

Internet Radio
eMusic
By Don Lewis

This is the fifth article in my review of Internet radio services. If you missed previous articles, they are available in the Product Review section of our website at <http://ppcuginc.com/prodrev.htm>.

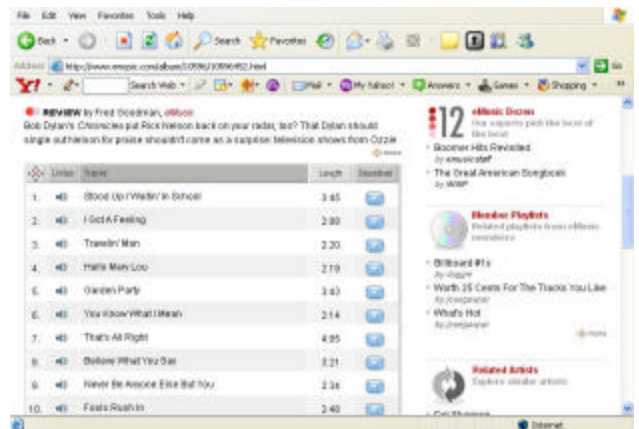
eMusic is not actually a radio site. At the beginning of this series, I stated that I would not include download sites because of the many and complicated restrictions they placed on the music they sold for download. However, I discovered this site that promised a million tracks available with no restrictions on the music. They advertise that the music you purchase is yours. It is compatible with MP3 format and the music can be transferred to any desktop, portable player or music service including iPod. There is no restriction on burning to CDs. The file format (VBR) provides the highest quality fidelity of any of the major digital music services. It is platform independent and works on PC, Macintosh, and Linux systems. There are three subscription levels: 40 downloads per month for \$10.00, 65 downloads for \$15.00 and 90 downloads for \$20.00. That is \$.25 per track or less assuming you download all of your tracks each month. Does this sound too good to be true? Well, there was a free trial with 50 free downloads. The following is my review of the free trial.

The site requires a credit card to sign up for the free trial like the radio sites. If you cancel before the end of the trial, your card is not charged. It suggests downloading the free file manager to assist with downloading files. It is not required, but makes it much easier since downloads must be done one at a time without it.

The download manager is simple to work. Just click the download button on the eMusic website and the track is added to the manager. Any number can be queued.

I found that the service works pretty much as advertised. Downloaded tracks worked in all of the players that I tried. They could be burned to audio CDs and moved to my laptop.

So why is this not the perfect service? The music is provided by independent record companies. The major record companies have no material on the site. I found a few mainstream artists, but their music was limited. I was pleased to find the album "Genius Loves Company" by Ray Charles. I found a few older artists like Ricky Nelson and Carl Perkins that had a few tracks, but it was no where near their complete



collection. Most of my artist searches came up empty. Most of the material is from artists I did not know. A 30 second clip is provided to sample each track and some of the music I tried was interesting. However, I think I would have a hard time identifying forty tracks a month to download.