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Popkomm IMEA Shortlist Unveiled

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By Juliana Koranteng, London

Four European companies, two U.S. ventures, plus one each from Australia and Israel comprise the eight finalists at this year's Popkomm Innovation in Music and Entertainment Awards (IMEA) on Sept 19 in Berlin.

Between them, the short-listed companies offer a range of innovative business and consumer services designed to help artists and labels fit into a sector increasingly dominated by social-networking and virtual worlds.

Barcelona Music and Audio Technologies (BMAT) creates sophisticated filtering technologies that publishers or content aggregators can install into catalogs to help professional music users, such as advertising agencies, choose relevant repertoire.

The selection criteria are based on hundreds of attributes, ranging from the genre, the mood, the tempo, to the beats per minute and chord progression.

"There's a huge amount of music on the Internet these days," Alex Loscos, BMAT's chief strategy officer, tells Billboard.biz. "We effectively have the expertise to teach computers to understand and enjoy the music being selected."

BMAT's technology has also been installed in a new Yamaha-made digital MP3 player called BodiBeat, which automatically selects the most apt music, depending on the body's rhythm during a gym work-out or a jog.

MusicMakesFriends.com, the Luxembourg-based music-sharing service, claims to be "the first pan-European music community in English, Spanish, German and French."

Germany's Kazzong believes its on-screen digital player will help labels, artists and content aggregators securely spread their music on as many suitable Web sites and social networks as possible.

"It costs a lot of money to try and attract a lot of people to a single Web site; why not take the most appropriate music to where the people instead," says Kazzong managing director Matthias Riedl.

A consumer version is scheduled for a September launch. This enables music fans to install the player on their social-networking page and fill it with music purchased from Kazzong's own library

Trivid, another German company, is submitting Clipgenerator, which permits consumers to mash their user-generated content legally with professional copyrighted works. Trivid is in talks with an unidentified major mobile-phone operator for Clipgenerator subscribers to mash content on handsets to transfer to a PC and vice versa.

IMEA's two U.S. contenders are digital-music pioneers, mSpot and MOG. mSpot is offering Remix, which allows consumers to use handsets to access music collections stored on their PCs from anywhere. "We want to make your mobile phone a portable media player," Daren Tsui, mSpot's CEO, tells Billboard.biz.

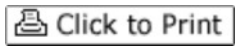
Usync-Go Backstage, from Australia-based international company GD Worldwide, is a digital audience-relationship management service which enables artists and labels to liaise directly with fans. YouLicense, from Israel, provides an online platform for music owners to sell content to music users.

YouLicense CEO/founder Maor Ezer admits the company's concept has been tried in the past but failed. "These days, people know that if they expose their songs online, they can make money, they can make friends. People are more open to new ideas."

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