



**RIAA Submission to Comment Request for the
2025 Review of Notorious Markets for Counterfeiting and Piracy**

Docket No. USTR-2025-0018

October 1, 2025

Submitted via regulations.gov

The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission in response to your request for comments identifying online and physical markets to be included in the 2025 Review of Notorious Markets for Counterfeiting and Piracy.

INTRODUCTION

The RIAA is the trade organization that supports and promotes the creative and commercial vitality of music labels in the United States, the most vibrant recorded music community in the world. Our membership – which includes several hundred companies, ranging from small-to-medium-sized enterprises to global businesses – creates, manufactures, and/or distributes sound recordings representing the majority of all legitimate recorded music consumption in the United States. In support of its mission, the RIAA works to protect the intellectual property and First Amendment rights of artists and music labels; conducts consumer, industry, and technical research; and monitors and reviews state and federal laws, regulations, and policies.

The RIAA appreciates that the “United States encourages owners and operators of markets reportedly involved in piracy or counterfeiting to adopt business models that rely on the licensed distribution of legitimate content and products and to work with right holders and enforcement officials to address infringement.”¹ The U.S. recorded music industry is highly reliant on the protection of intellectual property in order to drive innovation, creativity, and growth within this sector, and to enforce against those that unfairly and illegally steal our members’ music.

The music industry contributes significantly to the U.S. economy and to U.S. trade exports. Overall, the music industry contributes \$212 billion to the nation’s economy and supports 2.5 million jobs in the United States.² The U.S. has the largest recorded music economy in the world, accounting for more than one third of the world’s recorded music revenues.³ The U.S. is also the largest exporter of music, with one in three global streams from American artists. In

¹ 90 Fed. Reg. 40134 (August 18, 2025).

² See <https://50statesofmusic.com/?USImpact>.

³ *The U.S. Music Industries – Jobs and Benefits: The 2024 Report*, by Robert Stoner and Jéssica Dutra of Secretariat, prepared for the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), October 2024, available at <https://www.riaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/The-U.S.-Music-Industries-Jobs-Benefits-2024-Report.pdf>.

fact, American exports of music are more than the next six countries combined.⁴

However, in inflation-adjusted dollars, the 2024 U.S. sound recording revenues were still far below the peak U.S. sound recording revenues that were reached in 1999.⁵ This period of time coincides with the rise of broadband and digital piracy generally, as well as the later rise of the sale and importation of foreign-made, counterfeit physical music products through e-commerce platforms and the rise of stream ripping. As noted in the 2025 Special 301 Report, while the “increased availability of broadband Internet connections around the world, combined with increasingly accessible and sophisticated mobile technology, has led to the development of legitimate digital platforms for distribution of copyrighted content,” these “technological developments have also made the Internet an extremely efficient vehicle for disseminating pirated content that competes unfairly with legitimate e-commerce and distribution services that copyright holders and online platforms use to deliver licensed content.”⁶

Thus, despite the myriad ways people can engage with music legitimately, IFPI reports that 29% of people (and 43% of those aged 16-24) use copyright infringement as a way to listen to or obtain music, and that stream ripping continues to be the most prevalent form of online music piracy.⁷

In this submission, we first address online markets engaged in or facilitating copyright piracy, followed by physical markets engaged in or facilitating copyright piracy.

ONLINE MARKETS ENGAGED IN OR FACILITATING COPYRIGHT PIRACY

The following is a non-exhaustive list of online markets that engage in or facilitate substantial copyright piracy that infringes on U.S. intellectual property. We request these markets be considered for inclusion in the 2025 Notorious Markets List. These markets engage in the unlicensed reproduction, creation of derivative works, streaming, and/or distribution/downloading or other unauthorized dissemination of sound recordings that significantly damage the rights of U.S. companies, and/or also engage in circumvention activities that violate 17 USC § 1201.

These services harm U.S. artists, songwriters, record labels, and music publishing companies by (i) disseminating music, or derivative works thereof, without authorization and without providing any compensation to the creators and rights holders of the music, and (ii) artificially distorting the market value of the music, thereby reducing the compensation to the creators and rights holders owners from licensed services.

⁴ *RIAA Mid-Year 2025 Revenue Report*, available at <https://www.riaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/RIAA-Mid-Year-Revenue-2025.pdf>.

⁵ Source: RIAA. In inflation adjusted dollars, the peak U.S. recorded music revenue in 1999 is worth over \$26 billion today. In 2024 the U.S. recorded music revenue was \$17.7 billion.

⁶ 2025 Special 301 Report, Apr. 2025, p. 21, available at [https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Issue_Areas/Enforcement/2025%20Special%20301%20Report%20\(final\).pdf](https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Issue_Areas/Enforcement/2025%20Special%20301%20Report%20(final).pdf).

⁷ IFPI Engaging with Music 2023, Dec. 11, 2023, p. 22, available at https://www.ifpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/IFPI-Engaging-With-Music-2023_full-report.pdf.

1. Stream Ripping Sites

Stream ripping services enable users to make permanent copies of recordings from online streaming services, most commonly YouTube. They circumvent the technical protection measures applied to protect the copyrighted content and enable users to download (“rip”) it to their own devices.

Typically, a stream ripping service works by allowing a user to copy the URL of the content hosted on an online platform and paste the URL into a search box which appears on the homepage of the stream ripping service, which then provides the user with a media file (in mp3 or mp4 format, for example) once they have clicked the download button.

The music industry has a program to report stream ripping sites to search engines. Notices designate URLs on the sites that offer the infringing downloads. Search engines will eventually demote these sites in search based on these notices. However, ripper site operators have responded to this effort by creating new domain names to operate through that allows them to reappear at the top of search results.

Y2mate

Domain: y2mate.nu

Registrant: unknown

Registrar: SpaceDump IT AB (Sweden)

Hosting Provider: PRQ AB (Sweden)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 941, with nearly 670 million visits in the past 12 months

Revenue Source: advertising

Y2mate allows a user to paste a YouTube URL into the search bar and then download either an audio-only mp3 or the entire audiovisual work as an mp4 file. The site uses the well-known Y2mate “brand” which has been used by similar sites for several years, including the former y2mate.com. While *Y2mate*’s traffic has been declining, the site has still received tens of millions of visits in the last 12 months, making it extremely popular globally.

Savefrom

Domain: Savefrom.net

Registrant: “Redacted for Privacy,” registrant believe to be based in Russia

Registrar: Tucows, Inc. (Canada)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.); underlying hosting provider is OVH SAS (France)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 368, with 1.6 billion visits globally in the past 12 months

Revenue Source: Advertising

Savefrom operates with a slightly different but equally damaging model from other rippers listed here. Rather than downloading content to its own servers and then offering mp3s or full videos for download, *Savefrom* simply circumvents the YouTube content protection

measures and provides the unprotected content directly to users from the YouTube servers where the user can save either the video or the audio to their devices.

In April 2020, *Savefrom* announced that, due to “strenuous attacks by certain US copyright holders,” it was terminating its services in the United States. The site has since blocked access from the UK and Spain. *Savefrom*, however, has continued to function in many jurisdictions outside the U.S. and continues to generate more than 100 million visits per month to its site globally.

Ssyoutube

Domain: Ssyoutube.com

Registrant: “Redacted for Privacy”

Registrar: Tucows, Inc. (Canada)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.); underlying hosting provider is OVH SAS (France)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 1,564, with 481 million visits globally in the past 12 months

Revenue Source: Advertising

Ssyoutube allows a user to paste a YouTube URL into the search bar and then download the entire audiovisual work as an mp4 file. In addition, when on YouTube.com, adding “ss” before the word YouTube in the domain will redirect the user to *Ssyoutube* to download the audiovisual work. While *Ssyoutube* has blocked access from the U.S., global site traffic has increased since November 2024 and remains steady.

Tubidy

Domain: Tubidy.cool

Registrant: Domains By Proxy, LLC (U.S.)

Registrar: GoDaddy, LLC (U.S.)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.); underlying hosting provider is IPVolum (The Netherlands/Seychelles)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 14,701, with over 45 million visits globally in the past 12 months

Revenue: Advertising

The site describes itself as “an online platform that allows you to download mp3 and mp4 music and videos for free.” *Tubidy* differs from the other stream ripping sites in that it has Top Videos, Top Searches, and Recently Viewed sections.

Notube

Domain: Notube.net

Registrant: Domains By Proxy, LLC (U.S.)

Registrar: GoDaddy (U.S. and Cayman Islands)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.); underlying hosting provider is Limestone Networks (U.S.)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 2,462, with over 142 million visits globally in the past 12 months

Revenue: Advertising

Notube allows a user to paste a YouTube URL into the search bar and then download either an audio-only mp3 or the entire audiovisual work as an mp4 file.

Snaptube App and Related Domains

Downloads: Snaptube app – 1,470M downloads on Uptodown app store

Traffic: Snaptube.com global SimilarWeb ranking of 17,068, with over 42 million visits globally in the past 12 months

One of the most problematic stream ripping apps is *Snaptube*. *Snaptube* is an Android application accessible through alternative app stores and affiliated websites (following its removal from mainstream app stores). While *Snaptube* had previously changed its functionality slightly, the most recent version of *Snaptube* appears to have reverted to its original stream ripping functionality. Ongoing analysis has revealed that the developers have endeavored to conceal infringing features, such as download buttons, without completely eliminating them.

Snaptube is associated with multiple website domains that actively promote the app and facilitate APK file downloads. Several sources online indicate that the app has been caught distributing malware, stealing users' data, and generating ad revenue in illegitimate ways. The security company Upstream conducted an investigation into the app, as users' devices were compromised and had viruses installed on them after using the app.⁸

The developer of *Snaptube* is associated with companies in Hong Kong and China.

2. Music Download/Streaming Sites

These sites directly or indirectly offer unauthorized on-demand streaming and/or downloading of our members' music, including their most popular and valuable content. Commonly, these sites also provide unauthorized downloading of pre-release music, i.e., tracks and albums that have not yet been commercially released to the public. As noted above, such infringing activity clearly harms U.S. artists, songwriters, record labels, and music publishers by disseminating their works without authorization and severely diminishing the commercial value of those works.

Newalbumreleases

Domain: Newalbumreleases.net

Registrant: "Redacted for Privacy"

Registrar: Dynadot, Inc. (U.S.)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.); underlying hosting provider is WIBO Baltic UAB (Lithuania)

Traffic: Global Similarweb ranking of 30,486, with nearly 18 million visits in the past 12 months

Revenue Sources: Advertising

⁸ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/zakdoffman/2019/10/18/new-android-warning-40m-users-installed-video-app-hiding-devious-malwaredelete-now/>.

Newalbumreleases makes available a substantial library of newly released popular music content, as well as albums not yet commercially released. The site features the most recently uploaded albums on the homepage displaying album artwork. In addition, it organizes earlier posts by genre under menu tabs for Rock, Pop, Metal, etc. The homepage also offers search capability for content by artist or title. The site hosts its content on cyberlockers and provides users with links to other services from which the files are available for download. All the files appear to have been uploaded to the cyberlocker sites by *Newalbumreleases*, as the download files usually include “newalbumreleases” in the file name. Takedown notices sent by rights holders to this site are ineffective.

Scnlog

Domain: Scnlog.me

Registrant: Currently privacy protected by Whois Privacy Corp.

Registrar: TLD Registrar Solutions, Ltd. (United Kingdom)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.); underlying hosting provider is Internetport (Sweden)

Traffic: Global Similarweb ranking of 47,226, with 9.2 million visits in the past 12 months

Revenue Sources: Advertising

Scnlog makes available large amounts of newly released and catalogue music, focusing on so-called “scene” releases by organized groups engaged in music piracy. The site also distributes motion pictures, television programs, software, and other content. Music is made available in high quality, lossless audio format and is categorized by genre. A fully searchable index is also available. Copyrighted music is hosted on cyberlockers such as Nitroflare and Ddownload.

Waploaded

Domain: waploaded.com

Registrant: “Redacted for Privacy”

Registrar: Tucows Domains, Inc. (Canada)

Hosting Provider: Cloudwall Ltd. (Bulgaria)

Traffic: Global Similarweb ranking of 20,406, with 33 million visits in the past 12 months

Revenue Sources: Advertising

Waploaded and related sites are a network of infringing sites which are popular on the African continent and operated from Nigeria. Offering music along with motion pictures and television programs, the site maintains various *Waploaded*-branded domains which redirect users to the main *Waploaded* site. Music is hosted on various third-party servers and revenue is generated by advertising for adult and other content.

Hiphopkit

Domain: Hiphopkit.com

Registrant: Privacy service provided by Withheld for Privacy ehf (Iceland)

Registrar: Namecheap, Inc. (U.S.)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.); underlying hosting provider is

OVH Singapore (Singapore)

Traffic: Global Similarweb ranking of 32,541, with 20 million visits in the past 12 months

Revenue Sources: Advertising

Hiphopkit and related sites are a network of infringing sites which are popular on the African continent and operated from Nigeria. The site is searchable, and music is categorized by genre and artist, with full albums often available. Popularity of music available on *Hiphopkit* is reflected in regularly updated charts. Large quantities of African and international repertoire is available and music is hosted on various third-party servers.

3. **BitTorrent Indexing Sites**

BitTorrent indexing sites provide a searchable index of links to content which can be downloaded by users running the appropriate client software. Indexing services can generate revenue from advertising and/or user donations. The financial model, structure, and approach varies from site to site.

The following popular sites are the most egregious, based on: (i) the extent of the infringement, i.e., the number of users visiting the site to infringe copyright; (ii) the amount of unlicensed content on the site; and (iii) the site's failure to take steps to address the massive piracy problem across its network. Moreover, these BitTorrent index sites demonstrate they are dedicated to infringement by the way they organize and display the files they index. Files are typically organized into categories of music, movie, software, and games with file names clearly and unmistakably describing content in a way that shows the operators know they are distributing torrents for copyright-protected content.

Increasingly, BitTorrent sites are registering multiple domains to mitigate the problem of their sites going offline if one of their domains is seized or blocked, and to work around search engine demotion algorithms. A simple change in the country code or other top-level domain allows the site to reappear in top search results.

ThePirateBay

Domain: Thepiratebay.org

Registrant: Unknown

Registrar: easyDNS Technologies Inc. (Canada)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.), underlying hosting provider is Shinjiru Technology Sdn Bhd (Malaysia)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 1,503 with 315 million visits in the past 12 months

Revenue Sources: Advertising

ThePirateBay remains a popular global BitTorrent indexing site. This continues to be the case even though courts in many countries around the world have issued orders blocking access to the site in their jurisdictions. Vast catalogues of music and the world's most popular and newly released films can be downloaded via the site. The site

makes no pretense of legitimacy, fails to respond to any takedown notices, and has previously ridiculed those who have sent them such notices.

There are a number of other very popular BitTorrent sites that make a broad range of copyrighted content downloadable using the BitTorrent P2P protocol. The worst of these sites include the two sites listed immediately below.

1337x

Domain: 1337x.to

Registrant: None provided for .to TLD

Registrar: Tonic (Tonga, administered in U.S.)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.), underlying hosting provider PRQ AB (Sweden)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 777, with 515 million visits in the past 12 months

Revenue Sources: Advertising

RuTracker

Domain: Rutracker.org

Registrant: Whois Privacy Corp. (Bahamas)

Registrar: Internet Domain Service BS Corp (Bahamas)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.), underlying hosting provider is Frantech Solutions (Canada)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 1,054, with 439 million visits in the past 12 months

Revenue Sources: Advertising

4. Cyberlockers

A “cyberlocker” is a type of website/service which enables users to upload, store, and distribute digital files on a dedicated storage infrastructure on the Internet that is controlled, managed, and maintained by the website’s operator. Although there appears to be some similarity between cyberlockers and legitimate cloud storage services (as they both allow users to upload files to servers for storage and sharing), their business models are strikingly different. The business model for legitimate storage services is principally based around personal file storage and limited ability to share access to the files. Cyberlockers are all about maximizing and monetizing traffic to their service. Nothing draws traffic like popular copyrighted content that can be downloaded for free. Thus, their business model is, at its heart, the distribution of unlicensed content.

Cyberlockers typically earn revenue from one or more of the following means: advertising such as banner and “pop-up” ads, which usually appear on the pages where the files to be downloaded are accessed; and sale of “premium accounts,” which offer users benefits such as greatly increased download speeds, no-wait downloads, and simultaneous downloads – all features of particular interest to users who want to download large files such as albums and films. Some cyberlockers provide financial rewards to uploaders whose content draws large volumes of traffic to the site (which

translates to advertising dollars) or when a downloader purchases a premium account after accessing an uploader's content. Conversely, cyberlocker sites often have a policy of deleting content uploaded by non-paying users that is not regularly downloaded by others – in other words, content which is not drawing traffic to the site. Finally, these services provide little if any accountability for infringing uploaders. Files can often be uploaded without even opening an account, or free accounts can be opened with nothing more than an email address. Thus, there is no ability to police uploaders or effectively remove repeat infringers from their system. The fact of the matter is that, for many of these services, there would be no economic viability in the absence of traffic generated through piracy.

To a limited extent, rights holders can attempt to tackle these infringements by sending takedown notices to the site operators. However, this often entails monitoring thousands of third-party link resources – e.g., blogs, forum sites, and search engines – to locate the information that is needed to notify the locker of infringements occurring on their own services. These services are in a much better position to identify infringing content being uploaded to or distributed from their own servers if they really had an interest in conducting their business legally. There are efficient and reasonable technological solutions available that would assist in this.

The following five cyberlockers are some of the most problematic affecting the U.S. music industry:

Rapidgator

Domain: Rapidgator.net (and Rg.to, which redirects to Rapidgator.net)

Registrant: Whois Privacy Corp. (Bahamas)

Registrar: Internet.BS Corp. (Bahamas)

Hosting Provider: Melbicom (Lithuania)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 2,104, with over 314 million visits in the past 12 months

Revenue Sources: Advertising and premium accounts

This cyberlocker launched in October 2011 and has from the outset been a major source of the distribution of infringing music content. *Rapidgator* is also a major source for piracy of pre-release content, i.e., content that has not yet been commercially released. The site offers a rewards program that shares revenue with uploaders whose material draws large volumes of traffic, thus encouraging the upload of popular copyrighted content (particularly pre-release) and undercutting any pretense that it is operating a simple cloud-based personal storage service.

Despite the volume of infringements detected and removed from *Rapidgator*, the same content reappears and there is no effective action being taken to prevent infringement by the service. Although it provides rights holders with a takedown account, this does nothing to prevent (i) content from being disseminated (via links generated by the site) in the window *before* rights holders can intervene to take it down; (ii) content from being re-uploaded after removal; and (iii) content from appearing in multiple locations within the site, rendering such a takedown account not a sufficiently effective solution. Users complain on social media about being ignored when trying to cancel premium accounts

and about *Rapidgator*'s failure to deliver on premium services.

In 2018 and 2019, on applications brought by the game and music industries, the German courts issued preliminary decisions finding the site liable for copyright infringement, and in 2019 the Russian court ordered ISPs to block access to *Rapidgator*. The corporate structure of *Rapidgator* uses a sophisticated network of offshore companies and specialized corporate vehicles to obscure the underlying beneficiaries. It is believed to be operated from Russia.

Krakenfiles

Domain: Krakenfiles.com

Registrant: Unknown

Registrar: Key-Systems GmbH (Germany)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.); underlying hosting provider is Alexhost (Moldova)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 16,733, with 67 million visits in the past year

Revenue Sources: Advertising and paid premium accounts

This cyberlocker plays a significant role in the distribution of infringing music content and is also a major source of piracy of pre-release content. The site also makes appearances in the AI context; for example, *Krakenfiles* is a source of data comprising unauthorized music which is ingested to develop AI artist vocal models and also hosts outputs comprising vocal clones which infringe the rights of member companies and/or their artists. The operator is also running an indirect and forum site which contains infringing content and provides users with links to *Krakenfiles* from which they can download their chosen music track or album.

Chomikuj

Domain: Chomikuj.pl

Registrant: Unknown

Registrar: Instra Corporation Pty Ltd (Australia)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.); underlying hosting provider is believed to be Leaseweb (The Netherlands)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 6,978, with 77 million visits in the past year

Revenue Sources: Advertising and paid subscriptions

The popular cyberlocker is marketed to a Polish audience. Over 80% of the visitors to the site are in Poland, but the site hosts a broad range of U.S. music along with motion pictures, books, and other copyrighted content. Users may upload music and then share links to the uploaded music with others. Free and paid accounts are offered and a points system rewards users whose uploads are accessed by other users.

Pixeldrain

Domain: Pixeldrain.com

Registrant: Privacy service provided by Withheld for Privacy ehf (Iceland)

Registrar: Namecheap, Inc. (U.S.)

Hosting Provider: EdgeUno (Mexico/U.S.)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 1,583, with 343 million visits in the past year

Revenue Sources: Advertising and paid subscriptions

This cyberlocker has increased in popularity following the redirection of traffic from dbree.org, used by a previous locker, to *Pixeldrain*. It is frequently by members of the pre-release community to host content which has not yet been commercially released.

Pillowcase

Domain: Pillows.su

Registrant: None provided by registrar

Registrar: Regtime (Russia)

Hosting Provider: Served through Cloudflare (U.S.); underlying hosting provider is SOROK76 Ltd (United Kingdom)

Traffic: Global SimilarWeb ranking of 457,615, with 49,000 million visits in the past year

Revenue Sources: Donations

Pillowcase is a popular cyberlocker which harms the music industry through distribution of pre-release content. Links to pre-release content hosted on Pillows.su are frequently found on known leak sites and forums. *Pillowcase* has emerged from Pillowcase.su, which now redirects to Pillows.su. *Pillowcase* is unresponsive to notices from copyright owners.

5. Additional Issues

Bulletproof ISPs

As noted above, infringing sites continue turning towards offshore hosting ISPs that support the sites' infringing activities. These "Bulletproof" ISPs support various types of criminality through considerable leniency in the kinds of materials they permit to be uploaded and distributed via their networks. These ISPs do not respond to notices of infringement or warning letters that the ISP is hosting and supporting known infringing sites. The three most problematic bulletproof ISPs that support infringing activity relating to music are:

- **PRQ – Sweden.** *PRQ* is a Swedish hosting service headquartered in Stockholm and created by two of the founders of ThePirateBay. It offers offshore hosting options and has consistently hosted criminal content.
- **Frantech Solutions/BuyVM/PONYPNET – Canada.** *Frantech* (<https://frantech.ca/>) is a hosting provider located in Canada. *BuyVM* is a division of *FranTech Solutions*. Visitors to the *Frantech* website are asked on *Frantech's* homepage to visit *BuyVM* (<https://buyvm.net/>), and there is a link on *Frantech's* homepage which automatically redirects users to *BuyVM*. *BuyVM* offers virtual server services, and its data centers are located in a number of countries including Luxembourg which they describe as "Tiny Country, Huge on Privacy." They specifically note on the website that Luxembourg was purposively selected for its "strong privacy and freedom of speech laws."
- **DDoS Guard – Russia.** *DDoS Guard* (<https://ddos-guard.net/>) is a Russian-

based entity offering its users a number of services including DDoS protection and web hosting services. *DDoS Guard* is hosting a number of services included in this submission.

Domain Name Registrars

Rights holders continue to face hurdles from registrars failing to provide accurate domain name registrant information when that information is requested for legitimate intellectual property enforcement purposes. IFPI has reported that, in light of the misapplication of GDPR, several registrars have refused to provide registrant information to IFPI for such purposes, including NameCheap, Tucows, and others.⁹

Other Intermediaries

Messaging platforms Telegram and Discord have become the primary mechanisms through which pre-release music is distributed without authorization. Through private and semi-private communities, organized, global groups engage in hacking, social engineering, and other methods to obtain pre-release music and, in many cases, sell this illegally obtained material for thousands of dollars. While Telegram and Discord have been largely responsive to takedown notices sent about specific infringements, it is unclear what steps, if any, they take to limit or prevent the ongoing abuse of the platforms for illegal pre-release distribution.

PHYSICAL MARKETS

Physical CD and vinyl album sales continue to generate considerable revenue for U.S. record companies.¹⁰ Prominent e-commerce platforms have become the ideal outlet for counterfeit physical products being produced in Russia and China. In some cases, Russian and Chinese sellers will sell directly on retail platforms, shipping the goods to consumers from Russia or China. In other cases, the principals behind the Chinese and Russian counterfeits sell to third-party sellers on platforms that may or may not know they are buying and reselling counterfeits.

Chinese and Russian Counterfeit CD and Vinyl Manufacturing and Distribution

Counterfeit CDs and vinyl records being manufactured and sold out of China and Russia are high quality products made to closely resemble authentic ones. These counterfeits can be readily identified by our experts even though the tell-tale signs of counterfeits are not apparent to casual observers. The outside packaging will copy pull tabs, security seals, and shrink-wrap, while the insert booklets will mirror the legitimate versions of the product, printed on high-grade commercial printing machinery. In addition to counterfeit copies of legitimate album releases, we continue to see a vast array of compilation “Best of” and “Greatest Hits” albums that were never released by the record labels. With the resurgence in popularity of the vinyl format, we are also finding the unauthorized manufacture and sale

⁹ IFPI Submission to the EU Counterfeit and Piracy Watchlist Consultation 2024, August 15, 2024, available via https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/e9d50ad8-e41f-4379-839a-fdfe08f0aa96/library/dba7a3e4-8e6b-4586-b266-bdbeb89b172c?p=7&n=10&sort=modified_DESC.

¹⁰ *RIAA 2024 Year End Revenue Report*, available at <https://www.riaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/RIAA-2024Year-End-Revenue-Report.pdf>.

of vinyl versions of albums that were only legitimately released in a different format, such as digitally, on CD or pressed on different colored vinyl. Finally, we are finding counterfeit versions of official box sets discographies as well as unauthorized box sets discographies that were never released by record labels.

Test purchases, surveys, and enforcement programs have established that massive quantities of these counterfeits were finding their way into the legitimate market principally through major e-commerce platforms like Amazon, eBay, Marktplaats, and Leboncoin. Notably, eBay and Vinted's global platforms have had the largest number of counterfeit vinyl and CD listings. Vinted has become a destination platform for illicit vinyl sellers. Originally created as clothing resale platform, the volume of infringing vinyl listings has reached epidemic proportions. Despite industry efforts to remove infringing listings from the platform, sellers are allowed to continually relist counterfeit titles, and it appears the platform takes no meaningful action against repeat infringers. Among regional platforms, Marktplaats has an unusually large number of counterfeit listings and has made enforcement of intellectual property rights challenging. Consumers are paying full price for counterfeit offerings appearing alongside legitimate offerings, resulting in one-for-one displacements of legitimate sales.

An essential element for these platforms in protecting their customers and copyright owners from these Chinese and Russian counterfeits lies first and foremost in pre-screening sellers to ensure they have legitimate sources of supply. Each of these platforms has established processes by which counterfeit offerings can be reported and removed; however, there appears to be inconsistent action taken against repeat infringers. To address this inconsistency, each platform should publish the specific terms of their repeat infringer policy. In addition, titles identified as infringing because there is no legal version of the title (e.g., "greatest hits," vinyl albums) are not being removed from platforms across the board. More can be done by e-commerce platforms to prevent counterfeit products illegally manufactured and sold from Russia and China from infiltrating the legitimate marketplace here and around the world.

* * *

We hope you find this information useful, and we look forward to continuing to work with the U.S. government to find solutions to these problems. If you have questions or would like to discuss, please contact George York or Victoria Sheckler at RIAA.

Respectively submitted,

/Victoria Sheckler/

Victoria Sheckler
SVP, Deputy General Counsel
Recording Industry Association of America
1000 F Street, NW
2nd Floor
Washington, DC, 20004
202-775-0101