

Apple Launches iTunes Store in Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Confusion surrounding copyright rules and how to deal with suppliers limits the music selection on the portal.

Apple on Tuesday launched a Russian version of its bestselling iTunes Store, but the online music shop so far offers a limited selection of Russian songs because the U.S. company has failed to sign agreements with all domestic copyright-holders.

"Due to the fragmentation of Russian copyright laws, we came up with licenses through several companies. Ideally we'd like a new and reliable union of copyright-holders to be created through which we could draw up licenses," Vedomosti quoted Apple spokesman Ben Cave as saying.

The business daily reported that Apple had wanted to launch its Russian iTunes Store in November, but that signing agreements with copyright-holders had delayed the store's launch date.

Browsing the store Tuesday morning, individual songs on the Russian site cost at least 10

rubles (30 cents), and whole albums start at roughly 100 rubles (\$3) — a significant discount to U.S. prices.

Local copyright-holders explained their reluctance to sell their music on Apple's site by the U.S. company's unusual approach to singing licensing agreements.

"We just received an offer from Apple to work with them through the Russian Authors Society or First Music Publishing House, and we were very surprised by this approach, Alexei Kozlov, director of the Navigator Records label, told Vedomosti. "This is why we temporarily halted putting albums from our catalog on iTunes."

Navigator Records owns the rights to the songs of artists including DDT, Melnitsa, Zveri, Kalinov Most, Splin and Vladimir Vysotsky.

Valeria Grishina, general producer of Medialiner, another record company negotiating with Apple, said that the U.S. firm had "still not completely thought through how it should work with Russian copyright laws. We don't need an intermediary such as the Russian Authors Society, we can come to an agreement directly."

The iTunes Store first launched in the United States on April 28, 2003, and now operates in 61 countries across the globe.

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