

The Music Industry In Turmoil

There have been questions arising lately as to whether or not websites should be allowed to host lyrics and tablature from copyrighted music. Website owners and internet users have joined forces in claiming that they should have access to this content- while the music industry is holding fast to their copyrights. The Debate: Should Lyrics and Tablature Be Publicly Available? Depending on whom you ask the answer to the lyrics debate will be different. The music industry claims their copyrighted material is being violated. The industry claims that those who buy music in stores will have access to the lyrics, so there is no need for them to be publicly available. As for tablature rights, the industry claims that tablature books have lost sales due to the surge in publicly shared tabs. But where does the digital music downloads fit in? If a user downloads a single song, shouldn't they be entitled to the lyrics? In this instance, the publicly available lyrics are helping the consumer, and in no way harming the music industry. Sadly, many music services don't offer lyrics with downloads- which has led to the creation of services such as pearLyrics. A cease and desist letter was sent to the creator of pearLyrics, which functions to find lyrics based on tracks playing in iTunes. The creator, Walter Ritter, was forced to remove his freeware module. The module in question grabbed the lyrics from public domains on the internet- meaning the module in question wasn't exactly illegal. Nevertheless, the music industry shut it down without hesitation. Loopholes to the Lyric Dilemma Despite the massive amount of cease and desist letters handed out, we all know that there are hundreds of sources to find lyrics online. This is largely due in part to the fact that many countries outside the United States do not pursue the supposed violators. The result: many lyrics websites are being outsourced to foreign countries. If the lyrics website in question is hosted in the United States, there is a good chance the music industry has its eye on it. Nevertheless, many US-based lyrics sites have survived and continue to grow. Some lyric sites attempt to barter with the music industry or artists- while others are simply offering lyrics to public domain music. The Future of Lyric Resources Lyric resources are here to stay for now. Much like the VCR had caused turmoil among the film industry- the internet is just a new method to simplify life, regardless of what the industry tries to hold onto. We see the VCR as a household item- in time we will most likely see the same outcome with lyrics and the internet. Logically, the music industry can't keep up with every lyric website that springs up. Trying to shutdown foreign websites has also become quite a problem for the music industry. Instead of raising controversy, perhaps a more sensible solution should be called for. Compromises will have to be made- and several lyrics websites have already begun attempted negotiations with the music industry. It will be interesting to see how the debate develops as time moves on. As for the rest of us, we can still enjoy the freedom to enjoy lyrics to our favorite songs; it doesn't look like this fact will change anytime in the near future.

About the Author

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