

# US suspends embassy account on Vietnam website

November 28 2012, by Matthew Lee

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(AP)—The U.S. Embassy in Hanoi has deactivated its account on a popular Vietnamese website that's full of suspected pirated music and Hollywood movies. The U.S. had used the site to promote American values, including respect for intellectual property rights.

The State Department on Wednesday said the social media account with ZingMe was suspended after a review prompted by concerns about [digital piracy](#) on the site.

Spokesman Mark Toner said the suspension is part of a dialogue with ZingMe's parent company about [intellectual property rights](#). He says the embassy hopes to be able to reactivate its account after "adequate progress" on the property rights issue.

The Associated Press reported last month that the account raised questions about whether Washington was legitimizing a site accused of piracy.

At the time, the State Department said the account was created to reach out to Vietnamese youth in a restricted environment. It said the review was being conducted because "some of the contents of this website are suspect and run counter to our [Internet freedom](#) policy."

Officials familiar with the review said there had been spirited internal debate about whether the embassy should continue to use the site. Those officials said the department's human rights and [public diplomacy](#)

bureaus were in favor of letting the embassy remain on ZingMe because of the site's huge reach, particularly with Vietnamese youth. The officials said that position was countered by the department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, which takes the lead on intellectual property rights issues.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the review publicly.

The free-to-download bonanza has pushed ZingMe into the ranks of the world's top 550 websites while raising concerns about the content available on the site. [Record labels](#), singers and industry groups say the site repeatedly has ignored requests to take down material.

Coca-Cola and Samsung pulled their advertising from the site this month because of piracy concerns following questions from the AP.

The Recording Industry Association of America, which has labeled Zing a "notorious" pirate site, said it was neither endorsing nor criticizing the embassy's decision.

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