

Mobile Ringtones - Will it surpass the Music Industry?

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'If Music be the food of love, give me a Mobile.' The Phone that shrank the planet is yet to deliver another mammoth revolution fiercely. The global ringtone market is forecasted to grow around \$5.2 billion annually. There is an emerging trend among consumers worldwide to seek digital entertainment from their mobile phones. With the soaring popularity of Mobile Music aside, the Industry's growth is unprecedented due to high end mechanisms and ritzier models coming out every now and then.

Mobile Music, ringtones and downloads are a major fascination amongst the youth. Ring tone industry in particular is reaping fruits of the teenage obsession with 'gizmos of desire'. This group, mostly between 12 to 25 years old, likes to purchase their favourite tune without having to pay a higher price for a CD. According to sources, the Hip Hop fraternity's contribution accounts for more than half of all the downloaded ringtones across the globe. The formerly dominant polyphonic ringtones are now available in many different genres; Pop, Rock, Hip Hop, Country, Bollywood and also in a variety of formats in response to the insatiable consumerist demands. Bollywood, India's film industry by itself generates roughly \$1 billion in ring tone revenues annually according to trade experts.

Approximately 1million ring tones are downloaded everyday in India.

With the digital revolution kicking in, the mobile phone industry is proving a point by digging deeper into the music industry with help from technologies like the iPods which can hold more ringtones, longer tunes, and play with the clarity of a DVD. Global companies like Nokia, Sony Ericsson, Motorola and Samsung are also striving neck-to-neck to come up with handsets loaded with a variety of appealing features such as FM radios, MP3 players and a good memory capacity as a result of the stiff competition. The Music Industry obviously isn't cheerful about ringtones taking over the CD market sales wise. It expects you to buy an expensive CD before a cheap ringtone!

Even as the trend goes on, inexorable, the mobile music industry is facing dubious times on the legal front. It is estimated that transfer of music files via Bluetooth has reached an enormous volume, almost thrice the legal way. Fortunately or unfortunately these illegal routes have been serving as money making catalysts rather the other way. In India itself, the mobile piracy business is as big as 30 crore or more at this very moment.

Globally, we are witnessing a time where technology is converging majorly into telecommunications. It is highly unlikely for laid back, conventional music distribution mediums to prevail in a fast moving digital world for long now. Statistics prove that where mobile music downloads is growing by over 50 per cent every year; the growth of legal conventional music is diminishing.

It's not too far when music companies would acquire artists and film soundtracks only for mobile downloads. With full songs downloads on mobile becoming a successful service worldwide specifically on 3G networks, it simply brings this reality closer.

At current rate Mobile content industry is all geared up to surpass the music industry.

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