

RINGTONES THE MULTIBILLION DOLLAR BUSINESS

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Yet another years growth in the mobile ring tone market has confirmed its position as a major force in the music industry.

Once considered a passing craze,ring tones now account for more than 10% of the global music market and are overtaking CD sales sooner than expected. Few thought that the monophonic tones of the late 1990s would evolve into the multi-billion dollar market that exists today. But,following the advent of true polyphonic ring tones in 2003,the realisation of their potential has developed a fresh momentum.

Unable to ignore the ring tone market,the music business has come to embrace its future and its influence on youth culture. This is especially true of the hip-hop industry whose output makes-up more than half of all downloaded ring tones. Successful artists such as 50 Cent, Mariah Carey and Kayne West have all learnt that ring tones are by no means a niche product. To hear the latest from the mobile ring tone charts visit www.ding-dingringtones.co.uk

If there is a key to this success then it is probably the creation of a 'total product',that is,the full customisation of phones with ring tones,wallpapers,screensavers,logos,picture messages and games. This has led to huge consumer choice and demand,with endless catalogues of music and themes now available on both mono and polyphonic phones. Another factor has been the obvious media impact,with the likes of the infamous crazy frog ring tone experiencing unprecedented coverage.

Ultimately,the long term success of the ring tone market could depend on the ability of the major phone manufacturers like Nokia,Motorola,Sony Ericsson and Samsung to combine the very latest technology with wide-ranging compatibility;a balance which is becoming increasingly important in this truly global industry.

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