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Intellectual Property Standards on Music Sharing

In this day and age, illegal music sharing; often called pirating is still a problem. With advances in the speed of the internet, file sharing can occur at a much more prolific rate. This leads to large amounts of copyrighted music to be pirated. Copyright laws are clearly outlined as protecting the means of expression of the media that is copyrighted. The music itself is what is copyrighted, which means that an entity other than the owner cannot manipulate it. The IEEE has areas that are related to intellectual property as well, in specific sections 2, 7, and 9 of the IEEE Code of Ethics (“IEEE, IEEE Code of Ethics”). Also, the ACM covers intellectual property as well in sections 1.5, 1.6, 2.3, 4.1, and 4.2 of their Code of Ethics ("Association for Computing Machinery"). The RIAA references US law in regards to copyright (“RIAA - The Law”). Pirating music is not something that is permissible to do based on intellectual property standards and is an illegal activity.

The IEEE is, “The world’s largest professional association for the advancement of technology (“IEEE, IEEE Code of Ethics”).” This association has its own code of ethics that outlines how a professional should behave in their day to day activities. This code can be found in “Section 7 – Professional Activities” section of their policies (“IEEE, IEEE Code of Ethics”). There are subsections to this code that deal specifically with intellectual property and some of its surrounding areas. The first subsection in sequential order in the code is subsection 2. This section deals with avoiding conflicts of interest and to disclose these conflicts to the affected party (“IEEE, IEEE Code of Ethics”). This deals with intellectual property primarily in one way. There is a conflict of interest that occurs between the owner of the music and whoever has pirated the file. This conflict of interest occurs because the owner is not receiving compensation for their work and the pirate is most likely not going to give proper credit for the file. The second part of subsection 7 deals with properly crediting others for their contributions (“IEEE, IEEE Code of Ethics”). As outline in subsection 2, the pirate is not giving proper credit to the owner when they steal their work. Finally, subsection 9 talks about avoiding damage to people’s property. A person’s property is not limited to physical, but also includes intellectual property. Theft is clearly something that has very severe consequences. Theft of a copyrighted music file is the same as stealing a car radio, it is not something that is allowable in society and thus is not permissible for the internet.

The ACM is, “The world’s largest educational and scientific computing society ("Association for Computing Machinery")...” The ACM also had a code of ethics that deals with intellectual property. Section 1.5 deals partially with copyrights. It states that an unauthorized duplication of software must not be condone and doing other acts such as breaking copyright laws is not in line with professional behavior ("Association for Computing Machinery"). Pirating music is clearly in violation of this section since it is a copyright violation. Section 1.6 is titled, “Give proper credit for intellectual property ("Association for Computing Machinery").” This section describes how professionals should act in a manner to protect all intellectual property, including work that is not copyrighted. Music pirating is clearly not in accordance with this section at all, since the pirate is not honoring the creators work. 2.3 deals with, “knowing and respecting existing laws pertaining to professional work ("Association for Computing Machinery").” Copyright laws are common knowledge in regards to music. Pirating music shows a clear disrespect for laws dealing with someone else’s work. Section 4.1 discusses upholding the ACM code and section 4.2 says that violations of this code are not consistent with membership in the ACM (ACM). Ignoring laws on intellectual property do not follow the guidelines of these two sections because they violate other sections of the code.

The RIAA says that copyright law exist in order to protect people’s creative work (“RIAA - The Law”). They reference the United States law on copyright stating that, “A civil law suit could hold you responsible for thousands of dollars in damages. Criminal charges may leave you with a felony record, accompanied by up to five years of jail time and fines up to $250,000 (“RIAA - The Law”).” The copyright laws clearly show that the Government views theft of intellectual property the same as theft of personal property. Title 17, United States Code, Sections 501 and 506 are the outlines for the criminal and civil charges that can be pursued for illegal copying, distribution, rental, or transmission of copyrighted property (“RIAA – The Law”).

Copyright laws exist to protect people’s intellectual property. When a copyrighted material is illegally copied, it causes harm to a person’s intellectual property. Pirates blatantly disrespect copyright laws when they download music that is copyright protected. The laws that are laid in place have very severe consequences to show how society views intellectual property theft. Professional organizations such as the ACM and the IEEE provide excellent codes of ethics to demonstrate how computing personnel should behave. Looking at the way copyright laws are interwoven into both of these codes of ethics, it becomes clear that breaking these laws is a violation of the way professionals should behave. These codes also outline why it is important to honor someone else’s intellectual property and any rights those properties contain. Intellectual property rights are the basis for how a person can receive recognition or compensation for their labor. Breaking copyright laws is showing a blatant disrespect for someone else’s intellectual property. For these reasons, pirating music is not permissible in accordance with intellectual property.

Works Cited

1. "IEEE, IEEE Code of Ethics." IEEE. Web. 13 Oct. 2015
2. "Association for Computing Machinery." Code of Ethics —. Web. 13 Oct. 2015.
3. "RIAA - The Law - October 14, 2015." Http://www.riaa.com. Web. 14 Oct. 2015.