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Faces In The News

EMI Says Apple's Jobs Will Change iTunes Pricing

Peter Kafka, 11.16.05, 2:01 PM ET

Steve Jobs



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Life is complicated, but **Apple Computer's** iTunes store is pretty simple: Download a song, pay 99 cents. Consumers have done that more than 600 million times since Apple Chief Executive **Steve Jobs** opened the online music store in 2003.

That one-price-fits-all structure may be on the way out, though. Today EMI Group boss Alain Levy said at press conference today that he believed Jobs would introduce multiple price points for iTunes music within the next year. **Apple** (nasdaq: [AAPL](#) - [news](#) - [people](#)) officials were unavailable for comment. If Levy is correct, the new pricing scheme would mark a turnaround for Jobs, who has argued that a buck a song was an easy to understand proposition for consumers and a victory for the music business, which has been calling for the move for the past several months.

Levy, along with executives from **Warner Music Group** (nyse: [WMG](#) - [news](#) - [people](#)) and **Sony** (nyse: [SNE](#) - [news](#) - [people](#)) BMG, the joint venture between Sony and Bertelsmann, have been pushing Jobs publicly and privately to move to a tiered pricing system, where older, less popular songs could be discounted, and in-demand singles could go for more than a dollar. The dispute over pricing is one of the reasons that

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Sony BMG has stayed out of Apple iTunes offerings in Japan and Australia.

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Label executives have made multiple arguments for flexible pricing. They argue, for instance, that almost all retail businesses have different price points for different products. But they are particularly interested in boosting their revenue from digital music sales, which aided by the sale of mobile phone ringtones, are increasing but not quickly enough to replace the continuing drops in compact disc sales. EMI said today that digital sales, made up 4.9% of the company's sales in the last six months, up from 2.1% a year ago.

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