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Radio Firms Teaming Up With iTunes

By PATRICK SEITZ

HD Radio has teamed up with **Apple's** (AAPL) iTunes online music store for what both parties hope is a mutually beneficial relationship.

A new feature on select HD Radio receivers lets listeners "tag" songs they hear on the radio and preview and buy them the next time they sync their iPod music players to iTunes.

HD Radio officials hope the feature will help increase adoption of their new digital radio broadcast format. Apple executives expect the feature, called iTunes tagging, will bolster paid song and album downloads.

"To tie radio to what arguably has been the most successful consumer electronics product of the last 10 years, if not in history, is pretty important," said Bob Struble, chief executive of iBiquity Digital, which developed the HD Radio standard.

It's still early days for iTunes tagging, but Apple executives like what they've seen so far.

"Every time a customer sees it, you see their eyes light up when they see how easy it is to hear a song they love on HD Radio and simply tap the button and it will be remembered later," said Greg Joswiak, Apple's worldwide vice president of iPod product marketing. "Customers immediately get it. It's a great way for people to discover new music."

It sure beats having to find a pen and paper to write down the performer and song title, if you even got that information to begin with, he says.

Radio is the No. 1 method for discovering new music, says Jeff Littlejohn, executive vice president of distribution development for Clear Channel Radio. It's how 65% of people discover new music, he says. iTunes tagging marries the top way of finding new music with the top service for buying digital music, he says.

To date, iTunes tagging is limited to table-top radios with iPod docks, including the \$139 Jensen JiMS-525a and the \$499 Polk Audio I-Sonic ES2.

This summer, iTunes tagging is expected to be available in a number of aftermarket car radios.

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