

Editorial:

RIAA strikes Rider's campuses

The controversy over illegal music downloading has finally hit close to home. The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) has issued warnings to five Rider students on both the Lawrenceville and Westminster campuses. These individuals have had their ability to download and upload music turned off and could be faced with fines that might exceed \$150,000 if they continue these practices.

A great deal of time has passed since the RIAA began this campaign by suing the pants off of a 12-year-old girl and still illegal file-sharing is going strong. Services like iTunes and the new Napster, which require users to pay 99 cents per song, have also tried and failed to correct this problem. While it is clear that something must be done to curb this practice, it is also certain that neither the RIAA's scare tactics nor pay-to-play music services are working. What else can we do to save our artists' rights?

One possible way to do this would be to take the emphasis off of the album format. Instead of releasing collections of 12 to 14 songs, why not have bands sell every new song they create on their website for a price? Albums could still be sold as well, but rather than printing millions of copies to sit idly on shelves, a much smaller amount could be created. This would save record companies both time and money, allow consumers to purchase only the songs they want, preserve the album format in a lesser role and allow artists to profit more from their own work.

Another possibility would be to leave the current recording industry as is, but also create a system of music downloading reminiscent of a library. Every song ever recorded would be made available for free downloading to the public, but after a period of several days it would automatically delete itself. Such a system would require individuals to go out and buy an artist's album if they want to keep the songs while allowing for listeners to preview the material. This style has worked for books, why can't it work for music?

There are fairly obvious problems with both of these suggestions, however. Currently, the initial production costs of an album are so high that record companies stand to lose a large amount of money unless a CD sells hundreds of thousands of copies. Furthermore, album sales are the chief source of income for record companies. All proceeds from concerts go directly to the band and the sale of singles online would not provide enough profit to keep record companies afloat. In addition, hackers could easily find a way to get around the automatic deletion of songs proposed in the second idea. If they can get around the music industry's elaborate encryption, they can get by anything.

Sadly, any solution we attempt will be flawed in some way. The key, however, is to recognize these flaws when they become apparent and either fix them or come up with a new plan of action quickly. While the suggestions made in this column may indeed be full of possible problems, we know that the RIAA's actions have not, nor will they ever, work. We should be spending our time creating alternatives that will benefit everyone, not threatening a few Rider students unlucky enough to download a tracked song.

This weekly editorial expresses the majority opinion of The Rider News editorial board and is written by the Opinion Editor.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"All of the biggest technological inventions created by man—the airplane, the automobile, the computer—says little about his intelligence, but speaks volumes about his laziness."

— Mark Kennedy



The Issues Explained:

Reflections about the 'War on Terror'

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Bush administration started "The War on Terror." Osama Bin Laden was labeled as the most wanted man alive for his involvement in planning and carrying out the attacks. The Bush administration went to "war" with Afghanistan. Thus far, there are about 50,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan and 146 have been killed. President Bush vowed to bring whoever caused 9/11 to justice. However, Bin Laden is still not caught and the U.S. has 150,000 troops stationed somewhere else—Iraq.

Richard Clarke, former anti-terrorism advisor who served under Reagan, Clinton, George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush has stated on numerous occasions that President Bush said to him, "Iraq! Saddam! Find out if there's a connection." Clarke then told him, "We looked at it with an open mind. There's no connection." However, Bush ordered the U.S. into Iraq unilaterally in search of weapons of mass destruction.

Overall, 1,215 U.S. soldiers have been killed and 8,458 wounded. The U.S. has found no weapons of mass destruction but they are still trying to liberate the Iraqi people. Recently, U.S.

forces have taken over the city of Fallujah.

We feel right now that we have, as I mentioned, broken the back of the insurgency," Lt. Gen. John Sattler told reporters at the Pentagon.

In the last 10 days, 88 U.S. soldiers have been killed and 451

have been wounded. President Bush believed this was a necessary step for Iraq to hold its elections in January.

The war in Iraq has been surrounded by much controversy but President Bush still feels the war has been worth it. First, the mission was supposed to last a week and the U.S. was supposed to get national support. "Operation Iraqi Freedom" has lasted over a year and a half. Our biggest allies are Britain and Poland, contributing only about 8,500-10,000 troops.

The war has cost \$119 billion dollars and

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Nicholas Ballasy

The Rider News

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