

Can You Use That Song in Your Video?

What Content
Creators Need to
Know About
Music Licensing



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Introduction

In Nigeria—and across the globe—the content creator economy is booming. More than ever, creators are breaking barriers, turning passions into income streams, and reshaping the media landscape by transforming the marketing and advertising industries. This surge is fuelled by increased internet access, the rise of social media, monetised platforms, and a vibrant, youthful population.

Music plays a central role in this ecosystem. From TikTok videos to Instagram reels, music gives content emotional depth and viral appeal. But before you add that catchy tune to your next video, it's important to understand the legal framework around using music.

Why Music is Protected

Music is protected by copyright law. In Nigeria, the **Copyright Act 2022** gives artists, producers, and record labels exclusive rights over how their music is used. These rights include the ability to reproduce, perform, distribute, or adapt their work. Due to the broad scope of exclusive rights granted to copyright owners, various rights exist — including publishing rights and synchronization rights — which ensure that copyright holders are compensated whenever their song is used publicly, such as in broadcasts, films, or public performances.

Put simply, just having access to a song – or even owning a copy the song—doesn't mean you can use it freely in your content. Using music without permission can amount to copyright infringement, which can lead to takedown notices or legal claims.



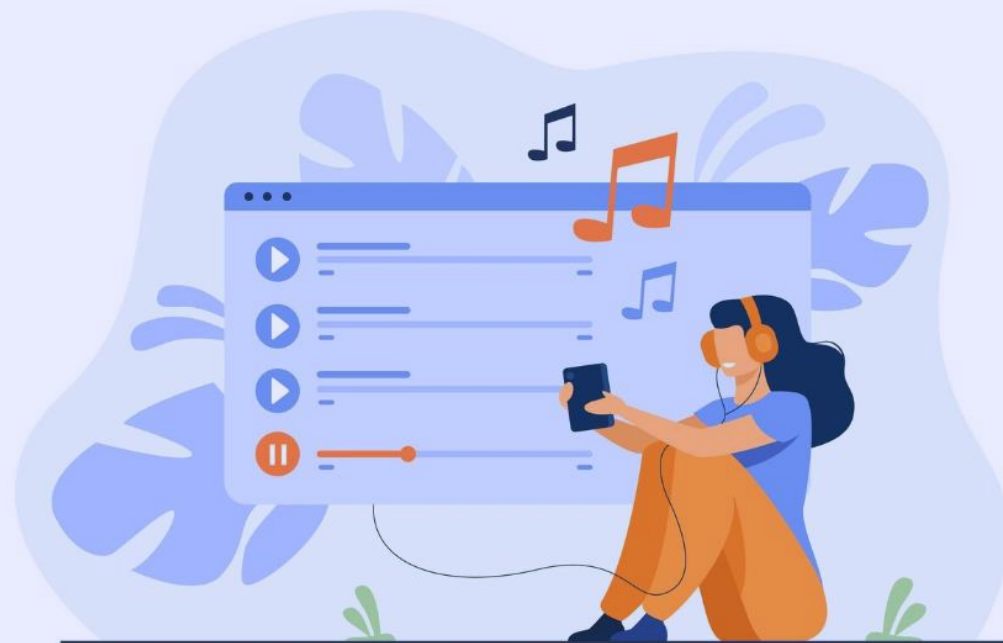


So How Are People Using Music on Social Media?

In view of this, you might wonder why everyone seems to be using popular music on social media without issue. The answer lies in music licensing.

Music licensing is how permission is granted for music to be used in different contexts—films, ads, streaming, or social media. In many cases, social media platforms have already negotiated licensing agreements with copyright owners, allowing users to include certain songs in their videos through the app's in-built music library.

This setup is mutually beneficial. Platforms get music, creators get access, and copyright holders (like artists and songwriters) receive royalties. It's how songs like Love Nwantiti by CKay or Calm Down by Rema went viral globally—boosted by user-generated content on TikTok and other platforms.



What You're Actually Allowed to Do

When you pick a song from an app's music library, **you're not personally licensing the song yourself**. Rather, you are relying on the limited licence that the app/platform has obtained from the copyright owner. The platform has a license that permits users to include listed tracks in content—for personal use within the platform. But there are limits.

If you're creating sponsored content or working on a brand deal, you may need additional permission from the copyright owner. That's because commercial use often falls outside what's covered by a platform's license.

Also, many platforms have different rules for creator or business accounts, which can mean access to fewer music rights than personal accounts. If you're using music for commercial purposes, always check what rights the platform has—and what rights you might need to get on your own.



Before You Upload... Ask This One Question

So before you hit “post” on that next video, ask yourself: **Do I have the right to use this song?**

Taking a moment to confirm this can help you avoid takedowns, penalties, or copyright disputes—and it helps protect the creative work of other artists while protecting your creative work from being silenced.

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