

# FACE OFF:

## Internet music piracy

Downloading music helps music industry

Pirating music hurts the economy, musicians

Jeff Sorensen  
The Clackamas Print



Jenna Johnk  
The Clackamas Print



Anybody who thinks downloading music has hurt the recording industry is either severely misinformed or a complete and utter idiot.

Just ask Mariko Zapf, a public relations manager for Forrester Research, who claimed in a press release based on Forrester's own independent market survey that music downloading was not the cause of the recording industry's sales slump in 2002 when the labels that formed the Recording Industry Association of America began to blame the internet for their troubles. Zapf found that by 2007, downloading would actually contribute \$2.1 billion (that's billion with a "b") to record sales in a single year.

So the recording industry is definitely getting theirs, but how much of that is the responsibility of file sharing? Another study from the Harvard Business School determined that of 239 million people who bought CDs in 2002, 61 percent were people who download music.

This means, simply, that the people who download music are more likely to buy, and it would seem that the sales numbers have backed that up. That's why the RIAA has to find other reasons to whine ... so that they can fool people into believing they have a reason to exist.

One of those other "problems" the RIAA addresses is bootlegging. A "bootleg" is a recording that gets distributed without the permission of the band, such as studio session tapes or live show recordings. The RIAA can kick and scream all they want, but what many bands don't appreciate is the fact that the only reasons bootlegs exist is because fans want to hear their music. That's right: fans want to listen to music.

Without fans, there would be no music industry, no money to be made, and bands would have to go back to playing for the reasons many of them started to begin with: The Music.

Now, the RIAA isn't lying directly to the public. Sales of music CDs have been dropping (fluctuating, actually) since 2000, and continue to rise and fall even now, but check this out: the RIAA themselves admit that sales of music DVDs and videos increased by almost 50 percent last year to another \$2 billion (with a "b").

They're scaring people with horror stories of declining CD sales (perhaps a sign of the recession that we're currently climbing out of?) and then admit that sales for other formats are booming! Penn and Teller have a television show devoted to this kind of debauchery, and it's called "Bullshit!" The RIAA is *not* suffering. In fact, they're making more money than ever, and it's all thanks to downloading!

Is downloading music morally wrong? That was billion with a "b," folks. I honestly think the real question is whether downloading music is still morally wrong when it is responsible for well over half of all CD sales. Without downloading and file sharing, people wouldn't be buying as many CDs as they are now, and then the RIAA would really have something to whine about.

As if the economy doesn't have enough problems, they've managed in the past few years to add another onto their list. And it hits the music industry of all places. This new issue comes in the form of music piracy – through the internet and through illegal CD sales.

According to the American Federation of Musicians, internet music piracy causes record store sales to drop by more than 20 percent every year, and has been responsible for more than 2.6 billion illegal downloads every month. It's gotten so bad that groups such as the AFM, along with the Recording Industry Association of America, have teamed up against piracy and even gotten our government involved. Now several legislations and bills have been brought before congress to help battle music piracy, taking the place of more vital issues.

It's not that I don't believe that music piracy is important, but there are bigger things happening in the world other than weaselly little thieves making money off of other people's hard work.

The 2002 Music Piracy Report compiled by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry states that the crime of music piracy is not victimless – it affects the artists and musicians who made the music, the governments that lose tax revenues, and economies that suffer from the deprivation of investment. And let's not forget the record producers whose valuable time and money the pirates are wasting. Or the little people with the dream of being a star.

How can they succeed if the music they make is providing more funds for thieves than for themselves?

In the IFPI report it is said that in 2001, 40 percent of all CDs and cassettes sold around the globe are pirated. There is no doubt that that percentage has grown significantly with the use of internet downloads and CD-R technology.

On April 17 of this year, Warner Music Group even announced that their sales were down. WMG's catalog carries more than 38,000 performers and includes 27 of the top 100 all-time best-selling albums in the United States

Think of the losses that such a company would have if music piracy swells – the loss on the economy, the loss of jobs, and the millions of share holders around the globe with stock in such a company. The loss would be atrocious.

Music pirates are thieves – nothing more. They are thieves that steal from the hard work and well-earned fame of performers all over the world, as America is not the only one who suffers. Countries such as China, Russia, Italy and even the Czech Republic have piracy issues significantly worse than ours – especially Asia and the Middle East. The internet, though a wonderful piece of technology, is breeding and nurturing a rapidly worsening crime that will soon suck dry the music industry if not addressed.

All I can say is that when I want a song or a CD, I take out my hard-earned cash and I buy it legally, in respect for the artists who work to entertain us.



Student Poll:  
*What do you think of music piracy?*



"I think it makes more sense to have to pay for a song. Getting it for free seems to undermine the industry"

Margaret Bailey



"Rock on. I'm all about it."

Austin Rose



"As a musician, it's scary because you could come up with something really cool and not make any money or get any credit for it."

Anna Howard



"It's better than shelling out \$16 every time you want to buy a CD. People have been sharing music for a long time"

John Stone



"How are people who spend money to produce the music supposed to make money if people get it for free?"

Jason Stewart

*This week's poll compiled by Johann Bergstrom and Shannon Armstead.*

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** Isaiah Creel  
**COPY EDITOR:** James Tombe  
**NEWS EDITOR:** Ben Maras  
**COMMENTARY EDITOR:** Shannon Armstead  
**FEATURE EDITOR:** Karlin Johnson  
**SPORTS EDITOR:** Mike McCormack  
**A&E EDITOR:** Hilliary Ferguson  
**PHOTO EDITOR:** Jeff Sorensen  
**AD MANAGER:** Ben Holm

**DESIGN EDITOR:** Michaele Cooper  
**STAFF WRITERS:** Frank Jordan, Joe Piazzisi, Jadon Triplett, Katie Wilson, Laura Cameron, Christa Danielson, Mike Guidice, Kyle Slate, Elizabeth Tobey, Norma Martinez, CJ Ciaramella, Sam Krause, Jimi McDonnell, Jenna Johnk  
**PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS:** Jesse Arguello, Joanne Bergstrom, Norma Martinez, Jadon Triplett, Randy Thrall  
**PHOTOGRAPHERS:** Brie Daykin  
**DEPARTMENT ADVISOR:** Linda Vogt  
**DEPARTMENT ASSISTANT:** Pat Lichen

**GOALS:** The CLACKAMAS Print aims to report the news in an honest, unbiased, professional manner. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the student body, college administration, its faculty or The Print. E-mail comments to [chiefed@clackamas.edu](mailto:chiefed@clackamas.edu).

CLACKAMAS Print  
19600 S. Molalla Ave.  
Oregon City, OR 97045  
(503) 657-6958 ex. 2309

The Clackamas Print is a weekly student publication and is distributed every Wednesday except finals week.