

Sports & Entertainment Beat

Video and Gaming Platform Twitch Implements Automatic Muting for Copyright Protected Audio

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On August 6, 2014, the online gaming community and video platform Twitch announced that copyright protected music and audio would be muted in its Video on Demand content. In a move that is likely related to its recent acquisition by Amazon, Twitch is collaborating with Audible Magic, the provider of automated audio content identification software, to identify and mute copyright-protected content. In an explanation provided on Twitch's blog, it notes that it "respect[s] the rights of copyright owners" and is seeking to "help protect both our broadcasters and copyright owners."

Works registered in Audible Magic's Global Content Registry will be muted under the new procedure without a requirement to opting in or take any other action. However, the new feature does have limitations. Unlike the ContentID system used by Google for YouTube content, copyright owners are not offered the option to choose whether they would prefer to allow access to their content in order to track viewership statistics or attempt to monetize it, and the change applies only to Video on Demand content and not to live streaming. Furthermore, the technology is not foolproof - as Twitch noted in its announcement, false copyright identifications are possible and content from copyright owners who do not work with Audible Magic may be missed.

With the addition of this feature, Twitch joins a number of other online content providers, including Facebook, Soundcloud and Vimeo, that collaborate with Audible Magic to mute or otherwise restrict access to copyright-protected content. Much of the reaction to Twitch's announcement has been negative, with frequent criticisms (such as those found [here](#) and [here](#)) focusing on the tool's uniform approach and inability to discriminate between in-game audio with validly licensed content, such as that used in the *Grand Theft Auto* series, and content that is being used in violation of copyright law.

For members of Twitch who wish to use music in the Video on Demand content they post to Twitch, Twitch suggests working with Creative Commons, Jamendo or SongFreedom. In addition, Twitch explained that they will consider un-muting copyright-protected content upon receipt and successful evaluation of a counter-notification that complies with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

Many large labels and media companies already work with Audible Magic to protect their artists' work. However, independent artists can also register their work with Audible Magic by visiting their website at www.audiblemagic.com/content-registration.

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