



## Filesharing & Downloading

### What is Filesharing?

Filesharing is a very popular activity online - easily obtainable programs allow users to connect directly with other computers and copy music files, movies, photos, and various other programs and files. Encouraging this use of the Internet is a security risk (the files can be infected), and a threat to copyright responsibilities. There are also many websites that allow you to download bootleg copies of games, music and software programs.

### Security Risks

There is a very real security risk to every user who chooses to use Peer to Peer (P2P) filesharing software. P2P software leaves your computer open to other users (you may even be allowing them to copy personal files from your computer), and the files you download could be infected with trojans, worms or viruses - potentially leaving your computer vulnerable to attack or misuse. Keep in mind, too, that the file sharing software itself could install malware or spyware on your computer.

### Legal Implications

Individuals who share personal copies of film, television or music files on the Internet are at risk for lawsuits. We are sure you've seen many stories on this topic in the news over the past several years.

### Risks and Liabilities

Instant messaging accounts are vulnerable to hacking, are not virus protected, and may change your computer's security settings. A very serious concern is the fact that the messages are not encrypted, and vulnerable to interception by third parties. Visit the [security](#) section of our site for more information about protecting your computer.

### Security Tips

- Carefully check your settings when installing P2P software. Be sure you are allowing others to access only the directories you wish them to.
- Update your anti-virus program regularly
- Be alert for spyware - these small programs are often bundled with P2P software [Read more](#)

### Additional Resources

CERT: [Risks of File-Sharing Technology](#)

MS-ISAC: [Security Concerns Regarding Peer To Peer \(P2P\) File Sharing](#)

OnGuard: [P2P File-Sharing](#)