

Evangelical teens also pirate music, says poll: Few consider unauthorized downloading wrong

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The Gospel Music Association says it has embarked on a campaign to counter music piracy after commissioning a study that found purchasers of Christian music are as likely as other teens to engage in the practice.

Overall, the online survey of 1,449 teenagers found 80 percent of those surveyed had engaged in at least one kind of music piracy—such as making copies of CDs for other people, downloading unauthorized free music or uploading music files to the Internet to share with others—in the past six months. Only 8 percent said unauthorized downloading and copying CDs for others is morally wrong.

But it was the more specific findings about evangelical-oriented youth that association officials found disappointing, if not surprising. Researchers found that 77 percent of born-again Christian teens engaged in music piracy, compared to 81 percent of all other teens. Statistics for teen buyers of gospel, worship or contemporary Christian music were in the same range.

“On a gut level we had hoped that it would be true that Christian teens did have a little bit more of a moral stake in this issue,” said Tricia Whitehead, spokeswoman for the Nashville, Tennessee-based music association, in an interview. “We hope that we can set ourselves apart a little bit and, in this case, we didn’t.”

With sales flat this year and down 5 percent last year, people in the Christian music industry suspect that they, along with the rest of the music world, are the victims of piracy, she said. The association used the survey to help shape a new effort it kicked off April 25 at the start of its annual GMA Week, a time when the Christian music industry gathers in Nashville for meetings and awards. *—Religion News Service*