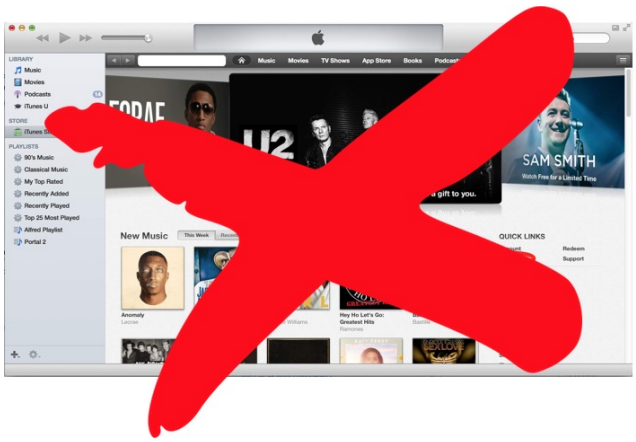
According to Digital Music News customers will soon be able to buy and download music off the iTunes Store no more-- Apple is reportedly considering an "aggressive" two-year termination plan for the online music store.



“Keeping [iTunes music downloads] running forever isn’t really on the table anymore,” an anonymous source insists. Also in discussion is a plan to “ride the [iTunes music download offering] out for the next 3-4 years, maybe longer" once music downloads become an afterthought in a streaming-dominated industry. Another source bluntly states “if he were alive, Jobs would have killed it.”

In turn, Apple actually released a rare statement on a news story-- one insisting “our response is that it is not true, we are not shutting down iTunes downloads per [Digital Music News'] story." However the news website insists its sources are in the right, and the Apple reaction is more of a reassurance to music labels and artists, whose incomes will be wrecked even further with the loss of the paid download revenue stream.

But will Apple actually bring paid iTunes music downloads to an end? Whichever way one slices it, fact is streaming is cannibalising into paid download revenues. According to music industry analyst Mark Mulligan, download revenues have been in decline since a 2012 peak of $3.9 billion, and are set to drop to just $600 million by 2019.

“By 2020 [Apple’s] download business would be tracking to be 10 times smaller than streaming revenue but, crucially, streaming revenue would nearly have reached the 2012 iTunes Store download revenue peak,” Mulligan estimates. “This is the point at which Apple would choose to turn off the iTunes Store. The narrative of services based music business would be complete.”

In other words, while Apple might not be as aggressive as closing the iTunes Music Store in 2 years' time, the store will eventually come to a close-- or at least that is what the market appears to suggest. As for how such a closure will take place, one has to keep in mind Apple has a weapon in the shape of Jimmy Iovine, whose deep contacts within the music industry should allow for a smooth full transition from paid downloads to streaming.

In other news related to both Apple and music, reports claim the Music streaming service is wrecking havoc with users' on-device music libraries. The first of such stories comes from composer James Pinkstone, who says Apple Music deleted no less than 122GB of music files from his laptop without his permission. Apple also provides a comment on the story, blaming it on a possible iTunes database bug. A software update should rectify the situation, and users suffering from such issues should contact AppleCare.

Go Apple Terminating Music Downloads "Within 2 Years" (Digital Music News)

Go Apple Offers Rare Response to iTunes Download Shutdown Report (Digital Music News)

Go After The Download: When Apple Turns Off The iTunes Store (Music Industry Blog)

Go Apple Stole My Music. No, Seriously

Go Apple Comments on iTunes Deleting Music (The Loop)