

**Subject:**

Intellectual Property and Internet Piracy

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The Copyright Alliance and A2IM (the U.S. independent music label trade organization) have informed me of this welcome invitation from the Obama Administration to share my thoughts on my rights as a creator.

As an independent record label, we are a small business. The company was founded in 2001, and in the past 9 years both the music business and the overall economic climate have changed significantly and a larger cultural shift has taken place as well. So much of this business is driven by consumer habits, and in the last 9 years, consumers have given up record stores for P2P sharing.

There is a culture proliferating on the internet of consequence-free piracy that has severely impacted both our profitability as a company, and our ability to financially sustain a larger workforce, both of employees and clients. Knowing firsthand the time, money and effort that go into creating intellectual property, whether a movie, album, written material or video game, it is disheartening to know that so much of the piracy now could be avoided. Once again, it comes down to consumer habits. Many young people buy music, videos and Apps on iTunes because it is easy and convenient, and has become part of their culture, just as going to a record store used to be a part of my culture. And similarly, many young people have no qualms about pirating copyrighted material online not because they do not believe in the sanctity of intellectual property, and not because they don't believe that the artists and publishers who have created this content do not deserve any form of compensation. Simply, they engage in piracy because it is easy, convenient, and there are no consequences.

File-hosting sites will *usually* respond to take down notices, but there are so many, and the spread of information is so quick, that once a piece of intellectual property is out, it's out, and torrent sites and communities do not even pretend to be subject to the same laws that apply to the physical world.

With minimal enforcement, the United States Government could change all of this, by changing the culture. This does not involve locking up everyone who engages in file sharing, merely changing the predominant discourse, by showing repeat violators that this type of behavior will not be tolerated.

Sincerely,  
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