail outlets in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City and parts of Texas and Florida, but the program is expanding to all areas of the country.

New York Times, January 22, 2003 (Laura M. Holson)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/23/business/media/23MUSI.html?tnemail>

AOL Offering Music Catalog for Downloads

America Online recently rolled out a new music downloading service called MusicNet. In the strongest attempt yet to create a legitimate alternative to piracy laden peer-to-peer swapping sites, AOL offers basic MusicNet service for only \$8.95 a month. Subscribers to the service gain listening access to a catalogue of over 250,000 songs. Higher-priced, more functional versions of MusicNet are also available to users. Record labels, artists, and music publishers are paid a share of the monthly service fees in proportion to how much their songs are played or burned to CD. While there are still limitations to MusicNet's service, critics claim it is very accessible to a mainstream audience.

New York Times, February 26, 2003 (Saul Hansell); <http://www.Nytimes.com/2003/02/26/technology/26MUSI.html?th>

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