

Written evidence submitted by Steve Farris

Summary

The internet and technology have changed the music business, much like many other businesses, for good.

My concern is that the creators and their immediate teams are not receiving the income and protections they should for their work.

This committee appears to be a good opportunity to reset some of the business practices that have happened to date in the digital revolution and put in place measures that will give creators a more equitable platform for earning money from this point in time.

“An increased share of the income from streaming services for songwriters and publishers.”

Personal viewpoint:

It would be great to see 50/50 with the master recording but I think aiming for 40/60 is more achievable. As a publisher, I have funded deals which were a similar level of advances or in some cases higher than the record deal but received a fraction of what the labels get in terms of royalties generated from streaming. Without the song there is nothing.

Evidence:

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/media-blog/2014/apr/30/music-streaming-revenue-pandora-spotify>

<https://www.midiaresearch.com/blog/songwriters-arent-getting-paid-enough-and-heres-why>

“Amend historical record contracts to give improved streaming rates”

Personal viewpoint:

Record deals did not include any points referring to digital income until well into the 2000's. Some labels are still paying royalties on an archaic royalty structure and are adding deductions that do not apply to a stream.

Evidence:

<https://completemusicupdate.com/article/sony-music-settles-dispute-over-deductions-on-foreign-streaming-royalties/>

<https://www.awal.com/blog/history-of-record-deals>

“Greater vigilance with streaming fraud”

Personal viewpoint:

Gaming the system for profit and buying streams needs policing.

Evidence:

<https://www.rollingstone.com/pro/features/fake-artists-have-billions-of-streams-on-spotify-is-sony-now-playing-the-service-at-its-own-game-834746/>

<https://www.rollingstone.com/pro/features/how-to-fight-spotify-streaming-fraud-850990/>

“Adopt user-centric model”

Personal viewpoint:

Every music fan wishes to support their favourite artists. Moving to a user-centric model makes streaming more ethical.

Evidence:

<https://pitchfork.com/thepitch/is-there-a-fairer-way-for-streaming-services-to-pay-artists/>

<https://pitchfork.com/features/article/the-record-industry-expects-a-windfall-where-will-the-money-go/>

“Make Google/YouTube pay”

Personal viewpoint:

Google have flagrantly flouted copyright law since they began and have continued to pay creators as little as possible.

Evidence:

<https://thetricordist.com/2020/03/05/2019-2020-streaming-price-bible-youtube-is-still-the-1-problem-to-solve/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/apr/15/music-industry-youtube-video-streaming-royalties>

“Policing stream ripping”

Personal view point:

Pirating of music has morphed to stream ripping. It should be heavily policed by the music industry collectively.

Evidence:

<https://www.prsformusic.com/what-we-do/influencing-policy/stream-ripping>

<https://www.nme.com/news/music/stream-ripping-piracy-has-increased-nearly-15-times-over-in-the-last-three-years-2762788>

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