

# Music industry takes to the digital cloud

January 23 2011, by Audrey Stuart

---



A man visits a stand of the music world's largest annual trade fair, MIDEM on its opening day at the Palais des Festivals, in Cannes, southeastern France. The MIDEM music trade show will bring 7,000 of the global industry's biggest players together on the French Riviera for four days.

Music is taking to the clouds after Sony said it is expanding its cloud-based digital Music Unlimited service around Europe to enable fans to access music on their digital devices.

After being launched in the United States, Britain and Ireland, Sony's "Music Unlimited powered by Qriocity" service, is being extended to France, Germany, Spain and Italy, Sony said in an announcement to coincide with Sunday's opening of the MIDEM [music industry](#) convention on the French Riviera.

The [subscription service](#) will be competing with a fast-growing number of free and paying music streaming services that include Spotify,

Pandora, Last.fm, Groove Shark and We7.

Cloud-based services differ from the music streaming services that download onto a computer by allowing users to house all their music on a remote server (or cloud) as well as giving them access to millions of tracks.

The cloud also acts as a "locker" for their own music collection so that users can access their music on different devices.

The big question mark is whether these services will bring the new revenue for the music industry, particularly after Nokia closed down its unlimited music service in most of the 33 markets in which it operated.

One potential new market is the auto industry, after Ford announced it would integrate the US-based Internet mobile radio [streaming service](#), Pandora, into its new vehicles.

Cloud services are attracting a lot of attention at MIDEM this year, as they promise to help music lovers connect their music to a host of digital devices at home and on the move.

"If you want to make a great user experience, the issue is how to make everything mesh together," Tim Schaaff, President of Sony Network Entertainment told a MIDEMNET conference in Cannes on Saturday.

Schaaff said Qriocity will link content across Sony devices, but he acknowledged the commercial risk involved: "There are a lot of bodies on the road leading to success with a [digital music service](#), and I was very keen to avoid that fate."

Cloud-based services are also gaining in popularity as fans increasingly want to access music rather than own it, experts at MIDEM explained.

"Cloud-based music services are also flavour of the month because we're finding that people want access (to music) more than they want ownership," said Harry Maloney, chief executive of Catch Media, which has partnered with Britain's Carphone Warehouse retail chain to launch a "Music Anywhere" service.

Not all the new services, however, have deals in place with the recording industry to ensure the music they offer is legal.

US-based newcomer mSpot, for example, revealed at MIDEM that they are only now trying to secure agreements with the big record labels.

This could be a potential problem for the recording industry as there is no current means of ensuring if music stored on a cloud-based service is paid-for or illegally downloaded.

Schaaff said Sony has partnered with a cloud-based unlimited music services provider, Omnifone, to build a huge catalogue of virtually all the music in the world.

The new Sony subscription service, which the Japanese electronics giant hopes will rival Apple's market-leading iTunes, will let fans stream their music from a multitude of Internet-connected Sony devices including televisions and Blu-Ray DVD players.

Sony's Qriocity is being pitched at 3.99 euros a month for a basic service and a 9.99 euro premium subscription giving access to every song on demand plus the option to create playlists.

"Music Anywhere" is meanwhile free to all customers who buy a Samsung Europa smartphone from Carphone Warehouse. The alternative is to pay an annual fee of 29.99 pounds (35 euros, 50 dollars) to use the service on other smartphones.

(c) 2011 AFP

Citation: Music industry takes to the digital cloud (2011, January 23) retrieved 24 June 2024  
from <https://phys.org/news/2011-01-music-industry-digital-cloud.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.