

Vkontakte Mulls Making Users Pay for Music

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Plans for additional revenue-generating services are underway, though getting people to pay for content they are used to getting for free remains a major hurdle. **humbert15**

Vkontakte, Russia's leading online social network and host of a vast collection of unlicensed and freely shared music and videos, is in talks with major record companies about creating a paid music streaming service on its website, Vkontakte's deputy head said.

Users would still be allowed to upload their own music and video content to their Vkontakte pages, Deputy Ilya Perekopsky said, but it appears that free access to the website's stockpile of largely unlicensed music uploads may be curtailed.

Vkontakte is in talks with Warner Music Group, owned by Ukrainian-born U.S. businessman Len Blavatnik, Perekopsky told RBC Daily. Universal Music and Sony Music Entertainment in Russia have also confirmed the talks.

The new music service may be modeled on Swedish streaming service Spotify, but Perekopsky said that Vkontakte was discussing three or four different scenarios, adding that it was too early to say which of them would be implemented.

Spotify offers a six-month free trial period, after which users have to pay a subscription fee or limit their listening to ten hours a month with advertisements interspersed between songs.

Vkontakte spokesman Georgy Lobushkin said the network was only going to "create some new services, but there are no plans to introduce paid access to the music library."

Because Vkontakte users are accustomed to getting free access to content it will be extremely difficult to force people to spend money on something they think should be free, Denis Terekhov, general director of communications agency Social Sites said. "I think that users would rather agree to watch advertisements than spend even a symbolic 15 rubles (\$0.57) for a song," he said, RBC Daily reported.

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