The Stealing Jay’s Book Campaign

Illegal downloads of *Thank You for Arguing* far exceed sales of e-books. In ten minutes searching Google, I found 14 torrent sites (see below) plus three school districts offering illegal downloads of the book in pdf form. The torrent sites make it nearly impossible to remove these downloads, and new “seeders”—volunteer uploaders—immediately pop up again. Book publishers, including Random House, say they are helpless.

While I got the school districts to remove the download, the teachers involved seemed unaware of copyright law.

So I decided to take matters into my own hands. At the very least, I’d promote the book and get more people to read it—maybe even legally. My campaign would have a budget of $500, using social media, humor, and fear of viruses to discourage illegal downloads. The techniques in the videos come straight from *Thank You for Arguing*. Of course they do.

The Videos: I used [Fiverr](http://fiverr.com) to recruit actors, video makers, and even a songwriter-guitarist to create 11 short vids. They followed several themes:

* Promoting a fake download site, [liketotallysafedownloads.com](http://liketotallysafedownloads.com).
* Warning of viruses from “pirate sites.” Here’s an [example](http://youtu.be/FFQEwgRbb44).
* Equating downloading with [theft](http://youtu.be/HDPeLaMndHI).

In addition, I did a [compilation video](http://youtu.be/YkubVGWy2Hc) that explains the campaign.

The Website: I registered the url for [liketotallysafedownloads.com](http://liketotallysafedownloads.com). A video automatically plays when people go to the site, satirically instructing visitors on how to download Thank You for Arguing. Clicking on the buy button leads to Amazon. I’m hoping that the site gets enough traffic and has the proper metadata and SEO factors to make it the number-one “downloading” site for my book on Google.

Social: I created a YouTube channel called [Stealing Jay’s Book](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJTItKHA2_J_Mwh0IKXC1MA), which contains all 11 videos. In the week before April Fool’s I’ll be sharing the videos promoting liketotallysafedownloads on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest. In addition, I do free video chats with rhetoric classes once or twice a week on average; I’ll be asking teachers to encourage their students to share the videos. With luck, Upworthy will post the campaign.

Huffington Post and Writer’s Blogs: I’ll be writing them offering pieces on book theft. People see copyright as a tool used by corporations to extract money from people. But illegal downloads could threaten books as we know them.

Help for Other Authors: I’ll offer to create a campaign for an author, including a fake download website with its own url.