



Online Licensing

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ONLINE LICENSING

Key concepts

- Most online revenue is licensed jointly by PRS and MCPS operating as *PRS for Music*. Only the distribution aspects of the MCPS share will be detailed in this document.
- Blanket revenues received for UK online music services are split between PRS and MCPS based on service type, in accordance with this matrix:

Service type	PRS	MCPS
Download	25%	75%
Streaming*	50%	50%
Mixed**	50%	50%
Webcast	75%	25%
FAST (Free Ad Supported Television)	75%	25%
Karaoke – Download***	17.4%	82.6%
Karaoke – On-demand streaming***	34.8%	65.2%
Ringtones****	33.33 %	66.67 %
Cloud locker services	25%	75%

* The split for YouTube is calculated at work level, see YouTube section below.

** If it is not possible to break service down into the component parts, this split is used.

*** Some karaoke services have a split that takes into account UGC content – see “Online Karaoke Services” for more details

**** Not all Ringtones services are split this way, some have bespoke splits, e.g. Vodafone 48/52 in favour of MCPS

- Transactional-invoiced revenue for online music services is apportioned using the same principles as blanket revenues. In this instance, however, apportionment is applied at an individual transaction level and not to the overall fee. This allows for the fact that control of the repertoire and the rights being licensed by MCPS and PRS can vary at work level.
- UK-focused services are licensed on a blanket basis and revenues are distributed by data-matching music usage reports against repertoire. For low-value services, for example Limited Online Music Licence (LOML) licensees with a royalty value of less than £12,500 per annum, revenues are distributed on a pro-rated basis. LOML+ services are distributed by data matching usage against repertoire annually.
- ICE Services operates licensing and distribution processes for multi-territory services
- For multi-territory services, including those operating in the UK under multi-territorial licensing agreements, ICE Services processes usage reports from each service to identify relevant repertoire. In respect of the UK, the processing excludes those repertoires specifically excluded from ICE Services’ mandate and licenses the remainder, providing a ‘residual blanket’ licence. Outside of the UK, ICE Services licenses those specific works that it is mandated to license for those territories at the time of invoicing.
- Online music usages are matched and invoiced following the territory of destination’s copyright policy, performing and mechanical rights splits, and registered share pictures.

- Full reporting is sought from all but the smallest of online licensees (such as LOML licensees). The quality of the data usually enables the systems to automatch usage for a very high proportion of the revenue. Manual matching also takes place for high value works.
- Ringtones and ringbacks are licensed and distributed in the same way as other online usages.

Unmatchables and carry forwards

Carry forwards for the General Entertainment Online Licence (GEOL) operate using the same method as used for broadcast.

For transactional and blanket online sections, we do not adopt a carry forward approach. This is due to the nature of the revenue received and the cost of implementing back claim capability on systems.

For multi-territory transactional online usage, we collect revenue relating to usage of works that could not be identified (Unmatchables), or for shares of matched works where the owner cannot be identified (Copyright Control). Once all usage data has been identified via automated and manual matching processes, there is some revenue left over relating to usage of works whose data cannot be matched.

For most online services, we collect revenue relating to UK usage and for only the repertoire we administer directly. This is distributed at the earliest opportunity after the initial distributions of matched repertoire royalties. We distribute it pro rata over all identified repertoire for the relevant service and usage period, so this effectively acts as a 'top-up' to the original distribution. We distribute to each member an amount which corresponds to their share of the original distribution from the same service, with amounts per work detailed on member statements.

For some smaller services, we collect revenue relating to UK usage for all repertoire, including repertoire from owners whose multi-territory online rights PRS does not otherwise administer directly. For this, a different approach is followed to help facilitate and administer royalty payments to those repertoire owners. This money is distributed as follows:

- Unmatchables:
 - 75% of the money for unmatched usage is distributed pro rata over the identified repertoire on an annual basis for the relevant service and period. Such distributions will be made across all matched data for all rights-holders, including direct licensors.
 - The remaining money is held for three years to fund claims and disputes, after which it is distributed pro rata over all identified repertoire for the relevant service and usage period.
- Copyright Control:
 - All money for unidentified shares is held for the three years before being distributed pro rata. This allows us to attempt to make adjustments for unidentified shares which are subsequently registered.

'Pro rata': in this context, this means money is distributed using the identified (matched) repertoire. Therefore, to all those who participated in the original distribution, we will distribute an equivalent share of the unmatchable and copyright control revenue.

This policy has been reviewed by the Distribution Committee in June 2014, July 2015, November 2016, March 2017 and October 2022.

Apple Music and Apple iTunes

Introduction

Apple holds significant market share in the online music market. ICE Services operate licensing for this service and process the usage data, which they pass to us for distribution to our members.

Royalty source

Apple revenue is invoiced monthly based upon processed usage under the terms of Apple's licence with ICE Services.

Distribution policy

Revenue apportionment/performance value calculation

For downloads via Apple iTunes, each usage has a 25% to PRS and 75% to MCPS split applied, in line with splits established for download services.

For streaming via Apple Music each usage has a 50% to PRS and 50% to MCPS split applied, in line with splits established for streaming services.

iTunes revenues are invoiced based on what falls within our mandated repertoire and paid on net of commission deductions.

Distribution basis

iTunes is distributed on a census basis where work registrations have been in place at the time of invoicing (subject to a minimum value requirement). The volume of data in iTunes reporting is high and the quality is generally good as so much of the reported data is automatched. Where a match cannot be established automatically, ICE Services will seek to manually match high value usages.

Distribution cycle

We aim to distribute iTunes revenue quarterly, six months after the end of the quarterly performance period.

Processing policy

Data provider and format

Data provided by the licensee in electronic format.

Processing thresholds and rules

All reported usage is loaded and passed through the automatch process. Works with insufficient streams to generate at least €0.01 are not loaded into ICE Services systems and do not, therefore become distributable.

YouTube

Introduction

A significant proportion of YouTube streams are accounted for by music videos, both in the form of official videos uploaded by record companies and in user generated content. ICE Services operate licensing for this service and process the usage data, which they pass to us for distribution to our members.

Royalty source

YouTube pays a blanket licence fee to ICE Services for MCPS rights administered by ICE Services throughout the term of the licence.

Distribution policy

Revenue apportionment/performance value calculation

YouTube revenue apportionment between MCPS and PRS works on a points basis. This reflects the individual usages controlled between MCPS and PRS, and the different set of rights (performing and mechanical rights) that we administer.

Each stream of a society-controlled work generates a single point. Controlled content varies between PRS and MCPS, so these points are weighted to take account of the established 50/50 streaming split between the two. The MCPS side is further upweighted by 3:13 to compensate for the synchronisation rights in a YouTube video.

This creates a weighting of 5:8 (that is 5/13:8/13) in favour of MCPS for each controlled stream.

Each performing right point generated is worth one while each mechanical point generated is worth 1.6.

This ratio does not represent the apportionment of the total licence fee. We control a broader spectrum of performing right repertoire used on YouTube, which is paid in the PRS distribution, than we do for mechanical right repertoire, which is paid in the MCPS distribution. At the level of split between PRS and MCPS, this dilutes the impact of the higher weighting given to mechanical usages.

We also apply a weighting based on the territory in which the streaming takes place. This accounts for the varying value of the same music, which we control, in different countries. Based on market forces, the same amount of music used in different territories generates different values.

These weightings are maintained by ICE Services as the administrator for our licence deal with YouTube.

Revenue is apportioned to individual works on the basis of the number of streams each work accumulates within the streamed content made available on YouTube.

Distribution basis

YouTube is paid on a census basis (subject to a minimum stream threshold requirement). Only videos that have accumulated sufficient streams to generate a payment of at least €0.01 are loaded into ICE Services systems and run through an automatch process.

Distribution cycle

We aim to distribute most YouTube revenue quarterly, six months after the end of the quarterly performance period. Some YouTube data goes through an extra processing step to identify the music using music recognition technology and so distribution of this data lags by an additional quarter.

Processing policy

Data provider and format

Data is provided by the licensee in an electronic format. YouTube also uses music recognition technology to provide ICE Services with accurate and comprehensive data.

Processing thresholds and rules

All reported YouTube videos exceeding the minimum stream threshold are loaded and passed through the automatch process. Videos with insufficient streams to generate at least €0.01 are not loaded into ICE Services systems and do not, therefore become distributable.

Other notes

This policy was confirmed by the Distribution Committee in April 2014. An amendment was made in November 2015 related to territory weightings.

Spotify

Introduction

Spotify holds significant market share in the online music market in the UK and across other territories. ICE Services operate licensing for this service and process the usage data, which they pass to us for distribution to our members. ICE Services charges for and distributes Spotify's use of the repertoire we control across each territory, for each service type separately, using different criteria.

Royalty source

There are different fees or licence fee calculations for each of the service types which use a mixture of different criteria and minimum payment thresholds.

Distribution policy

Revenue apportionment/performance value calculation

Spotify revenue is apportioned 50% to PRS and 50% to MCPS in accordance with established splits for on-demand streaming services.

The blanket fees and criteria established in the Spotify licence mean that an amount of revenue is directly attributable to each service type and period. Within service types and periods, revenue is apportioned to individual tracks on the basis of shares in total streams.

Distribution basis

Spotify is distributed on a near census basis. It would be prohibitively expensive for ICE Services to load and process all reported data - the lesser streamed tracks would not generate sufficient streams to trigger a payment, so thresholds are used.

Distribution cycle

We aim to distribute revenue quarterly, six months after the end of the quarterly performance period.

Processing policy

Data provider and format

Data is provided by Spotify in electronic format.

Processing thresholds and rules

Some load thresholds are employed to reduce file size and avoid unnecessary cost.

GEOL within broadcast blanket

Introduction

Many major TV broadcasters offer their audiovisual content for consumption online, often after the content has been broadcast on TV. In most instances, the licence fee for this online service is negotiated within the blanket licence fee paid by the broadcaster.

This section covers General Entertainment Online Licence (GEOL) fees included within the broadcast blanket licences of BBC, Channel 4, Five, and ITV amongst others.

Royalty source

The fees are set on either an individual basis or as part of the broadcaster's blanket licence and they take into account factors such as viewer hours consumed, music hours consumed, and level of music use.

Distribution policy

Revenue apportionment/performance value calculation

Revenue for these services is split depending on the type of exploitation involved and is in accordance with the splits detailed in the [Key Concepts](#) of this 'Online Revenue' section. Examples of the major GEOL services licensed within a blanket broadcast licence are Channel 4 (formerly All4), BBC iPlayer, BBC Sounds, ITV X (formerly ITV Hub) and My5.

Annual fees are established within the negotiated broadcast blanket licence. Revenue is apportioned to productions by pro-rating the total amount available for the service over all points generated within the period. One point represents a stream containing one minute of music e.g. a production accumulating 10,000 streams and containing 25 minutes of music would generate 250,000 points.

Revenue is apportioned to usage from the total portion of the blanket licence fee that is allocated to TV (or Radio in the case of BBC Sounds). The allocation of royalties is benchmarked against the value per viewer hour achieved by blanket standalone GEOL licences, reviewed annually. Channel 4 (formerly All4) and My5 have a minimum allocation based on a fixed allocation derived from historical licence negotiation but are allocated more if so determined by the value per music hour calculation.

Distribution basis

Distributions are made on a census basis.

Distribution cycle

We distribute these revenues quarterly, one quarter after the end of the quarterly performance period.

Data provider and format

Data is provided by the licensee in electronic format.

Processing thresholds and rules

All usage goes through both an automatch and, where necessary, manual match process.

Other notes

This policy was reviewed by the Distribution Committee in February 2021 with a change made for revenue allocation to be based on viewer hours.

Previously reviews took place in November 2017 and January 2017.

Blanket GEOL standalone licences

Introduction

A standalone GEOL licence is issued to online audiovisual content providers that are not covered by a broadcast blanket licence. Examples of major services covered by this licence include Apple iTunes, Amazon Prime, BT TV, Disney+, Microsoft Xbox and Netflix.

Royalty source

Licence fees are set on an individual basis and take into account factors such as music hours consumed, viewers and level of music use.

Distribution policy

Revenue apportionment/performance value calculation

GEOL revenue is split between MCPS and PRS based upon the type of service offered. All productions generate performing right and mechanical royalties.

Revenue is apportioned between MCPS and PRS in line with the mechanical and performing right splits as detailed in the '[Key Concepts](#)' section for 'Online Revenue' depending on the type of GEOL service

Revenue is pro-rated across all productions within the fixed performance term, based on the duration of music in each production streamed or downloaded. Because the total amount of music consumed within each performance period can vary, the value of one minute of music can vary from one period to another. For calculation purposes we use a points-based system where one point represents one minute of music in a production. For example, a production containing 25 minutes of music that is streamed/downloaded 10,000 times would generate 250,000 points. This ensures a consistent valuation for music featured in productions streamed or downloaded within a given time period.

Distribution basis

All reported usage runs through an automatic matching process. High value usages that the system is unable to match are matched manually.

Distribution cycle

We distribute these revenues quarterly, two quarters after the end of the quarterly performance period.

Processing policy

Data provider and format

Data is provided by the licensee in electronic format.

Processing thresholds and rules

All usage goes through an automatch and/or manual match process.

Other notes

This policy was reviewed in January 2017. Previously, we made adjustments regarding the extent of controlled usage for MCPS and PRS. As of January 2017, we no longer make these adjustments.

Cloud locker services

Introduction

Cloud Locker Services have 'scan and match' functionality which scans an end user's device and attempts to identify tracks which are already stored by the service. Where a match is found, the server copy is made available, by streaming or download, to a variety of the end user's devices rather than the user's copy being uploaded.

ICE Services operate licensing for this service and process the usage data, which they pass to us for distribution to our members.

Royalty source

Cloud Locker Services are charged on a per subscriber basis.

Distribution policy

Revenue apportionment/performance value calculation

Revenue for cloud locker services is split 25% to PRS and 75% to MCPS on the basis that the end user experience of the service is essentially one of 'ownership' rather than just 'streaming'.

Distribution basis

All reported usage above the threshold is run through an automatic matching process. High value usages that the system is unable to match are matched manually.

Distribution cycle

PRS distributes these revenues quarterly, six months after the end of the quarterly performance period.

Processing policy

Data provider and format

Data is provided by the licensee in electronic format.

Processing thresholds and rules

Cloud locker services produce vast amounts of data for relatively small licence fees making it completely uneconomic to process everything. For this reason a threshold sampling mechanism is used whereby the highest value (most used) works are processed and distributed and the remainder are considered non-distributable. The actual value of the threshold varies but for each service is pitched to give a 3% cost to revenue ratio.

Other notes

This policy was agreed by the Distribution Committee in May 2013 and reconfirmed by them in June 2014.

BBC iPlayer

Introduction

BBC's iPlayer is a significant online audiovisual content provider in the UK. Access is free to its on-demand or live online simulcast services via a range of devices including PCs, mobile devices, and tablet computers.

Royalty source

BBC's iPlayer service in the UK is covered under the terms of their broadcast blanket licence agreement with *PRS for Music* on behalf of both MCPS and PRS.

Distribution policy

Revenue apportionment/performance value calculation

Revenue is apportioned to usage from an overall allocation that is benchmarked against the value per hour streamed on blanket standalone GEOL licences, reviewed annually.

Distribution basis

BBC iPlayer is paid on a census basis.

Distribution cycle

iPlayer revenue is distributed quarterly, one quarter after the end of the quarterly performance period.

Processing policy

Data provider and format

Data is provided by the BBC in electronic format.

Processing thresholds and rules

All reported data is passed through an automatch process, with manual matching where it is deemed cost efficient to do so. Currently, a production value of approximately £5 is cost effective. We continue to review the appropriate threshold levels to ensure an optimal balance between cost and accuracy.

Other Notes

There is a separate licence for the BBC Studios Global iPlayer. This is apportioned and distributed as a standard UK streaming service. The basis of revenue allocation was reviewed in November 2017 by the Distribution Committee.

Multi-territory transactional licences

Introduction

On behalf of PRS and MCPS, *PRS for Music* represent some rights-holders' interests for transactional online services across multiple territories. ICE Services operate licensing and process the usage data for multi-territory online licences, which they pass to us for distribution to our members.

Royalty source

Revenues collected for distribution under this section are collected per transaction, line by line.

Distribution policy

Revenue apportionment/performance value calculation

Revenues are invoiced on a transactional basis to value individual usages. No other apportionments are made, and items are distributed as invoiced, net of administration charge/commission.

Distributions are made in accordance with the invoice on a census basis.

Distribution cycle

We aim to distribute on a quarterly basis, one quarter after the end of a quarterly performance period, if invoices are settled in time for this distribution to take place.

Processing policy

Data provider and format

Data is provided by the licensee in electronic format.

Processing thresholds and rules

All usage goes through an automatch and, where necessary, manual match process so that ICE Services can invoice for as much of its mandated repertoire as possible.

Limited Online Music Licence

Introduction

The LOML scheme will be unavailable by the end of December 2024 as we are releasing a range of more targeted tariffs during 2024

There are two types of Limited Online Music Licence – LOML and LOML+¹

LOML is applicable to online services generating less than £12,500 gross revenue per annum. The cost of our licence depends upon the type of service, whether streaming or download or general entertainment, and the extent of usage, based on number of streams, downloads, and music hours consumed.

LOML+ scheme deals with online services which generate between £12,500 and £200,000 gross revenue per annum. The same considerations as LOML are used to determine the licence fee.

The difference between LOML and LOML+ is that only LOML+ licensees are required to provide reporting of the music they used. This is because it is not cost effective to obtain and process all the uses from small services that generate less than £12,500 of their own gross revenue per annum.

Royalty source

Licence fees are collected from licensees whose service generates less than £200,000 per annum, either through the LOML or LOML+ scheme.

Distribution policy

Revenue apportionment/performance value calculation

LOML licensees are not required to supply reporting to go with their licence fees, so no calculations are performed.

LOML+ licensees do need to supply music reporting. We apportion revenue between MCPS and PRS in line with the mechanical and performing right splits as detailed in the '[Key Concepts](#)' section for 'Online Revenue' depending on the type of GEOL service.

Distribution basis

It is not cost effective to obtain music reporting from LOML licensees, and this can deter very small DSPs from using our music or licensing music with us. The revenue is aggregated and distributed over representative data from the Small & Community Radio Station analogy, built from a large range of stations.

LOML+ licensees do provide reporting. In this instance, all reported usage above the threshold is run through an automatic matching process. High value usages that the system is unable to match are matched manually.

¹ View a matrix detailing the structure here:

www.prsformusic.com/licences/using-music-online/limited-online-music-licence

www.prsformusic.com/licences/using-music-online/limited-online-music-licence-plus

Distribution cycle

We aim to distribute LOML revenue annually in July. We seek to distribute LOML+ revenue on a quarterly basis, one quarter after the end of a quarterly performance period, if invoices have been settled in time for distributions to take place.

Processing policy**Data provider and format**

LOML licensees do not provide actual data.

LOML+ licensees provide data in electronic format.

Processing thresholds and rules

Where applicable, all usage goes through an automatch and, where necessary, manual match process so that we can invoice for as much of our mandated repertoire as possible.

Online karaoke services

Introduction

We issue joint licences to a number of online karaoke services, for streaming and permanent downloading.

These licences cover the performing and mechanical rights in the musical work, and also the right to present the lyrics in graphic form in conjunction with the sound recording of the musical work.

Royalty source

The majority of licence fees are calculated as a flat rate fee, ranging from £142 to £18,042 as of January 2019, for different units of usage:

1,450 - 125,000	karaoke downloads
30,000 - 3,813,559	karaoke streams.

If a service generates more than £200k the licence fee is calculated as the greater of a percentage of revenue or a minima per track.

Distribution policy

Revenue apportionment/performance value calculation

The standard splits between MCPS and PRS are adjusted in favour of MCPS to reflect the graphic use of lyrics, resulting in the following splits:

- Streaming: 34.8% to PRS, 65.2% to MCPS
- Permanent downloads: 17.4% to PRS, 82.6% to MCPS

Where synchronisation rights are included in online karaoke licences the adjustment in favour of MCPS is increased further to:

- Streaming: 28.8% to PRS, 71.2% to MCPS
- Permanent downloads: 14.4% to PRS, 85.6% to MCPS

Distribution basis

All reported usage data is processed for distribution.

Distribution cycle

As with other online services, we aim to distribute on a quarterly basis, one quarter after the end of a quarterly performance period, if invoices are settled in time for this distribution to take place.

Processing policy

Data provider and format

Data is provided by the licensee in electronic format.

Processing thresholds and rules

All identifiable data will be processed for distribution. All usages that automatch are distributed. All usages that require manual matching and are worth at least £5 are

distributed. Items worth less than £5 and that requiring manual matching do not feature in the distribution. Money for works not included in the distribution is pro-rated across works that are included.

Other Notes

This policy was agreed by the Distribution Committee in February 2014.

Business to business music suppliers (MSB2B)

Introduction

Suppliers of background music systems to businesses are increasingly moving to online content delivery methods to their customers. This method of supply requires a joint licence on behalf of both MCPS and PRS. The licensing scheme requires many of these companies to supply us with actual usage data.

Royalty source

The licence fee is calculated as the greater of a percentage of revenue or a minimum per site/per month.

Distribution policy

Revenue apportionment/performance value calculation

Where licensees supply usage data each licensee's revenue is distributed directly over the usage data they report. Where no data is obtainable the money is distributed pro-rata over a suitable alternative data source.

Distribution basis

Distributions are made on a census basis where usage data is supplied or an analogy basis where no data is supplied.

Distribution cycle

We aim to distribute on a quarterly basis, one quarter after the end of a quarterly performance period, if invoices are settled in time for distribution to take place.

Processing policy

Data provider and format

Data is provided by the licensee in electronic format.

Processing thresholds and rules

All reported data is processed for distribution.

Other notes

This policy was agreed by the Distribution Committee in November 2012.

This revenue source should not be confused with the money PRS collects for the public performance end use of music supplied to businesses under the terms of this licence. For details of this see the 'Background Music Suppliers' section in the PRS Distribution Policy.

Overseas income

Summary

When we receive monies collected by other societies, for the use of repertoire in other territories, we will attempt wherever possible to distribute line by line against the usage data supplied.