

# Legal Downloading

“The [Higher Education Opportunity Act](#) requires all colleges and universities to offer legal alternatives to unauthorized downloading. The list at the bottom of this page includes some legitimate online services. No endorsement or evaluation is intended.

**Note:** Some of the sites listed provide some or all content at no charge; they are funded by advertising or represent artists who want their material distributed for free, or for other reasons. Just because content is free doesn't mean it's illegal. On the other hand, you may find websites offering to sell content which are not on the list below. Just because content is not free doesn't mean it's legal.”

Adapted from: <http://www.educause.edu/legalcontent>

## A few FAQ's

### **How do I know what's legal and what's not when it comes to copying music?**

Here's the bottom line: If you distribute copyrighted music without authorization from the copyright owner, you are breaking the law. (Distribution can mean anything from "sharing" music files on the Internet to burning multiple copies of copyrighted music onto blank CD-Rs and selling or giving them to others.)

### **What will happen to me if I get caught illegally copying or distributing copyrighted music?**

Under federal law, first-time offenders who commit copyright violations that involve digital recordings can face criminal penalties of as much as five years in prison and/or \$250,000 in fines. You could also be sued by the copyright holder in civil court, which could cost you hundreds of thousands of dollars more in damages and legal fees.

### **Is downloading and uploading music really stealing?**

If it's done without the permission of the copyright holder, it's legally no different than walking into a music store, stuffing a CD into your pocket, and walking out without paying for it.

## **These websites provide lists of legal downloading sites**

### **Educause Legal Content**

<http://www.educause.edu/legalcontent>

### **Music Matters**

<http://www.whymusicmatters.com/>

