Last month I wrote an article called ‘Hip-Hop Culture Needs to "Police" Itself’. It was about the recent rash of illegal downloading of hip-hop and rap artist albums and tracks on the internet.

Almost every album is on the net before it even hits stores. This has happened to Warren G, Tupac, and DJ Quik recently.

Another area of concern, at least for site owners is the ‘hotlinking’ of a sites images by less reputable sites. The ‘free’ sites that every one and their mother is putting up. Most have illegal downloads also, but the hotlinking of another sites images is becoming a burden for those sites who try to ‘play by the rules’.

The blame for the hotlinking problem is of course on the site owner but also, and maybe more; of the blame should fall on the hosts of these ‘free sites’.

There are many of these ‘free’ hosts that let anyone who can type throw up a site. Many hip-hop and rap sites are thrown up; it is everyone wants a web site, but they do not want to pay for it. They, like bootleggers, want to bite off others sweat and pocket book.

There are programs that can stop hotlinking but it is all according to the type of site that you run if you can use them or not. If you can’t run one of those programs then you can be sure that the ‘biters’ will be on ya like vultures.

Many times if hotlinking is a problem you can contact the site and if that don’t work then you can contact the host and they will take action; because most of the reputable hosts understand that hotlinking is theft. But there are those hosts who put on a good front and say –

Xanga is a community of online diaries and journals. You can easily start your own free journal, share thoughts with your friends and meet new friends, too.

How can I report a hotlinking violation?....

You can also contact us through this form:……

So you contact them and the problem persists and you never hear from them. We are having problems with one of their ‘free’ clients. Their line sounds good but in reality they are promoting hotlinking by not acting on it. They are not alone. There are plenty of hosting companies that act in such a manner.

We have a lot of ‘biters’ of our images; sites that have good images that we pay for. There is even a few sites that 90% of their images are hotlinked to us.

We are in the process of correcting this problem, but one thing that these sites need to understand is they can not control what is in that image file when they post it. So if we happen to change the picture and use the same file name over, then they get whatever comes up, this could be embarrassing.

So if you are thinking of opening a web site, or you have one especially a hip-hop or rap site, beware of some of the problems that exist.

To run a good quality site and play by the ‘rules’ is not free. If you want images, pay for them by hosting them yourself. And for the hosting companies they really need to know and implement what they say in their advertisement. Hosting companies are aware of the problems that hotlinking can cause a site. If you want to be a quality host – act like one to the community at large.

For all the sites doing it right keep up the good work, and I know you can feel me. And for all the biter sites – it is so much more respected if you do it on your own.

*Read ‘Hip-Hop Culture Needs to "Police" Itself’ HERE .