

Online Piracy

Piracy, whether made online or in any other way is an illegal act, which should be avoided and stopped. In this era of rapid globalization and booming technology, online piracy can be seen in many forms. However, the main area of concern are the consequences that the online piracy has for the many people who are directly or indirectly involved in it. These consequences provide implications for ethical considerations. In my opinion, online piracy is an unethical act and should be avoided, however in certain circumstances it has no harmful effects and so can be tolerated.

Several cases of online privacy have been reported. The most famous case is of Megaload.com, the online storage service whose owner made use of the uploaded material to make profits illegally. The owner of business, on the front end appeared to provide a service to the people who were confronting the issue of saving huge files. He appeared as providing a solution for the internet user, however he had other intentions. He made use of the material uploaded by people and sold it making millions of dollars each year. The owners of the material never knew that their material was being sold without their permission (Graeber, 2012). This is a completely unethical activity as millions of people lost their original work, and the time, cost and efforts that they used in producing the material.

The people who stored data on Megaupload.com were also experiencing issues of online storage, the key reason they uploaded the material for online storage. When an online service is formed for some specific purpose there is no written contract between the service provider and the service receiver, however, there is an implied contract that the service will fulfill its goal. This also includes that all aspects of the service are veiled and that customers are not cheated. It

includes fairness and just behaviors. The customers consider that their rights will not be violated and that the material uploaded by them will not be used illegally. However, in case of Megaupload.com, the owner veiled this implied contract. He made use of the material uploaded by the customers for his profits. He never considered the loss that many people would suffer. Many people might have uploaded their work to be sold it later. The illegal sale of their material by Megaupload.com might have caused losses to those customers.

The theory of Utilitarianism supports the idea that the consequences are a major determinant of ethical behavior. The behavior of an individual may be illegal but considered ethical if it is in favor of some human. However behaviors, which cause harm to others other unethical (Driver, 2013). Hence, as the sale of uploaded material had the potential to harm millions of people in terms of their time, money, and efforts, it is considered as an unethical act. However, if their material was used to find new talent to further enhance it, it would have been beneficial for the customers and so would have been an ethical.

There are many situations in which an individual downloading some material does not have the intention to harm others. This can be seen in case of music students who download the music from the internet without paying for it. When inquired, a student reported that he had no alternative to download the music, and could not afford to buy each individual item (Ayers, 2011). In this case, the student had no intention to harm others, and also to make illegal profits. He was unable to gain access to some specific source, which he required to perform his tasks. His intention was to learn music to bring further improvement in it. Hence, his move was illegal but cannot be considered as unethical. This is in accordance with the theory of Utilitarianism, which supports that, actions not unethical if it factors the wellbeing of an individual (Driver, 2013).

Music is an intellectual property of the producers and is guarded by copyrights (Lynn, 2012), but file sharing companies have enhanced illegal distribution of music. Many songs are downloaded by public prior to their release, which reduces the earnings of producers. Many people are seen to download music illegally from the internet on an ongoing basis. Many of these people may have the purchasing power to buy the music legally, however regardless of their ability to purchase, they continue to download music illegally. The motive behind this downloading can be cost saving. This is an unethical act committed by people because they are serving their personal purpose. When people download music illegally and do not pay the price, the revenues to be earned by the musicians and the people associated with this industry is reduced. They do not get the reward for their time, and efforts. Moreover, the revenues, which they could have earned after deducting the cost of production, also decline. Hence, they suffer a financial loss. Regardless of the regulations for online piracy, it is difficult to implement them (Sanchez, 2012) as people lack moral values.

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