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Perspectives

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Emerald

World Wide Worry

University students are very often at the forefront of the new technology emerging in our high-tech world. That is certainly the case in terms of digital music files, most notably the MP3 format, and the extremely accessible nature of its distribution channels such as the popular forum Napster.

But often students who obtain their favorite music in this format do so in a manner that is illegal, which amounts to theft from the very artists that are being enjoyed by listeners. While many large entertainment corporations are currently working to construct methods of controlling digital distribution in a way that ensures payment for the music, the copyright laws should be enforced to protect the artists and those companies who distribute their work.

The legal troubles for Napster — along with Yale University, Indiana University and the University of California — came on April 13 when a group of musicians led by Metallica filed a law suit claiming that the Internet forum constructed for trading MP3s promoted piracy through the free service where music is traded at no cost.

There can be real consequences to such behavior, should the piracy become too rampant. If the predominant form of obtaining music files becomes a system of open forums such as Napster, artists will no longer have any economic viability — let alone motivation — to continue the arduous and difficult process of producing music.

It is completely understandable that artists would be angered at losing money for their hard work. Their



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

long hours recording in the studio, writing and producing all cost a great deal of money and are a significant investment they can currently only recoup through the profitable sale of their material.

The basic moral is by no means new. Thievery is wrong and should be punished whenever possible. Our society maintains its peaceful structure by following and holding dear certain behavior guidelines, and the prohibition of theft has long been one of the pre-eminent forms of such social rules. And it is only through prosecution that laws can keep their power to do their designed task.

For obvious motivations, large companies are working to find safer, more profitable formats of distribution. This will make theft less accessible, in theory, and will continue the economic viability of music production. Sony already has a site that directs users to sites where they can find songs in several formats, listing songs as either purchasable or free on the various sites. By using services such as that offered by Sony and others, users can find their favorite music and keep their consciences clean.

The industry reaction every time a new format has offered consumers more freedom has been to panic excessively, though this time the Inter-

net and Napster could prove to be a real problem that deserves all the attention they're currently receiving. The Internet has proved to be a real revolution in communications and could pose a new threat to the old style of music distribution.

The legal and monetary rights of artists such as Metallica and rapper Dr. Dre, who has also threatened legal action, should be protected while the music industry slowly catches up to current technology, ensuring that all college students enjoy continued releases from their favorite artists.

This editorial represents the view of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

Letters to the editor

President clueless

I would like to respond to the article that reveals student reactions to the Worker Rights Consortium/Nike CEO Phil Knight situation (ODE, April 25). The first quote that really bothered me was from ASUO President Wylie Chen. He essentially says that Knight's withdrawing his \$30 million donation is not a big blow. Academics will stay the same. Then Chen says, "It's sad that people are focusing attention at one person's money on campus."

Sorry, but what is really sad is that our ASUO president does not understand the benefit that this one generous person brings. What is sad is that

he believes that losing \$30 million will not be a blow to students. I am glad Chen has so much money that this "pocket change" means little to him.

The issue isn't that money should not be more important than human rights. Nike seems to have worked diligently to improve conditions overseas.

There is also the quote from President-elect Jay Breslow that says the loss is not crippling and is not tragic. I want to know why losing \$30 million is not crippling. Just because it is earmarked for athletics doesn't mean that the future revenue won't get pumped into academic departments. And it's not even that sole donation. How much money have we lost in future donations by signing with an organization that is standing on wobbly

knees? The answer to that is truly crippling, Mr. President elect.

Nick Haselwander
pre-journalism

Minority rules

I guess in this case, the minority rules. It is extremely unfair that a small group of liberal-minded students should be responsible for the withdrawal of our largest financial contributor. I do not blame Nike CEO Phil Knight for angrily denying the University any further donations. I would do the exact same thing.

Why should Knight, after all the monetary gifts he has bestowed on our school, continue to give us more money after University President Dave Frohnmayr has signed on with an opposing organization: the Worker Rights Consortium?

Apparently some people feel that we have lost nothing and in turn gained personal morality by joining the WRC. In response to this naive view, I ask: Are you blind? Do you not see that if it were not for Knight, we would not have the Knight Library or the new law center? Not to mention that our athletic department has been generously supplied with top-notch athletic apparel and equipment.

Unfortunately, because a small group of protesters decided to lie around in front of Johnson Hall and trample the grass with their brand-name tents (which I am quite sure were made in unsatisfactory labor conditions), our largest benefactor has cut his financial ties with our entire University.

Connie McMurren
English

THE WEEK IN THUMBS



To a bit more pride

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month got underway Wednesday with this year's celebration theme, "Take Your Shoes Off! Come into Our House and Learn about America." The Asian Pacific American Student Union also sponsored a fashion show, auction and dance.

To putting them to work early

After the first Take Our Daughters To Work Day came into existence eight years ago, the event was once again celebrated on campus Thursday. About 100 middle school girls participated in a wide range of workshops including genetics, clay art and neuroscience.



To a big bill come due

The Oregon University System as a whole has accumulated \$420 million in repairs, with the University coming in second on the dubious list at \$98 million worth of deferred maintenance costs.

To silencing reform voices

There were 16 more pro-reform newspapers shut down in Tehran, Iran, last week by conservatives opposed to reform ideals of President Mohammad Khatami. Though also a Muslim cleric, Khatami has openly endorsed religious pluralism and free press.