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Viacom sue Google and YouTube for \$1bn

For breaking copyright law

by Stuart Miles published on 13 March 2007

Viacom Media, whose brands include MTV, Comedy Central and Nickelodeon has announced that it is suing Web giant Google and its video sharing site YouTube for \$1bn (£517m).

The Entertainment giant has accused Google, which owns YouTube, of illegally using its TV programmes.

The complaint contends that almost 160,000 unauthorized clips of Viacom's programming have been available on YouTube and that these clips had been viewed more than 1.5 billion times.

"YouTube is a significant, for-profit organization that has built a lucrative business out of exploiting the devotion of fans to others' creative works in order to enrich itself and its corporate parent Google", the company said in a statement on its website.

Viacom say that Google's "business model, which is based on building traffic and selling advertising off of unlicensed content, is clearly illegal and is in obvious conflict with copyright laws".

The company also criticises YouTube's strategy, saying that it has been avoiding "taking proactive steps to curtail the infringement on its site, thus generating significant traffic and revenues for itself while shifting the entire burden - and high cost - of monitoring YouTube onto the victims of its infringement".

The lawsuit seeks more than \$1bn in damages and an injunction to prevent future copyright infringement, after its failed demand for YouTube and Google to install tools to "filter" the unauthorised video clips.

