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Music Downloads – Staying Legal

By Ciara McGrath

There are many music download sites on the Internet, though the legality of some of these services is debatable and the companies that produce CDs and records are trying to close some down.

The concept these sites use to justify what they do is that of file sharing between individual members. File sharing is probably legal, but the file sharing of copyright material may not be legal.

The MP3 format has changed the face of music. Music and speech can be converted to MP3 files easily. Some detail is lost but this is not detectable on most MP3 players. MP3 files take up much less space on a hard drive than a conventional audio file. This allows personal MP3 players to hold hundreds of MP3 files on their hard drives, whereas they would only hold 10 –20 conventional audio files.

Music download sites hold a database of files belonging to their members and you access members' own computers to download the music MP3 files you are searching for. Many of the music files have viruses in them, sometimes deliberately put there. Many more files contain spy–ware, giving the provider access to data on your Internet use or even files on your computer.

Some of the download sites themselves install spy–ware on your computer and then sell the information gathered to third party users.

Better, probably, to pay the small monthly download fee from paying sites and download your MP3 music legally and in safety. This way the artist gets rewarded for their effort, and it only seems fair to pay them for the entertainment they give us. If you like an artist or group then encourage them to produce more music of the same type by paying the small fee that is asked, and stay legal at the same time.

Ciara McGrath has four teenage daughters. She travels widely. For more articles click

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Legal Music Downloads

By Matt Garrett

With the scandals in past years involving the famous (or infamous) Napstar, more and more net users who love music are searching for good quality free legal music downloads. The Record Industry Association of America and the FBI are threatening to find and prosecute people who pass along illegal downloads. This is not an idle threat, since it is easier to trace people who download music illegally than it is to find people who make unauthorized recordings through conventional devices. Therefore, legal music downloads are a safer way of finding the music you want to listen to at no cost. Although some complain about the quality of most legal music downloads, fellow browsers can give valuable hints and advice.

There was once a vast library of legal music downloads with millions of recordings to choose from. This music "library" was

<http://MP3.com>

, which was later bought by another company and taken offline (no

doubt the purchaser realized that the company was giving jewels away for free).

Although more than one lover of legal music downloads compared the dissolution of

<http://MP3.com>

to

the burning of the great library in Alexandria, there are ways to find great legal music downloads, although it takes much more investigation than was required in the heyday of

<http://MP3.com>

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Music Downloads – Staying Legal

Many independent musicians who are promoting their work provide legal music downloads from their sites for free. Although they may not be big names, they can sound like those at the top of the charts. It can be fun and exciting searching for these up and coming bands and downloading their music. You can get tips from other music lovers on what bands provide the best free music downloads, or many musicians will give you their information at concerts.

The reason musicians can afford to offer free legal music downloads is that they see it as a way of promoting their music, and they know that those who enjoy the downloads often buy their CDs. It works on the same principle as the bookshop/cafes that allow shoppers to sip coffee and browse through their titles for free; samples increase actual sales. Since these independent musicians do not yet have big names, free legal music downloads is sometimes the only way they can give potential CD buyers an idea of their music.

One of the best ways to find legal music downloads is through iRATE radio, which has a very large database of downloads, and enables the listener to download music, give reviews and rate each recording. You can look at other ratings and reviews as you submit your own, and from this feedback, you can find the best legal music downloads. IRATE radio will send you samples of music that fits your stipulated categories, and if you like a certain artist or style, it will automatically download new recordings for you.

Word of mouth is the best way to locate your favorite legal music downloads, and several friends can get together and make a hobby out of searching for the best new downloads. It is a good idea to look through music magazines and e-zines for reviews of the best up and coming bands and artist. The reviewer will often give you a link to the artists' website which might contain free legal music downloads.

However you find your music online, keep in mind that it is much easier and safer to stick to legal

music downloads than to take advantage of offers that might involve a violation of copyright laws. In the old days of VHS, it was easy to just make a recording without anyone knowing about it, but most PCs can be easily traced, and your music downloads can be investigated by authorities.

Therefore, if your dissatisfaction with the quality of many legal music downloads is tempting you to bend the rules, it might be a good idea to do a more thorough search among legal music downloads to find truly good ones. There are great independent bands out there who sound even better than the big names.

Matt Garrett for

<http://www.LMG.Org>

and

<http://www.musiccdsonline.net>



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