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## Simmons University File Sharing Policy

This article is intended to satisfy the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, which includes provisions that are designed to reduce the illegal uploading and downloading of copyrighted works through peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing and to inform and educate the Simmons community about illegal online file sharing.

As online music, movies, games, and other media have become commonplace, so has piracy and the theft of copyrighted material. Companies who own the copyrighted material being pirated frequently pursue those who are not abiding by the law. By tracking the files being transferred and the users behind the transfers, these companies are increasingly putting pressure on internet service providers (ISPs) to reveal the identities of the computer users who are infringing copyrights. In recent years, a small number of students have been sued by copyright holders and required to pay substantial settlements.

Simmons provides an online network for its community to utilize as a tool for education and communication. With that access comes the responsibility to show the community how to use the network properly and productively. The idea of file sharing is like many other technological innovations, in that it is not an inherently negative or a positive invention, it is only when a people decide to use it in such a fashion that the tool negates progress rather than furthering it.

### How File Sharing Programs Work

Most file sharing programs use a technology called "peer-to-peer sharing" in order to transfer files. To find out more about peer-to-peer sharing (P2P) visit the links below.

- [Wikipedia: File Sharing](#)
- [How Stuff Works: How BitTorrent Works](#)

### Federal Copyright Information

What is copyright? How are copyrights applied to original creative work? How do copyright laws written before the digital age apply to today's new media?

To find out more visit the links below.

- [What is copyright?](#)
- [What are some of the basic copyright laws?](#)

### Simmons Acceptable Use Policy

Like many other higher educational institutions, Simmons has implemented a set of policies to help guide and regulate use of the technology we make available to support teaching, learning, and the business of the University.

[Acceptable Use Policy](#)

### When is File Sharing Illegal?

Simply stated, file sharing is usually illegal when you are downloading or uploading a file without the consent of the copyright owner of the music or other content in the file. There are some gray areas in this evolving area of the law. For further information, please refer to the University's copyright policy:

[Copyright Policy](#)

## **What Happens if a Student is Investigated?**

If a claim is made by a copyright holder against a student, the student will be notified by the University and given an opportunity to address the complaint. If the student is found to be using the Simmons network improperly or fails to comply with the Simmons Acceptable Use Policy, that student could lose network privileges. Depending on the severity of the infractions, other actions could also be taken. Theft of property, including copyrighted material, is also a violation of the University's Honor Code. In addition, users can also be sought out by the holders of the copyrighted information for restitution, which may incur heavy fines and time in prison.

- Record Industry Association of America (RIAA): [About Piracy](#)
- Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA): [Why Copyright Matters](#)

## **How Do I Shut Off File Sharing**

The following link provides simple and easy to follow instructions on resetting, uninstalling, and shutting off your file sharing programs.

- [Uninstall your file sharing software](#)

Created 8/15/2011; Updated 1/14/2021