

Music Piracy is Theft

Throughout history, music spread through common experiences among people of different cultures. In today's technologically advanced society, however, people spread music online, sometimes without an artist's permission. This can lead to many problems, and music companies are now cracking down on this practice. Sharing music online without permission is essentially theft.

Sharing music online prevents recording companies from making money from their efforts. They say that online file sharing has resulted in a "dramatic drop in profits and sales" over the past 10 years (Flaherty). People who find music for free online are not paying for CDs or every MP3 download. To truly understand the impact of music piracy on creator, one must understand how many people are involved the recording process. For the sale of each album, profits must be shared between all parties: musicians, sound engineers, music producers, record labels, managers, advertisers, and the company selling the product. Thus, one renegade digital pirate can negatively affect "the profit-margins of a diverse array of contributors" (Stansen 47). Many people believe sharing music only affects the recording artist, but the reality is that sharing hurts business for all companies involved. Therefore, the sharing of music files is just as damaging as stealing a CD from Target.

There are many people who don't see the harm in sharing music files online and even think they have the right to do it. One online blogger states that he originally paid for an entire CD and that he "should be able to do with the material whatever [he] wants" ("My Music, My Right"). While this individual may have legally paid for the music, he does not have the right to provide it to the world at no cost. Most music is copyrighted, which by definition means that the material is "protected for the life time of the author or creator and for a period of 50 years" ("Copyright"). Because the material is protected, no one can legally hand out free copies without permission, which means individuals like the aforementioned blogger are thieves.

Although we do not spread today's music the same way we did historically, there's no doubt that people around the world love to share music. However, internet piracy, if not contained, could prevent musicians from wanting to continue producing albums for fear of theft. Therefore, if people want to continue listening to their favorite artists, they need to buy their music so that artists will make enough profit to continue their music careers.