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Billy Bragg Campaign Helps Lead To Change In MySpace Terms

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By: [ChartAttack.com Staff](#)

[Pressure](#) from British singer, songwriter and activist **Billy Bragg** has caused MySpace to change their terms of agreement, and he's once again putting music on his [page](#).

Bragg had expressed concern that, under MySpace's previous terms, his songs could have been used elsewhere without his permission. He urged fans and other artists to let MySpace know that they believed these terms were unfair to creators, and the campaign seems to have worked.

"I am very pleased to see that MySpace have changed their terms of agreement from a declaration of their rights into a declaration of our rights as artists, making it clear that, as creators, we retain ownership of our material," the Bard Of Barking wrote in a MySpace [blog entry](#) on Monday. "Having been adopted by the biggest social networking site on the block, I hope their recognition of the right of the artist to be sole exploiter of their own material now becomes an industry standard because there is much more at stake here than just the terms and conditions of a website.

"In the past, songwriters and performers needed a record company to manufacture, market and distribute their work, and in exchange for that, the company expected to own the rights to exploit the recordings for as long as the material was capable of earning royalties — life of copyright in legalese which currently means 50 years.

"I've always had a problem with that arrangement, arguing that the recordings I've made should provide my pension not that of some record company executive. In order to achieve this, I have held on to my rights, signing licensing deals in which ownership of the records reverts to me after a stipulated period, usually 10 years. I figure that if a company can't make their money back after that time, they don't deserve to put out my records anyway.

"Every few years, the reversion clause kicks in, my back catalogue returns to my ownership and I begin the licensing process all over again. Not only does this strengthen my hand in contract negotiations, it also allows me to take advantage of new technologies in a rapidly changing industry."

Bragg recommends that artists learn about copyright issues and their rights as they pertain to their music, especially in the digital realm. He hopes that other websites and music companies follow MySpace's lead in using clear and transparent language in contracts.

Bragg also included MySpace's new terms regarding proprietary rights in content in his blog entry.

This story can be accessed online at <http://www.chartattack.com/damn/2006/06/2839.cfm>



Billy Bragg

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