



# Rensselaer

**TO:** Rensselaer Students

**FROM:** Eddie Ade Knowles, Vice President for Student Life  
John E. Kolb, Vice President and Chief Information Officer  
Robert E. Palazzo, Provost

**DATE:** September 27, 2010

**RE:** Copyright Infringement

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## You may be at risk

Copyright infringement continues to be a growing societal concern. Since 2003, the entertainment industry has filed thousands of law suits against college students, including students enrolled at Rensselaer, for facilitating the unauthorized online distribution of protected material.

## So, what does this all mean to you?

This means that you need to carefully evaluate your activities with computers and the Internet. Most file-sharers in your age group “don’t care much about the copyright status of the files they share” according to a recent Pew Internet & American Life study of 18 to 29 year-olds. You may share this view, but if you act accordingly, your actions could have serious consequences. The unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material, including peer-to-peer file sharing, may subject you to civil and criminal liabilities. Penalties may include stiff financial penalties and even possible jail time in criminal cases. Lawsuits filed have demanded as much as \$150,000 *per infringing file*. Furthermore, Rensselaer has policies on acceptable use of its information technology resources. [These policies specifically prohibit the infringement of copyright.](#) For more information on copyright infringement penalties, see <http://www.rpi.edu/dept/cct/public/rpinfo-oth/FederalCopyrightLawInfringementPenalties.pdf>.

## Legal alternatives

Many low and no-cost music and video services are available, letting you completely avoid the risky consequences of the unauthorized channels. A reasonably comprehensive list for legal alternatives for downloading copyrighted material can be found online at <http://www.educause.edu/legalcontent>.

Also, the entire collections of both the Naxos Music Library and the Database of Recorded American Music are open to all Rensselaer students at <http://library.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=271>.

## For more information about copyright and campus policies, and how they may affect you, please review:

Rensselaer Policy on Electronic Citizenship at <http://www.rpi.edu/web/comec>

Research Libraries “Hot Topics” – *File Sharing and Copyright Infringement* guide at <http://www.lib.rpi.edu/copyright>

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter and wish you success throughout the year.