

# RIAA objecting to free vid sites

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In the realm of copyright conflicts, only the skirmishes change; the core issues remain the same. Several years after its heightened battle against music-file swapping over peer-to-peer sharing networks, the Recording Industry Association of America has turned its attention towards another side of its market.

The RIAA, founded in 1952, functions as the music industry's lobbying arm and helps administer in the collection, administration and distribution of music licenses and royalties for the vast majority of its industry.

Unauthorized music videos, according to the group, have become prevalent over popular Internet viral video sites such as YouTube, Google Video and iFilm. The result has been a series of cease-and-desist warnings on the part of the RIAA to users of these sites, who have been importing the videos through digital recorder devices such as TiVos and then uploading them to the sites, which base their content on user submissions.

In such cases, users have returned to view a favorite music video only to find a notice reading "This video has been removed at the request of copyright owner the RIAA because its content was used without permission." In many instances, the same music video is uploaded to the site again within a few days, only to be subsequently removed under the same legal constraints.

As many as 40 million streams of unlicensed music videos have gone out

across the Internet, many being captured and uploaded without the approval of the record companies, according to the RIAA.

Though typically considered a promotional tool to generate interest in a band and not a profitable market for the music industry, music videos have become a growing market, especially where DVD sales are concerned. Recent estimates by the RIAA have claimed that music-video sales cleared \$3.7 million in three months after being introduced in October of 2005.

The RIAA respectfully declined requests to comment on the current situation.

"The issue isn't about any kind of revolutionary technology. What's new is the resonance that it's striking with average consumers," said Todd Chanko, an analyst for Jupiter Research. "Consumers are taking time to create, upload and view this material."

Chanko then mentioned that he could see where music producers would be annoyed, especially given that traditional music-video replay markets such as the MTV and VH1 television networks consistently pay royalty fees. Such an infrastructure doesn't seem to be as well established over the Internet. "Internet video is a category in its infancy,"

Even with the technology in a relatively early stage, Chanko remarked that the Internet provides an excellent means for paid video distribution, even without the controls creators would like to see applied to it. From a marketing perspective, distributors can track their markets through easily obtained data and choose a course of action from there.

In the meantime, the RIAA has voiced a desire for sites like YouTube and Google video, which act somewhat as online video jukeboxes (users can readily search for quickly loaded video footage and "channel surf"

from one clip to another) to implement content-filtering technologies that help identify and block the distribution of copyrighted works.

Whether or not this will come about remains to be seen, depending on the extent of legal actions the RIAA is willing to take and what changes would need to be made to the Web sites themselves.

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