
Around seven million people in the UK are involved in illegal downloads at huge cost to the economy - but changing attitudes is going to be tough. A report warns that criminalising people who download illegally may not be the right course. Rory Cellan-Jones reports:

The report for a **body** advising the government on **copyright** looks at **consumer attitudes to** illegal downloading. Researchers found 1.3 million people online on just one file-sharing network on a weekday and worked out that over a year, they were **getting free access to** material worth 120 billion pounds.

The report says seven million people who download illegally in the UK can't all be students, older people **must also be involved**. But it says **there's uncertainty about** what is or is not illegal, and the fact that so much on the internet is free only **adds to the confusion**.

The report warns the government that **criminalising** downloaders could have huge economic costs and might not even work.

Rory Cellan-Jones, BBC

Vocabulary and definitions

body	here, organisation, institution
copyright	the legal right of either creative artists or publishers to control the use and reproduction of their original works
consumer attitudes to	here, how downloaders feel about
getting free access to	here, able to download without paying
must also be involved	here, look certain to be using illegal downloads as well
there's uncertainty about	nobody knows for sure
adds to the confusion	makes the situation even less clear
criminalising	treating somebody as a criminal and/or making what they do punishable under the criminal law

More on this story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/8073068.stm>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/6music/news/20090116_downloading.shtml

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/05/090529_witn_downloads.shtml