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# USB-stick albums take off

By ASHER MOSES - SMH | Wednesday, 03 December 2008

**The Australian music industry is getting behind a new music format that will allow shoppers to access an ongoing stream of bonus content and listen to their collections from any computer or mobile phone.**

From this week albums from Sneaky Sound System, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu and Australian indie acts Grafton Primary and Skipping Girl Vinegar will be sold on USB sticks featuring new "DDA" digital album technology.

People who buy the albums register with an online locker system that not only makes a back-up of the songs - which can then be accessed from any other computer or mobile phone - but also provides access to a swathe of bonus content provided by the artist on an ongoing basis such as photos, videos, lyrics, artwork, new tracks and even concert tickets.

The creator of the technology, Scott Murphy, from Melbourne, said he was testing the market with Australian artists and would produce an initial 15,000 units this year. In February new DDA albums would be released from artists including John Butler Trio, Lior and Quan of Regurgitator fame.

Murphy, a 25-year record industry veteran who has patented the technology, said USB DDA albums from British and American artists would be on sale in those countries by the second quarter of next year.

"It's bringing the album experience to the internet and creating a bridge between artists and the people who buy their music, which is something they haven't had to this day," said Murphy, 41, who designed the technology during the dot-com boom of 2000.

"Sneaky Sound System could be touring America, take all these fantastic digital photos and within five minutes of taking them they can upload them to their 20,000 activated users."

Sales of physical CDs are plummeting and, while digital downloads are experiencing explosive growth, they are not accounting for the loss of physical CD revenue. This suggests an increasing proportion of people are obtaining their tracks illegally from download sites.

Murphy said he did not expect his USB DDA albums to be the music industry's saviour but the technology would appeal to hardcore fans looking for a deeper, ongoing relationship with their favourite artists.

"It's not just a one-off experience, it's an ongoing experience. Yet it sells for the same price as a CD," he said.

Artist whose albums are sold on the USB DDA format are given their own personalised web space, which they can use to push out new content, while fans can have

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THE FUTURE: USB albums from artists including Sneaky Sound System will cost the same as a regular CD in Australia.

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