

rants & raves

Rant: who's stealing from whom?

Britney isn't happy. Just when she thought it couldn't get any worse, someone has apparently been stealing her music. And it's not organised gangs or proper criminals – it's those pesky internet users.

Downloading music, you see, is illegal. It's the same as going into a store and stealing a CD. The only difference being that you don't actually visit your local record shop and shove an album up your coat sleeve. But that's just nit-picking. A seven percent drop in CD sales this year alone? All down to downloading, not poor plastic pop, apparently.

Britney's had enough. It's up to her to tell her fans how to stay on the straight and narrow: listening on the radio is fine, watching on TV is super, but downloading is wrong, diddly wrong.

Of course, Big Music Corp's not far away in the background – so close, in fact, you can see the strings. Radio and TV are promotional channels that it can control. If people can listen to an album before they buy it, they may find out just how 'good' it is and

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not buy it at all. Which would mean the end of Big Music Corp's trick of banging out two good singles followed by an album of pap.

The music industry isn't about music – it's about brand, image and cold hard cash. Disposable pop stars are created for the good of the company, not for the good of the listeners. If people won't listen to Big Music Corp, maybe they'll listen to its stars. And if they don't, it'll be the end of music forever – or so we are told.

Music, you see, can no longer be made without the help (or permission) of Big Music Corp. And even if someone did manage to somehow make some music, how would they ever get it to the public? Through a distributed peer-to-peer file sharing network? Nah, that'll never work. ■

Will Head

Rave: stress relief at PCA Towers

My body may be more of a two-bedroom semi than a temple and my six-pack now comes in a handy carrycase

To keep *PC Advisor* readers up to date with all things IT we staff members endure a punishing schedule. Being a monthly magazine might lead you to believe we sit around for three weeks reading *Heat* then knock out a few words in the week before we go to press. Sadly, this is not the case. Instead we are forced to churn out copy on a daily basis and this takes its toll on body and soul.

The pent-up stress that builds while creating the best monthly IT mag in the world needs a cathartic form of release. Some of us have followed the dark path of the body beautiful and hit the gym at lunch for half an hour of sweaty circuit training. Well, not me. My body may be more of a two-bedroom semi than a temple and my six-pack now comes in a handy carrycase, but my own brand of stress relief has left me with finely honed reflexes. At one o'clock I pick up a big gun and run around shooting things. No, not my colleagues who haven't learnt to run fast enough at the gym, but my fellow online gamers.

Come lunchtime you'll find me hitting the servers on Gamespy or All Seeing Eye for a bit of first-person shooter action to blast away the morning's tension. Editor giving me grief due to late copy? Load up *Soldier of Fortune* and let someone have it. Production team moaning about word counts? Join an online Deathmatch in *Unreal Tournament 2003*. ■

Spencer Dalziel

next month

february 03 issue on sale 12 december

features

Hot product guide

The coolest gadgets, the swankiest screens, the handiest add-ons and accessories – we present a round-up of *the* most desirable Christmas gifts.

Helpline mysteries solved

PCs can be every bit as idiosyncratic as the people that use them, not to mention the glitches and bugs they're prone to. *PC Advisor* provides assistance.

Run a business from a single PC

Armed with a PC, a few office basics and a good idea, you can become a business entrepreneur. *PC Advisor* shows you how.

workshops

Technical drawing with CorelDraw 11.0

We show you how to produce logos, plans and other vector-based designs.

DVD recording guide

Choosing a suitable DVD writer, comparing standards and burning digital discs.

NEW! broadband advisor

Introducing our new section dedicated to all things broadband.

xp advisor

Our hands-on guide to Tablet PCs.

consumerwatch

As handy as it is to order all your festive gifts online, it can be awkward and downright irritating when they don't turn up until the new year. Here's how to ensure your presents arrive on time.

reviews

Feature charts

Top 10 Power PCs
Top 10 17in and 19in monitors

Technofile

Our Reviews department shines some light on photo printers.