

MTV to debut music download service URGE

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Taking on online music store giant Apple's iTunes, MTV Network's new digital music service URGE is set to open shop May 17.

The new music shop is a collaboration between MTV and Microsoft Corp.

Consumers will have access to more than 2 million songs for 99 cents per song or full albums starting at \$9.95. A monthly subscription fee is also available for unlimited downloads at \$9.95 to a PC, and for \$14.95 monthly subscribers can transfer songs to portable media devices. Video purchases are said to be available later this year.

"Our audience has come to expect us to deliver the world's best music programming on MTV, VH1 and CMT," said MTV Networks' Music Group President Van Toffler earlier this year at the International Consumer Electronics Show. "URGE will be a major new way for artists across all genres -- from alt-country to zydeco -- to connect with their fans and find new audiences through multiplatform exposure from MTV Networks and on one of the world's most popular digital media players, Windows Media Player."

"Microsoft and MTV Networks have combined their strengths to dramatically redefine how Windows users discover and enjoy music," Microsoft's Bill Gates had added. "The result is a seamless melding of software and entertainment expertise that makes it easy for people to discover new music and listen to old favorites."

Microsoft will also be releasing a beta version of its latest Windows Media Player within the music service.

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