

Free Web and Content

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Note: This is a response to the Editorial, "[The Internet Entitlement Mentality](#) [1]"



Jason's article is right on target. Theft is theft, and the fact that theft is easy in the digital age does not change this. Quality must be paid for, and that applies to entertainment and news alike. Will web-based news outfits be able to pay for a network of qualified correspondents in all countries of the world, for in-depth reports and thorough research? I doubt it. What people expect nowadays is the type of shallow sound bytes we are getting from the so-called TV Networks. Their motivation is not to inform or entertain, it is to sell commercials. For that reason, the programming surrounding the commercials is as sensationalistic and shallow as possible. I grew up in Germany where I was used to a different system: Everybody paid a small fee for the public TV and radio channels (and still does). This ensured quality programming throughout the day. The 8:00 PM news was an uninterrupted 20 minute segment with comprehensive coverage of world and national affairs, far from the sound bytes that mainly consist of the latest celebrity gossip that I see in this country. The current Winter Olympics coverage is painful to watch for me. I see a 2 1/2 minute event followed by 2 minutes of commercials during which a whole nation is being brainwashed into thinking that brand A is so much better than brand B (just because it spends more advertising dollars). Of course, this type of coverage is "free" if you ignore the fact that you are sitting through hours and hours of offensive and repeated commercials.

I am amazed that useful services such as weather.com or mapquest.com are free (for the time being). What is wrong with paying a small fee for good information? If you look up an address twice a week and pay 10 cents for the service, is this going to ruin you? I pay for my MP3 files that I download from Amazon or other sources, and at 79 or 99 cents a track it's not ruining me either. I can afford to be picky, and I really do not need to download hundreds of MP3 files. Just as with CDs, which are highly overpriced, as some commentators rightfully claimed, one out of 20 tracks is worth downloading. The web will grow in capacity and in variety of choices. At the

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same time it will become much shallower, since there is only a constant amount of advertising dollars that will be shared by all providers of news and services. Once, it has degraded to the point where it is not interesting, reliable, or informative any more, we have to thank the freeloaders for it.

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