

Have Subscriptions Spoiled Royalty Free Music

"Cheap" Music, Subscriptions and Quality, Oh My! Have Music Wars Been Declared?

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Subscription plans offered by stock [royalty free music](#) sites seem like a quick convenient way to access music on demand. But are they really all that cost effective? The simple answer is Yes and maybe No. There are a number of issues that should be explored before an ultimate answer can be arrived at.



How Long is a Piece of String?

Some library sites offer “all you can eat” limited use licensing for a year. Some offer a fixed number of selections over a three month period. Some allow cancellation at any time, some have a minimum commitment. Often, selections downloaded can not be used after cancellation or non-renewal.

“

Use each download as many times as you like in an unlimited number of productions. We call it the CSS Music Standard Forever License. ”

*Mike Fuller, CSS Music
Marketing Director*

The Fine Print

Some libraries, while allowing unlimited licensed uses, require end users to download a new [license](#) for each successive use. Again, the right to use a track disappears after cancellation, non-renewal, or failure to re-license.

Cost at the Margin

Subscriptions are attractive because of their “low” price points. But what is the cost/benefit at the margin? For example, is an offer for 5 tracks a month at \$13 dollars per track a real value when there is a commitment to go out a minimum of 3 months? On an annualized basis, our example would yield the end user 60 tracks at a cost of \$780.

The Bundle of Sticks

The cost per track is certainly an important factor when selecting a [subscription plan](#). But often

the decision boils down to what you can do with a selection downloaded under the library's terms and conditions (i.e. the license) often referred to as the "bundle of sticks". How many sticks you get in a license bundle can make a big cost difference. One quick question to ask is "how many seats do I get under this license" (how many people can be grouped together as one end user)? Another important question often overlooked is "Do I need a new license to use a track in subsequent productions? Am I infringing a copyright if I forget to get another license?" Generally, the bigger the bundle of sticks, the better the value.

Possible Solutions To The Subscription Conundrum

First and foremost, end users should estimate their probable music needs for a given period of time. Be realistic, a subscription isn't for everyone. Another potential way to go is simply not to buy a subscription at all. Right off the bat you eliminate those pesky re-occurring credit card charges or auto-renewal surprises.

CSS Music Marketing Director, Mike Fuller, points out 2 solutions. "First, our pre-paid bulk download plan. 100 downloads, \$199. Less than \$2 a pop. Use your downloads immediately, in 3 months, or over any length of time you so desire. No time limits. Unlimited seats, No recurring credit card charges. Use each download as many times as you like in an unlimited number of productions. We call it the CSS Music Standard Forever License.

If all of this subscription stuff is too confusing, consider paying as you go with an eye on the CSS Music Automatic Quantity Discount Plan that can easily save you up to 40%. No muss, no fuss."

CSS Music has been serving the AV/Video, Film & Broadcasting communities since 1982. For more information, call CSS Music at 800-468-6874 or visit CSSMusic.com.

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