

Infinity Broadcasting To Stop Play For Pay

Written by Keith ID407

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Wednesday Infinity Broadcasting said it had severed ties with independent promoters, following the lead of other radio chains that have stopped the controversial practice of taking payments in return for playing new songs on their stations.

The move comes just over three weeks after U.K. music giant EMI Group Plc confirmed that the New York Attorney General had begun a probe of how music companies influence what songs are played on the radio.

"We're not going to be utilizing independent promoters, effective immediately," said Karen Mateo, a spokeswoman for Infinity Broadcasting, a unit of Viacom Inc .

Infinity declined further comment, but its move follows similar actions by radio giants Cox Radio Inc and Clear Channel Communications, who ended the long-standing practice of accepting payments for research from independent promoters also seeking airplay for new songs.

Radio companies are prohibited from taking cash or gifts in exchange for playing a specific song, unless they disclose the transaction to listeners.

But it had become common within the industry for independent promoters to pay radio stations annual fees often exceeding \$100,000 for advance copies of their playlists.

According to industry executives, the promoters would then bill record companies for each new song played on the radio, adding millions of dollars to earnings for radio companies.

For the past several years, legislators have been questioning whether the deals constituted a new twist on the payola "pay for play" schemes of the 1950s.

Investigators in the office of Eliot Spitzer, the New York State attorney general, have been

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looking into the music industry's practices with regard to securing airtime, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Sources familiar with the matter have told [Reuters](#) that Spitzer served Universal Music Group, Sony BMG Music Entertainment, EMI and Warner Music with subpoenas in September. EMI has confirmed that it was under investigation along with other music companies it did not name.