

Paying Respect: An Analysis of Attitudes towards Music Paywalls in China

Recently, 7/30, the Chinese department of national copyright published the article of “About Forbidding Unauthorized Rebroadcasting of Music for Online Music Services”, which brought down 220 million music from a wide range of music apps. However, Steal music is still easy in China. Users have uncountable ways of acquiring unauthorized music. Direct downloading or listening, which is getting music straightly from unauthorized online resource sites, though theoretical illegal, is a very common way for people to steal music. Because Internet users are not being supervised rigorously, they can upload any music they have online or into apps and share to others. If anyone has the source somehow (recorded secretly), it is not a surprise that after only a few hours, the “pirated” songs are everywhere.

1. The Present Situation of Music Paywall in China

There are 5 major music apps in China: QQ, Xiami, Kugou, Kuwo, and Wangyiyun. Recently, due to the copyright issue, a great amount of music is being brought down from Wangyiyun

Music. Differently, because of valuing copyright, Xiami is not concerned about the problem too much. On the other hand, Kuwo, Kugou, and QQ are under the banner of a single company. These are the three apps which contain most of the music. All five of the apps have similar payment methods: the V.I.P, or per song purchase. By purchasing V.I.P. access, users are able to listen to copyrighted music and are able to download them by buying songs and can listen to music and download them as often as they want.

Since 2012, most of the music platforms have implemented music paid download in China as mentioned above. However, when we open a music application, we will find that, it just needs less than 20 yuan to be a V.I.P and download all music, or 2 yuan to purchase one song. Or, even though you are not a V.I.P, you still can download most music or listen to music freely online. It's not a protection of the music copyright, but a means of these music platforms to attract more consumers to pay for their services. Music paywall, a system that prevents Internet users from accessing certain Web content without a paid subscription in order to protect creators' right, still faces embarrassed situation in China.

Music paywall is a crucial system because rights of composers and artists are depending on it heavily. Under such system, people purchase their product in terms of supporting the composers and the artists for their ultimate talent and their extraordinary work. However, to people who do not respect this system, they will harm the content creators by stealing their creations for free, meaning the creators would eventually lose money on their products made.

Government wants to forbid infringement, but it is so easy and cheap for people to have a infringement in China.

2. Attitudes towards Music Paywall in Other Countries

Compared with China, other countries are dealing with this problem far more effectively. They are much stricter about music paywall issue. No sources of pirated music could be found anywhere online, for music only appears in legal music apps. In addition to prevent conflicts and copyright issues between apps and companies, the countries also sets out exclusive neutral copyright organizations that are in charge of all the conflicts and are responsible to hand out the copyright certifications to artists.(All artists and companies are stipulated to register their products to the

organization). Germany has GEMA, France has SACEM, Hongkong has CASH, U.S. has ASCAP, BMI and SESAC, and Japan has JARAC.

We have researched countries that have mature laws on music paywall, such as the United States. American copyright law mainly protects the following aspects:

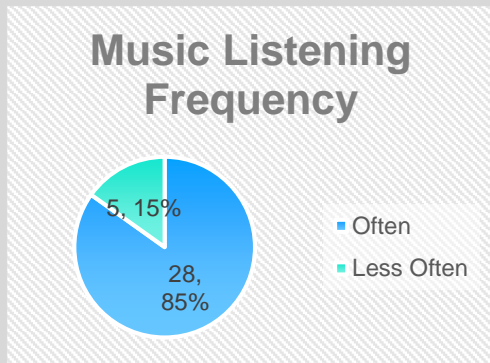
1. to prevent people from using unauthorized works (piracy, plagiarism);
2. to prevent people from commencing unauthorized attempts to gain profit from pirated music;
3. to provide protection of the rights of derivative works (works related to a same author), plus, the copyright owners have the right to give the derivative works to others;
4. to protect the rights of the first sale of the works; author decides when to publish it and in where it will be published.

The first law that prevents others from using pirated music leads to a situation, in which, it is impossible to download music free in US.

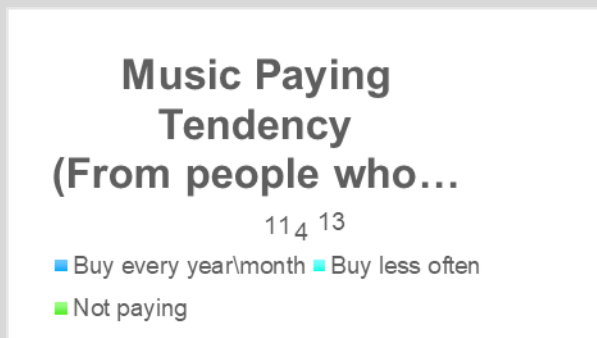
3. Surveys We have Taken about Paywall

To get a sense of the attitudes towards paywall issues in China, we interviewed 33 people from different age groups. We used the method of

stratified in Statistics. We first asked the frequency of people about listening to music.

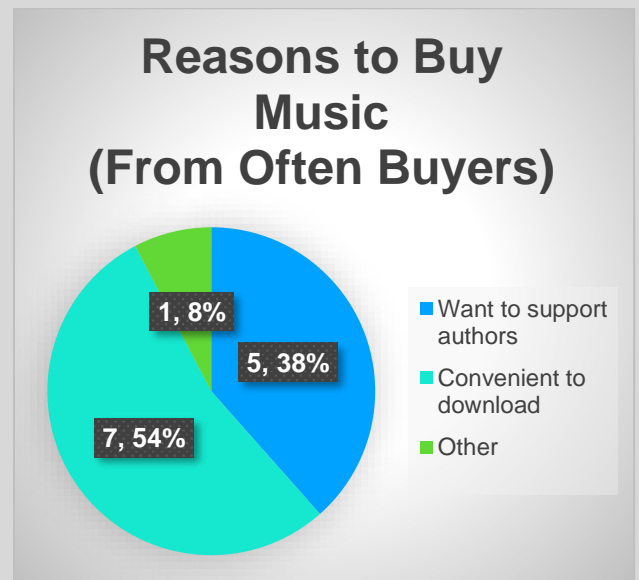


Now we can scope our population to get more accurate and specific results in the later survey.



The big data helps people to understand that one reason of buying music is to support and respect musicians.

Besides, 38.47% of the people who buy music often stated the reasons that they like to support and encourage the musicians. The rates of people who consider that copyright has to be respected and to be easily to be downloaded, are the same, 53.84%.



More deeply, we also interviewed a German boy who is preferred to be called “Remzi”. He responded that he purchases apple music for every three month, since it is very easy to use. Around him, 8 of his friends use Spotify, paying \$10 every month. Though, there are still 13 people who are downloading the music illegally. The boy said that he did pay because he likes to respect the copyrights and to encourage talented musicians. Although the Germany government has developed laws on music copyrights and paywalls, it still lacks of the policy on musicians, leading so many people downloading the music inappropriately. In fact, the juvenile laws on music which includes paywalls and copyrights still exist in many developed and in developing countries.



This is Ramzi from Germany, a 13 years old boy who listen to music on Spotify every day.

4. Reasons for Having Different Perspectives about Paywall

After the survey, half of the people surveyed are from different places and age groups. They have own incentives about paying for music.

In contrast, there are people who don't pay.

18.18% of the population says that music is not a necessity of their consumption. And some of them also believe that it is too complicated to use and to pay music on a platform. While also, 0.15% uses illegal or inappropriate ways to listen to music.

We interviewed a girl “Charlotte” from Hong

Kong. She stated that she was using an app called “Joox” which is also an online music app. Many of her friends also bought the card so they can enjoy the music in a better audio quality.

However, many other people use the code which allows downloading specific music, but cracked by hackers, to download music for free. To those people's value, it is not worth paying for music.

Based on the law Hong Kong has a “CASH System to protect music and musicians.

However, we can tell from the interview that laws can't prevent all listeners from using illegal ways to download the music.

From the data, we can see people value the paywall situation differently. The cause of it is also diverse.



This is Charlotte, She is 14 and she lives in Hong Kong Kong. "There is really no need to pay for music, for me at least." She claims.

established and diverse music industry, people will have the sense to respect the music paywall too.

5. What We Should Do

China is experiencing a transformation. We are entering a newly formed and a more completed system in Paywall. According to research, Xiaomi and QQ Companies own the most legal copyrights in music industry. Chinese department of national copyrights also caught to forbid the unauthorized music and 220 million music was taken down from various Medias. Apparently, strategies and published law couldn't work effectively in short term; cases of flourishing illegal music on Internet are common deals. But, China is doing things that take time. It's clear that China has to emulate developed music industry countries. First, we should establish a neutral copyright organization and enact certifications to musicians. Second, media in China should publish related news often to brought citizens' attention and gain musicians' trust to platform and government. Lastly, organizations should eliminate every illegal channels and platforms by using high technology in computer science.

If all the above can be established; no more than ten years, China will have a mature, well-