

Class: 5A

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Topic: Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am writing to articulate my views on why fewer people go to the cinema and buy CDs than before. In the following, I will explain why there has been a decline in cinema attendance and in the sales in the music industry in Hong Kong. Apart from that, I will also discuss the impacts of the rise of online sharing activities on people's lives and society as a whole.

To begin with, online sharing activities have been gaining momentum in recent years which is the fundamental cause of the decline in cinema attendance and sales in the music industry in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is predominantly acknowledged as one of the more avant-garde hubs in Asia on the matters of copyright. However, infringement of copyright are still imposed on producers, implicitly or explicitly, in varying scopes. When everyone searches on the Internet for a movie or a song title, you will find these files of movies or songs easily, even download them without any payment. Therefore, when the Internet can provide numerous complimentary movies or songs, it does not bode well as no one will go to the cinema or buy CDs anymore. As a result, the growth of online sharing activities is the main cause.

Besides, citizens who brush copyright-related issues aside, is another root cause of the decline in cinema attendance and sales in the music industry in Hong Kong. In accordance to a public-opinion poll administrated by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, nine out of ten people have illegally downloaded movies or songs from the Internet before. The majority of the interviewees claimed that they know it is illegal to download movies or songs without payment on the Internet, but they still keep downloading them as it is convenient and they are accustomed to it. Illegal downloading is as commonplace as surfing the Internet nowadays. Consequently, the decline in cinema attendance and sales in the music industry in Hong Kong is blamed for its citizens cold attitude towards copyright issues.

Moreover, citizens' lack of cognizance of intellectual property is the underlying

cause of the decline in cinema attendance and sales in the music industry in Hong Kong. Teenyboppers nowadays are under the illusion that all movies and songs are allowed to be downloaded on the Internet. Approximately 90% of youngsters always download movies or songs online and they do not know it is illegal. Even for adults who are more educated and more mature, 80% of them still always illegally download movies or songs. Unlike many other places abroad, people in Hong Kong do not have a vast knowledge of intellectual property or respect the producers. Thus causing the decline in cinema attendance and sales in the music industry in Hong Kong.

For the impact on people's lives, the rise of Internet sharing activities will affect people's social life. Since the rise of Internet sharing activities, people can download their interested movies or songs easily, which leads to them spending more time on the computer or other electronic devices which can cause addiction. It may seriously affect their personal relationships since they will just spend a lot of time watching movies or listening to songs but give up the chance of hanging out with friends.

Apart from affecting people's social life, risks of Internet safety is another impact on people's lives. There is no absolute method to check if the file they are downloading is the movie or song they want. It may be a virus or malware. Worse still, people's computers may be attacked by hackers. Although Internet sharing activities seems to bring convenience to our lives, it can also bring a ton of unexpected dangers.

For the impact on society, it may cause many layoffs in the entertainment industry. Singers and bands are the public face of the music industry, but creating, recording and promoting a song takes a large team of people. As record companies have seen their profits decrease, they will cut positions they are no longer able to afford. It may include artists as well as engineers, songwriters, producers and marketing support. It will definitely increase the unemployment rate in society.

Apart from layoffs, it may also affect the financial and economic growth of society. The cultural and creative industries are among the most dynamic sectors in Hong Kong, contributing to economic growth and job creation. It is also one of the four key industries in Hong Kong. But the sad truth is that music sales in Hong Kong have

dropped 53% since the appearance of Internet sharing activities. The availability of free music has cost the music industries \$12.5 billion in economic losses. In the long term, the appearance of the Internet sharing activities damages the financial and economic growth of society. Worse still, the prime of the culture and creative industries in Hong Kong will vanish off the face of the earth.

Last but not least, this is of the utmost urgent campaign to beef up public awareness of copyright issues. The government must emphasize more on spurring the attention of copyright. We should safeguard the interest of the producers. If people continue to illegally download movies or songs online, the decline of both the movie and music industry will be inevitable.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong