

Alive with the Sound of Music

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Directions in Education

Alive with the Sound of Music

A **KEY** attraction of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has been the increased ease for manipulating text in digital form, for example, by copying and pasting text from a wide variety of Internet sources. Accompanying this has been the obvious positive productive use of ICTs by both teachers and students in working with an enriched range of information sources. Educators, however, have become aware of the legal and ethical issues related to copyright, such as the emergence of cybercheating afforded by ICTs. In addition to copying text, ICTs have also raised copyright issues related to the recording of music, as so much music has been made available through the multimedia environment of ICTs. Just as Maria utilised singing and music to connect with the seven von Trapp family members, educators and students at all levels of schooling have recognized the control they can have over the selection and access to sound via the Internet. Caution is needed as this potential for improving educational programs is explored. What might appear to some education providers as downloading music to enhance educational programs might be seen as piracy by the recording companies.

According to Whinnett (Merc., 19/5/03: 5), the University of Tasmania is embroiled in a Federal Court battle with Australia's record industry over alleged piracy of music on the Internet. Whinnett indicates that the record company giants, EMI, Sony and Universal have sought a court order that will require the University of Tasmania, the University of Melbourne and the University of Sydney to preserve any evidence of illegal distribution of recordings by the university technology infrastructure (Merc., 19/5/03:5). This is serious stuff, as university students in the United States were heavily fined this year after being successfully prosecuted for illegally distributing music files. The three Australian universities, says Whinnett, refused to

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comply with an approach by the Australian Record Industry Association (ARIA) to supply it with the names of people using university technology to breach copyright. The ARIA's piracy unit's Michael Speck points out that serious infringements of copyright in Australia includes a maximum penalty of five years jail.

Sue Cant (SMH, 2/6/03:32) also warns that there is an estimated \$11 billion in illegally trafficked music files, and writes that, as well as universities being put on notice, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are also coming under close scrutiny. Cant indicates that there are ramifications for companies such as Telstra, Optus and other Internet providers (SMH, 2/6/03:32). Again, Michael Speck weighed in to the argument by claiming that ISPs were refusing to crack down on piracy, as it realized as much as 20% of their revenue from it. Cant points out that federal police officers have raided Telstra over alleged music piracy. The logistics are enormous as Peter Coroneous, chief executive of the Internet Industry Association, indicates that the music industry was asking the ISPs to monitor 5 million users accessing hundreds of millions of websites a day (SMH, 2/6/03:32). Coroneous makes the analogy that it would be a big call to allege that ISPs are knowingly involved anymore than a telco is responsible for the content of its phone calls (SMH, 2/6/03:32). Clearly, the challenge is to enable access to such a rich resource by educators and their students while developing ethical and legal approaches to utilising that resource.

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