

Illegal downloading and its effect on the entertainment industry

[Art & Culture](#), [Music](#)



The act of illegal downloading and its effect on the entertainment industry is an argument that has provoked many different reactions and opinions from many people in many different industries around the globe. In this essay the author will examine the different aspects to this argument, both positive and negative, and also share their own opinions and experiences. However, the main focus of the essay is on the side of the file sharer. How has illegal downloading really affected the entertainment industry? Is it true that all recording artists, movie directors and writers are better off without illegal downloading?

The author of this essay suggests that this may not be the case. The Internet has changed the entertainment industry and continues to do so, it has its pro's & it has its con's. The Internet has come a long way in the last ten years, with more and more people entering the online world and discovering its marvels. One of which being, downloading media such as movies & music. Illegal downloading has become rife in modern society, with broadband speeds getting faster & broadband becoming more readily available around the world. This in turn makes it easier to obtain such media.

It wasn't long before sites such as 'Napster' were born, which allowed people to download media for free from the Internet via peer to peer networking (P2P). People soon realised the potential for such capability, leading the creation of more and more similar sites such as 'Limewire' and 'Bareshare'. Even though 'Napster' was shut down in 2001, this discontinuation made little impact on the industries fight against illegal file

sharing, as others still operated, and indeed continue to do so today in some form or other. Torrents or 'Warez' sites are similar concepts.

As opposed to one click download, the user downloads 'torrents', which are essentially links to a source from which the desired file is obtainable. The user then opens the torrent in a program such as "Utorrent", which proceeds to download the file from the linked source. The birth of such sites make it even harder to combat against illegal downloading due to numerous sources & links to media. The Internet simply isn't policeable to the degree society is, and mass Internet crime such as file sharing is unstoppable, all an artist can do is embrace it and utilizes it to the best of their ability.

In 2000 the heavy metal band "Metallica" began a fight against "Napster" after discovering that one of their demo songs for the then forthcoming movie "Mission Impossible II" had been leaked and was being played over the radio in the US. In many ways this marked the beginning of a debate that still rages over whether or not the act of illegal downloading is right or wrong. Metallica eventually won their fight against 'Napster', which was a landmark case in terms of bringing sites such as 'Napster' to account for enabling illegal activity.

Now, ten years on, illegal file sharing and illegal downloading is still rife online, with hundreds if not thousands of new sites springing up for every one shut down. But, as any struggling recording artist will tell you, one of the hardest things about breaking into the entertainment industry is actually getting your music into the public eye. With online downloading still as high

as it ever was, the chance for lesser-known musicians and singer/songwriters to have their music played on the radio has increased considerably.

Artists such as 'Souljah Boy', 'Example', 'Sean Kingston' & 'Lilly Allen' owe much of their success to 'Myspace.com'. While the author would agree that 'Myspace' is not a file sharing site, it has still managed to thrust such artists into the public eye, granting them exposure in much the same way that file sharing does. Artists began to recognise the potential of the Internet to share music and in fact embraced the idea, with many publishing their music online for free in order to get recognised and established in the industry.

This worked extremely well for many artists, for example, 'Arctic Monkeys', who were discovered and signed shortly after being discovered by a record label on 'Myspace'. The few songs available for free on 'Myspace' generated enough hype amongst the public it to lead to their discovery. It can be argued quite easily, therefore, that they have "Myspace" and free online publishing to thank for much of their success. "The freeman's journal" article (referenced below) discusses the negative impact of illegal downloading on a band called 'Glyder'.

They calculate that 30,000 copies of their most recent album has been downloaded illegally. Bands can argue all day long that they're losing out on thousands of potential record sales, however if the people who illegally download 'Glyder's' music like the band enough, it's the opinion of the author that they will still go out and buy the album themselves in order to support their

pursuit to fame and to keep them producing music. It's like the old saying goes " No publicity is bad publicity".

Without illegal downloading many artists wouldn't get as big as they do and wouldn't get offered the gigs & concerts as a result, which is where a huge chunk of an artist's capital comes from. It is the opinion of the author that up-and-coming artists in the movie & music industry should be pleased that their music is getting heard, illegally downloaded or otherwise. However the author is sure there would be a host of angry artists leaping to their own defense, stating why they deserve to be rewarded for their ideas and intellectual property.

But has it really made any notable difference to the bank balances of such artists? Without the internet and file sharing most artists wouldn't get as big as they potentially could and therefore wouldn't make as much as they do, so, in the long run its as broad as its long in terms of how much money they make, and how quickly they make it. If the Internet didn't exist, illegal downloading also would not exist, and the artist's exposure to the world would be lessened. This in turn would reduce the artist's record sales.

So even though illegal downloading removes a proportion of an artist's record sales, it more than balances out by increasing the market to which the artist can sell the records in the first place. Take ' 50 Cents' album for example, which was illegally downloaded an estimated 300, 000 times before it went on sale. However he still managed to sell 872, 000 copies once it hit the market. So its apparent that the already well established of

artists aren't suffering as badly as they make with record sales. It goes to show that even with such a large proportion of material downloaded the artist can still manage to make huge sales.

References

<http://www.forbes.com/2000/04/14/mu4.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2008/aug/04/illegal.downloading.is.here.to.stay>

<https://assignbuster.com/illegal-downloading-and-its-effect-on-the-entertainment-industry/>