

Streaming Integrity Initiative: Protecting Artists, Songwriters and Fans from Streaming Fraud

To Succeed, Distributors, Well Positioned to Prevent Uploads of Illegal Fakes, Must Commit to Act Against Streaming Fraud

Increasingly, streaming fraud harms the music ecosystem and its stakeholders – depriving artists and songwriters of their fair share of royalty revenue while also harming fans' experiences.

Typically, this involves bad actors' misuse of technology to dupe fans by uploading tracks intended for fraud to digital service providers (or DSPs), including via music distribution services (or distributors).

These criminals then deploy armies of bots to generate artificial plays and siphon money from royalty pools, diluting legitimate artists' share and reducing their compensation.

These are fake plays ripping off real artists and real fans. More must be done to stop it.

Each player across the music ecosystem has an important role to play in addressing this problem. Music distributors are a key entry point to the digital music ecosystem and supply DSPs with content in the first place. They are well-positioned to help prevent the uploading of tracks intended for fraud.

For their part, DSPs – as the interface with fans and as the manager of artist royalty pools – can act to detect fraud at the source. Music companies and law enforcement authorities must continue their multi-pronged, global campaigns of litigation and enforcement. Policymakers must ensure that the laws against streaming fraud are clear, strong and effective.

Below are the five baseline practices that distributors should embrace and implement to meaningfully help counter streaming fraud at the source.

We urge all distributors to commit to these five practices.

Together, we can fix this.

Five Practices to Counter Streaming Fraud

1. VERIFY

A. “Know Your Customer” (KYC)

Before distributing content, verify the identity and legitimacy of the customer through robust KYC and fraud checks.

2. VET

A. Content Filtering

Before making content available to DSPs and on a regular basis, use effective, industry-standard measures to ensure that content does not infringe third party rights, including lyrics and metadata checks, audio content recognition technologies and checks against other relevant databases.

B. AI Detection and Voice, Image Name and Likeness (VNIL) Rights Infringement Protections

Implement measures to identify AI-generated content and vet for potential associated issues, including streaming fraud.

Adopt and contribute to the latest audio, artist and artwork recognition technologies to identify and prevent the distribution of content that infringes voice, name, image or likeness rights and other abuses on artist profiles.

3. ACT

A. Detection and Mitigation

Apply effective and dynamic measures to detect streaming anomalies, investigate cases of suspected fraud, and take reasonable measures to stop identified fraud and mitigate its impact.

B. Penalty System

After repeated violations, ban the customer across all platforms; this should not preclude the possibility of an immediate ban in appropriate circumstances.

4. SHARE

A. Cross Partner Checks

Identify potential infringement across streaming and social media platforms.

B. Bolster Information-Sharing Across Industry

Through data protection compliant industry information-sharing arrangements, share high-confidence indicators of fraudulent and infringing activity to help prevent offenders from re-entering the ecosystem through other services.

5. MEASURE

A. Improvements to Anti-Fraud Measures

On a regular basis, distributors should track the efficacy of their measures and make reasonable updates to capture new fraudulent activity, methods and actors based on its own data and information shared.