

## A STING IN THE APP

### Recreating the record experience

In the mid-1990s, just before the introduction of DVD-Video, record labels and software developers began exploring the possibilities of inserting a multimedia-rich CD-ROM about rock music into a computer drive. Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones released relatively expensive software packages (\$59.99) such as Highway 61 Interactive and the Voodoo Lounge CD-ROM, respectively.

Powered by an early version of the Apple-developed QuickTime video technology, the CD-ROMs enabled users to navigate around a virtual world about the artists, their music, read the lyrics, look at album covers, and watch concert performances and interviews with the musicians. Ironically, those discs won't work on a current Mac, because they were developed for OS9, which Apple doesn't support any longer.

Fast forward to about 16 years later, and the physical disc is becoming superfluous, as digital media technological advances have catapulted a whole new realm of music experiences via the iPad. Indeed, Sting 25, the first 'appumentary' – and a free one at that – showed up in Apple's iPad app store this past November for Sting, who the previous month had celebrated his 60th birthday. The former leader of the popular rock band The Police had also recently hit the 25th anniversary of being a solo artist.

The musician's New York-based manager, Kathy Schenker, had originally approached multimedia production company @radical.media to commemorate her client's milestones with a documentary. The company's documentary credits include The Concert for George [Harrison] and more recent films about Jay-Z, Lady Gaga, Britney

Spears, as well as one that was exhibited at the Sundance film festival about the making of Paul Simon's Graceland album.

@radical bills itself as 'a global transmedia company.' "The idea is that you tell stories across multiple media platforms," explained Justin Wilkes, @radical's Executive Vice President, in an exclusive D2D interview.

"[For Sting] We kept coming back to maybe there's a much more exciting way to tell this story [than a documentary film]." The iPad was the perfect platform, according to Wilkes, because of its ability to interactively combine audio and video. "It's how you would want to explore something," he added.

#### FREE AT A COST

The day before the app was released in late November, Sting appeared at the Apple store on Manhattan's Upper West Side to reflect on his career and promote Sting 25, which is also, perhaps not surprisingly, the same name of a deluxe four-disc boxed set Universal Music Group released the previous month. "I think it's the future model of delivering music. It's the first of its kind, which is why it's free," Sting explained at the store, following an extensive demo of the app by an @radical executive.

The musician likened the app experience to when he would listen to jazz records from the late 1950s and early 1960s. "I would pore over the liner notes. I knew how the music was made, what the artists who made it were thinking. There were pictures of them in the studio. I got a slice of their life. If you put the music in this digital cloud –

The Sting 25 app allows the user to explore the musician's career chronologically

Are advertising-supported music 'appumentaries' here to stay? Larry Jaffee asks the developer of the recently released Sting app exclusively for the iPad.



All of Sting's solo music is available to be purchased as downloads via the app

we're disconnected. I think this app and the iPad can bring back the sense that music comes from real people. It's a modern way of going back to what I loved about music."

The Sting app would have not been possible without underwriting from commercial sponsors Chevrolet and American Express, @radical's Wilkes admitted. The two sponsors organically fit as part of the story. Amex has been involved with Sting's music in the past, and General Motors share Sting's passion in supporting charitably One World Football, a program that provides indestructible soccer balls to kids in third world countries.

"It's because of [Chevrolet and American Express'] support that we were able to make it free. Otherwise it wouldn't have been a sustainable business model," said Wilkes, who declined to put a financial figure on what the app cost to develop. @radical staff worked on the app for nine months, and also designed the packaging for Sting 25, the boxed set, which uses the same graphics motif in the app and was nominated in February for a packaging Grammy.

[The nomination was in the category of Best Boxed Or Special Limited Edition Package, won by Bruce Springsteen's The Promise: The Darkness On The Edge Of Town Story - see Grammy packaging article on page 17.]

Prior to working on the Sting app, @radical utilized platform knowledge it gained from creating an app for the Gagosian Gallery.

Sting's 60th birthday concert, an all-star gala featuring guest stars including Stevie Wonder, Bruce Springsteen and Robert Downey Jr, did end up getting filmed, but there aren't any current plans for it to be released on DVD in its entirety. "While there's the physical production of the app, there were so many other assets that went into it,

including the production and filming of the Beacon concert," Wilkes explained, declining also to reveal the number of app downloads.

"Considerably more people will have experienced this music in that concert through the app than would have ever seen it on television and/or DVD. We're pushing his music out to as large an audience as possible, which would have been prohibitively expensive for clearances for the music itself, video clips and archival material. It just wouldn't have been possible to do," Wilkes added.

Wilkes noted that Sting as the songwriter, and UMG as the owner of the master recordings, were both supportive of the project by making available the necessary licences to cover the music used in the app, which offers for sale downloads to all of the artist's solo music, thus creating new revenue streams for the record and music publishing companies.

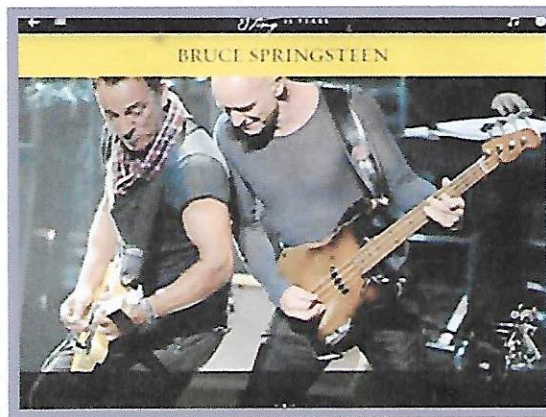
"The reason we chose to distribute it for free – and it was a very conscious decision – there was no track record for something like this. Bjork's Biophilia is an album release. Rolling Stone did it recently with some of the Beatles archive. There are Grateful Dead and Pink Floyd apps, but all of those are limited in how far they go. We wanted to take a much more retrospective look at his life and times."

@radical had no idea what to expect on how well the app would be received, Wilkes noted. "Are we going to have 10,000 downloads or 100,000 downloads? There were no existing metrics for it. We wanted to get it out to as many people as possible. We were able to push it out globally, and get a pretty significant response. That was the

motivation for giving it away for free. But to do that we needed to be able to partner with brands," he adds.

@radical is currently working on apps for a slate of undisclosed artists on the level of Sting for UMG and other labels. iPad analytics allow @radical to examine which parts of the app are more popular than others in terms of downloads. "What's nice about an app in general is that it's something we keep updating, so it's never old," explained Wilkes, citing a few more songs added from the birthday concert and backstage footage. "Our plan is for it to be an ongoing thing. We're adding tour dates and you can buy tickets from it. It's in Europe now. We look at it as a living, breathing story; not just a static thing." D2D

www.radicalmedia.com  
www.sting.com



IT'S FROM 1954, SLIGHTLY YOUNGER THAN ME I FOUND IT OVER 20 YEARS AGO, AND IT WAS LIKE A LITTLE ORPHAN THAT NOBODY WANTED

▶ "MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE"



The app features highlights of Sting's 60th birthday concerts, including special guests such as Bruce Springsteen

## Coming in Issue 16 of D2D

**ONCE, TWICE, THREE TIMES...** - In Part 3 of the series, **George Cole** continues the voyage of discovery into the booming second-screening phenomenon with a look at how the social network aspect works with content delivery, whether live, time-shifted or on disc.

**KEEPING THE PIRATES AT BAY, PART 2** - **Steve Traiman** reports on the state of the content protection industry and how the technology companies are keeping physical and digital delivery secure.

**RESTORATION RENAISSANCE** - **Fiona Maxwell** continues her guided tour through some of Hollywood's greatest old classics and how they have been given a new lease of life through TLC and careful restoration.

**3D OR NOT 3D?** - Studios are still making 3D titles, and some, like Hugo, are winning critical acclaim – and awards. Has it overcome the status of gimmick?

**BIG WHEEL KEEP ON TURNING** - D2D visits a company that is taking green and retro seriously and recycling old vinyl records to make new vinyl releases.

**I'M STILL HERE** - the music CD has gotten creakier with age, but is not out of the game. **Dan Daley** explores the evidence that the music industry is shifting more towards an indie paradigm, and the premium CD is taking on the retro cool of vinyl.

**E FOR ENHANCED** - E-published author **Linda Lombri** examines challenges and opportunities in the e-publishing world and talks to service providers about behind-the-scenes technology on e-books and enhanced e-publications.

**METADATA AND CONTENT DELIVERY** - consumers can't consume content they can't find. Our white paper examines the challenges and opportunities for content owners to get their content in front of viewers.

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Take on Technology** - **Barry Fox** provides his unbiased view of content delivery
- **FutureSource Focus** - a sneak preview of the Future of Entertainment Summit
- **On With the Show** - highlights from IPTV World Forum
- **In Their Own Words** - industry leaders air their views

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### Kenny Packaging Machinery Ltd.

Units 2206-7, Honour Industrial Centre, 6 Sun Yip St., Chai Wan, HONG KONG  
Tel: +852-2558-6068 Fax: +852-2558-8261 E-mail: inquiry@kennypackaging.com