

LABEL SERVICES DIGITAL SPECIALISTS

GETTING UP TO DATA

Some are improving music rights-holders processes online - and helping to get them organised

DIGITAL

■ BY TIM INGHAM

Labels used to rely on a pretty simple equation when it came to music retail: a CD or track was sold a certain number of times, and that spawned the manageable number they had to pop into their database.

Yet in the modern age, what was once thousands of sales have become potentially hundreds of millions of lines of data from myriad streaming services.

So how best to deal with this sudden influx of intimidating and potentially confusing commercial information?

One option is to continue using old software built for a sales-driven world - but many small labels are now looking into tools created specifically for the new retail landscape. And it's this need that's being served by analytics app OTTO. An alternative way of processing sales files in a simplified way, it was born from an independent label - Diogenes Music - which itself became frustrated with outmoded digital processes.

"OTTO was designed to help streamline the sales reporting process from digital services back to rights-owners," explains co-founder Eric Namour (pictured). "In a few words: a label



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ERIC NAMOUR, OTTO

or distributor which deals directly with online retailers (i.e. iTunes, Amazon, Spotify etc) has to manage and consolidate an increasing amount of single files in order to report back to sub-labels or artists by providing them with statements and data analytics.

"Although the primary focus is for record labels or distributors and aggregators, artists will be able to access and view their own

data and graphs."

OTTO aims to both reduce the internal operations within labels dealing with streaming and download services, and also increase the management's visibility by providing data analysis, trends and internal management reports.

"OTTO wants to change part of the game by being more transparent and flexible than others and not trying to do it all

at once but rather focus on key issues and connect to other service providers to scale," says Namour. "Labels should have their wishes from a reporting system satisfied; a rapid development cycle and responsive support team - on top of the intuitive interface which is constantly evolving based on suggestions."

He adds: "The labels that are in the space of direct delivery and reporting know that it can be a very tedious and manual process to manage the entire flow from retrieving a file to generating statements.

"For example, anyone manually processing a few months of Spotify statements knows the time it takes and potential room for error.

"Our idea was to build a scalable and flexible system for achieving the arduous task in the most simple and efficient way whilst being aware of the problems behind some of the current systems on offer.

"We are continuously adding productivity modules and tools. As our tagline suggests, we aim to be "a smart and elegant online tool" - an alternative to other systems built on the basis of a thorough knowledge of the workflow and the industry's evolving requirements."

COUNTERPOINT SYSTEMS: 'YOU NEED WELL-ORGANISED DATA'

Counterpoint Systems, part of the Vistex Group, provides specialist rights and royalties management software for the entertainment and brand licensing industries.

It has modernised in recent years to accommodate all forms of new entertainment media.

"As a reputable company - over 25 years in the business, clients trust our solutions," head of sales Phil Bird tells *Music Week*.

"The investment we are making into our product range for the music industry is substantial, particularly in the areas of cloud solutions, data management and content delivery.

"Efficiency is probably our key difference as well as reporting i.e. metrics and sales information. In addition, Counterpoint can provide a configurable royalty payment structure which can manage the ever complex deal structures now employed by record labels.

"The sheer number of exploitation channels has grown considerably in recent years, which means it is more important than ever to have data well organised and accessible.

"Counterpoint delivers each of these requirements and provide in-house expertise, knowledge and a support infrastructure that's the envy of our rivals."

FUGA LAUNCHES WHITE LABEL SOLUTION

One company making moves to help labels with their digital B2B needs is music rights expert Fintage House.

The company has extended its digital music business platform FUGA to incorporate a white label service.

This now enables labels, distributors and aggregators to issue branded accounts to their clients, who can then upload and create content.

It also allows sub-labels and partners to upload their audio files and release information, and submit them for review before



acceptance into a right-holder's master FUGA catalogue -

then deliver to a network of master stores.

"We received constant feedback from our labels, distributors and aggregators that the process of receiving, polishing, QCing and managing content before uploading into FUGA was taking up to 30% of their resources, so we knew we had to act to streamline the 'data in' component of digital distribution for those dealing with large volumes of content from multiple sources," says the director of the platform, Dave Driessen (pictured).

"During Beta testing this has allowed our developing

partners to allocate up to two full time employees towards other areas of their business such as marketing and A&R, while at the same time, giving greater control over digital content creation, and helping to educate their sub-labels and artists on better digital practice.

"You can utilise our White Label software module whether you use FUGA as a technical partner to deliver content through your own deals, if you use FUGA Aggregation, or, typically, a combination of both for 100% market coverage."