For $1.99, a (Legal) Song to Add to YouTube Videos

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You've shot the video and edited it down. It's ready for YouTube. But what about the soundtrack?

Publishing a video with copyrighted music requires a license for the song. And securing that can be a cumbersome task — track down the record label, make a deal — especially for amateurs just looking to post a video of the family vacation.

But on Tuesday, the music licensing company Rumblefish is introducing a service that allows users to buy a license to a copyrighted song for $1.99. For that price, the user gets the full version of the song and can edit it as well.

The new service, Friendly Music, can be used only for noncommercial purposes — like posting family or wedding videos online. Any commercial purpose, like including it in a video intended to sell a product, requires a different license.

“A lot of the users of YouTube are the everyday filmmakers, and they don’t have an outlet like this,” said Paul Anthony, chief executive of Rumblefish. “We’re excited about this being a connection point, the first of many steps to make music really easy to use in video.”

Google, which owns YouTube, patrols the use of copyrighted music on its video site, collaborated with Rumblefish for the new service. Last year, YouTube began deleting the audio on videos that contained a protected song. In 2007, it began offering a service, AudioSwap, that provides access to free music.

Google’s strategy seems to be working. Last week, a federal judge threw out a $1 billion copyright infringement suit against YouTube, ruling that the company was protected because it pulls content from the site when it is notified by its rightful owner that the content was uploaded without permission.

Friendly Music will offer access to more than 35,000 songs, though none of them come from the four major labels. The company says that it hopes to have deals with what it is calling name artists in the coming months.
Mr. Anthony said that the service hand-selected the songs added to the service, picking only the ones it thought would work well for film. Users can search the music in a variety of ways, including by genre or by mood (like love or warm summer day), and can eliminate songs with vocals, for example, or those that have a slow tempo.

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