

Is downloading free  
music from the  
internet legal?



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Is Downloading Free Music from the Internet Legal? Nowadays, it is extremely easy to download free music from the internet. All someone has to do is download some peer to peer file-sharing application such as Kazaa, Edonkey, Blubster, or Bearshare, and you have unlimited access to download just about anything that you please. But is downloading free music from one of these applications legal? I think that it is. This paper will look at both sides of the argument. The first online peer to peer file-sharing application was Napster. Napster allowed people to copy music from their CDs onto their computers in mp3 format. They then allowed other members of Napster to download these songs onto their computers. Once this caught on, millions of people were downloading thousands of songs a day. And as you can imagine, this did not make the record companies happy with the idea that people were getting their music for free instead of buying the CD. It also caused a problem with some of the recording artists. Most notably Metallica. In 2000, Metallica filed a lawsuit against Napster and won. As a result, Napster banned about 300, 000 of its users who were sharing Metallica songs. Soon after, the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) filed a suit against Napster and the file-sharing server was forced to shut down. You kind of have to wonder if the downloading of mp3s really hurt the recording artists. When the artist makes a CD, they make relatively little money from it. Most of the millions that an artist makes is from merchandising and endorsements. Most of the money from CD sales goes to the record industries executives. In an article from Young Money (An American Recording Label), Meredith Corbin states that " the executives from the recording industry should change the way they operate by either lowering the price of CDs or taking a pay cut. " I totally agree. The executives and <https://assignbuster.com/is-downloading-free-music-from-the-internet-legal/>

artists make more money than they will ever need. And by losing a few pounds or dollars to downloads or lowering CD prices, I doubt they will go broke. The amount of money musicians and the record companies make is one of the reasons I think free music downloads are acceptable. They make unreal amounts of money then they want me to drop £15 for a CD. I am not against purchasing CDs. I own over 50 different types. But the excuse they use that it takes money from the artist does not exactly make me feel bad or want to jump off a building . And if you think about it, file-sharing is exactly that, sharing. It is sharing your music like you would burn a CD. Copying CDs is one of the main uses for a CD burner. So why make CD burners that allow you to copy and put music from applications like Napster onto a CD, why make them in the first place?. Since the fall of Napster, there have been many more peer to peer file-sharing applications to come out that allows users to do the same thing Napster did. And since that time, the peer to peer file-sharing has remained popular. But according to Roy Mark, in the one year period from November 2002 to November 2003, the number of people with peer to peer file-sharing applications has dropped significantly. He also states that a new study has shown that, “ online music file-sharing has dropped by half over the last six months. . . . ” He associates this drop with the music industries legal battle to pursue the identity of file-swappers and sue them. And according to Industry News from Boycott-RIAA. com, the RIAA has targeted 912 potential copyright infringers. That probably scared many people into getting rid of their music downloading applications. This trend in less of less people downloading free music can also be associated with the growth of pay sites, such as itunes and the new Napster. They either charge an annual fee, or they charge a fee of something like £0. 99 a song. These

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new sites have been increasing in use and have given rise to the new Ipod, which allows you to upload thousands of songs onto it from your computer. This alternative to downloading free music from peer to peer applications is becoming very popular and is one example of how the music industry is using the internet downloading craze to its advantage. This is what I think the music industry is going to have to do. There is no way to stop all of the free music downloads. So, the so called ' illegal' downloading is either going to continue, or some kind of compromise is going to have to be reached. For example, most artists make a few songs available to download from their websites. So you could allow a person to download singles and a few other songs, then an annual fee for subscription to unlimited downloads. People are going to have to pay some kind of fee to download their music, but the single at least should be free. So, as long as I can download free music, I will. It is not stealing or like shoplifting. If you shoplift, the record company does not lose money, the store does. To quote Meredith Corbin, ". . . stores lose more money annually than any multi-million dollar singer that loses £15. " I think musicians like Metallica who worry about the little money they use from internet downloading should shut their mouths. Their fat bank accounts are making it hard to hear them anyway.