

## A Letter To The Editor

7A Sharon Tam

Dear Editor,

Nowadays, almost everyone in Hong Kong has a computer and knows how to get access to the Internet. People can obtain lots of materials from the Internet, including software, essays, songs and movies. However, the majority of Internet users download materials illegally. They seem not to know that their action is actually infringing upon the originator's copyright. As an Internet user who likes to download things from the Internet, I would like to express my concern over the rights and wrongs of downloading entertainment from the Internet and discuss whether internet users would continue to download entertainment from the Internet if they risked being prosecuted.

Many people think that they have the right to download entertainment from the Internet freely. Downloading entertainment from the Internet brings us a more colourful life. Actually, the sharing of music and movies provides entertainment to us. Without the Internet, it would be difficult for people to distribute their work. They can only share their work among friends. Only a few people can enjoy it. But the situation now is different. With the Internet, people can upload their work to forums or to websites like Youtube. No matter where the computer users are, they can enjoy their work just by clicking a few buttons and waiting for a few seconds. In other words, the Internet brings them more entertainment. It is obvious why so many people download entertainment from the Internet.

At the same time, people can save time, money and space for storing by downloading entertainment from the Internet. Computer users can get music and movies anytime just with their computers. They need not go to music stores to select their favourite CDs. As people are downloading them free, they can save the amount of money that they would spend on buying those CDs, VCDs or DVDs. Moreover, the entertainment can be stored on their computer. They do not need spare room to store the software. Therefore, people tend to download entertainment from the Internet nowadays.

In addition, people can transfer the entertainment to their mobile phones. It renders those movies and songs portable. People no longer need

to buy CD players or VCD players. They can enjoy the entertainment anytime and anywhere they like.

With so many advantages, it explains why people keep downloading entertainment from the Internet instead of buying them in stores. However, downloading music and movies from the Internet breaks the law as people are actually infringing on copyrights. They do not have any permission to get such entertainment files from the Internet. This is the main reason why people should not continue to download movies and songs from the Internet. No one wants others to steal their work. So computer users should not do anything which is violating the law.

Besides, if people continue to download entertainment, the movie industry and the music industry will be affected. As computer users steal entertainment, less people are buying CDs or going to the cinema. With less revenue earned, producers may not break even and so may cut their production. The industries will therefore shrink and this will affect Hong Kong's economy. As Hong Kong citizens, we should not do such things.

Last but not least, the movies and music downloaded may not be simply used for home entertainment. People may use it for commercial purpose. Shopkeepers may play them in their shops so that they do not need to buy them from the music stores. Some people even resell the music to gain profit. In this case, they are stealing those producers' profit in reality. If people do not download entertainment illegally, such occurrences will be minimized.

Although the Internet users who download entertainment from the Internet may be prosecuted, I do not think they will stop doing it. They often think that as long as they are not downloading a large quantity of entertainment, they will not be prosecuted. Therefore, they will continue to download them in a small amount to avoid being caught. Moreover, people are always selfish. They do not want to pay for things that they may obtain free. They think that though they can pay a lower price to buy entertainment through the Internet, it is still more expensive than getting it free. Owing to all these reasons, people will continue to download songs and movies from the Internet.

As it is difficult to monitor and check the use of Internet, it is not easy to eradicate this illegal act of downloading. I hope that Hong Kong government can swing into action and work with other countries to combat this illegal act before it is too late.

Yours faithfully,  
Chris Wong

**Teacher's Feedback :** Sharon has given an in-depth analysis of this 21st century social problem. The essay is well-organized, with clear and suitable paragraphing. Careful choice of diction is shown and the expressions are quite idiomatic. Most of all, I have made only minimum marking in her original essay because her writing is quite free from grave grammatical mistakes. What I usually do is to offer alternatives for further improvement in polishing up the expressions. This is indeed a good essay for students to read and to model on. (Miss Chan Siu Ying)

**Food For Thought :** Facing an era of information explosion, our life pattern has changed with the easy access to knowledge, news as well as entertainments on the Internet. However, this technological advancement has bred a social evil. That is, some of our social norms and moral values, like personal privacy and right of intellectual property, have experienced great impact and challenge. This is worth our concern.