

Women in Piracy: Behavioral Perspective on Copyright Infringement

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The strategy of suing consumers for copyright infringement when they illegally download music adopted by major recording companies is premised on the assumption that actual suit raises the price of downloading and dissuades use of downloads in favour of legal CDs. This experiment suggests that this assumption is questionable since a market for downloaded and copied music exists despite the fact that it is costless to copy, absent the prohibitions of copyright law. Consumers are willing to pay a non-zero price for a downloaded or copied music file, a price in general quite a bit below their willingness to pay for a CD, but quite a bit more than what would be expected for a product that can be obtained at zero cost. To prove this, we asked our participants their WTP for original and burned CDs using hypothetical as well as real choices. We compare our results with the usual market pricing and we explore infringing behaviors in order to verify if an increase in lawsuits is effective in reducing infringing activities and raising legal demand. In the experiments and in the surveys we also asked subjects questions about their ethical attitudes toward burning CDs and awareness about present legislation.

Comparing WTP prices with this more behavioral question we found that perceptions about illegality of burning CD positive influence WTP for original CD and negatively influence WTP for burned CD. More over, the declared WTP is influenced by gender, age and income.

These result can be very important to infer useful consideration in order to redefine public policy towards piracy more effectively.