

U2 manager urges ISPs to help fight web piracy

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By Ben Fenton in Cannes

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The music industry should shift the focus of its battle with internet piracy towards the technological industries which have "built multibillion dollar industries on the back of our content without paying for it", according to Paul McGuinness, manager of rock group U2.

Mr McGuinness, a highly-respected figure in the industry, told delegates to Midem, the music industry's international trade show being staged in France, that they had concerned themselves for too long with the small fries who organised illegal peer-to-peer file-sharing on the internet.

Mr McGuinness, who has managed U2 for 30 years, said: "I suggest we shift the focus of moral pressure away from the individual P2P file thief and on to the multibillion dollar industries that benefit from these countless tiny crimes. The ISPs [internet service providers] the telcos [telecoms companies], the device-makers."

Mr McGuinness listed some companies that should be pressurised to help "save the recorded music industry". Huge corporations, such as [Microsoft](#), [Google](#), AOL, [Yahoo](#), [Comcast](#), [Vodafone](#), Facebook and [Apple](#), should be helping "not on the basis of reluctantly sharing advertising revenue, but collecting revenue for the use and sale of our content".

Speaking at the event, sponsored by the International Music Managers' Forum in Cannes, Mr McGuinness turned particular attention on the ISPs.

He said that such companies could help if they wanted to. Their ability to block various kinds of activity, for example visits to controversial websites, showed that they also had the ability to target the P2P offenders who used their services.

He added: "We must shame them into wanting to help us. Their snouts have been at our trough feeding free for too long."

The call for action from ISPs follows on from a French government study that led President Nicolas Sarkozy to appeal to the industry to co-operate in catching pirates rather than face legislation.

Other agencies at Midem offered their support for Mr McGuinness's words, which at times were interrupted by bursts of spontaneous applause from his audience.

The organisations backing him include the IFPI, the international body that represents the entire recording industry, the British Phonographic Industry, the Recording Industry Association of America, and British Music Rights.

Mr McGuinness said he envisaged a partnership with ISPs in the future.

"For me the business model of the future is one where music is bundled into an ISP or other subscription service and the revenues are shared between the distributor and the content owners," he said.

Last week, IFPI released figures showing that while digital sales increased by 40 per cent from \$2.1bn globally to \$2.9bn, it was not enough to counter a fall in physical sales – CDs, tapes and vinyl – from \$17.5bn to \$15bn.

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