

Napster, fighting for survival 20162

[Technology](#), [Internet](#)



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The Internet provides many different types of information on virtually any topic possible. There are many components that make up the Internet besides text. Software that is available on the Internet is ever-changing and is rapidly growing. Napster is a software company located in California, that distributes music, to users all over the world. Napster is among the many programs that enables you to " share" audio files with people all over the world on the Internet. The controversial topic is, where do you cross the line between sharing and stealing? Many people believe that Napster should be banned permanently because it violates numerous copyright laws and many major company labels should be paid for there losses. There are also some people that think Napster should be allowed because it isn't really considered to be stealing if someone gives you the music for free.

This issue has intensified over the past 6 months, and now there is a legal debate to determine Napster's fate on the Internet. The co-owner of Napster is Shawn Fanning. At a young age of 19 years old, Fanning designed Napster as a freshman at Northeastern University in Boston. Fanning bought and self-taught himself Windows 95, Common Controls and Messages API Bible off of [www. Amazon. com](http://www.amazon.com). He began building a piece of software that would allow people to connect to a computer network where they could freely trade songs back and forth. This is defined as peer to peer technology. He named it Napster and it was more than just normal computer code. What he created was not only the fastest-growing Internet program in the world but also the launch of a " paradigm shift" for the world wide web. Some have dubbed Fanning the " Robin hood of the Internet", comparing him to stealing from <https://assignbuster.com/napster-fighting-for-survival-20162/>

rich music industries and providing millions with free music. Fanning dropped out of school, relocated to California and started the company. Napster rose 500 percent by users in 6 months, and attracted more users than America Online.

My opinion of this controversial topic is that Napster is not to blame and should not be punished for providing the public with music. Napster is only one of the many software programs that enables you to receive free music. There are FTP servers, web page downloads and other software programs that provide the same services Napster does. If Napster does somehow lose the lawsuit there are "rogue alternatives" to fill Napster's absence. Gnutella is a Napster-like service that eliminates the middleman, or central web site. Users share music they've obtained with each other. The music is transferred by MP3, short for the Moving Picture Experts Group Audio Layer 3, which is an audio data compression format that allows users to send music files over the Internet. Freenet is another program that goes a step further than Gnutella, this service uses encryption codes that keep identities of users concealed. The existence and widespread use of such programs would make it very difficult for record companies to identify who is sharing music files.

The Recording Industry Association of America is suing Napster and holding them liable for revenue's lost due to "pirating of music". Artists such as Metallica have come forward and are willing to fight for the downfall of Napster. The RIAA is also moving forward with the formation of the Secure Digital Music Initiative (SDMI), a group that consists of music companies and manufacturers, which would set a standard for music compression that

ensures copyright protection. The group includes Sony Corp., BMI Music, IBM Corp. and AT Corp. Napster has not taken in much money so far, due to the fact they are fairly new and do not charge people for their services. They have offered a settlement to the music companies, offering up to 450 million dollars for compensation for the first year. Napster's corporation would have begun billing users roughly \$4.95 a month for services at the start of the new year. The settlement was rejected, Napster's hope was to come up with a "compromise scenario that would convert Napster's online fan base into a financial and creative victory for all" (Gomes). My opinion is that the recording industry should come to a realization that there is no control, and there will never be control, on any aspect of the Internet.

Napster does not duplicate illegal music, it just allows it to be shared freely. How can a company be responsible for pirated music, if it never actually broke a copyright law. The RIAA does however suggest that the majority of the music being swapped may be pirated, but is a suggestion enough to shut down the company? A possibility is not definite, and I feel that there is no actual way of knowing how much illegal and legal music is being swapped daily. "As a business Napster technically doesn't make any copies of the music. Why then should Napster be held liable? A? A? if Xerox isn't? A? A? when an individual uses one of the company's machines to copy and distribute protected material" (). Laws such as copyright infringement, have been reviewed in court and accusations were made that Napster was encouraging the distribution of stolen music over the Internet. It looks as though the case could go either way at this moment in time. The ending results could be devastating to the music industries, there is always the

possibility of a backlash from music lovers all over the world. An online survey, off of [www. aj. com](http://www.aj.com), showed that almost 90 percent of people using Napster would boycott and not buy a CD again, if it were to lose the lawsuit. Recording companies should reevaluate and decided weather or not it is worth getting rid of this software. If used properly it could be very profitable for these corporations as well as the artists.

Technology can not be stopped or even slowed down in some cases. This trial has a huge impact on the future of the music industry. Attempting to stop something that is not feasible, is pointless in my eyes. We are lucky to have found this technology, even if it was at the expense of others. A quote by a news reporter from the wall street journal stated it best " The dirty little secret those trying to shut down Napster ignore is that, historically, technology often rewards those who fear it and fight it most vigorously"(Gomes).