
Music and the Internet

A guide for parents and teachers



Music on the internet – what you should know

There are many great ways of accessing music safely and legally online.

This guide aims to keep parents, teachers and young people well informed on how to stay safe and legal when enjoying entertainment on the internet or via a mobile device.

Did you know?

Using illegal sites and file sharing programmes can be risky

Using illegal file-sharing programmes exposes users to the risk of unwelcome content such as viruses, pornography and violent images. File-sharing software can also compromise your privacy and security by opening up your computer and sharing what's stored on it with the outside world.

You could be breaking the law and face consequences

Copyright law applies to downloading, sharing and streaming music just as in the world of physical CDs and DVDs. If you make copyrighted music available to others on a file-sharing network, or sell copies without the permission of those who own the copyright, then you are breaking the law and could face serious penalties. Downloading music from a file-sharing network is also illegal in most territories.

Using legal sites rewards creators for their work

Copyright laws protect artists, musicians, producers and all the people who work in the music industry. This allows them to be rewarded fairly and to continue creating and producing music.

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Staying tuned in while staying legal

Where are the best legal sites to find music?

There is a wide choice of legal sites where you can download or “stream” (transmit over the internet) music. There are more than 400 legal services available worldwide, offering more than 13 million tracks at great prices. Some are stores where you buy downloaded tracks and albums to play on a computer, a portable device or on a music player. Others charge a monthly subscription fee and let you stream from an internet-connected device at any time. Some services provide music for free, supported by advertising.

A full list of these services, and links to them, can be found at www.pro-music.org. This is a comprehensive information resource about digital music.

Is it OK to copy or rip music from a CD or DVD to my computer or media player?

Making a digital copy of a CD you own for your personal use without further distribution can generally be done without legal consequences.

However, distributing a digital copy on the internet or to a friend is different and may result in legal action. For music purchased online, legal music download services generally allow you to make a copy as a backup for your own use on other devices.

Is it legal to make a copy of streamed music?

Usually it isn't. Legal streaming services give instant access to tracks, films and videos, often for free, but they do not usually allow you to “rip” the content to make a permanent copy.



What you can and can't do with music online

Is it always illegal to use file-sharing websites and services?

It is illegal to upload (and in most countries or territories to download) copyrighted files without permission from the person who owns the rights.

File-sharing services can in theory be used legally, but in practice nearly all the content on them is illegal. If they are sites that aren't clearly licensed by copyright owners, then the only safe way to use them legally is to be sure you are sharing materials that are not protected by someone else's copyright - such as music you create yourself.

How are people who illegally file-share found out?

Generally, those file-sharing illegally do so on public networks. Every device connecting to the internet is assigned (usually by their internet service provider) a unique number known as an IP address. Details of this unique number as well as data showing the material used illegally are either clearly visible on or can be easily obtained from such services.

In general, customer details can be obtained from the ISP through law enforcement or a civil court order. The copyright owner can then take legal action against the infringers.

Does paying for my music guarantee that it is legal?

There are websites, often in countries or territories with poor enforcement of copyright laws, which sell tracks and albums very cheaply because they are doing so illegally without paying the owners of the rights. To help you stick with legal websites visit www.pro-music.org for links to legal music services.

Is it legal to download music from blogs?

In some cases, entertainment is made available legally from blogs. However, links from blogs to music stored on online storage services-called 'cyberlockers' - are generally not legal. In almost all cases it won't be legal to download a song offered for download via a link to a cyberlocker.

It is illegal to upload copyrighted files without permission from the person who owns the rights.



Find legal music sites at www.pro-music.org

Staying safe and responsible

Are there penalties for illegally sharing music and other entertainment on the internet?

Yes there are potentially very serious penalties for those illegally sharing music. This is covered by civil law, criminal law, or both, depending on where it is happening. People illegally file-swapping could find themselves facing legal action leading to penalties such as damages.

Apart from copyright what are the other risks involved in the illegal downloading of music?

Illegal file-sharing programmes and websites pose greater risks to your computer or mobile phone than legitimate sites. Alongside media files, users often unwittingly download viruses and spyware.

They can also inadvertently share personal computer files, containing financial information, with other users, potentially putting themselves at risk from identity theft. Also some files are purposefully misnamed on file-sharing and peer-to-peer networks to trick people into downloading them.

Filtering tools that can block offensive content on websites are not effective when these illegal services are used, leaving children at risk of exposure to unsuitable or harmful content.

Some peer-to-peer software lets users “chat” with other file-sharers, most of them strangers. For guidance about chatting on the internet see Childnet’s www.chatdanger.com website.

Where can I get more information about the security risks of illegal file-sharing?

Your ISP can give advice about the effects of using illegal file-sharing programmes. There have been many examples of computers becoming infected with viruses; malware and spyware after people have used P2P networks for music file-sharing. Many ISPs provide software that can protect people against these risks.

How can I prevent my internet connection being used for illegal file-sharing?

There are some basic steps you should take. Your ISP should provide information on how to protect your Wi-Fi connection, including details on how a password can be set up to limit access to your connection.

Parental controls on software systems can also be activated to block access to specific websites.

It’s also a good idea to make simple rules for whoever is using your computer and your network, so they don’t upload or download illegally.

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Jargon buster

Blogs

Short for 'web log', a diary or journal published on the internet. Blogs are often used to post links to files, which may be illegal copies of music, films or other entertainment.

Cyberlocker

A service for storing large quantities of files on the internet. Frequently used for sharing music, film and TV illegally.

Downloading

Copying or transferring files (music tracks, films and TV programmes) from another computer or the internet to your own computer.

File-sharing

Allowing others, who you may not know to access information on your computer via the internet, including music, film and personal files.

Filtering

A way of restricting access to certain content, websites or functions online.

IP address

Short for internet protocol, a number – similar to a telephone number – that can be used to identify the account holder of a computer at a particular point in time when it is connected to the internet.

ISP

An internet service provider. A company that supplies a connection, enabling access to the internet.

Peer-to-peer (P2P)

A popular method of exchanging music, film or TV files directly from one or more computers to another without it passing through a central point.

Ripping

Making a digital copy of music from a CD/DVD to a file, typically so it can be transferred to and played on a computer or portable media player like an iPod.

Router

A device used to connect computers to the internet.

Spyware

A malicious program installed on a computer without the user's knowledge, typically used to report information about the user and his or her activities online.

SSID

Short for service set identifier, a name or phrase that identifies an individual wireless router.

Streaming

Transmitting music, film or TV over the internet in real time so it can be played on a computer or media player but is not stored on the device.

Uploading

Making available files stored on your computer or device to other computers via the internet, or storage services such as cyberlockers.

Virus

A malicious program that can 'infect' computers, replicate itself and disrupt normal functioning.

WiFi

A way of transmitting computer data through the air, without wires, using radio waves.

WPA

Short for WiFi protected access, a security setting for wireless computers and devices.

Tips for parents and teachers

Parents

Talk with children about computer use

Are you aware of how your children are using the computer to access music?

Talk to them so that they understand why it's important to use legal sites online.

Using legal sites helps to ensure that everyone who works to make a song is paid fairly for their work. It's also worth discussing with them what the consequences would be for the whole family if they were caught breaking the law.

Explore the web's legal music services

There are more than 13 million tracks licensed to around 400 legal music services worldwide. A full list is available at www.pro-music.org

You may want to use a download service that lets you buy individual tracks and albums, or a service that supplies access to a library of music for the whole household.

Check your computer and wireless connection

Are you aware of what is on the family computer? Make sure it is protected against viruses and spyware. Ensure your wireless connection is secure with a password and encryption (such as WPA). Talk to your family about what they do online, and decide what protections are best placed to meet the needs of the users in your house.

Teachers

Debate with your students

How do they access music and what does it mean to them?

How do people who create music get paid? What part does copyright play in the creation of music and in the different jobs in the creative industries? What do they think of all the legal online services on offer? Check out resources on copyright at www.childnet.com/kia/toolkit/

A topical subject for the curriculum

The ethics of accessing entertainment online is an excellent topic for discussion in a variety of lessons, such as Citizenship, ICT and Music.

Teaching about music in the classroom

If you want to make sure that you are using music legally in school then check an online resource such as www.licensing-copyright.org

Many countries have exceptions in their laws that allow educational institutions to make certain uses of copyrighted music in the classroom for teaching purposes.

About this guide and how to get further help

This guide has been written by children's charity Childnet International, with support from organizations representing creators and producers in the music industry.

Contact organizations:

Childnet International

Childnet International is a non-profit organisation working in partnership with others around the world to help make the internet a great and safe place for children.

Registered as a charity in the UK (No 1080173).

www.childnet.com
www.kidsmart.org.uk
www.digizen.org

Childnet is the European Commission appointed safer Internet Centre for the UK.

www.saferinternet.org.uk

Pro-music

Pro-music is a coalition of people and organizations working across the music sector. The international alliances of musicians, performers, music publishers, major and independent record companies and retailers across the music industry have joined forces to promote the many different ways in which people can enjoy music safely and legitimately online.

www.pro-music.org