Mp3s A New Age Problem Essay, Research Paper

Music is beautiful, and the artists who create it are greatly appreciated. Music lets you escape reality or get you in touch with reality. Most people can relate to a lot of songs, the reason for this is because the artists who write the songs are in some way or another, just like you and me. In the last two years MP3 s have become very popular over the Internet and on computers. The new fad deals with sharing MP3 files with other users by downloading the songs from their computer to yours. Is sharing songs between numerous users over the Internet a good or bad concept? Is it illegal and can you get into some legal trouble for doing this?

MP3 is short for Moving Picture Experts Group, Audio Layer III, and is a compression format that shrinks audio files with only a small sacrifice in sound quality. MP3 files can be compressed at different rates, but the more they are scrunched, the worse the sound quality. So are they good or are they bad? Good of course! Well it depends on what you use your MP3 files for. If you use them on your own hard drive, for your own personal use and not on any other servers, then you re not a distributor. As long as you keep your MP3 s in the privacy of your own hard drive and not on the web, it s okay, because you re relatively harmless. You get to download a song and make up your own play lists of songs that you enjoy, without having to go out and spend your money on a CD that you might not end up liking. In most cases, after you heard the songs on your computer and find a band that you re musically interested in, you ll buy that CD. One of the reasons that MP3 s are so popular is because they come with so much convenience. Most people would rather download a song then run out to the nearest CD retailer to buy one.

Why are MP3 s bad? The view of the recording industries is that MP3 s are threat to their very ways of life . (Anonymous quote from www.123jump.com) This means that they fear MP3 s will take over the purpose of recording labels, which will in turn cause them to lose their jobs and lose their money. The theory is that the ones who are getting hurt by the sharing of MP3 files over the Internet are the artists and music industries. They say that because we are getting the songs for free over the Internet, we won t buy CD s any more. This is most likely not true because most people still buy CD s even when they use their computer for listening to music. In most cases, listening to MP3 s helps people decide if they want to buy a certain CD or not. They are declaring war against the host sites, which distribute free MP3 s by using their lawyers to systematically shut them down.

The famous sites that are hosting the sharing of MP3 files are Napster and MP3.com. Both of these two hosts are going through legal battles to declare whether their site is legal or not. Napster is facing charges of copyright infringement that threaten a shutdown of the site in response to a lawsuit filed by RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America). According to this, on June 26, 2000, Federal District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel ordered the site be shut down. The day after that was issued the judge said the site could remain up until the trial was finished. The battle dealing with MP3.com is almost settled according to the proposed licensing agreement with NMPA (National Music Publishers Association). According to NMPA, the agreement could mean a settlement in the copyright infringement action filed against MP3.com on March14, 2000. If the agreement is reached, MP3.com will pay up to 30 million dollars to the Harry fox Agency, an NMPA licensing subsidiary, over a 3-year period. The payment will be divided into two funds that will benefit up to 25, 000 music publishers and their songwriter partners. Both of these sites are very useful to the regular MP3 downloader s of the world. If either of these sites were to be removed from the web, it would make a lot of people angry. At the same time, if these sites are removed from the Internet, there will always be another host site waiting for new members to join all having the same format as Napster or MP3.com. What the music industries aren t taking into consideration is the fact that this will be a continuous cycle because the web is enormous with endless capacities, so new sites that involve sharing of MP3 files will be.

If you are a recording artist and believe that sharing MP3 s over the Internet is harming your lifestyle, most people can assure you that the danger barely exists. The CD retailers across Canada and the United States are still getting business from all of us MP3 maniacs because we love music. Music is such a huge part of people s lives that the end of CD or music retail is far down the road into the future where cars can fly. Music should be free because it was made for listeners not for music industries to play with. The only reason that artists confide in labels is because music has turned into an industry, involving money and promotion. So to all those MP3 sharers out there, don t give up if your favourite MP3 host gets shut down, fight back and look for another one, there s sure to be one on the web somewhere.