THEN AND NOW: Songwriter Compensation in the Digital Age

ASCAP operates on a not-for-profit basis, working to ensure music creators are paid fairly for public performances of their copyrighted works.

Technology is rapidly changing the way people listen to music.

Public performance royalties paid through ASCAP are rapidly becoming the most important source of income for American songwriters and composers, who do not have the same revenue streams as recording artists (no tours or t-shirts, for example).

Outdated laws have created inequality in the market place.

A WWII-era consent decree between ASCAP and the DOJ dictates that rates for public performance licenses are set primarily by a single federal judge, or “rate court,” rather than the free market. *No other entertainment industry operates this way.*

Online streaming giant Pandora, for example, pays songwriters only about 9 cents in performance royalties for 1,000 streams of their music.

ASCAP internal data

Record labels and recording artists routinely earn 12 to 14 times more than songwriters for the exact same stream of music.

Pandora financial disclosures

IF OUR MUSIC LICENSING LAWS AREN’T UPDATED, THE COLLECTIVE LICENSING SYSTEM THAT KEEPS COSTS DOWN FOR MUSIC LISTENERS WILL BE AT RISK.
IT’S TIME FOR A MUSIC LICENSING SYSTEM THAT REFLECTS THE REALITY OF TODAY’S MUSIC MARKETPLACE

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