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LESSON—Online Sharing and Intellectual Property

Suggested Grade Levels 5-6

Lesson Guide

This lesson uses the character, Donny the Downloader, to help students understand the relationship of intellectual property and intellectual property rights to the users of online social networking applications.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify media that is commonly shared online
- Age-appropriately understand the relevance of intellectual property rights to online sharing
- Be able to ascertain how copyright applies to various types of media found online
- Be able to distinguish legal sharing from illegal sharing on social networks
- Know how to report unacceptable intellectual property usage on social networks



Materials

- online access (recommended, but optional)
- copies of the reference and activity pages for each student OR each student group

Procedures

Discussion with Optional Online Access:

Engage students in a discussion about where various types of shared media can be found online. Make sure they cover social networking sites such as Facebook, photo-sharing sites such as Flickr and Photobucket, and video-sharing sites such as YouTube, Vimeo, Yahoo! Video, Metacafe, etc.

Discuss the concept of how these types of sites work. Have students provide input and discuss the way media is shared by users.

Introduce the Concept: Media is shared both legally and illegally on social networking sites by users.

Ask:

- Is it legal for users to share media online on social networking sites? (Answers may vary).
- How do they know it is either legal or illegal?

If you have online access, select a Web site such as YouTube or a school-approved social networking site and access instructions on how to upload/share media. Discuss the way media is shared by users. Note that usually, all the user has to do is check a box to certify that he or she has rights to the content.

Reference Page and Activity

Continue the discussion by handing out the Intellectual Property and Online Sharing reference page and going over it as a group.

Optional: If you have online access, go to “Copyright and intellectual property policy” on Yahoo! Video at <http://info.yahoo.com/copyright/us/details.html?pir=kxzh76tibUmEMdWe3GDhyKAmTYp9W5bbeH7WFQ> And read the terms together. Without Internet access, share the following from the Web site:

The first section states:

“Yahoo! respects the intellectual property of others, and we ask our users to do the same. Yahoo! has no responsibility for content on other Web sites that you may find or access when using Yahoo!’s products or services. Material available on or through other Web sites may be protected by copyright and the intellectual property laws of the United States and/or other countries. The terms of use of those Web sites, and not the Yahoo! Terms of Service, govern your use of that material.

It is Yahoo!’s policy, in appropriate circumstances and at its discretion, to disable and/or terminate the accounts of users who may infringe or repeatedly infringe the copyrights or other intellectual property rights of Yahoo! and/or others.”

Student Activity

Have students complete the activity page individually or in small groups.

Go over their answers as a group and discuss each question.

Answer Key:

1. c) Be suspicious and check for other sources to verify (make sure) the site really is an “official” site operated by the band.

Discussion: One of the problems with social networking pages identified as “official” or identified with a celebrity’s name is that the page could have been made by anyone. This tactic can be used to lure users to the page, possibly to do harm such as to spread computer viruses. Any “official” social networking page should be verified by another reputable source. In the case of a band or celebrity, go to the official Web site (usually a .com URL). That site will usually provide links to valid, official social networking pages. If none is listed, do not download anything from the page you have found.

2. c) Turn down the offer and tell Aden it is not legal to share in this way.

Discussion: Although these types of file sharing sites are legal to use, it is up to the users to determine if the CONTENT is legally available to share. Any type of commercial media or media owned/created by anyone other than the user should not be made available in this way.

3. b) Share the YouTube link on his page.

Discussion: One of the best features of social networking is the ability to share links to other Web sites. Linking to a recognized site such as YouTube is an appropriate function of social networking.

Conclusion

Conclude the discussion by informing students that if they do recognize media online that is being shared illegally, they should report it to the Web site. Some sites, like YouTube or Facebook, have a “Report” link associated with every media posting. Others, like the Yahoo! site referred to previously provide contact information.

Key Point: Users of online social networking have the responsibility to know how to use intellectual property online in a legal manner. Ignorance is not an excuse.

REFERENCE—Intellectual Property and Online Sharing

Online social networking is done in many formats. Sometimes, users just use text postings, but much of the time photos, music and videos are shared.

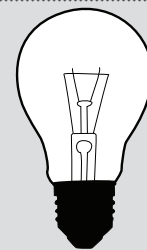
When Donny the Downloader goes online he sees lots of things he wants to have – music tracks, videos, even photos. He says people post things to share with others. That’s the point of social networking! He says social networks wouldn’t allow any illegal sharing – so anything he sees is free for downloading.

What are the real facts? Does copyright have anything to do with “shared” material? If material is found on a social network, does that mean the network has approved it for being legally shared?



What Donny Should Know

Social networks ARE all about sharing media, but many users don’t realize that the networks are not responsible for making sure users share legally.



How do they get away with that?

Any time you sign up for a social networking site in order to share media, you are asked to read and accept the “Terms of Use.” This is usually accomplished by checking a box that says “I agree.”

The problem is that most people just check the box and don’t actually read the terms, which sometimes are very long and difficult to understand.

Once a user agrees to the Terms of Use, which always includes a copyright and intellectual property policy, it is the user’s responsibility to determine if shared media is legal to upload or download.

ACTIVITY



How can you tell what's legal or safe to share and/or download?

If in doubt, USE COMMON SENSE:

- Media is always covered by copyright. Someone has the intellectual property rights to it. A user does not have the right to share this type of media he or she purchases.
- In most cases anything “commercial” such as music or TV videos are not legal to share – ONLY to VIEW ONLINE on approved Web sites.
- Non-commercial media created by a user is still subject to copyright laws.
 - Make sure the owner/creator gives permission to download.
 - If you are the owner/creator of media on a social networking site, clearly state your rules for how you want it to be used.
- Some sites, like YouTube, use applications that make it difficult to download media. If there is no easy way to download media from a site, it is obviously NOT available for download.
- Be aware that freely available media may contain computer viruses. Download legally and only from reputable Web sites.

ACTIVITY

Help Donny decide what to do to keep him and his computer safe and legal.

1. Donny regularly visits the “official” social networking page of his favorite band. It sometimes offers free song downloads, clearly marked “Free Download.” Donny sees his favorite new song listed. He should:
 - a) **Download the song to his computer.**
 - b) **Do not download the song because it probably has an imbedded computer virus.**
 - c) **Be suspicious and check for other sources to verify (make sure) the site really is an “official” site operated by the band.**
2. Some networking sites allow users to upload folders of media files to store and share with others. Donny's friend, Aden, uses this type of network to store music tracks he has purchased from iTunes. Aden tells Donny (gives permission) to download anything he likes from his folders. He should:
 - a) **Download a few tracks, but not everything in the folders.**
 - b) **Download all of the music.**
 - c) **Turn down the offer and tell Aden it is not legal to share in this way.**
3. Donny visits Josh's (a friend) social networking page and finds a link to a funny YouTube video made by some classmates. Among other options, the posting allows viewers like Donny to “share” the video by posting the specific link on their own page. Donny wants to share the video. He should:
 - a) **Not share the video, it is illegal to do so.**
 - b) **Share the YouTube link on his page.**
 - c) **Attempt to download the video so he can post more than just a link on his page.**

REFERENCE—Donny the Downloader



Meet Donny the Downloader – he’s got a problem! He doesn’t have a clue about the meaning of intellectual property or how to use it correctly and legally. Don’t be a Donny!



Look for this icon

It indicates a chance to demonstrate what you have learned as you help set Donny straight about the right ways to use intellectual property.

What is Intellectual Property?

Intellectual Property is a name used for **copyrighted** material, or things that are intangible (you can’t touch it)—like ideas, music, written word, and pictures.

Copyright is legal protection provided by the laws of the United States to the creators of things – like books or other written works, as well as other dramatic, musical, and artistic works. Copyrighted works are protected from being copied, distributed, performed, or changed **without the creator’s (or owner’s) permission**.

This protection is available to both published and unpublished works.

That means – something you create is protected.



This symbol on a person’s works shows that it is protected by copyright laws

So What’s the Big Deal?

You may not be able to touch it, but intellectual property has value to its owners. The owner has control of what can be done with his or her intellectual property.

Don’t Be a Donny

It is wrong to copy or download materials you don’t own (like music) if you don’t have permission. That’s called piracy, and when you commit piracy, the person who made them doesn’t get paid or get credit for their work, and you are stealing something that belongs to someone else.

And when you purchase music, movies, or software—you have purchased the right to use or listen to it—NOT to make copies for your friends.

Discuss: If you worked hard to make something and people kept stealing it, would you keep making it?