

Copyright law and music piracy



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In order to understand what music piracy is one must first define it.

According to Piracy (2001), music piracy is when a person utilizes copyrighted music without either purchasing it, or petitioning the songwriter, or singer for permission to use the music. In the late 20th and early years of the 21st century, this has most often occurred over the internet when a person downloads an MP3 off of the internet off of a website that does not charge the user for music downloads. Prior to the music industry and the Recording Industry, and Artists of America (RIAA) choosing to prosecute internet users who download pirated music this most frequently occurred on sites such as Napster and Kazaa (both of whom now charge for downloads). Sites such as the iTunes store that have always charged for music and video downloads have remained free of prosecution as they pay a fee to the record companies for use of the songs.

The music industry has chosen several different routes in their attempts to control music piracy and copyright law violation. First, they have chosen to sue file sharing websites such as Kazaa and Napster in order to ensure that these sites are charging for music downloads. The second method they have used to stop music piracy has been to monitor internet users, and prosecute those users that download pirated music. Finally, many record companies have begun to release copyright protected music that cannot be uploaded onto computers, or file sharing networks.