



## Bar Owners: Choosing The Wrong Karaoke Host Can Put You Out Of Business

### The Problem...

There are many KJ's (Karaoke Jockeys) that use laptop computers to run their shows. It's a lot easier and much more convenient to have all of your music files stored on your laptop or hard drive and certainly beats carrying hundreds of discs around. It's also much quicker than having to change discs, which can become scratched or damaged. Nothing wrong with that, we use a laptop too. The problem is that many KJ's are using them with illegally obtained song files.

### The Pirates...

There are a lot of KJ's and karaoke companies promoting themselves as having anywhere from 25 to 100 thousand or more karaoke songs. And 99.99% of the time, these songs have been illegally obtained. These people are called 'pirates' because they have not legally purchased these songs. They're stolen!

### Where Do They Get These Songs?

They can be downloaded from the internet (through file sharing web sites), or they can get them on hard drives pre-loaded with thousands of karaoke songs from EBay, Craig's List, or Sell.com for only a couple of hundred dollars. A small price to pay several thousand dollars worth of music. These hard drives contain stolen music and are illegal.

### How Does This Affect The Honest KJ?

KJ's who are operating legally have invested thousands of dollars in music and equipment and take pride in what they do. Unfortunately, many of them can no longer compete with these pirates and are being forced to go out of business. That's because since there's basically no investment involved on the part of the pirates, they can try to undercut the KJ who is trying to earn an honest living. They're walking into venue's telling the owners: "I have 75,000 songs, a lot more than the guy you got now, and I'll even do it for \$40 less". The owner not knowing that they're using stolen music (how convenient, they forgot to mention that part) thinks it's a good deal and hires him/her. This leaves the legally operating professional KJ out of a job.

### What's Being Done About It?

Sound Choice®, a leading manufacturer of karaoke CD's, is taking action. Representatives from the company have been visiting establishments that provide karaoke entertainment in an effort to find and prosecute those KJ's operating illegally. They have already filed lawsuits in several states against these pirates and the bar owners that hired them for copyright and trademark infringement. If they (Sound Choice®) come into your establishment and suspect the KJ is using illegally obtained karaoke song files, the KJ must be able to prove ownership of the physical CD's that those files came from, not a burned copy but the actual legally purchased retail CD. In other words, if a KJ has 75,000 karaoke song files on their laptop, they better be able to provide the all of the discs that those 75,000 files came from. If they can't, and a settlement can't be reached, they are slapped with a lawsuit.

### [How Does This Affect The Bar Owner?](#)

Hiring a KJ who is using stolen music and operating illegally puts you and your bar at risk. If he/she should get caught while working in your bar, you can be liable for fines of up to \$250,000 as well as lose your liquor license because it is *your* establishment that has been publicly promoting and broadcasting music (karaoke songs) that have been illegally obtained. You would also helping to put an honest KJ out of business.

### [What About ASCAP & BMI Fees?](#)

As a bar owner you might think you have nothing to worry about since you're paying your ASCAP & BMI fees which grants you a license to publically broadcast music. Think again. Performing Rights Organizations (PRO) such as ASCAP, BMI and SESAC only represent the rights of the musical composition owners (song writers/publishers), however these licenses do not cover the karaoke sound recordings themselves.

### [So, What Can A Bar Owner Do About It?](#)

Make sure the person you hire to host karaoke is operating legally. If they claim to have an unrealistic number of songs (usually anything over 20,000), ask them to prove ownership by showing you the actual Karaoke CD's that those song files came from. If they can't or won't, don't hire them. Think about it, if a KJ claims to have 75,000 songs, which usually cost \$2 a song on average, it would make his/her investment a whopping \$150,000.00 in music. Do you really think that's likely?

### [Our Position...](#)

Firelight Karaoke strongly opposes piracy and the use of illegally obtained media of any kind. These illegally operating pirates have no ethical or moral values. They don't care about you and your establishment or those they try to steel jobs from. Their only motive is to turn a quick buck. They stay in business by undercutting or out bidding the "real" KJ's. They can do this because they have none or very little of their money invested and have nothing to lose. Well, we on the other hand, have a lot to lose. We have invested several thousand dollars in music and equipment. We have ongoing expenses such as maintaining and updating our song library when new songs come out, maintaining and the printing of songbooks, maintaining and replacing equipment, microphones, etc., and since we have to pay for these things we can't afford to do it as cheap as the pirate who doesn't.

### [Our Thoughts On The Matter...](#)

We, at Firelight Karaoke, can only hope that we were able to shed some light on the subject of piracy and the ramifications of hiring an illegally operating KJ or karaoke company. It (piracy) affects us all and is hurting the entire karaoke industry. Several manufacturers of karaoke CD's have already gone out of business and so have many legally operating KJ's because of piracy. Let's level the playing field. Hiring only legal KJ's allows us to fairly compete with each other and not with the pirates. It can also help drive them away. So please, support the legal karaoke jockeys who are trying to make an honest living. It will help us all.

### [Our Conclusion...](#)

If you are willing to hire one of these pirates to work for you, and put your business and reputation on the line in order to save a buck, you will most likely be paying for it in the end. The choice is yours.

Firelight Karaoke  
www.firelightkaraoke.com