

European Union passes controversial copyright law

The future of the Internet in Europe faces a lot of uncertainty after the European Parliament passed Article 13, which sets new copyright restrictions in place on a lot of content. Essentially, it means sites such as YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, Twitter and Soundcloud – sites that host user-generated content – become legally liable for the copyrighted material it hosts. For YouTube's case, this is the large majority of it.

Many people on the Internet have labeled Article 13 as the 'meme ban' as many memes are repurposed from other original content.

This will effectively ban the process of creating memes, which are entirely driven by the ability to take an image or video and then edit it to provide some humor. Under the new directive, this will be prohibited, as will the remix of any song, unless the remixer had written consent from the original artist to use their work.

The goal of Article 13 is to try and create a shift towards more original content on the Internet, but many who rely on remixing or remaking content may be hurt.

Article 13 will require any media website to remove content that infringes copyright and show they took prior care to prohibit the upload of anything protected by copyright. If they fail to comply, it would likely lead to a fine.

The simplest and most likely solution for companies is to block all EU user-generated content from sites that host it at the point of upload.

This is because as soon as copyrighted work has been published

to the world, it immediately breaks the law and then the site would become legally liable for the punishment of breaking copyright law.

Because of the extent of content that is published on these sites, like on Youtube, where 300 hours of video are uploaded every minute, they cannot possibly regulate and decide which videos actually infringe copyright. With all of that content, they can't physically go through and check every video.

EU member countries have two years to decide how to enforce Article 13, but it will have a serious impact on Internet content not only in Europe, but worldwide as well.