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iTunes Store replaces Sony's Mora as default music service...

It looks like Apple is really piling on the iTunes Store partnerships. After the recent deal with Mebo, the company has now partnered with Yahoo Japan Corp. to become its default music download service. Visitors to Yahoo Music pages will now see prominent links in the menubar and one click access to iTunes instead of those from Mora, a Sony Corp.-affiliated music download service. Up until now, Yahoo Japan had relied exclusively on Mora, and access to the service is still available, it just isn't the default one. Users may still change their preferences if they want. The financial details of the deal are unknown, but considering that Yahoo Japan is by far the most popular portal site in the country, reaching around 40 million people, or 84 percent of the country's Internet users accessing the Web from home each month, it will likely be good for Apple service. Considering the rivalry between Apple and Yahoo in the U.S., some might find this new partnership a surprise. Due to the fact that Softbank Corp. is the largest shareholder of Yahoo Japan, with Yahoo only having a roughly one-third stake in the company, Yahoo Japan's business is largely independent of the U.S. one. Of course, the deal with Yahoo Japan does not mean that similar deals, in other markets, are on the way. Apple's is definitely pushing iTunes hard, but deals such as the one with Yahoo Japan are a win for everyone. Users are able to choose between the services they like the most, Yahoo gets access to the top music download service, and Apple gets to strengthen its position in Japan. First Mebo, now Yahoo Japan, one wonders if the partnerships stop here, or is this just the beginning? Considering that the deal with Mebo was for the UK and Ireland only, and the one with Yahoo is just for Japan, Apple still has a lot of ground left to cover.