

Fighting the illegal download battle

Project Snapshot

Company:	Faber Music
Business:	Leading independent British publishers of classical, educational and media music
Project:	Developing and implementing the 'E-Partners scheme' that will enable 3rd party website vendors to sell sheet music downloads legally

With a worldwide reputation as one of the leading independent British publishers of classical, educational and media music, Faber needs to be at the forefront of the illegal download debate

"One of the main problems that we face as a music publishing company is that there exist a number of extremely large, multi-million pound websites that give sheet music that is protected by copyright away free. This is illegal and the quality is poor, often containing wrong lyrics and chords," explains Sarah Holcroft, Head of Digital at Faber Music. Unfortunately the company operates in an environment where their music sheet assets and copyright agreements are constantly being eroded by illegal websites offering free, unauthorised sheet music of copyrighted works to the public.

A KTP with London South Bank University is currently underway with the aim of developing and implementing the 'E-Partners scheme', managed through Faber Music's central hub, that will enable 3rd party website vendors to sell sheet music downloads legally. KTP Associate Riccardo Zanella has been brought on-board with an MSc in Business Information Technology and a BSc in Electronic Engineering to become the Technical Manager of this project. Faber have already launched 7 E-Partner stores and have 40 more ready and waiting. "These partners want to be able to sell their content but they do not have the capability, knowledge or

technology to do so, Faber can offer them that," says Riccardo.

Faber has prioritised the development of the E-Partners scheme as it believes it approaches the problem of illegal downloads with creativity and imagination, and will provide an effective, commercially viable solution. "This scheme consists of a central hub where 3rd party companies or composers can upload their digital musical content. This content is then 'skinned' onto a bespoke website for that company and enables each E-Partner to sell their music through Faber's technology," says Riccardo.

Sarah explains why this KTP really is ground-breaking stuff, "Currently our competitors provide one-stop-shop systems where they sell all digital sheet music through their own websites. Our project is the complete reverse of that and is partnering up with multiple sites all over Europe in order to filter right through to the niche corners of the market." Working with all these different companies who know their specific market very well is a real boon for Faber as they get continual getting feedback with suggestions on how to improve on their stores. "The project has gained external recognition from the public, our customers, our competitors and the industry. Faber is really pushing the boundaries when it comes to digital exploitation."

Not only is this project going to create a big splash in the world of music publishing but it is also about trying to solve a very prominent social and political problem. Sarah

Centre for Knowledge Transfer

tells us that "Whilst this KTP is creating significant revenue for ourselves it is also hugely benefitting our publishers who receive 50% of net receipts from every £1 we make. We hope this project will infiltrate the market with lots of very exciting, niche, top quality legal stores who generate their own sheet music."

Professor Shushma Patel at London South Bank University has been the academic working with Riccardo on this KTP. "Working with Faber Music has been a challenge to me because I have had to look at the music industry from a different perspective, not just as a consumer. The management of the copyright, for all stakeholders, the detailed legal aspects that have gone into the process to enable the delivery of a fit-for-purpose, multi-stakeholder e-system has been great. The launch of the websites and feedback from the e-partners to Riccardo has really given us a boost and set the path for further development."

Whilst this KTP is creating significant revenue for ourselves it is also hugely benefitting our publishers who receive 50% of net receipts from every £1 we make. We hope this project will infiltrate the market with lots of very exciting, niche, top quality legal stores who generate their own sheet music