

# MySpace 'MyStores' Tie Bands Closer to Community

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Word of an announcement from SNOCAP, the music technology/online distribution company, was brewing earlier this week, and today they finally let the cat out of the bag: SNOCAP is working with record labels like SubPop to power "MyStores," the company's tool that allows people to buy music directly from MySpace band pages.

The labels involved are Sub Pop, New Line, and Dangerbird, and the sales will come through the labels' U.S. distributor, Alternative Distribution Alliance (ADA). SNOCAP's MyStore service has been available to unsigned artists as a selling tool since December, but the fact that Sub Pop, one of the largest and most successful independent labels in the U.S., has agreed to use this tool hints at a shift in the way MySpace will be used in the future.

Tom Anderson, president of MySpace, was interviewed in front of a few hundred people at SXSW today by Steve Jones, ex-Sex Pistol and current radio host. After the interview, PC Magazine asked Anderson about the new developments with SNOCAP and Sub Pop. Can MySpace eventually replace online music stores - and does MySpace get a cut?

"Yeah, we do get a cut," Anderson answered. He went on to explain that SNOCAP is not the only selling tool on MySpace, "but the others link directly to iTunes and we don't get a cut of that."

According to Anderson, there was a lot of publicity surrounding the SNOCAP tool, and some people thought MySpace was trying to take on

iTunes. "We don't think we're gonna kill iTunes and change the world," he said.

Over time SNOCAP might become more valuable to bigger labels, he said, but added that it primarily remains a useful tool for unsigned acts: "If you're not worried about DRM - because it comes in a DRM MP3 format - SNOCAP is really useful."

Anderson went on to say that he was very surprised by the way MySpace has become a hub for music and publicity, and that it was never a goal of his to have big labels like Sub Pop selling The Shins music through his site - though he happily welcomes the development. "It's kinda like the beginning of MySpace," he said, alluding to the fact that MySpace didn't even have music for the first seven months of its existence.

As he saw the musical possibilities for the site, however, it skyrocketed into a promotional tool for artists, and now music is a very large part of the MySpace experience, Anderson said. No longer just a promotional tool for bands, MySpace is working with labels, artists, and SNOCAP to take things to the next logical level. "Snoop Dogg sells MP3s through SNOCAP on MySpace...and now labels are, too," Anderson said.

MySpace has a new, small record label - MySpace Records - and stands to benefit from these selling tools. But will SNOCAP's MyStores tool be a financial goldmine for everyone involved?

"I really feel that the - current online - music buying experience is different than what you do on MySpace...you can be chatting with your friends and press a button and buy a song," Anderson explained. He compared MySpace to the process of going to the iTunes Music Store, buying an album and waiting for it to load into your library. On MySpace, socializing and shopping are combined, and it makes for a lot of cheap impulse buys that, undoubtedly, will help the bands selling

them as well as line MySpace's pockets.

Is this the way of the future? "It certainly looks like the business might be headed in that direction, and it could turn out to be something quite big," Anderson said. "I can't predict the future," Anderson added, more than once. He's just quite good at adapting to it.

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