

YouTube goes online for second Music Awards

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The YouTube Music Awards are undergoing an overhaul for their second edition next year, scrapping a star-studded gala and instead looking at videos' online buzz.

The blockbuster video-sharing site in November 2013 debuted the

YouTube Music Awards, with a livestreamed show from New York that appeared aimed at creating a next-generation, new-media successor to the MTV Video Music Awards.

The YouTube inaugural awards have had more than 54 million views but received a mixed reception among social media users. One common criticism was that the awards lacked a unique YouTube flavor, with rap superstar Eminem—no stranger to accolades—chosen as Artist of the Year.

YouTube, which is owned by Google, said Wednesday that instead of a physical-world show, which in 2013 was hosted by director Spike Jonze, it would transform the site for one day in March 2015 to present the awards.

"For one special day, music will be the headline act on YouTube," the company's official blog said.

"We'll take this moment to celebrate the biggest and emerging artists through new and unique music video collaborations with top directors and creators," it said.

While eager to reach out to music lovers, YouTube will scrap the inaugural awards' methodology of counting votes from fans. Instead, the YouTube Music Awards will use metrics that already exist on the video-sharing site to determine popularity, a company official said.

The second awards ceremony will aim to be forward-looking by identifying videos that are expected to generate buzz in the coming year, rather than honoring past performances, the official said.

The decision to hold a second round of the YouTube Music Awards comes as the company promotes a new subscription service.

The company last week introduced YouTube Music Key, which will allow subscribers to listen to music without advertisements and without an Internet connection.

Through YouTube Music Key, Google is seeking a greater slice of the online music business and to compete more forcefully with the likes of Spotify's streaming service, Apple's iTunes and Pandora Internet Radio.

YouTube promised to debut a number of videos by prominent artists in the coming months ahead of the awards.

Unlike many prizes, the YouTube Music Awards have been international in scope.

At the inaugural edition, the South Korean pop group Girls' Generation, which has a wide following in Asia, beat out Western superstars to win Video of the Year for "I Got a Boy."

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