

Any Music Brings Sweet Sounds to the Masses with Innovative Downloading Service



Any Music Inc
Tokyo, Japan
www.anymusic.jp

Industry:
High-Technology

Employees:
30

Oracle Products & Services:

Oracle Database
Oracle Real Application Clusters
Oracle Financing

Key Benefits:

- Ensured stability and high availability of music downloading service through the use of clustering technology
- Reduced initial investment by adopting a flexible financing plan with clearly defined incremental payments
- Enabled capital to be utilized more efficiently

“Our customers are sensitive to quality and want the process of downloading music to be smooth and easy. Oracle clustering technology ensures we deliver a seamless, high quality service.”
– Akira Kurihara, General Manager, Service Business Division, Any Music Inc

Founded in February 2004 with joint funding from eight audio and video equipment manufacturers, Any Music allows customers to download music from the internet and enjoy high-quality playback on their electronic devices.

To ensure the service is highly available and powerful enough to support thousands of simultaneous downloads, Any Music’s core systems—customer relationship management, product administration, and payment—are underpinned by a robust database platform consisting of Oracle Database and Oracle Real Application Clusters.

The reliability, scalability, and industry leading performance of Oracle Database with Oracle Real Application Clusters ensures music downloads can be completed quickly and seamlessly. This is particularly important for a market that does not tolerate slow, erratic service.

Moreover, Any Music’s ability to construct a high-quality system while keeping initial investments down was made possible through its use of Oracle Financing, a flexible payment method that enabled the company to pay for licenses incrementally.

Bringing Music to the Masses

Any Music was established to revitalize the audio industry while responding to advances in networking technologies. The company’s mission is to uncover a market in which both the audio hardware and music content industries can prosper together.

“Any Music’s existence requires the cooperation of music labels and equipment manufacturers, and since each of these entities has its own policies and priorities, it hasn’t been easy for all of us to march in step,” said Toshikazu Minoshima, general manager of

the systems development division at Any Music. “If the introduction of equipment compatible with Any Music was delayed, we would not be able to attract the number of users we were targeting.”

Each of the founding manufacturers installed an Any Music button in its home audio equipment. Using simple remote control features on the Any Music service screen, users can:

- Sample, purchase, and download the latest songs from Japanese and Western artists on the music download site Mora.
- Order and buy CDs from HMV, Japan’s largest music store.
- Display the names of programs, song titles, and artists playing on FM radio and download that music or purchase it on CD.

Use of this service requires customers to register as an Any Music user. A registration fee and monthly fees apply. A single song can be downloaded for ¥150 (US\$1.28) and album prices start at ¥525 (US\$4.49).

Not only does the service enable users to enjoy a wealth of songs with high-quality sound, but it also allows them to download music without using a computer. In addition, music is not streamed. Users download the songs they buy, so they can play them back as often as they like and transfer them to their cell phones and music players.

“In short, the Any Music service provides new ways for users to enjoy music to their heart’s content, via the internet,” said Minoshima.

Ensuring Smooth Music Downloads

Oracle clustering technology provides Any Music with a powerful and highly reliable database server platform. The company runs Oracle Database and Oracle Real Application Clusters as a two-node cluster. If one server fails or needs to be shut down for maintenance, the workload is automatically transferred to the second server in the cluster.

This configuration ensures users can download music files quickly and easily. The service is smooth and seamless even at peak times such as when a new music album is released.

“Since we launched the Any Music service in 2004, our database

has performed steadily with no problems, despite the numerous, complex connections between various systems,” said Akira Kurihara, general manager, service business division, Any Music.

“The high quality of the service has earned the trust of users and is one of the reasons for Any Music’s success. I have no doubt Oracle can continue to support further business growth.”

Any Music is now planning to broaden its range of services, link up with cell phone providers, and diversify its fee structures and payment methods.

Flexible Financing Strategy

Based on its financial strategy, Any Music wanted to avoid buying all the required licenses at once. The company was introduced to Oracle Financing, which provides flexible payment plans to companies adopting Oracle solutions, including software, hardware and services.

After detailing its business plan and licensing concerns to Oracle, a payment plan was proposed under which Any Music would purchase its licenses from Oracle in installments, while acquiring its software upfront. The ability to do this was a factor in Any Music’s final decision to adopt Oracle.

Manabu Yoshihara, senior manager in Any Music’s business planning section, said, “We had three choices: buy all the licenses at once, leasing, or rental. Oracle provided an efficient solution that gives us integrated support in both the technical and financial aspects of the project.”

Another benefit of this approach is that it can ease the tight cash flow experienced by startup companies. “Since the cost of the licenses also includes maintenance costs, the amount we have to pay each month was made clear,” said Yoshihara. “We were able to devote the difference between the cost of the financing plan and that of purchasing the licenses all at once to other investments.”

Why Oracle?

The decision to adopt Oracle technologies was based on Any Music’s policy of maximizing the quality of its services at all levels. “Any Music is an online service, and in this market, any system downtime is unacceptable,” said Minoshima. “The products underlying our systems had to be highly reliable. This is why we focused on Oracle, which has an established reputation for database stability.”

Another consideration arose from the fact that, unlike personal computers, consumer electronics devices are used for long periods of time, often five to 10 years. “In terms of business continuity, we wanted to build a relationship with a vendor that has a substantial service structure and that would look out for our interests over the long term,” said Minoshima.

“Although we compared a number of other database products, I knew from past experience that Oracle could provide technical information during the development process,” added Kurihara. “As a developer I felt confident with the choice of Oracle.”

Implementation Process

The design and installation of Any Music’s database infrastructure was undertaken in-house. The Any Music downloading service was launched in two years and nine months.

Any Music offers an integrated music distribution service, where customers can download sound files or purchase albums online from music stores using audio devices manufactured by the company’s founders.