

Online streamed Services: Licensing & Music Information

Any organisation (including churches) in the UK who wish to use copyrighted music as part of an online streamed service (or activity) are required to have an appropriate license to legally allow them to do so. This is administered by PRS (Performing Rights Society) and is called a *Limited Online Music License (LOML)*. It can be purchased directly from PRS, and to calculate the cost they will need to know estimates of your audience size (number of people viewing), the number of songs used in a service, and the number of services. There are also some reporting obligations, meaning that you may need to regularly submit a report to them about the number of tracks used, audience sizes and frequency of use. It only covers music streamed in and to the UK. If you use music without an appropriate license, and are found to be doing so, you may be subject to action against you by PRS or the copyright holder and / or a backdated claim for music already used.

Visit the PRS LOML page here:

<https://www.prsformusic.com/licences/using-music-online/limited-online-music-licence>

It has to be noted that copyright law is possibly one of the most complicated areas of law, and the need for the above license has been confirmed by a solicitor on our behalf.

It is worth considering whether the cost of the LOML is worth being able to use copyrighted material in your Zoom service when other options are available.

Other / No-cost Licenses

Uploading any copyrighted audio to YouTube / Facebook without permission is likely to trigger a copyright warning. This happens automatically, with music being detected and identified electronically. You may then be asked to edit out the music.

Other options to consider...

Whilst there may be tracks that you are familiar with and would like to use, it is worth considering using music that is without restriction or cost. Most sources will, quite reasonably, require you to “attribute” or give credit to the creator and the track.

It's first useful to think about the purpose of music in an online service. It can be useful background music at the beginning while people are waiting for the start. It can also be useful to break up the different sections of the service, and give time for personal reflection, prayer or to send healing. Thinking about its purpose will help in choosing the best piece to set the required mood.

If your service is going to be uploaded to YouTube and contains unlicensed music, you are likely to receive a copyright claim or copyright strike. Multiple strikes lead to your account being closed. However, if you use tracks from the YouTube Music Library (accessed via your YouTube account), these will be safe to use.

Resources

The following are all good options, and with careful selection can work extremely well in your online activities. Full details of usage conditions can be found on each site.

Pixabay Music: <https://pixabay.com/music/>

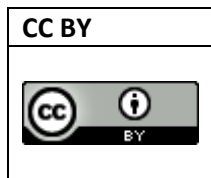
You can search for music by genre, mood etc. Music is free to use, and you do not have to give credit to the creator.

YouTube Audio Library : <http://www.youtube.com/audiolibrary/music>

You'll need to log into Google (search for "YouTube Audio Library") to find a collection of tracks covering many moods and genres. These tracks can be used freely on YouTube videos without triggering a copyright warning or copyright strike (which may lead to account closure.)

Free Music Archive (FMA) : <https://freemusicarchive.org/>

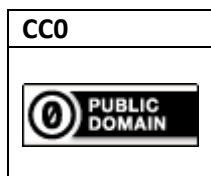
Use the "search FMA" option. Music here is covered by the "Creative Commons" licensing system. You can search for music that is covered by different types of Creative Commons Licence, which include those most useful for a church service, called "CC BY" and "CC 0" (explained below):



Work covered by this license (CC BY) requires the creator to be acknowledged for their work by attribution. You must attribute the track to its creator, and include Title, Author, Source, License...

EG: "My Song" by A. Singer, FreeMusicArchive.org, Creative Commons CC BY

Attribution (giving credit to the creator) can be done on screen (as a caption) or in the chatbox while the music is playing.



Work covered by this license (CC0) is in the public domain, and the creator has waived their rights, so no attribution is needed.

Further information about Creative Commons Licensing is here:

https://www.freemusicarchive.org/License_Guide

The search function at FMA is not intuitive at first, but a little experimentation soon finds lots of results.

Bensound: <https://www.bensound.com/>

Information Sheet

This is the website of a musician who has kindly allowed their music to be used without royalties. You can search for music in wide range of sounds and moods. Like a *CC BY* license, attribution is required.

Examples of the proper way to credit music from this website:

"Music: <https://www.bensound.com/royalty-free-music> "or "Music: « Song Title » from [Bensound.com](https://www.bensound.com)"

Free Stock Music: <https://www.free-stock-music.com/>

Another website with a range of music that requires attribution to use. You can search for music with either "CC BY" or "CC0" licenses.

Royalty Free Music:

Searching for this kind of music will help you to find sites like the ones mentioned above, as well as sites where you can purchase and download a track that is then free for you to use. While the sites mentioned above have thousands of tracks between them, this is another option, albeit with a cost attached (some may cost as little as \$1 to download, however).

Further Reading / Research

<https://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2020/03/17/streaming-church-services-an-updated-guide-to-copyright-and-religion/>

This is a useful blog giving an overview of the legal situation for using copyrighted material, and it also demonstrates how complex this area is. Keeping things simple using *Creative Commons* music is a sensible, effective and low-/no-cost solution to online worship.