



# **Illegal Downloading**

## **A guide for young people**

# **E-Sussex, E-Safe**

**Safeguarding all children in East Sussex all the time**



### **There are plenty of illegal download sites. Why should I pay?**

Because if you don't you are stealing. There is no other word for it. You are also putting whoever pays the bill for the broadband connection at risk.

### **So what?**

There are many careers that are barred to you if you have a criminal conviction, and copyright theft is a criminal act. Imagine if you were in a film, and that you got paid every time that film was sold and people were stealing it. How would you feel?

### **Don't care! Actors make millions.**

And all films are owned by a studio or production company who DO care. Nowadays, it is easier than ever before to track who has been downloading illegal material. When they do this, **they always prosecute** the people concerned. That usually means the young person who did it, **and** their parents or carers for allowing it to happen.

### **Are the penalties heavy?**

If you call a fine of £30,000 heavy, plus a prison sentence, then, yes.

### **But I'm only a child. I can't get take to court.**

Who told you that? If you are 10 or over, then you are held accountable for your actions in Law. The copyright owners have had enough of being ripped off, and are taking a very firm line with young people who steal their material.

### **But everyone I know does it! Why shouldn't I?**

By now, you will have heard someone say that "life isn't fair". Sooner or later you will be caught. Just because everyone does it, (actually, most people don't) doesn't make it right. Your internet service provider knows every single website you visit and is able to track how many downloads you make.

### **So, what if I do it in someone else's house?**

Then you are deceiving them and putting them at risk. They, of course, will also know you were there! (If you are thinking like that, then you are already at risk. Would you like it if someone put you at risk like that?)

**What if someone gives me music or a film that THEY have downloaded. That's different, right?**

Yes, that is different. Instead of stealing, you are now guilty of the offence of **“receiving stolen goods”**. If it can be shown that you knew, or should have known, that the material is illegal then you are as guilty as the person who downloaded it.

**I think film companies and record companies make far too much money as it is. This is payback.**

This is theft. Pure and simple. You may well have a point about how much record companies and artists make, but that still does not change the law. You could also argue that because the record companies have so much money, they can afford the best lawyers to tackle this kind of thing. It is not easy, fighting a multi-million pound company!

**But it takes so long for the decent films to come out on DVD.**

Yes, they want to make their money from the cinemas first. Don't forget that not everyone has a full Dolby THX 3D cinema system at home!

**So I should either wait or pay, is that right?**

No. You may need to wait AND pay! Think about it for a moment. Most DVDs cost around the £7-12 mark. For a film that cost several million pounds to make, that isn't a bad price really, and most tunes on from iTunes cost 79p.

**Well, what if I want to risk it?**

Then you are putting yourself, your parents and carers, and possibly even your future career at risk. Would you employ someone with a record for stealing? Would you let them come to your college or university?

**Most importantly**, we are creatures of habit. We become good at what we practice. Practice football, you will be a good footballer, practice skateboarding, you become a good skateboarder. What does it say about you if you practice stealing? It won't end with films, songs and software. It will spread into other things.

**What about games, or software – that's ok isn't it? They can't track that?**

Who told you that? Of course they can – and increasingly easily. Take this as an example. A boy copied the Windows 7 operating system onto 10 CDs. He sold them to his mates who installed them.

The moment the operating system started to run, it sent a message to Microsoft telling them that it had been installed. (Part of the Activation process). Microsoft wondered why the same serial number was present on 10 different computers.

All 10 individuals who bought a copy, plus the original boy were fined – as were their parents.

Software, games, videos, music – it doesn't matter, it's all traceable these days.

### **What if I've bought a CD and put it on my iPod? That's not stealing is it?**

Not if you bought the original CD, **AND** if you still own it. Lending it to a friend who copies it may well be a different story though.

Every musician, every artist, every actor, every music, film, game and software company do this for a living – it is how they get paid. Stealing from them is dishonest – is that really what you want to teach yourself to do.

### **Er – what if I've already done it – copied something I shouldn't have?**

Delete it. Now. Everyone makes mistakes, and if you behave responsibly now, it may be ok. Delete anything that you should not have, no matter what it is, and learn from the experience. It may already be too late, but it's better to have deleted the stuff than be caught with it.

There is nothing clever about teaching yourself to be dishonest – sooner or later you will be dishonest with someone you care about and you will risk losing their trust. Family and friends may give you a second chance – employers won't. Steal from them and you are not only out of a job, you are looking at a criminal record. All shops charge shoplifters every time – and the electronics industry is getting better and better at tracking its products.

If you have already made a mistake, don't make it worse.

The moment the operating system started to run, it sent a message to Microsoft telling them that it had been installed. (Part of the Activation process). Microsoft wondered why the same serial number was present on 10 different computers.

All 10 individuals who bought a copy, plus the original boy were fined – as were their parents.

Software, games, videos, music – it doesn't matter, it's all traceable these days.

### **What if I've bought a CD and put it on my iPod? That's not stealing is it?**

Not if you bought the original CD, **AND** if you still own it. Lending it to a friend who copies it may well be a different story though.

Every musician, every artist, every actor, every music, film, game and software company do this for a living – it is how they get paid. Stealing from them is dishonest – is that really what you want to teach yourself to do?

**Left blank for your notes.**