French music industry reaches deal with YouTube

The Associated Press

Songwriters and composers will get paid when their videos are seen on YouTube in France, under a deal announced Thursday by the online video sharing site and France's leading music industry group.

The industry group SACEM called the deal difficult to reach but innovative, and a victory in its efforts to protect copyright and make money online.

YouTube's owner, Google Inc., has faced lawsuits in France over use of copyrighted content online, and criticism from the entertainment industry and the French government.

The agreement means songwriters, composers and music publishers "will be paid for the distribution of their works on YouTube," according to a statement by YouTube and industry group SACEM.

The statement did not say how they would be paid, or how much. The deal affects any music managed by SACEM, a group that has 132,000 members and copyright to more than 40 million musical works. The deal will be in effect through 2012.

The deal also covers "Anglo-American repertoires from multinational publishers" broadcast in France. The statement did not elaborate.

"This deal shows again SACEM's will to favor legal use of works on the Internet, in particular on video sharing sites," SACEM President Bernard Miyet said.

Google has sought to improve relations in France, and CEO Eric Schmidt promised at a meeting last month with President Nicolas Sarkozy to invest more in France.

The announcement comes a few weeks after a German court ruled that YouTube must pay compensation after users uploaded several videos of performances by singer Sarah Brightman in violation of copyright laws.

The Hamburg state court said the standardized question to users about whether they have the necessary rights to publish material is not enough to relieve YouTube of the legal responsibility for the content, especially because the platform can be used anonymously.

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