

# Copyright in musical databases: Social factors and economic evaluation

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Copyright in the music industry is a contentious issue, it has been from the very first printed sheet music, through recorded music, home taping, and the digitisation that led to the ongoing file-sharing debacle that nudged the industry towards streaming solutions and new business models.

For those managing musical databases within a firm, there are esoteric issues to consider in that the nature and structure of a database itself might be protected by copyright but the contents held within may have their own copyright limitations and considerations. Writing in the *International Journal of Digital Culture and Electronic Tourism*, a team from Italy hope to unravel the social and [economic factors](#) surrounding [copyright issues](#) in this context.

Bruno Marsigalia of the Department of Economic and Business Science at the University of Rome 'Guglielmo Marconi,' Giovanni Calcagni of the Department of Economics and Law and the University of Cassino, and Southern Lazio explain that the double copyright protection for databases offered by European Union law does not extend to the contents of the database and so should not prejudice the rights holders of copyright material held within said database.

The team explains that it is not always possible to estimate the value of a database because it needs to be considered in a much broader context rather than as a single entity. "The [database](#) can be estimated as a part of an intangible asset portfolio, and can be tied to patents, brands and trademarks," the team writes. "The methods of estimating the value of intangible assets can first of all be used to calculate the economic worth of the databases," the researchers add. As such, their paper sets out to

identify the factors that will have the greatest impact on the value of copyright material provided by a [music](#) streaming service.

The valuation must be seen in the context of the artists and performers, songwriters, and others invested in the [creative process](#) to produce a new song who reputedly see little of the revenue in many cases despite the growing multi-billion dollar stature of the streaming services that profit from those songs. The law surrounding copyright is evolving from the artists' and creatives' perspectives it must be nudged towards allowing them to make a living from their endeavors and not simply a cash cow for the companies that run the databases containing the [copyright](#) material.

**More information:** Bruno Marsigalia et al, The impact of *social factors* on the economic evaluation of copyright in musical databases of firms, *International Journal of Digital Culture and Electronic Tourism* (2022). [DOI: 10.1504/IJDCET.2022.120826](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJDCET.2022.120826)

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