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OVERVIEW

From attending several music industry events such as AIM Digital Days, Midem and London Calling, it has become clear many labels and artists are still unaware of many key terms and processes in the digital area. As a leading global mobile distributor, VidZone Digital Media has created this guide to demystify the mobile and the digital space so labels and artists can increase their presence and maximise promotion and revenue.

1. What is Metadata?

Metadata is a critical part of all deliveries as it is the easiest and most effective way to identify your products. Metadata can be submitted in various formats (XML or Excel document) and typically has over 30 fields, including:

- Artist
- Title
- Product Title
- Release Date
- Duration
- Label
- Explicit – Y/N
- ISRC
- UPC / BARCODE

2. What product formats are available for music?

Product formats evolve as digital services evolve. The key formats as of May 2007 are:

- **Audio** Full/edited track downloads
- **Videos** Full/edited music video downloads
- **Mobile TV** TV streamed or downloaded to your phone
- **Ringtones – also called Ringtunes** Poly, mono tones
- **Realtones – also called Truetones**

***Definition:** Realtones are **heard when your phone rings**. They are the next stage on from ringtones as they are an edit of the original audio track instead of a simple mono or poly tune. Realtones come in different edits and formats specific to different mobile phones (e.g. some phones are 7s AAC files and others are 40s mp3 files). Listen to an example here: www.vidzonemobile.tv/mobile/Purchase.do?mediaType=rt&mobileGroupingId=4698.*

- **Dialtones – also called Ringback / Friend tones**
***Definition:** Dialback tones are an edit of the original track but instead of being heard when your phone rings this sound is **heard by a caller when they phone you**. Effectively you buy a dialtone as a gift whilst your callers wait for you to pick up. In some territories, this is the most popular product format on mobile.*
- **VidTones – also called Pic Tones**
***Definition:** VidTones are video ringtones watched and heard when your phone rings. Watch an example here: <http://www.vidzonemobile.tv/mobile/Purchase.do?mobileGroupingId=2485&mediaType=mv>.*

3. What formats are there?

Your files will be encoded into multiple end user files. The most common are: 3GA, 3GP, AAC, AAC+, AIFF, AMR, APL, AVC, AWB, MOV, MP3, MPG1, MPG2, MPG4, OGG, PCM, RM, SMAF, SWF, WAV, WMA and WMV files



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4. What are Sales Notes?

Sales Notes contain information about your product (album, single, EP, video etc.). In this information you should include your **artwork**, release/artist **facts**, radio/TV/online/mobile **press** and **quotes** from any publications or important individuals.

5. What Is An ISRC?

ISRC stands for International Standard Recording Code. An ISRC is a unique international identifier for tracks on sound and music-video recordings, comprised of a 12 character alpha-numeric code:
For example: GB-Z03-99-32476

6. Why do I need an ISRC?

An ISRC is a unique code for each individual recording therefore your sales are tracked by the ISRC code and it is crucial in making sure you receive your royalties.

If you don't already have ISRC codes we strongly recommend that you obtain these quickly as you won't be able to sell your music on any digital service without this information.

7. Where can I get an ISRC?

You can obtain an ISRC code from the PPL at www.ppluk.com. For more information visit:
http://www.riaa.com/issues%5Caudio%5Cisrc_faq.asp.

8. What is the PPL?

PPL stands for Phonographic Performance Limited and is a UK music industry collection organization which distributes airplay and public performance royalties on behalf of over 3,500 record companies and 40,000 performers.

If you are a record company and your tracks are broadcast on the radio or played in public, you need to become a PPL member to ensure you receive airplay royalties.

9. What is a UPC / BARCODE?

UPC stands for Universal Product Code and is a 12 digit code that is unique to each bundle (album/EP) of recordings. Each individual album or EP must have its own UPC / BARCODE. UPC / BARCODE are also referred to as EAN codes.

10. Why do I need a UPC / BARCODE?

Most services use a UPC / BARCODE or EAN number to track the delivery, process and sales of albums. UPC / BARCODE are used to group all your recordings in the same bundle. Without a UPC / BARCODE your content cannot be delivered to the network.



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11. Where and how can I get an UPC / BARCODE?

AIM members can benefit from the Unique Music scheme, giving a discount of over £100 towards getting GS1 unique numbers for barcodes. Visit www.gs1uk.org/txt_temp.asp?fid=395 for more information.

As the UK authority for the worldwide GS1 System, GS1 UK issues its members with sets of globally unique numbers which form the basis of this identification and communication system. These numbers are most commonly shown in bar codes on products. These unique numbers have no meaning, but they act as a link to information held on databases about each product line, company, location, shipping unit or asset that is being identified. The way in which companies and organisations use these numbers is standardised internationally, which means that standard electronic business documents can be exchanged simply, accurately and quickly in all global supply chains.

12. Delivering Your Content

There are various delivery methods you can use to submit your content and there are lots of different factors to take into account when choosing the appropriate method for you. If you are planning on sending a large delivery (e.g. over 1GB) it is advised to use an external hard drive/DVD. For all priority/frontline deliveries we recommend that you send via FTP.

13. How can I FTP?

FTP (File Transfer Protocol) is the most secure and stable way to deliver you frontline/priority releases. In order to FTP files, you will need to use software like SmartFTP or programs like LinkedIn. You also require a very good broadband internet connection. Upon request your digital distributor can help guide you through using FTP.

14. What is a download?

In terms of multimedia, a download is the transfer of a file between the digital retailer and a user's multimedia device (PC/Mobile Device). Any product format can be downloaded.

15. What is a stream?

In terms of multimedia, a stream is a non-saveable transfer from a digital retailer to a user's device (PC/Mobile device). This type of media is sometimes used as a preview of the purchasable, download file. Any product format can be streamed.

16. Why and how can I submit my video for distribution?

In recent years, video has gone from being a marketing tool to being a great way to make revenue. In fact several labels can recoup the video's costs over a short time frame.

Due to multiple encoding formats, it is important to submit your video in the highest possible quality. We recommend labels send a Betacam SP, which your mobile distributor can capture a digital file from and return back to labels.



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17. What is a music aggregator?

An aggregator licenses a collection of labels / music from many different labels / artists. An aggregator can be a distributor and seeks to make revenue through distribution and promotion.

18. What is a digital distributor?

A distributor licences a collection of labels / artists / aggregators and provides promotion, marketing and reporting solutions for the distribution of content into shops. A digital distributor should also be able to provide secure technology and delivery solutions to mobile networks and online partners.

19. What is a platform?

A platform's role with the mobile networks/operators varies. Predominately, they provide technology services including hosting files, editing the wap and online sites and digitising content into various specifications tailored to each networks needs. Some platform's also offer promotion strategies to mobile networks, working in conjunction with distributors and labels.

20. What happens to my files once I deliver to a distributor?

Once you have delivered your files, a distributor will ingest this content and digitise/encode and deliver to a digital service specification. A distributor will then check your content is live, market and promote the content and report back to you on sales.

21. How long will it take for my content to go live?

The various services all have different "ingestion" periods ranging from 2 weeks to several months. Unfortunately no aggregator can eliminate this waiting period.

22. How many tracks/videos do I need to go live on mobile and/or online?

You only need 1 track or 1 video to be published on mobile and/or online. More helps!

23. Can I deliver catalogue as well as latest releases digitally?

Yes definitely. Longtail sales are very important and prove to be extremely profitable for labels – the more content published online / mobile, the more sales you will generate. Don't ever assume your physical content won't "work" in the online or mobile space.

24. I'm an unsigned act - can I submit my music online / mobile if I'm not on a label?

Yes definitely. You can deal directly with distributors or seek an aggregator deal. Please speak to like-labels or like-genre artists to seek the best advice on which aggregator to work with or whether you should go direct.



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25. Who do I contact to get my content on mobile?

Unless you are a large Independent with either consistent Top 10 hits or a large catalogue, almost always Independent labels need to choose an aggregator or distributor to get their content distributed and live on mobile networks. This is because the mobile operators can't accommodate relationships with thousands of Independent labels.

26. Do I have to sign an exclusive deal for mobile and/or online?

Always be aware of whether you are signing an **exclusive** or **non-exclusive** distribution deal and what duration this agreement will last. No distributor can cover every music service directly. This means working with a few distributors to ensure your music is being represented in as many markets as possible and by the most experienced people. This way a structured promotion strategy can be implemented for a frontline campaign per service.

Questions to ask when licensing to aggregator / distributor:

- a. Does the aggregator or distributor have **direct deals** with the mobile networks and online companies? If so, which companies and **what formats**?

You should always seek to get the best distribution per territory/per product format and this is achieved where your distributor has a direct deal with the digital service → ask the distributor where they deliver to for physical, digital and mobile services.

- b. Which other labels or unsigned acts does the aggregator or distributor work with?

Always contact like-labels or like-genre artists to seek the best advice on which aggregator / distributor to work with. Not every company who is renowned for physical distribution has deals or can represent you digitally and not every company renowned for digital distribution can represent you physically.

27. What is an MNO?

MNO stands for Mobile Network Operator (mobile network). Examples of UK MNOs include 3, O2, Orange, T-Mobile and Vodafone.

28. What is an MVNO?

MVNO stands for Mobile Virtual Network Operator. By simple definition it is a virtual network using MNO infrastructure but mostly utilising an internal billing and pricing structure. E.g. Virgin Mobile is a virtual operator using the T-Mobile infrastructure in the UK

29. Which UK mobile networks can sell my content?

- **3 Mobile:** http://www.three.co.uk/personal/music_/index.omp
- **O2:** <http://music.o2.co.uk/>
- **Orange:** <http://www.orangedownloads.co.uk/downloadshop/?WT.svl=208>
- **T-Mobile:** <http://pfw.t-zones.co.uk/web/Downloads/en/Downloads/>
- **Virgin Mobile:** <http://www.virginmobile.com/vm/home.do>
- **Vodafone:** <http://www.vodafonemusic.co.uk/>



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30. Are mobile networks Chart eligible?

As of May 2007, 3 Mobile, Orange and Vodafone mobile networks are chart eligible for audio sales in the UK. It is just as important to publish your content on these networks as it is online so *mobilise your music now!*

31. What does 2G, 2.5G and 3G mean?

The first point to be made is that 3G is not 3 Mobile – this is a common misunderstanding. The former is like referring to broadband technology and the latter referring to a mobile network.

The “G” in 2.5G or 3G stands for “generation” referring to cellular wireless technology, IE the generation at which the technology has advanced for mobile. 2 or 2.5 or 3 refers to the stages at which the technology is advancing – in the online world 2.5G is similar to a “modem” connection on a 90’s PC and with 3G we are starting to see the beginning of “broadband” connection on a 00’s PC.

3G supports much higher data rates, measured in Mbps, intended for applications other than voice (2G is predominantly intended for voice and text). Other application examples include full-motion video, video-conferencing and Internet access. 3G currently offers the best music experience where you can download any format including full length video, tones and tracks.

2.5G systems have some 3G and 2G technology, providing additional features such as GPRS and enhanced data rates. 2.5G doesn’t offer a great music experience with only edited video, track and tones available (e.g. 30 second videos).

Get a 3G phone! 4G phones are coming soon.

32. What is DRM?

- a) Digital Rights Management (DRM) enables the restriction of the usage of music purchased and downloaded to your PC or digital device
- b) DRM has several levels of restriction and can be applied to any product format (e.g. video, audio etc.) or content type (e.g. music, sport, games, etc.).
- c) The level of DRM depends on the service (online/mobile) and the type of device the file is being downloaded to including:
 - Basic forward locking (mainly on mobile devices, disabling the choice for the user to transfer the file via Bluetooth, etc.)
 - Full management rights which enables services to lock the content intelligently (Assigning specific play, burn and transfer restrictions)
 - DRM product names include OMA1, OMA2, Windows Media DRM, etc.

33. What does SMS mean?

SMS stands for Short Message Service. It allows text messages of up to 160 characters on digital GSM networks.



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34. What does MMS mean?

MMS stands for Multimedia Message Service. It allows a message to transmit graphics, video clips, sound files and text over wireless networks using WAP protocol. MMS can be a very effective way to promote music content.

35. What does WAP mean?

WAP stands for Wireless Application Protocol. A simple explanation of WAP is that it allows access to the internet from your cellular phone.

36. What is a shortcode / musicode?

A shortcode is a special phone number (shorter than the average phone number) which can be used to send SMS messages to receive content. Music shortcodes can be used to purchase realtones, full length audio tracks, music videos and video ringtones. A shortcode example might be:
To get Maximo Park's "Books From Boxes" realtone **TEXT REAL 261549 TO 80160**

37. How much will shortcodes cost me?

a) Some companies work on a **revenue share agreement**:

Where there are free set-up costs and revenue share offered, then it is in the interests of all parties involved to create the shortcodes as quickly as possible and maximise the potential of these shortcodes through promotion

b) Some companies charge **setup costs**:

If there is a set up cost for your shortcode then make sure that these costs are easily recoupable through the sale of your shortcode based on the revenue share that you have been offered

38. When should I expect to see sales online?

Tracking sales and receiving payment depend on your/distributor relationship to the music service and the service itself. Some online music services offer labels access to an area where they can upload their music and track sales, others do not grant such access. Whichever service you choose to upload your music to, you should always ensure that you are accounted to on a regular basis and that you are aware of what the out payment is per product download for that service.

39. When should I expect to see sales on mobile?

Mobile networks usually report to their labels/aggregators on a monthly basis as there are so many formats to collate sales for and labels to report to. If your content is being distributed via an aggregator/distributor, then there is usually an additional 3-4 week wait. Mobile reporting has some catching up to do on the quick online music reporting.



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40. How can I improve my sales?

There are a number of ways to improve sales including:

- a. Get your entire catalogue distributed and live on **all digital services!**
- b. Establish good positioning on any music service where your product is retailed – a good aggregator/distributor should provide this service but good sales notes and information from labels/artists are crucial to achieve this
- c. Take advantage of any promotional areas or features which digital services provide
- d. The method of improvement which is most forgotten: tell your customers where they can buy your music! For example list your shortcodes or include links or logos to mobile networks or online partners on your artist website, myspace, flyers, etc.

NEED HELP – Ask VidZone Digital Media

VidZone Digital Media is a leading global mobile content distributor dedicated to marketing and promoting content on mobile networks internationally.

We are a Friend of AIM and a BPI member so please contact us with any questions or changes related to this document.

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