

1 Check the ways you get your music. Then talk to a partner.

- ☐ I buy CDs from music shops.
- ☐ I buy pirated CDs.
- ☐ I borrow CDs from friends and copy them.
- ☐ I buy music from the Internet, for example, through iTunes.
- ☐ I download free music from illegal websites.
- ☐ I download free music, but I don't know if it is legal or not.
- ☐ I subscribe to and pay for music-streaming services.
- ☐ I use music-streaming services without paying a fee.
- ☐ I don't listen to music.

Digital Downloads

There was a time when buying music meant one thing – you went into a store and paid for it. You can still buy it from a store, of course, but you can also buy it off the Internet. However, nowadays you don't even need to buy music – you can just download it for free. For many people, the last option is the simplest and quickest, and costs nothing, but it's not always legal.

Jammie Thomas, a woman from Minnesota in the US, downloaded and shared thousands of music files over the Internet. Unfortunately for her, the music companies were not happy. Her case went to court and she had to pay a fine of \$222,000 to six different music companies. They said it was illegal because she didn't have the copyright to share the music. The companies hoped that the large fine was a message to other people that downloading their music without permission is not OK.

Ms Thomas isn't alone in downloading music from the Internet for free. Billions of songs are downloaded each year, but only one in 20 are paid for. The music companies are fed up with people sharing them without any money going to them or to the artists who make the music. In 2007, British band Radiohead decided to do something different. They decided to sell their seventh album over the Internet as a digital download. There were two important points about this decision: first, the band sold the album through their own website, instead of using a record company, and second, the band said that buyers could decide how much they wanted to spend – they could spend as little or as much as they liked. Perhaps not surprisingly, most people chose not to pay anything! However, the publicity the band got was very positive and the following year a CD and a vinyl version were available for sale through their new record

company. In addition, the band filmed a performance of their new album and released it on YouTube. Within the first week, hundreds of thousands of people had seen the video and many, no doubt, clicked the link to their website.

Digital downloading is changing the music business. Will record companies become a thing of the past?

2 Read the text and check the sentences True (T) or False (F).

- a It's generally illegal to download music from the Internet without paying for it. T ☐ F ☐
- b Jammie Thomas had to pay a big fine. T ☐ F ☐
- c Not many people download and share music illegally. T ☐ F ☐
- d Radiohead was a new band when they sold their album as a digital download. T ☐ F ☐
- e Many people got a Radiohead album for nothing. T ☐ F ☐
- f Radiohead now sell their albums on YouTube. T ☐ F ☐

3 Read the text again and answer the questions. Check Yes (Y), No (N), or the information is Not Given (NG).

- a Is Jammie Thomas from America? Y ☐ N ☐ NG ☐
- b Is she married? Y ☐ N ☐ NG ☐
- c Was she the first person to go to court for illegal download of music? Y ☐ N ☐ NG ☐
- d Was her fine almost a quarter of a million dollars? Y ☐ N ☐ NG ☐
- e Was the CD version of Radiohead's album free? Y ☐ N ☐ NG ☐
- f Was the Radiohead live performance video very popular? Y ☐ N ☐ NG ☐

4 Do you agree or disagree with these sentences? Talk to a partner.

- a Buying music from the Internet is simple and quick.
- b Everybody should be able to share music online.
- c The fine for Jammie Thomas was too much.
- d Music companies will disappear.
- e CDs are too expensive.
- f Parents should pay fines for their children who download music illegally.