

Prominent artists still resist digital download services

February 22 2011, By Tyler Sharp

Digital music downloads may be popular with fans, but they're hitting a sour note with musicians, according to one music professor.

Digital [music downloads](#) have proliferated in popularity since Napster was launched in 1999. Numerous music downloading services have been vying for control of the digital download market ever since. The most successful has been Apple's iTunes, providing an array of cost-efficient options for music aficionados.

But some artists have avoided becoming a part of iTunes. A Kansas State University music professor said these artists have two primary reasons for shunning the digital download giant.

"Some artists feel that iTunes takes too big a cut," said Steven Maxwell, an assistant professor of music who teaches a history of rock and roll course. "When someone sells an album, first the label takes a large cut, then iTunes, and finally the money goes to the artist. For many artists iTunes marketing and sales are worth it even if their cut is less than that of a CD."

But others like the band Tool prefer to stay pure to the album concept, Maxwell said.

The Beatles fought a very public battle to avoid joining the iTunes catalog. But in November 2010 Apple announced the group would become part of the catalog. Despite the Beatles' decision, several well-

known bands still shun iTunes, Maxwell said.

"Artists not on iTunes right now include AC/DC, Kid Rock, Garth Brooks, Bob Seger, Black Sabbath, Def Leppard and Tool," he said. "I believe many of them will begin to use digital downloading in the future. The industry seems to be moving so quickly that way that it may be impossible not to embrace it."

But to determine what the right practice is can be a challenge.

"The downloading technology is changing the industry, and I see how some artist aren't ready for that," Maxwell said. "However, this industry is constantly changing, and what hurts some artists is great for others."

Though some artists don't support [iTunes](#), Maxwell says they can unite behind one cause.

"People not paying for copied music will always be a problem," he said. "This continues to be a major challenge for the downloading industry, and the people it hurts the most are the artists. More work needs to be done on this issue."

Provided by Kansas State University

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