

Music and the internet

Digital music: the key facts

Music is an important part of young people's lives. Accessing music on the internet has never been easier, but it raises important issues; for example, respect for the copyright of the creators of the music; what you can safely and legally do with the music you access online; what you can copy onto your computer; how to download music without exposing the home or school computer to viruses and other security risks. You can still enjoy all the advantages of digital music while staying on the right side of the law.

About digital music on the internet

A song on the internet or a mobile network is a computer file that can be sent, received and copied just like any other file. Music files can be accessed in many different ways, some legal and some illegal — there are download sites, peer-to-peer networks, blogs and social networking sites.

Where to find music

Digital music comes in a myriad of ways. You can buy a single download or album online, a ringtone or a CD. You can discover new acts and become their friend on a social networking site or sign up to a subscription service. You can also access free music that some artists make available on their own site or on the site of their record label.

Peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing

Music files are also found on file sharing or peer-to-peer (P2P) networks, however the vast bulk of P2P 'file sharing' is illegal because it's occurring without the consent of the creators of the music. Copying or distributing copyrighted material such as music, films, games and software without permission or payment is illegal. Moreover, the files sent over a P2P network may not always be what they claim to be. File-swappers are vulnerable to risks such as viruses and unwelcome content. They can also be at risk of exposing personal details, possibly resulting in identity theft. Because of these dangers users should be especially careful when using P2P services.



Explore music legally on the internet

There are many ways to discover and buy music legally online. You can, for example, download individual songs or albums, stream music through an online radio or listen to a huge library of tracks on your computer or music player for a monthly subscription. There are scores of legal music retailers on the internet and these sites are safe and guarantee sound quality. They offer millions of songs of all genres.

To find legal online music providers in Australia, go to:

www.mipi.com.au/Guide-to-digital-music.html

At school

Teachers have a unique opportunity to educate young people on the issues around digital music. It is important that students learn about copyright and respect for creative expression. What's the difference between a student who's had their essay copied and an artist whose songs are being illegally copied? It is guaranteed to be a thought-provoking debate.

Many good teaching materials exist to help teachers cover these issues in the classroom, and help meet curriculum requirements. For a comprehensive list of educational tools and materials, visit MIPI's website at: www.mipi.com.au/IP-Awareness.html

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