

Streaming services slow down illegal downloads

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The majority of college students have used a peer-to-peer network, such as Kazaa or Bit Torrent, to illegally download copyrighted material. Examples include a song in digital form, such as an mp3 file, or a movie in digital form, such as a DVD Rip. College students should avoid using these types of peer-to-peer networks to download and share copyrighted material. If you are not careful, you could find yourself in a lawsuit for copyright infringement. Shawn Fanning, the founder of Napster, found himself in a lawsuit with the band Metallica on April 13, 2000. Metallica sought a minimum of \$10 million in damages, at a rate of \$100,000 per song that was illegally downloaded.

In order to ascertain that you will not find yourself in the middle of a copyright infringement lawsuit, you should avoid going to websites that post or distribute copyrighted material. In 2011, Congress tried to pass a bill called the Stop Online Piracy Act, which would force Internet Service Providers to prevent users from being able to access these kinds of websites. Copyrighted material is illegal to download unless you pay for it, or you acquire permission from the rights holders. The only exceptions are if you download a file to report about it in the news, research, scholarship and to make commentary about the copyrighted material. Downloading copyrighted material without paying for it is the same thing as committing copyright infringement.

According to Cato Institute research fellow Julian Sanchez, “consumers want content that is convenient and reasonably priced. If the content industries want a genuinely effective way to reduce global piracy, they should focus on providing innovative services that make piracy unattractive.” Instead of using the Internet to illegally download copyrighted material off of peer-to-peer networks, consumers should use services like Spotify and Netflix to conveniently access content that is reasonably priced. Both of these companies are examples of content providers that carry copyrighted material but do not violate copyright laws.

If you are a music fanatic, then Spotify is perfect for you. Spotify is a program that is used to find a user’s favorite songs, share songs with friends and listen to music from any location and on whatever device a user owns. Spotify works on computers, cell phones, tablets or home entertainment systems. Discovering new music is easy on Spotify. You just browse through the collections of friends, artists and celebrities. Users can also share their favorite songs with friends on Facebook, Twitter, blogs or email.

Spotify also offers an option where you can listen to unlimited, uninterrupted music for \$4.99 a month. A premium subscription, where listeners can access their music on all devices, not just laptop or desktop, is available for \$9.99 a month. Subscribers can even download music and listen to it when they are offline.

In *The Cost of Movie Piracy*, the Motion Picture Association of America claims that “in 2005, \$2.3 billion was lost to Internet piracy, defined as obtaining movies by either downloading them from the Internet without paying or acquiring hard copies of illegally downloaded movies from friends or family.”

Like Spotify, Netflix is another service that carries copyrighted material but does not violate copyright laws. Netflix is used to legally access movies and TV episodes. All you have to do is pay a subscription fee of only \$7.99 a month, and you can instantly access unlimited videos over the Internet, on your TV or computer. With 35,00 different film titles available, you should never run out of content to stream.

You can easily avoid finding yourself in a copyright infringement lawsuit. Avoid using peer-to-peer networks to illegally download copyright materials. Using convenient services that are reasonably priced, like Spotify and Netflix, can help reduce piracy.