

Cricket's Muve Music tops 500,000 subscribers

January 9 2012, By RYAN NAKASHIMA , AP Business Writer

(AP) -- Muve Music, the all-you-can listen music plan offered to subscribers of prepaid wireless carrier Cricket, has attracted more than 500,000 subscribers in its first year of operation.

The milestone announced Monday marks substantially quicker growth than some of Muve's competitors, which include MOG and Rdio, thanks in part to the service being bundled into a monthly cellular plan that includes unlimited talk, text and Web access for as little as \$55.

Muve is the second largest music subscription service in the U.S. behind Rhapsody, which has 1 million subscribers. Swedish service Spotify says it has 2.5 million subscribers worldwide, but it hasn't disclosed its U.S. subscriber count since launching in the country last July.

"The growth rate for the service continues to accelerate and we couldn't be more excited," said Jeff Toig, general manager of Muve Music.

In September, Cricket expanded the Muve offering nationwide at retailers, including Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and Amazon.com Inc., using a roaming arrangement with [Sprint Nextel](#) Corp.

Cricket is a unit of [Leap Wireless International](#) Inc., the seventh largest cellphone carrier in the U.S. with some 5.9 million customers at the end of 2011.

The company has said that Muve has become a key way to attract new

subscribers, and Cricket added 413,000 net new subscribers last year.

About 60 percent of Cricket's new customers in December joined by buying a smartphone powered by [Google Inc.](#)'s [Android](#) operating system or subscribing to Muve, the company said.

Toig said the company is seeing indications that Muve customers are highly attached to the service and are less likely to drop their cellphone plans as a result. Overall, Leap said that "churn," or the percentage of customers who drop cellphone service every month, fell to 3.7 percent to 3.9 percent in the fourth quarter of 2011, from 4 percent a year earlier.

Muve users on average download 300 songs to their phones every month and spend about 40 hours a month listening to the music.

Leap shares rose 430 cents, or 5 percent, to \$9.05 in afternoon trading Monday.

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