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10 Characteristics of legal Music Download Sites

By Syd Johnson

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1. Pay for use

The major issue facing the recording industry is how to get paid for all the music that is being downloaded, swapped and sold online. If you are using a legal music download service, there should be a fee per song, per month or per year to have continued access to the service.

In keeping with the spirit of the internet, most of the major legal music sites are offering free mp3 files just for signing up, for keeping your subscription current and in general obeying the rules of the site.

Note: Usually, there is an extensive trial period. If you really want free music, you can sign up for multiple sites and get access to hundreds of free mp3 downloads for little or no money up front.

2. Size Limits

The legal music download sites mostly distribute music from reputable labels and artists. This means, that you won't find extensive mixes, and custom files that will slow down your connection and take forever to download. Also, the relatively small files gives some assurance to the music retail industry that a site is actually selling music files and not illegal video games or movies which can be hundreds of times larger.

3. Volume limits

Legal music download sites usually distribute their material on a per song basis. One of the major advantages of buying your music online is that you don't have to spend \$17 for an entire album if you only want 3 or 4 songs. The legal sites will set up song volume limits as well as file transfer limits. This prevents unscrupulous customers from setting up their computers to copy hundreds of files in a few hours.

Note: even if you are music fan - Really, why would you need 300 songs at once?

4. Larger databases, Larger costs

One peculiarity of the legal music download stores and file sharing services is that variety comes with a

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price. The larger, more established services will give you access to hundreds of thousands of song, but it will cost you. Expect to pay an average of \$1–\$3 per song. If you work it out, the average album will probably cost a little bit more than a CD from Wal-Mart or Target.

Keep in mind, that legal music download sites must give a portion of their fees back to the recording industry. Also, the songs are not disposable since the sound quality probably won't degrade over time. Even CDs can get scratched and lose their quality after a while.

5. Limited Choice

Most of the legal music download sites don't have the capacity or copyright authority to distribute hundreds of millions of songs. The songs are stored on servers with a finite amount of space unlike the tangled web of computer to computer file transfers from the illegal sites.

Another reason for the limited choice is that, it is highly unlikely that they will get an agreement from every single record label to distribute their music online.

The quality of every online music catalog depends on the Music Studios that are providing the material. Established, and therefore popular artists usually switch labels at least once during their singing career. So you might have access to their newer materials, but not the older songs, or vice versa.

6. No adware, No Spyware

Legal music download sites like their offline retail counterparts are getting an actual fee for their service. They don't want to scam or upset their customers by placing dangerous and annoying spyware and adware programs on their computers. The industry has even trouble getting payment from consumers so they won't tamper with anything that leads a trail of cash behind.

7. Music Only

You will have access to music files only. No free movies, games, clips, promos etc. are allowed without paying an extra fee. These items also require copyright approval before they can be distributed online. All fees, even a monthly subscription fee will not lead to an entertainment free-for-all.

8. Copyright Notice

A clearly written copyright notice should be provided on the stating

- a) The nature of the site owner's authorization to distribute legal music files online
- b) what you can do with the files once you have paid for them
- c) and any limitations on either party as far as use and distribution of the files.

9. No file sharing allowed

You are only allowed to use the files for personal use. Unlike a CD (physical product) you cannot purchase songs, use them and then sell them to another party or distribute them free of charge to friends, family, web surfers etc.

10. Backed by a big label?

Most of the legal music download sites are backed by at least one major music label. People are looking for songs that are hot, on the radio, playing in the clubs or on MTV. All of that commercial

material comes out of the studio system. If the label does not provide the material, subject to fees, taxes and copyright notices, then the site cannot legally distribute them.

This article may be freely distributed as long as there's an active link to <http://www.rapidlingo.com> Syd Johnson Editor

Legal Music Download Sites VS P2P File Sharing.

By Anna Rowe

This article compares the differences between legal music download sites VS file sharing networks.

1) Music files available for download:

The p2p file sharing networks heavily outnumber the legal music sites when it comes to the amount of files available for download. A p2p application provides millions of unlimited mp3 music files, while a legal music download site provides legitimately licensed music files in the hundreds of thousands.

2) The cost of downloading music:

You can download p2p file sharing networks for free, or for a very cheap one-time fee. A legal music download site is usually either "subscription-based" or "pay-per-download". A legal site will also usually charge extra for the ability to rip or burn music.

3) Variety of files available for download:

A legal music site mainly provides ONLY music files for downloading. A p2p application gives you, besides music files, full movie, game, video, software, TV show and ring-tone files to download as well.

4) Legal Issues & Controversy:

Legitimate legal music download sites are completely free of controversy and 100% legal to use. P2p file sharing networks, while legal, are not without lawsuit concerns and controversy due to how the file sharing technology can be used.

If you choose to use a p2p file sharing program, there are potential risks you need to be aware of, including:

Lawsuit Risks – Peer to peer file sharing networks have been ruled legal in a court of law. However, if you download and share "copyrighted material" you could risk becoming targeted, and possibly sued, by the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America).

Virus And Privacy Risks – In using a file sharing application, you risk the possibility of installing harmful spyware, viruses, worms and malware on your computer. And if that's not bad enough, many p2p applications also leave you exposed to online hackers and identity thieves that can steal your personal

information.

Legal Music Download Sites VS P2P File Sharing – Summary:

At first glance the p2p file sharing networks may seem to offer an easy way to get unlimited free file downloads. But remember, nothing is really free and this is especially true with the p2p file sharing applications.

The file sharing programs come with a price of increased privacy and security threats, and potential RIAA lawsuit risks. The **ONLY** way to guarantee getting safe music downloads online is by using a legitimately licensed music site that provides downloads of music legally licensed from the record labels and artists themselves.

Article by Anna Rowe, webmaster of

that provides music download site

reviews and quality online music download solutions. Sign-up for a Free Mp3 mini-course that details critical facts about downloading music online.



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