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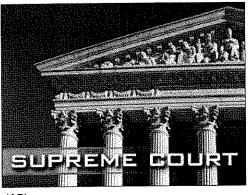
AnswerTips™enabled (What's this?)

(AP) Getting audio recordings of landmark legal arguments is becoming as easy as downloading the latest Snoop Dogg single.

For the first time, Internet users can download, edit and swap many of the U.S. Supreme Court's greatest hits.

Oral arguments available include those for the Roe v. Wade abortion-rights case and the disputed 2000 presidential election.

The audio files come from the OYEZ Project, a multimedia archive that gets its name from the synonymous phrase "Hear ye, Hear ye."



(AP)

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issues and analyzes important cases of the day.

"There's so much more information and emotion in the human voice that a transcript can't do it justice," said Jerry Goldman, the project's director and a professor at Northwestern University.

Goldman said the bitterness in Justice Thurgood Marshall's voice is apparent when he explains his views in Regents v. Bakke, a 1978 affirmative action case. And the silence is deadening in Roe v.

Wade when Jay Floyd, representing Texas, makes a joke but no one laughs.

Since 1994, the OYEZ Project, run out of Northwestern, has made audio of the cases available in a "streaming" format that requires a continuous Internet connection. Available were some 2,000 hours of audio dating to 1955, when taping of oral arguments began.

The project is converting the files to the MP3 format, which permits offline listening, use of portable devices and sharing through the same peer-to-peer networks used to swap music and movies. The first batch of MP3 files was released in late June.

Goldman said he ultimately wants to make available in MP3 every bit of Supreme Court recordings, about 6,000 hours in all. He also wants them easily searchable.

"The whole idea is to build a digital commons, make accessible materials that are really valuable in a free and open society," he said.

David Pride, executive director of the Supreme Court Historical Society, said the project appeals to attorneys, particularly those who argue before the court.

"It is the only opportunity you have to see what questioning before the court is like," Pride said.

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