



What you need to know about File Sharing

Points to make note of:

- * Nearly every work is copyrighted.
- * "Everyone does it" is a fallacy.
- * Copyright infringement is not the only threat from file sharing.
- * Assume files on p2p (peer-to-peer) networks are infected with spyware.
- * You are responsible for your actions.

File Sharing discussions always lead to the topics of copyright and copyright infringement. This entanglement results from the relative ease in which copyright infringement can occur over file sharing mediums. It is important to realize that even a good-natured violation is still a violation, and it can have consequences.

If you are unsure of license restrictions on a song, program, movie, etc., assume that the item in question is regulated – assume that nothing is free. Further, assume that you do not have the right to redistribute the item. While these assumptions are not always true, they are safe assumptions when trying to avoid legal troubles. However legal issues aren't the only issues to be aware of when file sharing.

File sharing can prove to be a threat to your personal sensitive information and your computer's health. Typically p2p file sharing programs come bundled with spyware (which can track your actions and report them back to a third party), or the files obtained with the p2p programs will contain spyware. This information is typically used for marketing research, but it could be used for spamming, identity theft, etc. Adware is another common component of software in p2p environments. Adware can prove to be frustrating and very distracting by popping up advertisements on your computer. Too much adware and/or spyware on your system can make it practically unusable. Lastly, it is not uncommon to find viruses in files available on p2p networks.

Consequences of Copyright Violation

- * Legal action taken against you by the copyright holder.
- * Removal of University of Iowa Internet privileges or other disciplinary action.

Suggestions

Utilize a pay-service such as www.rhapsody.com or www.itunes.com to get your music. The quality of these services is typically much higher than any free p2p network. The songs are good quality, and the down loads are fast.

If you must use a p2p application, check all files for viruses before opening and do not share out any files.

Resources

- * http://fairuse.stanford.edu/primary_materials/legislation/dmca.html (DMCA information)
- * <http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/dmca.pdf> (DMCA information)
- * <http://helpdesk.its.uiowa.edu/security/spyware/default.htm> (Spyware information)

IT Security Office

Tel: 319 335 6332 E-mail: security@uiowa.edu

Web: <http://itsecurity.uiowa.edu>

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa-sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires any accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact the IT Security Office at 319 335 6332 or email: security@uiowa.edu in advance.