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Argumentative Essay

### Music and Movie Piracy

Today, there are many forms of entertainment, some dating back to the early centuries and some only finding their start in the 1920s. Today, two of the most broad and accepted forms of entertainment are music and movies. They've long been thought of as mediums for creativity, a way for musicians, actors, directors, and other visionaries to bring their inner most thoughts to life. However, with the advancement of the internet, a controversy has sprung up around these art forms. Music and movie piracy is the act of downloading a song or movie without paying for it. It can also include burning the song or movie to a CD or DVD and sharing it with friends. In this case, nobody receives any money and the creators do not profit from that which they worked so hard to create.

When you think of piracy, you might immediately think of a pirate, plundering a town and taking everything for himself while leaving others poor. This could be related to the most extreme view of music and movie piracy, the view that many people in the industry hold. These are the people who will say that people who download music and movies without paying for it are thieves. Downloading a song or movie for free is the same as stealing a tangible item, they say. Obviously, the artist gets no money for an illegally downloaded song or movie, which means they lose out on profit. There have been cases where these people seek to persecute pirates to the fullest extent of the law, sometimes resulting in middle class adults or teenagers

going in to court and coming out owing millions of dollars to the movie or record company in question.

On the opposite end of spectrum, there are those who find the aforementioned opinion to be ludicrous and actively argue against it. These are the people who say that not everyone can afford to buy all the music or movies they'd want to watch. They may support the artist when they can, but should have the right to download all they want without persecution. They'll also argue that music and movies are meant to be enjoyed, and the movie or record company already made their money from the people who could afford it. Extreme liberals tend to hold this opinion, and are always at odds with movie and record companies. Obviously, these two extreme opinions clash often and create tension.

Thanks to new websites, these two opinions have found a new battleground to clash on. YouTube is easily the most prominent and recognizable website for uploaded videos on the internet. However, it's also reached a point where it has to side with one or the other one the issue of music and movie piracy. People who are members of the site post clips of movies or songs thousands of times each day. Record labels and movie studios were outraged when they found out about this. Their argument was that this was another form of piracy, letting people listening to music or watch movies for free. The other end of the scale argued in return that this is like free promotion, that they should stop complaining and let it happen. The videos in questions don't offer links to download them, they just offer a place for people to listen to a song or watch a particular movie clip. YouTube, to save itself from a lawsuit, sided with the record labels and movie studios. Now, if a video is found with a copyrighted song or clip in it, the owner is warned and the video is removed from the website.

In the middle of these two opposing forces are people like myself. I believe firmly that if you can, buying the CD or DVD is always better than downloading it for free. We want our artists to keep entertaining us! However, banning copyrighted material from YouTube and other such websites seems like a futile effort. There isn't anyone I can think of that a video on the internet is hurting. For musicians, a person may search for them and realize they have a song they've never heard before. For movies, there may be a movie out that someone had no idea about. It boggles my mind that these companies don't want the free exposure that comes with sites like YouTube. It's like saying, "Please, don't tell anyone that I wrote this song. No, I don't want as many people as possible to buy it. I want to be unknown."

I can't say that I'm innocent of using YouTube to listen to a song that I like instead of buying it. However, I've discovered many new bands through my searching of the site, and come across movies I'd never known about. There should be nothing wrong with posting music and movies on websites, as long as they're appropriate ones such as YouTube. Musicians and movie studios have to realize that in this new age, where children, teenagers, and adults have so many options open to them, they need all the exposure they can get. Besides, when has there ever been a musician that's gone bankrupt due to the fact that, "Everyone pirated my music, nobody bought it."? Or a movie studio that's gone bankrupt for the same reason? I've never heard of one. There's still the money from music rights, movie rights, concerts, theater time, and radio time to consider. Plus all the people who do buy the CD or DVD when they want it! It all adds up to more revenue than one might think.

Piracy in the past few years has become more and more prominent. However, there's never going to be a way to catch everyone, as there are just too many offenders. There's also nothing right about stealing the music or movie that was worked so hard on. In the future, there

has to be an appropriate medium that can serve as a solution to the problem. YouTube doesn't seem like it'll be the one, but maybe one day there will be a website where music and movies can be posted for everyone to enjoy, even those who can't afford to buy the real product. Such a compromise would bring peace to the turmoil.

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