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MySpace Makes Nice With Music Widget-Makers

Eliot Van Buskirk [✉](#) 04.05.07 | 2:00 AM

The Fox-owned social networking giant is easing up -- kinda -- on third-party widget-makers after reminding some of the site's better-known celebs (like Tila Tequila) to take a closer look at the fine print in their terms of service. Developers -- previously ousted from the site for potential copyright infringement -- must now prove they're legally entitled to stream the music they're hawking.

MySpace is asking developers to register their music catalogs with Audible Magic, the company that provides copyright authorization (aka fingerprints) songs for MySpace, GoFish, Microsoft and MTVN. By doing this, MySpace execs say they're hoping to protect their company from copyright-infringement lawsuits.

"This signals MySpace's willingness to consider deploying Web 2.0 apps, and suggests that MySpace's reluctance may stem from administrative logistics and legal concerns," says Susan Kevorkian, audio analyst for IDC. "MySpace would be shooting itself in the foot by taking a stance against Web 2.0 applications."

"By using a third-party provider's database," explains Kevorkian, "MySpace can save the time and resources that would otherwise be required to build one from scratch. Monitoring posted content with a database helps to keep MySpace in the good graces of content providers and head off copyright infringement lawsuits in the process."

As things stand, MySpace currently blocks outgoing links on music widgets embedded in the site by [Amie Street](#), [Sonific](#), [MOG](#), [Indie911](#) and others. The blockages represent MySpace's move in late March to a hardline lock-out of users and developers embedding any third-party content onto their MySpace profiles.

MySpace is "killing themselves with this -- castrating the ecosystem that built them," says Gerd Leonhard, founder and CEO of Sonific, a music-streaming company.

Indie911 CEO Justin Goldberg told Wired News he is in talks with MySpace to once again allow Indie911's widgets on the site. The new bottom line: Indie911 will need to register all of the songs in its store with Audible Magic. (MySpace refused to comment on the talks, and Audible Magic says it has had no contact with Indie911 as of yet.)

But registering a music catalog with Audible Magic isn't a simple matter: Only an artist, label or other copyright holder can submit a song for addition to Audible Magic's database of verified songs.

Vance Ikezoye, president and CEO of Audible Magic, says, "There's a very good chance that the content in question (from smaller artists on Indie911) is not registered in the database. The indie artist can contact Audible Magic through the [website](#) to register their content and establish their business rules (how they want their content treated)."

Audible Magic claims to have more than 6 million sound recordings in its database. By comparison, Apple's iTunes store contains about 3.5 million songs.

Currently, Audio Magic is the only company MySpace endorses for cataloging music. This makes Audible Magic's rapidly expanding song database increasingly valuable, as MySpace and other big online social networks rely on it (as well as databases from Advestigo, Auditude, Gracenote, Relatable and Vobile) for protection from charges of copyright infringement.

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