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March 27, 2004

## UltraStar offering unique access to musicians' lives

By Chris Marlowe

Camera phones are being banned from many locker rooms, but one company is using them to expose the innermost sanctum of the biggest rock stars. Online marketing company UltraStar Entertainment has signed a deal with wireless platform specialists Versaly Entertainment that will combine all the latest mobile tools and toys to enhance fan club offerings.

UltraStar's artists -- who include the Rolling Stones, Sting, gospel legend Bill Gaither and company co-founder David Bowie -- will of course have control over precisely what content is allowed out. But the idea is to provide fans with an experience they couldn't get any other way.



The company has staff members who literally travel on tour with the artist. "This person's job is to provide exclusive video, photos, text reports and whatever else they can to maintain an ongoing multimedia tour diary," said Lawrence Peryer, UltraStar senior vp marketing services. "Sometimes it's episodic; sometimes it's slice-of-life or a sound check. Since it's in collaboration with the artist, the content really does start to represent their personality."

Many musicians enjoy finding new ways of expressing themselves and communicating with their audience, Peryer said. "And fans are asking for entertainment on their mobile devices," he added. "They're starting to consume their pop culture this way, and people want to communicate their affinities this way."

The technology advance is merely the latest for Bowie as well. The superstar has long been a pioneer in using the Internet to establish a community based on his creative vision. Among other achievements, his thriving BowieNet online presence ([www.davidbowie.com](http://www.davidbowie.com)) was among the first to offer an extensive catalog of exclusive music, artwork and personal chat opportunities to premium subscribers.

Versaly president Matthew Feldman said the deal "reinforces our leadership position in the mobile entertainment market and highlights how effective mobile entertainment can be as part of music fan Web sites and concert tour experiences."

Versaly will be providing custom recorded voice ring tones, outgoing message

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greetings for voice mail, event calendars, text alerts for concert notifications, daily mobile travelogues illustrated with a camera phone, a multimedia journal and other mobile products. One of its latest capabilities is ring-back tones; when someone calls a subscriber's phone, a ring-back tone replaces the traditional ringing sound callers hear before their call is answered with the subscriber's choice of alternative sounds.

"Our artists charge us with bringing them new and creative and exciting opportunities," Peryer said. "They want us to bring them new toys to play with, new ways to communicate with their fans and new business opportunities. Our deal with Versaly is part of that."

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Versaly offers both a production studio and proprietary technology, working with national and international carriers to provide the latest mobile services, specializing in entertainment-oriented content. Its client roster includes games and content based on such global brands and artists as "Star Trek," "Fear Factor," "The Untouchables," Jimi Hendrix, Yes, Queensryche and eUniverse.



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