



LOWDOWN

NEWS FROM THE FRONT

GOING DIGITAL

AUSTRALIAN MUSIC PRIZE FOUNDER AND INDUSTRY VETERAN **SCOTT MURPHY** TELLS **TOM HAWKING** ABOUT HIS LATEST PROJECT – THE USB-BASED **DDA** FORMAT.

The DDA is the brainchild of Australian Music Prize founder Scott Murphy. Billing itself as a format with "all the content and functionality of its CD equivalent... plus more", the DDA consists of a USB memory stick that you plug into your computer – you install some software, connect to the DDA server, and off you go.

Time Off: *OK, so I have the USB, I plug it in – what happens next?*

Scott Murphy: "You activate it with an activation code – you enter an email address and password and mobile phone number. From there our software produces a full screen user interface which has its own mini-player for all the music, along with videos, lyrics for every song, stacks of photos, a lot of art... it's basically a digitised version of a traditional album."

TO: *Do you keep the email address and phone number?*

SM: "Yeah, they're all recorded because if someone loses their password, the only way we can get them a new password is via their email address. And also in our terms and conditions, we share that information with the original owner of the content – the artist or their label."

TO: *What does the artist or label do with it?*

SM: "Well, under privacy laws, they can email [the DDA owner], but they also have to include a little tab on the email saying 'Click this if you don't want to hear from us again'. If you're an artist, you get that email address and I guess you could email [users] promotional material."

TO: *Do you think people will be happy with the idea of buying a record and getting bombarded with promotional stuff?*

SM: "Well, they're not going to be bombarded, because [content owners] are going to know that's not going to work – it'll annoy people."

TO: *I'm wondering: who do you think is the target audience for this? Older people tend to buy CDs or records, whereas younger people will download MP3s. Who do you think will pick this up?*



SCOTT MURPHY

SM: "It depends on the music. We're coming at it with a variety of titles... We don't think it's gonna replace CDs – we're just saying it's another alternative."

TO: *What will make people choose this format above others?*

SM: "Well, a lot of people are serious fans of a particular artist. This format a) gives you more content up front, but also b) gives you more content on an ongoing basis. Say you're a Sneaky Sound System fan, and they are touring America, they can within ten minutes take a whole lot of digital photos live on stage and upload them to their activated users. Or remixes

– Sneaky have already put a remix that anyone who buys and activates [a DDA] will get for free."

TO: *Can you download the material and play it outside the DDA software?*

SM: "Absolutely. That's what it's all about... The system will export playlists to burning a CD, or to their iTunes, or sideload it onto [your] mobile phone."

TO: *Is there any digital rights management on the tracks?*

SM: "It's up to the content owner. They actually design their own DDAs, so they can upload WAV files, or MP3s – they can have DRM if they choose."

TO: *Can you activate the device on multiple computers?*

SM: "It's one at a time, if you activate it on your home computer then take it to work, enter the email address and password, it'll say, 'Okay, I know who you are, I'm on your computer, would you like relocate?' It's easy: you just just click 'Okay'."

TO: *Do you think people will be leery of having to install software to play content they already own?*

SM: "I don't think so. It's not like they're labouring for hours to install it. You just plug it in."

TO: *How do you access the content on the USB without installing the software?*

SM: "They're just normal MP3 files. We don't make it restrictive. In this day and age there's no point in putting restrictions on what people can do... We don't make it really easy to find, because that's not what we're about, but you can."

TO: *Have you had a lot of interest in the product?*

SM: "Yeah, yeah, we have. We have five [releases] coming out [this week], and another five to eight coming in February, and we'll keep going from there. We'll open offices in America and England in the first quarter of next year."

Check dda4me.com for more information about the DDA format, which was launched this week.