

In defense of piracy: a critique assignment

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In Defence of Anti-Piracy In “ In Defence of Piracy, (Well, some piracy)” (<http://www.macopinion.com/columns/curmudgeon/99/01/28.html>), Matthew Ruben argues that it should be perfectly ethical for a person to download popular single songs off the Internet without paying for them, although he is against wholesale downloads on entire albums. He argues that much of the demand created for these singles come from widespread advertisement and as such there is a lot of impulse buying of CDs.

He also reasons that for most albums, only a few songs are actually good and worthy of buying, the rest rightfully belonging “ to the landfill”. However, his arguments are not very convincing on the grounds that he has assumed that there are no albums with many good songs. He has also assumed as if the onus is upon record companies to produce albums packed with good songs so that consumers get the value that they paid for instead of upon individual consumers who ought to be prudent in their spending.

The author has rightfully pointed out that many advertisements actually hype up the demand for particular songs, and the examples he gave such as Jimmy Page song in the movie Godzilla really reflects what is rampant in the entertainment industry today. Granted that most consumers only find one or two songs of an album good to listen to but this hyped up demand that was created for one or two songs of an album is not the excuse to justify piracy of these songs.

The author has not considered album remixes that contains only hit songs in one album, to satisfy the demands of those consumers who really want to see value in all the songs that they buy in an album. Another strength that

the author has in his arguments is in his concession of how anti-piracy advocates argue that breaking the law is no way a means to express one's displeasure. While the author has rightfully acknowledged consumer choice to be the deciding factor in purchasing, he made an error in trying to reason out that consumers' excited desires were being equated to obligatory purchases.

It is precisely the point that these hyped songs are only objects of desire and not necessities. Therefore, it is not right to demand piracy simply because one likes only one song from an album and does not want to waste money on buying an entire album. The burden is thus upon the consumer to reflect upon himself whether he really needs to make that purchase. The author has mentioned that it is unethical to be paying so much for a song only to get bored by it after a few weeks. This argument is weak because it is the nature of humans to be naturally bored of anything he encounters so frequently.

In consumerism, this phenomenon is known of the Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility. As such, getting bored of a song is no excuse for not wanting to pay for it in the first place. When a person has gotten bored of a song means he has 'maximally consumed' the utility of the song and hence this even justifies the payment. Another point about people getting bored of the albums they bought is that many actually sell back their albums to second hand stores. It should be noted that those who bought albums can actually rip the songs into their hard disks for personal consumption and this will not be considered as piracy.

Some people may sell back the albums they bought because they have already ripped the songs to their hard disks and want to get rid of the bulk created by the physical albums; they may not necessarily be bored of the songs. The author has also failed to note that lately, popular singles are becoming more and more accessible to consumers who want to purchase only hit singles. Most of these songs are inexpensive, about a dollar a track. With such measures effectively in place, there is no reason why piracy of hit singles should be made legal.

In conclusion, the author is not convincing in his stand supporting for piracy of hit singles. He has largely based his arguments on the appeal to consumers' desires for hit singles instead of an entire album, the purchase of which would be tantamount to wasting money. Also, the author tried to justify piracy because of the boredom with the songs purchased after some time. These are not the reasons why piracy of singles is to be justified.

References: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/law-of-diminishing-marginal-utility>