

## File sharing on the Internet

MGM and Grockster clash in the courts over the legality of file-sharing software. Would banning peer-to-peer software reduce illegal copying?

1 “It’s wrong to download copyrighted songs and movies from the Internet without paying royalties.” Put a cross on the line at the point which shows your opinion. Compare your answer with a partner.

Agree strongly ←————→ Disagree strongly

2 Scan the article below and underline the names of the companies. What does each company do?

### MGM vs Grokster

Does p2p (peer-to-peer) technology encourage illegal activity? A bitter battle on this issue is now being fought in the US Supreme court. On one side is MGM, representing the movie business. Estimates claim the film industry is losing \$4 billion in lost revenues to piracy annually. Hollywood and the recording industry have already sued thousands of individuals for alleged illegal downloads. The music business has seen global annual record sales go down from \$40bn to 30bn over the last four years. The industry, which has suffered massive redundancies and restructuring, says the swapping of music files over the internet is one of the major parts of music piracy. 750 million unauthorised or free songs are swapped online *every month*.

On the other side are Grokster and StreamCast Networks. They allow users to trade music and movie files without

going to a central site like Napster, which was shut down in 2001. Can these companies be accountable for bootlegged material swapped using their software? Supporters say this is ridiculous – a ban on devices which could theoretically be used to infringe copyright would include technological innovations such as the VCR, audiocassettes, iPods, fax machines and photocopiers.

What will happen in the future? Sony Pictures plans to digitize its top 500 films, such as Spiderman2, and make them available for mobile phones and digital stores. Within a year, people could be downloading and owning films in the same way as they use Apple’s itunes for music. However, fears of digital theft remain. Will people even want to watch movies on their PC? The result of the court case is eagerly awaited. It is seen as a battle between copyright infringement and the potential uses of technical innovation.

3 Read the article again. Summarise the positions of both sides in this dispute.

4 Complete the business collocations taken from the article.

Adjective – Noun		Verb – Noun	Noun – Noun
(a) illegal _____ / _____	(c) digital _____ / _____	(e) to download _____	(g) record _____
(b) lost _____	(d) technological _____	(f) to infringe _____	(h) copyright _____

5 Work in two groups, group A and group B. You will participate in a meeting to discuss the future of the film and music business. Prepare your notes in advance of the meeting. Group A represent the entertainment industry; Group B are consumers. The meeting will conclude with a vote on each item.

Date: April 2005 **AGENDA**

1. Should p2p software be made illegal?
2. Should the industry proceed with plans to make films available in digital format?
3. Should the prices of CDs / DVDs be reviewed?