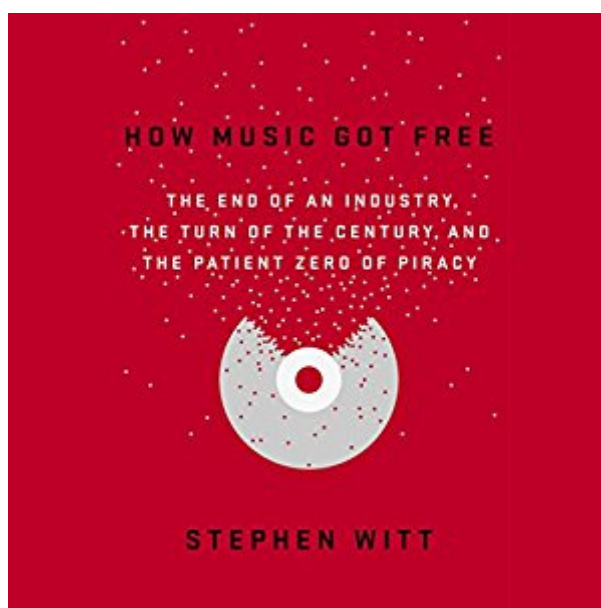


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# How Music Got Free: The End Of An Industry, The Turn Of The Century, And The Patient Zero Of Piracy



## Synopsis

"What happens when an entire generation commits the same crime?" How Music Got Free is a riveting story of obsession, music, crime, and money, featuring visionaries and criminals, moguls and tech-savvy teenagers. It's about the greatest pirate in history, the most powerful executive in the music business, a revolutionary invention, and an illegal website four times the size of the iTunes music store. Journalist Stephen Witt traces the secret history of digital music piracy, from the German audio engineers who invented the mp3 to a North Carolina compact-disc manufacturing plant where factory worker Dell Glover leaked nearly 2,000 albums over the course of a decade to the high-rises of midtown Manhattan where music executive Doug Morris cornered the global market on rap and finally into the darkest recesses of the Internet. Through these interwoven narratives, Witt has written a thrilling audiobook that depicts the moment in history when ordinary life became forever entwined with the world online - when suddenly all the music ever recorded was available for free. In the pause-resisting tradition of writers like Michael Lewis and Lawrence Wright, Witt's deeply reported first book introduces the unforgettable characters - inventors, executives, factory workers, and smugglers - who revolutionized an entire art form and reveals for the first time the secret underworld of media pirates that transformed our digital lives. An irresistible, never-before-told story of greed, cunning, genius, and deceit, How Music Got Free isn't just a story of the music industry - it's a must-listen history of the Internet itself.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 9 hours 13 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Penguin Audio

Audible.com Release Date: June 16, 2015

Language: English

ASIN: B00UJZZU8I

Best Sellers Rank: #51 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Sports & Entertainment > Entertainment #56 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > True Crime > White Collar Crime #61 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Business

## Customer Reviews

History of the MP3? How data compression works? This must be a book for technoweenies, right?

Wrong. It's an extremely well-written book about the music industry and the greed, fear, and loathing within it, and how it was upended by the "darknet" and a bunch of guys who stole music from Universal and other insanely-profitable goliaths (a CD ultimately cost 40 cents to produce including liner and case and sold for \$16) and gave it to hackers who stole music for the thrill of it to beat the Big Labels to a major release rather than to get rich. It's also the story of how hits are (or were) made and how the music industry, hackers, and oh yes, consumers, ultimately wound up where we are today. Even the story of how the MP3 (and other accomplishments) came to be was the result of fierce competition between naive scientists and engineers in academia versus scientists and engineers backed by the massive assets and marketing savvy of Philips. Philips won Round One with its MP2 technology but the MP3 rose from the dead through sheer dogged refusal by its champions who refused to give up (and who ultimately "won" and got rich). This is a terrific book for anyone, as it's written by someone with the rare ability to describe technology in a way anyone can understand, combine it with intrigue and a fair dose of biography, and make it a page-turner. It's a keeper...

Summary:- this is a captivating and very educational book, and I'm happy to recommend it. It's a one-of-a-kind on the market, and the book's flaws shouldn't deter you from reading it. As a musician, a programmer, a composer, and a millennial, I'm greatly interested in understanding the dynamics of the modern music industry. So, I picked up this book with great joy, and I am very glad I read it. As I read, I felt like I was sitting at a cafe with Stephen Witt - a man who is clearly deeply knowledgeable and full of incredibly interesting stories. As a narrative, the work is captivating. However, as a coherent, edited book, it falls short of perfection. As the other reviews mentioned, Witt carefully interweaves several stories within the book. I felt that the balance between the broader music industry and the individual stories of prolific pirates was a bit jarring sometimes. I greatly appreciated the introduction where the author discusses the academic research that led to the invention of the MP3, and even dives into some of the technical aspects of how music is compressed. As a layman, this was incredibly useful, and I learned lots. I was also emotionally captivated by Dell and Glover's story. The book fell a bit short, however, when it jumped to the broader dynamics within the music industry. Moreover, while Witt's conversational tone can be a page turner, oft-repeated sentence structures and convoluted phrasing would have surely benefitted from a better editor. All in all, I greatly enjoyed the book, but wish it was edited for clarity and slightly restructured for coherence. This shouldn't deter you from reading it, as the benefits still greatly outweigh the cons.

A music journalist from the US said to me, "If you want to know why is it that I think the music industry is to blame for its own destruction, this book is all you need." I suppose he's right; they didn't want to adapt themselves to the changes, technology-wise...How Music Got Free is a very entertaining read. The reader gets to know everything that has to do with the way music developed since the 1960's while feeling like Witt is right there in the living room with you, telling how it's all been, coffee mug in hand. Highly recommended to anyone who's a music nuts, also to rising musicians who nowadays see themselves having their music on iTunes, Spotify and other digital stores. It's important to know the story behind the ways of distributing music, past and present.

A very interesting read. I think this book would appeal to two types of people: 1) Gen X-ers and Y-ers who were around for much of the digital revolution of music (I started college in 1999, right when networking and Napster were becoming huge); and 2) business and marketing strategists. The beginning of the book is more about creating the technology (which I really liked as an engineer) and format wars. The latter half was more about coming to grips with the digital era from a business perspective, and how pirating affected the industry. Highly recommend if you dig music. I still buy CDs and rip them, and will continue to do so as long as I can find them. I think there's room to have both mediums, and an interesting add-on chapter or sequel could be the resurgence of vinyl. I do think Spotify is terrible for the industry, as convenient as it is.

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