

Moms Internet Guide

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Downloading Music

Hi, I'm Sarah. Welcome to Moms Internet Guide—the place to find straightforward answers to all your questions about the Web. I love to listen to music, but after hearing so much about illegal downloading, I was afraid to look for my favorite songs online. Then a friend introduced me to online music stores. They let you legally purchase music over the Internet—just like you might order a book or a new sweater. It saves me a trip to the mall, and I don't have to find a place to store my CDs. Plus, I can choose to buy one song or an entire album, and listen to the music right on my computer. Depending on the site, I can also burn CDs or put the songs on my iPod.

You've probably heard of iTunes—it's one of the most popular places to buy digital music. To get started, you can download the iTunes software from www.apple.com.

Then you can open the software on your computer and start looking for music to buy. It works a lot like a search engine, so it's easy to find a favorite song or artist. You can even use iTunes to organize your new music or download the songs to your iPod.

But iTunes isn't the only place to buy music online. There are lots of sites where you can buy songs—usually for around a dollar each—as well as entire albums.

I've bought a few great tunes from www.amazon.com. You'll also find a good selection of tracks to download at www.walmart.com.

No matter what site you choose, it's easy to search for music and download it. These services work like almost any other online store. But before you buy, you need to read up on exactly how each service works. You'll want to know, for instance, how you can use songs after you download. Can you put them on more than one computer? Or burn tracks to a CD? I like to make mix CDs with my songs to take on long car trips with the family. If you have an iPod or MP3 player, make sure you'll be able to download the music to that device. You need to purchase the right file type for your player. There should be an FAQ or About Us section on each site that answers all of these technical questions.

There are also online music sites that work on a subscription model. Instead of buying songs or albums individually, you pay a monthly fee to listen to music.

At www.emusic.com—a site that specializes in independent music—you pay a monthly fee to download a preset number of songs each month. If you want additional tracks, you can upgrade to a more expensive plan. The music belongs to you once it's on your computer.

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Other subscription sites charge you a small monthly fee to listen to an unlimited amount of music. But if you cancel the service, you typically lose access to all or most of those songs.

I recommend taking a look at www.napster.com and www.rhapsody.com. Even Yahoo! Music offers a subscription. You can read up on it at music.yahoo.com. In fact, it's a good idea to check out the fine print before committing to any service with a monthly fee. Some of these sites also allow you to purchase individual songs.

There's really no downside to buying music online. You can keep up on the latest artists—thanks to recommendations on each site—and save some valuable time. Plus, digital files are easier to organize than CDs, and they allow you create groups of songs on your computer for different moods. What more could a music lover ask for? Even your kids will approve.

Sites to Try:

www.apple.com

www.amazon.com

www.walmart.com

www.emusic.com

www.napster.com

www.rhapsody.com

<http://music.yahoo.com>