SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Apple Inc. and music label EMI Group plan to announce "an exciting new digital offering," EMI said on Sunday, a move that could involve putting the Beatles music catalog online.

EMI said it plans to hold a news conference on Monday at its London headquarters where EMI Chief Executive Eric Nicoli will be joined by Apple Chief Executive and co-founder Steve Jobs, the company said in an e-mail to reporters.

A live Webcast of the event, which will feature "a special live performance," will be available at http://www.emigroup.com beginning at 1 p.m. local time in London (8 a.m. EDT).

Currently, no Beatles songs can be downloaded via online music services. EMI has been the distributor for the Beatles since the early 1960s.

The news event follows the settlement in February of a long-running trademark dispute between Apple Inc., which recently changed its name from Apple Computer Inc., and the Beatle's company, Apple Corps Ltd. This cleared away a major hurdle for selling the Fab Four's songs on Apple Inc.'s iTunes online music store.

Apple Corps is owned by Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, John Lennon's widow Yoko Ono and the estate of George Harrison.

The music company had maintained that the computer company had violated a series of agreements stretching back decades over use of the Apple trademark by entering the music business through its now market-leading iTunes online store.

The Beatles are high-profile holdouts from Internet music services such as iTunes, but it also emerged during a trial last year that Apple Corps was preparing the band's catalog to be sold online for the first time.

At the high-profile launch of the Apple iPhone in January, Steve Jobs raised hopes that the band could be about to go digital when it played one of their songs and used a Beatles' album cover to grace a giant on-stage screen behind him.

Beyond any potential deal with EMI involving the Beatles, Apple and EMI could also be working on a means for eliminating restrictions that prevent unauthorized duplication of digital music.

Earlier this year, Jobs called on the world's four major record companies, including EMI, to start selling songs online without copy protection software to thwart piracy known as
digital rights management (DRM).

Jobs said there appeared to be no benefit for the record companies in continuing to sell more than 90 percent of their music without DRM on compact discs, while selling the remaining small percentage of music online encumbered with a DRM system.

(Additional reporting by Eric Auchard and Michael Kahn in San Francisco)
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