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22 Oct. 2015

ENGL 2010

Opposition Argument

“The Effect of Music Streaming Services on Music Piracy among College Students”
A Summary

The article “The Effect of Music Streaming Services on Music Piracy among College Students” by Karla Borja, Suzanne Dieringer, and Jesse Daw appears in the journal *Computers in Human Behavior*. The article discusses many things that affect the likelihood of engaging in music piracy, including music streaming, which is usually thought to help prevent music piracy.

The experiment conducted in the article takes a sample of 197 college students at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg campus, because college-age students are found to be more likely to engage in illegal file-downloading and music sharing. The experimental group was divided into two types: those who illegally downloaded music (Type-1), and those who either paid for their music or did not download it (Type-0).

It was found in the experiment that the usage of music streaming services was significantly different between the two types. A much higher percentage of Type-1 subjects (92%) were active users of streaming services, as opposed to Type-0 (77%).

Music streaming was not the only factor taken into account that affected the likelihood of pirating music. Using a Logit model, the probabilities of several factors affecting music piracy were found. Age made a relatively small impact, ranging between 2% and 2.6%. Absolute income and peer pressure, however, made quite a large impact on the likelihood of engaging in piracy: 57.8% and 34.7%, respectively. Perceptions of low risk involved with pirating increased likelihood by 35.3%, and individual opinions on the artist’s success increased likelihood by 28.9%.

The use of music streaming services, of course, was also found to be a strong predictor of music piracy. Streaming increased the probability that a student illegally downloaded music by 23.5%. Though it may not have been the largest or the only factor affecting illegal decisions, it certainly played a strong role.

The authors suggest that solutions to combat copyright piracy emphasize enforcement, legal and risk awareness, and economic incentives. However, sometimes economic incentives like cheap music streaming have little effect on those that intend to illegally download. Therefore, the music industry must plan new methods to substitute the means of listening to digital music without relying on streaming technology.

In conclusion, authors Karla Borja, Suzanne Dieringer, and Jesse Daw assert that music streaming is one of the large factors that influence college students to engage in online music piracy. They believe that other measures should be taken to combat illegal music downloading, without relying heavily on streaming services as a way to reduce online music crime.