

The new digital era called "mp3 technology"

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Downloading of music has been a long time subject of piracy. In the 1920's, radio stations played records that are not tracked. It is a not-so obvious manner of piracy but did impact writers who were losing money due to public performance of their works without proper accountability. No one was making money through this procedure but only radio stations via their sponsors. (Wicknick, par. 1)

With this, the performance rights societies including ASCAP and BMI worked with the Congress and the FCC to change legislation to ensure that radio stations will track airplay and pay blanket licenses that were given to writers based on airplay. (Wicknick, par. 1) It is impossible to copy a record before the invention of blank tape. Its either you bought it or borrow a copy and played it until the needle lost its tip. (Wicknick, par. 3)

In the mid 1960's, even after the invention of blank tapes, copying a record is still a clunky process. (Wicknick, par. 3) In the advent of cassette tape, people learned to do dubbing. But marketing of these tapes are low because it is still evident that it is dub due to sonic integrity has been compromised. ASCAP and BMI, together with the FCC, they began to collect blanket license fees on the sale of blank media and give them to writers and publisher members. (Wicknick, par. 4)

In 1982, in the façade of CD in Europe, Japan and in the United States by 1983, it was read-only. Burning to a CD is impossible before. But advancement in technology made it possible. In the year of 2003, you can burn CD from mp3 and sources like iTunes. However, MP3 and iTunes do

charge for licensing, worked out deals and propose duplication allowances. (Wicknick, par. 5)

The onslaught of the digital wave in 1999 started with the newly created MP3 file sharing software called Napster, stated Catherine Edwards, in her article "The Napster Challenger." Lee Bockhorn, in his article "MP3 and Me: How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love Online Music File Sharing (sort of)" stated that on one side of the wave is the estimated 60 million MP3 Internet users that enjoy the advantages of ala carte collection choice, downloading these selections for free and testing music before purchasing.

On the other side are the artists and recording companies making strong claims for illegal sharing of copyrighted material states John Healey and Jeff Leeds in their article "Tone Deaf to the Moral Dilemma?" The new MP3 file sharing technology has brought to us into a new digital age madness designed for music lovers. Claiming violation of copyright laws, the greedy recording companies and music artists do not wish to give up the present business structure and refuse to embrace the exploding expansion of digital technology that will allow 'ala carte purchases'.

The start of this digital age software began with a 19-year-old freshman at Northeastern University in Boston in 1999. His name is Shawn Fanning. He revolutionized the music industry, developing a software program called Napster. Napster allows music fans to share and download music files via the Internet for free. Shawn received \$15 million to start the corporation and is now a famous CEO (Edwards 160).

Then, one and a half years later, in 2001, 2 famous bands, Metallica and Dr. Dre, sued Napster. The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) sued as well, claiming Napster violated record label copyrights. This case is still on appeal. Since this time, Napster has joined with BMG Entertainment (a \$50 million dollar deal) offering a new fee-based system (Edwards)

The RIAA has been taking drastic measures to limit piracy. Consumers of music sees file-sharing or downloading as the wave of the future and legal in their own right. The lawsuits include a twelve year old for downloading contents online and an 80 year-old grandfather who were sued for his computer activity wherein he claimed that he don't even know how to turn a computer on. Many of the grandparents bought computer for their grandchild as a treat whenever they come to visit their place. But a twelve year old may be well aware on the usage of the computer technology as well as a graduate student but doesn't know or understand the violations of what they have done. (Wicknick, par. 2)

The next approach for RIAA is to target college students and parents with further lawsuits alleging copyright violations. " One goal is to persuade parents to crack down on their children's file sharing before an entire generation comes to expect music to be free" (Healey and Leeds 175). This may prove to be a futile effort with the millions of Internet users copying music for free on the new sites that have popped up, such as Kazaa or Limewire. Also, many parents condone students' downloading even though it's unethical. RIAA lawsuits will attempt to target the Internet account that is used to share the file (Healey and Leeds 177). These lawsuits may change

the attitudes of 12-22 year-olds, that when surveyed said that 70% of them would stop if at risk of a fine or jail (Healey and Leeds 178).

According to the Pew Internet Project's national survey of adult Internet users conducted last January-February 2005 resulted that about 7 million adults downloaded files from someone's iPod or MP3 player. (Madden and Lee par. 2) Approximately, 10 million people get their music and video files through email and instant messages. But there are people who use both the same sources. Other alternative sources of downloading include music and movie websites, blogs and online reviews.

There is also a legislation being pushed in Congress by the record companies. If approved, it would use software to flood peer-to-peer sharing with dummy files, search public folders for illegally copied music and block users from downloading. Even though it's difficult to empathize with rich artists and greedy record companies, it is still, according to law, an illegal practice to share and download copyrighted music online. Millions of people through MP3 technology are sharing files, making the concept of 'fair use' ridiculous (Bockhorn 163).

Further in his article, Bockhorn writes of his personal exposure to the Napster era. At the start of the Napster take-off he felt that it just wasn't right to not pay an artist for his/her music. He explains that his first temptation came after attending a Norah Jones concert. He later downloaded her performance of the 'Tennessee Waltz' thru I-Tunes.

His justification was that he had paid to see the concert and had bought previous albums (Bockhorn 162). In a forum done by eight graders, some <https://assignbuster.com/the-new-digital-era-called-mp3-technology/>

students thought that the music industries have huge incomes and it would not hurt if they will get a song or two from an album through the internet. A student said that the artist will still have an income because they are still buying T-shirts and watch their concerts. (Hafner, par. 13)

Curiosities about MP3 file sharing, lead to Bockhorn's downloading of Limewire, a successor to Napster. He agrees that it is unquestionably, great technology, without paying a fee. Drawbacks to MP3 are availability of music, modem connection speed, and the guilt of acquiring music without paying. " If I want to download My Cherie Amour, Stevie Wonder should get a cut of whatever price a true market . . . determines the song is worth . . ." (Bockhorn 162).

Currently, Bockhorn's primary concern is that MP3 technology has definitely warped the minds of users copying illegal files to build their music collection. But, why does the music lover continue to partake? Number one because of choice and number two because it's free (Bockhorn 163). Most people will agree that it's illegal but will continue to do it. " Like countless millions, Miriam Philips felt no guilt in downloading music from a shared campus folder" (Healey and Leeds 175). Philips offers no sympathy for the artist and the record company, " They're rich, they can deal with it", (Philips via Healey and Leeds 175).

According to a 13-year old girl, if you wanted a song or two in a certain album, it is not a big deal.(Hafner, par. 3) However, when someone consistently downloaded an artist whole CD, it might be the right time to call them thieves. Almost all of the houses here in the US have Internet-

connected computers in their homes. A student even asked that if downloading of music is really illegal, why do PCs were sold with CD burners? (Hafner, par. 18)

Downloading of music through CD burning is very convenient especially to students who were mostly doing it. Just a few clicks away, they will be able to have the songs they wanted. (Hafner, par. 9) Though some of these people knew that they are violating the law, but they can't afford to give up convenience and less expensive or the free copies of the recordings of their own choice.

On the other hand, there are some advantages to the downloading frenzy. This technology has prompted some users to purchase CD's based on a new interest in a particular type of music. It is able to give a taste of a certain type of music or unknown band before purchasing an entire CD. Users will find that if they're downloading more than 2-3 songs they will probably go out and buy the entire album.

Internet users will also argue that it is difficult at times to locate a particular piece of music that they're looking for. Also, this activity is for personal use, not resale (Healey and Leeds 176). There is also no evidence that MP3 file sharing has dramatically hurt CD sales. In 2001, sales dropped 10% and in 2002 sales dropped 7% (Bockhorn 163).

There are news and write ups on lawsuits for music-downloading like the Napsters and Metallica lawsuits but possible loss of revenue for recording industry were not perceived. Music-downloading is hurting the businesses of music retailers. While downloaders are getting music for free through <https://assignbuster.com/the-new-digital-era-called-mp3-technology/>

downloading it from internet or MP3s, it is a loss of income for massive music retail outlets. (Bestul, par. 5)

People resigned from buying or purchasing music and switch over to downloading it from the computer instead. What they haven't thought about is the income that music retailers or outlets will lose every time they download the music for free from computer or MP3 instead of buying a CD from retail outlets.

In attempting to defend this illegal behavior, consumers will argue that corrupt record companies refuse to embrace technology that will allow 'ala carte' purchases. Consumers wish

to purchase the one or two songs from an album that are worthy of purchase. This choice could lead to the extinction of great albums such as the Beatles' Sgt. Peppers album (Bockhorn 163). Bockhorn believes that people want to do the right thing, and hopes that record companies will provide us options for subscription or ala carte, but thus far they have been very reluctant. If record companies would join the new technology, all of us could rest easier know that the artist got his/her share (Bockhorn 164).

It is believe to be impossible to stop the downloading of music because it is the fad as of this era. Aside from the fact that many people are music lovers, the technology that we have today is unstoppable. Advancement in technology might be the reason why people can come up in this kind of technique in getting what they want for free or at a lesser cost with much ease. Maybe in the future, we might have other ways or means of

downloading music or files in a more convenient way based on how technology progress on every generation.

Future growth of MP3 digital technology is yet to be determined, with many changes to come. Millions of Internet users each day have access to use of this technology, either through free or paid Internet sites. Consumers do have a choice, the questions remains to be, how many will lean toward their obligation of legal choice. Future enforcement of the free technology won't be effective unless the music industry offers a legal alternative to file sharing.

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