Chapter 6 of *Blown to Bits* spends page after page fretting over the details of the copyright wars. The overarching concern is that overbearing copyright laws are preventing technological growth. On page 222, *Blown to Bits* says, “As collateral damage of the battle, innovation is being held hostage.” While this perspective is expected from one who is passionate about technological innovation, the worry is unwarranted. No heavy-handed federal law is enough to block innovation: the Internet is too vast, quick-paced, and brilliance-filled to even hesitate for more than a moment at most.

First of all, in only the seven years since the book was published, the prediction stated on the very next page about how to get around the laws has come true in full force. Specifically, the book offers, “A complementary approach promotes sharing of music and other creative works in a way that enriches the common culture, by making it easy for creators to distribute their own work and to build on each others’ work” (224), using the *Creative Commons*. SoundCloud is a shining result of this dream. The music service allows anyone to upload original or remixed versions of songs, and all music is available to listen for free. The service is now used by an estimated 175 million listeners a month to find new music from artists who are willing to offer their creations free of charge. To avoid copyright issues, SoundCloud strictly disallows downloading, so every listen can be tracked online. The result of this *technological* innovation has been a thriving community of *musical* innovation—the best of both worlds, so far existing despite the copyright laws.

Furthermore, artists are beginning to take it on themselves to innovate the way music is shared where major music businesses will not. Radiohead made world headlines when it announced
that its seventh album would be released independently, rather than through a record label—and for a price decided on by the consumer. In the words of a producer interviewed by *Time* magazine, “Radiohead is the best band in the world; if you can pay whatever you want for music by the best band in the world, why would you pay $13 dollars or $.99 cents for music by somebody less talented? Once you open that door and start giving music away legally, I'm not sure there's any going back.” The “Pay what you want” model completely circumvents copyright laws because every listener has the option to listen at any cost, his only cost being guilt if he does not spend money supporting the artist. The artist still can make comparable money through the album and concerts, as no profit is lost to record labels or other third-parties.

This model, as well as services like SoundCloud, are powerful examples that copyright has in no way taken innovation hostage. As illustrated in *Blown to Bits* by Napster, its followers, and then by modern-day experimental music-sharing models, the artist and listener are only getting closer together over time as copyright laws attempt to keep them separate. Ultimately, if anything, the copyright laws are just driving musical artists, enthusiasts, and businesspeople to be even more innovative than ever.

**Bibliography**
