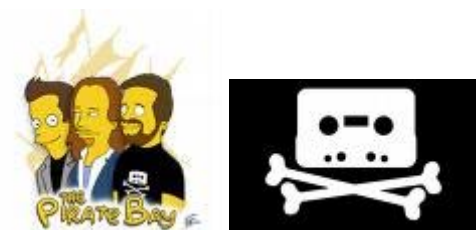


Copyright Infringement / Pirate Bay / Google Books

The Internet era has put a new complexion on the relatively old notion of ***copyright infringement***. Customarily, copyright infringement occurs when a copyrighted work is reproduced, distributed, performed, publicly displayed, or made into a derivative work without the permission of the copyright owner. With regard to the Internet this means that copyrighted music or films are electronically shared, downloaded or put on platforms like YouTube by Internet users without the permission of the film or music producers. This is stealing copyrighted material and is thus illegal. Nevertheless, the phenomenon is widespread. Piracy damages the media industry tremendously, but with a fast and intelligent medium like the Internet preventing this piracy completely seems to be impossible. Indeed, increasing active groups with a “welcome to the 21st-century” attitude are calling for liberalization of restrictions for sharing film and music.

The Pirate Bay, for instance, founded in Sweden in 2004, is the world’s largest so-called BitTorrent tracker. It works as a search engine for data, giving users information on how to obtain it; therefore it does not contain illegal data itself but simply helps users gain access to it. On 31 May 2006, several servers of “The Pirate Bay”, which were located in Stockholm, were confiscated by the Swedish police and three people responsible for the organization were arrested. The Swedish police reacted after the USA with its film and music industries had demanded the closing of the website and threatened to impose trade sanctions against Sweden. According to Swedish copyright law, however, “The Pirate Bay” could not be sued at that time because it did not contain the copyrighted files itself, which is why the website was back online after a couple of days and the people responsible for “The Pirate Bay” were freed. Nevertheless, in the beginning of 2009, the four persons mainly responsible for “The Pirate Bay” were brought to trial and found guilty for aiding in violating the copyright law. Now there is a member of the “Pirate Party” in the European Parliament, campaigning in Brussels for internet privacy.



The “copyright infringement” vs. “user privacy” is also a key issue in the four-year-long legal proceedings against ***Google Books***. A final settlement is scheduled for 9 November 2009. Rightsholders of the scanned-in books must claim their copyright interest in those books by June 2010. Google Books is a student’s dream – so many books available electronically! – but, until this settlement, an author’s or publisher’s nightmare.