



Higher Education Opportunity Act

Peer-to-Peer File Sharing

Are you violating the law without realizing it? You could be if you are downloading music, movies or other copyright material without paying for them or without permission.

Under copyright law, it is illegal to download or share copyrighted materials such as music or movies without the permission of the copyright owner. The record and movie industry in recent years has taken an aggressive approach to stopping illegal downloading and file sharing. This has put many students at the nation's colleges and universities at some legal risk.

There are many initiatives that address illegal file sharing. For instance, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) has sent letters to colleges and universities that were found to have students in violation. These letters pointed to specific alleged instances of illegal file sharing.

If you are downloading and sharing files with peer-to-peer file sharing software, this can be traceable and could result in a significant financial penalty to you. Besides, it's stealing, and that's illegal. Stealing music or movies just results in costs for everyone going up and since there are reasonably priced options. It's just not necessary.

The following is a list of some of the more popular P2P file-sharing software programs, but there are many, many others. If you choose to use one on your personal computer equipment, use caution. P2P programs can install spyware on your computer. This spyware could keep your P2P connections active even though you think you have stopped the application. The only way to be sure you have stopped any P2P software is to completely uninstall the application. Other P2P programs can turn your computer into a server without your knowledge, and then you can find yourself in violation of the law without realizing it.

- Bearshare
- Bodetella
- Cooltella
- Gnewtella
- Gnut
- Limewire
- Mactella
- MyTella
- Newtella
- PeaGnut
- Reflector
- SearchLord
- Shareaza
- Napster (and many variations of Napster)

For more information, please visit the [Information Technology](#) webpage.