

Epic Games to buy artist-focused site Bandcamp, adding music to its 'metaverse'

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Credit: Wikipedia

Video game developer Epic Games said Wednesday it is buying

Bandcamp, a popular music marketplace used by artists, for an undisclosed sum.

Epic, the maker of the popular video game Fortnite, has raised billions of dollars from investors in recent years, and it has aggressively used that money to buy other [technology companies](#), such as the makers of the Rocket League video game and the Houseparty chatroom app.

Bandcamp, which allows users to buy and stream music, marks Epic's 18th acquisition, according to venture capital data company Crunchbase. Epic declined to comment on the acquisition beyond its own release.

Bandcamp has gained in popularity in recent years as a place for musicians to sell their music, in a landscape increasingly dominated by streaming services like Spotify and Apple Music.

Artists can sell both digital and physical goods on Bandcamp, which takes a 10% share of the sales, NPR previously reported. The company, which is profitable, according to reports, also occasionally holds special days, called Bandcamp Fridays, when it allows artists to take nearly 100% of the revenue from their sales. In 2020, artists brought in \$40 million on Bandcamp Fridays, Variety previously reported.

In a release, Epic said Bandcamp will help it build out a marketplace for artists and creators. The company has said previously it is aiming to create a virtual ecosystem, dubbed the metaverse, where users can purchase art and other items directly from each other.

Bandcamp is the second artists' marketplace that Epic has bought in the past year. Last year, it bought ArtStation, a website that allows artists to sell their work and host their portfolios.

The two purchases are quickly turning the Epic Games Store into a place

where users could potentially buy much more than just video games.

"Bandcamp has built an incredible community and business where up and coming artists can succeed thanks to the direct support of their fans, with one of the best revenue models and terms in music," Steve Allison, [vice president](#) and general manager of the Epic Games Store, said in a statement.

"This aligns closely with Epic's approach to supporting creators across all media and enabling them to connect directly with their fans."

The news of Bandcamp's acquisition came as a surprise to many artists who use the service as an income stream. Durham musician Al Riggs tweeted they were worried about what Epic's ownership could mean.

"Bandcamp is the only platform that allows me to release music and merch in a way that actually benefits me financially," Riggs wrote, "so I hope this doesn't lead to any shenanigans or means of exploitation. It's hard not to worry about these things when something like this happens."

Bandcamp's CEO, Ethan Diamond, said his company's marketplace won't change following the ownership, and would continue to hold Bandcamp Fridays.

"In Epic, we've found a partner who believes as deeply as we do that the future of music, and art itself, depends on the creation of equitable and inclusive communities like the one our fans and artists have helped to build," Diamond said in a statement.

"We're excited to work alongside the Epic team to accelerate the realization of our mission and pursue our shared goal of empowering more creators in a fair and open way."

Already, Diamond said, Bandcamp is working with Epic to expand internationally and improve its mobile apps, discovery features and payment systems.

It also will work to boost its own streaming platform and a vinyl pressing business that it started in the wake of a vinyl pressing shortage that has delayed releases for many artists.

In a blog post, Diamond made many references to Epic being "champions for a fair and open Internet."

For nearly two years, Epic has battled internet giants Apple and Google in court over their decision to take 30% cuts of purchases made through apps on iPhone and Android phones.

A decision in those cases could impact how Bandcamp manages its platform going forward. Currently, users cannot buy digital albums on Bandcamp's iPhone app because of Apple's in-app purchases fee. Instead, users are directed to Bandcamp's website, where those fees don't apply.

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