

Internet companies legitimize file-sharing for music

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Kazaa's parent company, Sharman Networks Ltd.

Among companies trying to convince the music industry that P2P doesn't have to be all about piracy is Wipit, a Britain-based music subscription service.

For about \$50 a year, subscribers can download any of Wipit's tunes using P2P and save them in as many places they like — an idea that makes many big record-

ing companies nervous. Other services limit copying.

Most of the 200 recording companies that have signed on to Wipit are independent, and there are huge gaps in what music is available.

But EMI, whose artists range from the Rolling Stones to Coldplay, is set to debut most of its catalogue on Wipit in February, said Wipit's chief executive, Paul Myers.

Myers says he's in talks with the four other major labels, and he hopes that two of them will join his service next month, though the deals aren't finalized.

"With the majors, there's a fear within those companies of the word 'peer-to-peer,'" Myers said. "There's still a fear it's out of control."

PlayLouder, an Internet service provider for music lovers that's set to debut in Britain later this year, also

will offer file-sharing. One of its investors is the influential indie label Beggars Group.

Mark Mulligan, a senior analyst with Jupiter Research in London, doubts that Wipit and PlayLouder can ever become mainstream because major labels are too worried that people will use them to make unlimited copies.

But "I think they're both major parts of the puzzle," he

said. On the Internet, "one size does not fit all. Online consumers want to have different options."

Another file-sharing option may come from a German company, 4FriendsOnly.com, which teamed with the Fraunhofer Institute, the German research center that developed that MP3 music format, which is widely used for file-sharing.

Their service isn't available yet, but the idea is that

fans should get a commission if they pass on tunes to friends who buy them. Fans who get a recommendation could listen a few times before access to the song ends — unless it is purchased.

Chief executive Jurgen Nutzel, who was showing the technology at Cannes, said people who might be less tempted to burn extra copies of songs for friends if they could get a commission instead.

Factories' production sizzle in December, but jobs are still elusive

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three years of declines. In December, 26,000 manufacturing jobs were lost. Analysts will look for signs of improvement in the January payrolls report, due Friday.

Most of the 2.4 million jobs lost over the past three years have been in manufacturing.

"The economy is going to accelerate in some areas and decelerate in others and the labor market is going to be the one that keeps getting squeezed," said Lehman Brothers economist Drew Matus.

Historically low levels of

inventories have contributed to the surge in output in recent months.

"The factory sector is in direct drive — when the new order comes, there's not enough stuff on the shelves to fill it, so they have to ramp up production," said Northern Trust Chief Economist Paul Kasriel.

A separate report on Monday showed one of the pillars of the economy, construction spending, notched a fresh record high in December for the sixth month in a row.

Overall construction

spending rose 0.4 percent to a seasonally adjusted \$933.2 billion, the Commerce Department said, as low mortgage rates fueled a strong housing market.

Meanwhile, personal spending rose 0.4 percent in December, the department said, slightly below forecasts of a 0.5 percent gain and down from 0.5 percent the previous month. Adjusted for inflation, spending rose just 0.2 percent, with much of the increased spending on autos.

The report said personal income rose 0.2 percent, in line with expectations. But that included a disappoint-

ing decline of 0.3 percent in wages and salaries because of the soft labor market, which could weigh on future spending.

"If job growth doesn't pick up soon, we could be rethinking the strength of the economy," said Kasriel.

A key reading of inflation in the spending report, which is closely watched by the Federal Reserve, dipped to just 0.7 percent in the year to December. That measure, the core personal consumption expenditures index, or PCE, has declined sharply. It fell from a 1.7 percent

annual rate at the start of 2003, illustrating the Fed's worries last year about the risk of falling prices, which has since faded.

Economists believe December could mark the low point for underlying inflation before a gradual increase this year to around 1 percent. That should not present any worries for the central bank, which is more concerned about soft labor markets and excess production capacity in factories.

"I suspect that December could prove to be the low point for the year-over-year

advance (in core PCE) because the early 2003 readings were extremely weak," said Stephen Stanley, chief economist at RBS Greenwich Capital.

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Law partnerships eluding women of color

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ception," says Dennis Archer, referring to the need for findings that go beyond anecdotes. Archer, the first African-American elected as president of the bar association, is chair of his law firm, Dickinson Wright, in Detroit. "Let's deal with reality and the facts. That's how we deal with things as a profession."

The first time the bar association examined issues concerning women of color was in the late 1980s. At the time, Archer was heading a

bar commission on minorities and the then first lady of Arkansas Hillary Rodham Clinton was heading the bar association's commission on women. They both concluded that women of color were "falling through the cracks," Archer says. They formed a committee that held two meetings to hear what the issues were for women of color.

The situation of female lawyers, as a whole, has changed substantially since that era. Yet, despite the fact that women have entered

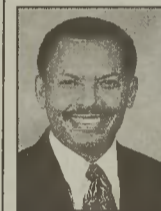
the profession in droves since the 1970s and are usually welcomed as associates in the lucrative large law firms, they are still underrepresented in the ranks of law firm partners, that is those with ownership interests in the firms.

Women of color, however, are still vastly underrepresented in law firms — from entering young lawyers to partners — according to the women's commission. Instead, women of color attorneys tend to cluster in the public sector, as state

prosecutors, public defenders and U.S. attorneys.

Sheila Thomas, one of the commissioners and the study's co-chair, says women of color find work in the public sector more in line with their interests and their community. They also find the environment more hospitable because of the presence of more women of color.

"It's seen as a place where you may have a greater opportunity to flourish as an attorney," says Thomas, who left a small firm to work for herself in Oakland.



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You Never Know

One of the things that we can definitely count on in life is its unpredictability. This uncertainty in life is problematic for most of us. We like to know what is going to happen to us. In essence, we want to be able to predict the future. Just think of the many people who confer with fortune tellers. There is the hope that some how we can know our futures and eliminate as many surprises as possible.

However, life continues to show us that no matter how hard we may try, we really cannot predict what will happen in our lives. Not only that, but when something happens in our lives, at the time of the event, it may seem like a blessing. Then if we were to regard it from another perspective it may seem like a curse instead.

For example, many people dream of winning the lottery. They imagine that all of their problems will be solved if they can only strike it rich. However, there are countless cases of people who have struck it rich and then encountered many problems along the way. They start hearing from people who made claims of their fortunes. Friends turned their backs on them. Unscrupulous people entered their lives who tried to take advantage of them. Some have thought life was better before their fortune came into their lives.

On the other hand, there are others who have known only wealth and though that living a more poverty-stricken existence would be better. Later on they learn that what they thought was the life of the poor was much more desperate than they realized.

In other words, what on one hand can seem like a blessing can on the other hand seem like a curse. It seems that it all just depends upon what is happening in our lives.

To live a life of success, it is to our advantage to realize that we must simply be ready for whatever comes our way. We never really know what is hidden beneath any of our experiences. We should simply strive to make the best of whatever the situation is that we may face. Flexibility is at the very heart of those who would lead a successful life because you just never know.

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