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FRENCH CROWDSHARING PLATFORM HELPS MUSICIANS MAKE RECORDS FOR FREE

 ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Platform for musicians taps fan base to get vinyl albums made and distributed

Spotted: French startup [Diggers Factory](#) wants musicians to make vinyl records and it wants them to be able to do it for free. The startup aims to [solve the challenges](#) that stop artists from recording on vinyl: the cost and distribution.

While there is [increasing demand for vinyl records](#) — pushed by fans' love of listening to albums — the production process is time-consuming and costly. To make it cost-effective, large orders are usually required. This often leaves artists with stock they can't sell. And distribution requires knowledge and a network of buyers, which most artists lack.

[Diggers Factory](#) makes the process free for musicians by transferring the cost to their fans. Artists determine how many records they want to sell ([the minimum is 50](#)) and then use the startup's crowd-funded-type platform to ask fans to pre-order records.

The platform differs from traditional crowdfunding in that people cannot decide how much to contribute. Rather, the site calculates the price to cover the artists' costs. Each fan pays the same amount for the album. [Diggers Factory](#) earns a commission from the sales.

Once the sales quote is reached, Diggers Factory makes sure the album is pressed and distributed. Startup founder Alexis Castiel said they work with six different factories, 10 mastering studios and dozens of records shops around the world to get the job done.

The startup is already up and running and has put out several albums. It also provides an online community marketplace for vinyl album fans, where they can buy and sell old records.

15th March 2019

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Takeaway:

Vinyl record sales have been increasing over the past several years. While it still represents a fraction of the \$15 billion music industry, sales neared \$1 billion in 2017. The drive for records has led to an official "Record Store Day" (13 April this year) and even record-of-the-month clubs. But most sales are driven by rereleases of old classics, like the Beatles' White Album. The problem is that even established recording artists struggle to gain traction due to the cost and challenges of getting their albums into stores. Startups like Diggers Factory are using new strategies like crowdfunding to overcome obstacles and disrupt distribution.