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Apple iTunes sees billionth download

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27 February, 2006

THE ARTICLE

Apple iTunes sees billionth download

An American teenager made a little piece of music history yesterday when he downloaded the billionth song from the Apple iTunes music store. The unsuspecting 16-year-old spent 99 cents to purchase a digital version of *Speed of Sound* by British rockers Coldplay. The track's title seems an appropriate reminder of the breathless pace at which innovations in the industry are moving. Apple's online store has only been in operation for three years and to sell a billion songs in that time is nothing short of phenomenal. At the turn of the millennium, barely a soul would have known what an mp3 was and iPods were yet to make their ubiquitous mark on digital culture. By contrast, sales of more traditional formats such as CDs have halved in many parts of the world.

The teenage record maker, Alex Ostrovsky from Michigan, scored a bag of digital goodies to mark the milestone. A representative from Apple phoned Alex in the wee hours of the morning to congratulate him and tell him he was soon to receive an iMac computer, 10 iPods and a \$10,000 gift card for the iTunes store. He initially presumed it was a prankster and was about to give him a piece of his mind. Alex said: "I was really skeptical. I didn't even know there was a competition. But the guy knew the details of my mum's credit card." Apple CEO Steve Jobs was equally happy. He said the billionth download represented "a major force against music piracy and the future of music distribution as we move from CDs to the Internet".

WARM-UPS

1. MY MUSIC HISTORY: In pairs / groups, talk about your history with music. What musical experiences and preferences did you have when you were younger? How about now? How has the way you buy and listen to music changed over the years?

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Teenagers / music / history / iTunes / 99 cents / the speed of sound / innovation / digital culture / CDs / pranksters / skepticism / minds / music piracy / the future

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. FAVORITES: Tell each other your favorites. Use these examples to guide your conversations:

- Song to relax to
- Song when you're stressed
- Song of all time
- Song you love to hate
- Song to sing in the bath/shower
- Band
- Singer
- Lyrics
- Instrument
- Album

4. PREFERRED FORMATS: In pairs / groups, discuss the pros and cons of these music formats:

- Vinyl
- CD
- Cassette tape
- MD
- MP3
- Live
- Video
- Other

5. MUSIC FORMAT OPINIONS: What do you think about these opinions?

- a. I prefer to buy an album, CD or single with a cover than to download a song.
- b. It's better to be able to buy a few songs you like than pay for a whole CD.
- c. Illegal downloading of mp3 files is the way to go.
- d. iPods are the best thing since sliced bread.
- e. Internet music stores are much better than real CD stores.
- f. The Internet will mean many new bands can become famous.
- g. It's better to wait for mp4 or mp5 to come out before buying a music player.
- h. MP3s are the best thing ever to happen to music listening and buying.

6. BILLION: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "billion". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Apple's iTunes music store just sold its billionth song. T / F
- b. A U.S. teen made history by selling one billion songs online. T / F
- c. Songs on the Internet are sold at the speed of sound. T / F
- d. Sales of CDs have increased twofold in many parts of the world. T / F
- e. The teenager got a bag of digital goodies as a prize. T / F
- f. The teenager opened up his mind while on the phone to Apple. T / F
- g. The teen spent countless nights downloading endless tunes to win. T / F
- h. A CEO said music downloads represented a major force against piracy. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| a. unsuspecting | person |
| b. breathless | won |
| c. phenomenal | dubious |
| d. soul | innocent |
| e. ubiquitous | joker |
| f. scored | rapid |
| g. wee | staggering |
| h. prankster | considerable |
| i. skeptical | ever-present |
| j. major | early |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| a. An American teenager made | mark the milestone |
| b. the breathless pace at which | ubiquitous mark in digital culture |
| c. barely a soul would have known | of his mind |
| d. iPods were yet to make their | hours of the morning |
| e. sales of more traditional formats | a little piece of music history |
| f. scored a bag of digital goodies to | innovations in the industry are moving |
| g. Apple phoned Alex in the wee | a major force against music piracy |
| h. He initially presumed | such as CDs have halved |
| i. give him a piece | it was a prankster |
| j. the billionth download represented | what an mp3 was |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Apple iTunes sees billionth download

An American teenager made a little _____ of music history yesterday when he downloaded the billionth song from the Apple iTunes music store. The _____ 16-year-old spent 99 cents to purchase a digital version of *Speed of Sound* by British _____ Coldplay. The track's title seems an appropriate _____ of the breathless pace at which innovations in the industry are moving. Apple's online store has only been in _____ for three years and to sell a billion songs in that time is nothing _____ of phenomenal. At the turn of the millennium, _____ a soul would have known what an mp3 was and iPods were yet to make their ubiquitous mark on digital culture. By _____, sales of more traditional formats such as CDs have halved in many parts of the world.

operation
barely
unsuspecting
short
piece
reminder
contrast
rockers

The teenage record maker, Alex Ostrovsky from Michigan, _____ a bag of digital goodies to mark the milestone. A representative from Apple _____ Alex in the _____ hours of the morning to congratulate him and tell him he was soon to receive an iMac computer, 10 iPods and a \$10,000 gift card for the iTunes store. He initially _____ it was a prankster and was about to give him a piece of his mind. Alex said: "I was really _____. I didn't even know there was a competition. But the guy knew the details of my mum's credit card." Apple CEO Steve Jobs was _____ happy. He said the billionth download represented "a major _____ against music piracy and the future of music distribution as we _____ from CDs to the Internet".

skeptical
phoned
force
presumed
move
scored
equally
wee

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Apple iTunes sees billionth download

An American teenager made _____ music history yesterday when he downloaded the billionth song from the Apple iTunes music store. The _____ 16-year-old spent 99 cents to purchase a digital version of *Speed of Sound* by British rockers Coldplay. The track's title seems an appropriate reminder of _____ at which innovations in the industry are moving. Apple's online store has only been in operation for three years and to sell a billion songs in that time is _____ phenomenal. At the turn of the millennium, barely a soul would have known what an mp3 was and iPods were yet to make _____ on digital culture. By contrast, sales of more traditional formats such as CDs have _____ in many parts of the world.

The teenage record maker, Alex Ostrovsky from Michigan, _____ a bag of digital goodies to _____. A representative from Apple phoned Alex in the wee hours of the morning to congratulate him and tell him he was soon to receive an iMac computer, 10 iPods and a \$10,000 gift card for the iTunes store. He _____ it was a _____ and was about to give him a piece of his mind. Alex said: "I was really skeptical. I didn't even know there was a competition. But the guy knew the details of my mum's credit card." Apple CEO Steve Jobs was _____ happy. He said the billionth download represented "a major force against _____ and the future of music distribution as we move from CDs to the Internet".

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'music' and 'history'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "MUSIC" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about music and music players.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| • history | • scored |
| • version | • wee |
| • pace | • initially |
| • short | • mind |
| • barely | • equally |
| • contrast | • force |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of digital music?
- c. Have you ever downloaded music?
- d. Are you surprised one billion songs have been downloaded from Apple's iTunes?
- e. Can you see any negative points about downloading music?
- f. What do your parents think about digital music and iPods, etc?
- g. Would you like to make a little piece of history? In what?
- h. How important is music in your life?
- i. How have your musical tastes changed over the years?
- j. Do all of your friends have iPods or similar music players?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. How do you think mp3s and music downloads have changed music?
- d. Do you prefer browsing for music online or in real stores?
- e. What do you think of downloading music without paying for it?
- f. What punishment do you think should be given to people who illegally download music?
- g. Do you think there's a legal difference between downloading a song without paying for it and recording a song off the radio?
- h. Do you think CDs and cassette tapes will die out soon?
- i. Have you ever given someone a piece of your mind?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

MUSIC DIARY: Complete the following music diary about the best music to listen to at the times listed in the left hand column.

To wake up to in the morning	
In the shower	
In the car / on the bus to work / school	
Lunchtime	
When you're really bored at school / work	
After work / school	
To fall asleep to at night	

Talk to each other about your diary.

How many people can you find who have similar musical diaries to you or whose musical schedule you would like to follow?

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find information about music downloads and piracy. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. LYRICS: Make a poster about the lyrics of your favorite song. Explain what they mean and how they make you feel. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Which other songs did you like the lyrics to?

4. MUSICAL FUTURE: Write an essay describing the future of music. Include sections on how and where we'll be buying it, and the different ways it will interact with our lives. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. F d. F e. T f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. unsuspecting	innocent
b. breathless	rapid
c. phenomenal	staggering
d. soul	person
e. ubiquitous	ever-present
f. scored	won
g. wee	early
h. prankster	joker
i. skeptical	dubious
j. major	considerable

PHRASE MATCH:

a. An American teenager made	a little piece of music history
b. the breathless pace at which	innovations in the industry are moving
c. barely a soul would have known	what an mp3 was
d. iPods were yet to make their	ubiquitous mark in digital culture
e. sales of more traditional formats	such as CDs have halved
f. scored a bag of digital goodies to	mark the milestone
g. Apple phoned Alex in the wee	hours of the morning
h. He initially presumed	it was a prankster
i. give him a piece	of his mind
j. the billionth download represented	a major force against music piracy

GAP FILL:

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An American teenager made a little **piece** of music history yesterday when he downloaded the billionth song from the Apple iTunes music store. The **unsuspecting** 16-year-old spent 99 cents to purchase a digital version of *Speed of Sound* by British **rockers** Coldplay. The track's title seems an appropriate **reminder** of the breathless pace at which innovations in the industry are moving. Apple's online store has only been in **operation** for three years and to sell a billion songs in that time is nothing **short** of phenomenal. At the turn of the millennium, **barely** a soul would have known what an mp3 was and iPods were yet to make their ubiquitous mark on digital culture. By **contrast**, sales of more traditional formats such as CDs have halved in many parts of the world.

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