

## Quick Tips for Parents

- Place the family computers in common areas, such as the living room.
- Talk to your children about how they acquire music, video games and other media files.
- Protect your computer from unwanted files by installing anti-virus software.
- Set limits for your child's online activity, and check their Internet history to make sure they are following your rules.
- Tell your children about legal alternatives such as iTunes or Pandora.com.



## Beware of:

- "Free" peer-to-peer file sharing networks.
- Software that requires a one time payment for unlimited downloads;
- Counterfeit copies. If a movie is still playing in theaters or a CD is not yet being sold in stores, any copies of it you encounter are most likely counterfeit; and
- When in doubt, purchase the media from a reputable retailer.

*Disclaimer: The Mississippi Attorney General's Office is not responsible for the content of listed websites, which may have changed since the writing of this review, nor does the office endorse a particular website, filters or software.*

## Where To Find More Information

**Childnet International**  
Parents' Support  
[childnet-int.org](http://childnet-int.org)

**U.S. Federal Trade Commission**  
Consumer Protection  
1-877-FTC-HELP  
[ftc.gov](http://ftc.gov)

**Recording Industry Association of America**  
[riaa.com](http://riaa.com)

**Business Software Alliance**  
Piracy and The Law Info Guide  
[bsa.org](http://bsa.org)

**U.S. Department of Justice**  
Cyberethics for Parents and Educators  
[cybercrime.gov](http://cybercrime.gov)

**Wired Safety**  
Internet Safety and Education  
[wiredsafety.org](http://wiredsafety.org)

**American Society of Composers, Authors,  
and Publishers**  
[ascap.com/resource/dtd/](http://ascap.com/resource/dtd/)

**Isafe: E-Safety Education**  
[isafe.org](http://isafe.org)



*Attorney General Jim Hood*



For more information about Internet safety and tips for parents, visit the Mississippi Attorney General's website [www.agjimhood.com](http://www.agjimhood.com).

# Illegal Downloads:

## What Parents Should Know



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# Illegal Downloading

**W**ith the growing accessibility of information on the Internet, illegal downloading (online piracy) of music, movies, software and other media files has become a popular way for young people to obtain copies of their favorite songs and movies. However, downloading or sharing copyrighted material without paying for it is a form of copyright infringement, which is a crime.

- The average student or teen has downloaded over 800 digital files illegally. (University of Hertfordshire, 2008).
- Only 11% of seventh to tenth grade students understand that downloading copyrighted material without paying for it or obtaining the owner's permission is a crime. (Microsoft 2008).
- While 90% of teenagers believe that someone should be punished for stealing a bicycle, less than half think that punishment is appropriate for stealing music online. (Microsoft 2008).

Most teens named their parents as their main source of information for what they can and cannot do online. (Microsoft Study 2008). In order to inform your children, educating yourself is the first step.

## What the Law Says

The federal copyright law prohibits both distribution and reproduction of copyrighted material without paying for it. In addition to the traditional distribution methods, such as making a photocopy of sheet music or burning a copy of a CD to give to a friend, the law prohibits distribution by downloading and/or "sharing"

files containing copyrighted material on the Internet. (18 U.S.C. § 2319). A federal conviction could result in imprisonment and a fine of up to \$150,000 per violation.

It is illegal to make and distribute copies of copyrighted material under Mississippi law as well, and penalties of up to \$25,000 in fines or up to 5 years in prison may be applied. (M.C.A. § 97-23-87(2)(a)).

## Peer to Peer File-Sharing

The most common method of illegal downloading is through peer-to-peer, or P2P, file-sharing networks.

- While the file sharing software in itself is usually not illegal, when an individual uses the network to download or share copyrighted material, this is -copyright infringement, which is illegal.
- A federal conviction could result in imprisonment and a fine of up to \$150,000 per violation.
- Contrary to popular belief that it must be legal if it is online and available, downloading copyrighted music without paying for it is a crime.

Do not automatically share files from your computer and change the settings on any file-sharing software you have to opt out of sharing your files. File sharing raises the potential for illegal activity and opens you up to invasions of privacy.

## But Everyone is Doing it

Widespread copyright infringement is a big problem:

- The music industry loses an estimated \$3.7 billion each year as a result of illegal downloads.
- Approximately 71,000 jobs are lost in the U.S. each year as a result of illegal downloads. (Institute for Policy

Innovation, 2007).

To combat piracy, the record companies are starting to fight back. Approximately 35,000 music piracy lawsuits have been filed by the RIAA against individuals since 2003, including individuals as young as 12.

## What is Legal?

There are a number of websites and online retailers, both free and paid, that provide legal access to music, videos, and other media.

Most free sites offer "streaming" technology. Streaming media allows a song or video to be played on one's computer without permanently storing (downloading) a file on the computer in use.

Paid services (such as iTunes), allows you to pay per album or song that you download. Others (such as Netflix) charges a monthly fee for unlimited streaming movies and television shows.

## WHERE CAN FILES BE DOWNLOADED LEGALLY?

### Music

- Amazon.com
- Emusic.com
- iLike.com
- iTunes.com
- Pandora.com
- Rhapsody.com

### Images

- Clipart.com
- iStockphoto.com

### Video Games

- Store.playstation.com
- Us.wii.com
- Xboxlive.com

### Video

- Hulu.com
- Netflix.com
- Zune.net

### Software

- Download.com

## BY THE NUMBERS

**10**  
The maximum sentence, in years, for copyright infringement.  
(U.S. Code)

**12**  
The age of the youngest person to be sued in the U.S. for illegally downloading music.  
(New York Times)

**99¢**  
The cost to download one song on iTunes.  
(iTunes.com)

**\$750**  
The minimum civil penalty per song for copyright infringement.  
(RIAA)

**20,000**  
The number of individuals sued by the U.S. Copyright Group in 2010 for illegally downloading films online.  
(PC World)

**\$3.7 billion**  
The amount of dollars lost in music piracy each year.  
(RIAA)