

The unseen cost of online piracy

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In the midst of a dark room, the bright light of a laptop screen shines. A teenager clicks a download link on thepiratebay. Within seconds, the teen is now able to watch one of the newest movie releases, without paying a dime. However, little does he know that “ free” movies are not actually free - the cost just gets taken from another person’s pocket. The crime committed here is online piracy, which is a serious issue that causes money, and sometimes jobs, of online content creators to be lost, as well as discourages more content to be made. Internet piracy is a crime that demands greater attention from the United States government and needs to be punished. Piracy causes creators of online content to lose money, because it is essentially stealing. As a result of the loss of income, many employees of these companies are laid off.

According to the Institute for Policy Innovation (IPI), a nonprofit organization that promotes solutions to problems in public policy, “ the U. S. economy loses 71, 060 jobs [each year]” because of the piracy of music files (Innovation). Internet piracy does not just annoy companies - it ruins people’s careers. When a company does not make enough money from a product because the people that want it are getting it for free, sacrifices have to be made in order to minimize losses, which often includes removing some employees from the company.

So before you click that download link, think about the fact that someone’s job could be on the line because of your selfishness. In addition, companies, and in turn the U. S. economy, lose large amounts of money because of their products being pirated. The IPI reports that the “ US economy loses \$12.

5 billion in total output annually” due to music piracy alone. If piracy were cracked down upon and the perpetrators punished, then the economy would be significantly improved. For the benefit of America as a whole, the online piracy problem needs to be fixed. Not only does online piracy cost people their jobs, it also discourages more online content from being made. A great example of this effect is the case of the movie *Zombieland*. The writer of the movie, Rhett Reese, reported that shortly after the movie’s release, *Zombieland* became “ the most pirated movie on Bit Torrent”, a popular movie pirating website, and that this fact “ greatly affects the likelihood of a *Zombieland 2*” (Screenrant).

It turns out that Rhett’s fear was justified, because to this date, *Zombieland 2* has still not yet been made - and it is not like *Zombieland* was a commercial failure. The earnings were more than triple the movie’s budget. However, the amount it earned was just slightly below the limit that could have ensured the movie’s sequel - something that would have been easily achieved “ if those one million people sitting at their computers had decided to drop 7-12 bucks to see the film in theaters” instead of stealing it off the internet (Screenrant). This situation is a bit ironic. Many people enjoyed the movie, but were just too lazy or selfish to pay for it themselves, thereby ensuring that they would not be able to see the sequel that they likely would have wanted.

So before consumers think about pirating something, they should consider that it lowers the chances of more of that content being created. However, some may disagree with this viewpoint, and claim that piracy does not do any physical harm and therefore should not be punished. Markus Persson, <https://assignbuster.com/the-unseen-cost-of-online-piracy/>

the creator of the popular online game Minecraft, states that “ piracy is not theft”, because “ if you copy a game, there are simply more of them in the world” (Forbes). This reasoning is flawed, though, because essentially what the person is arguing is that digital products are not actual things, which is not the case. It takes a great amount of effort and money to create movies, games, and music, even if they do not have physical representations.

It is a lot like stealing a \$60 game disk from GameStop - the disk itself did not cost the company anywhere near \$60 to create, rather, the majority of the cost comes from producing the content of the game itself. If you would not steal a game in real life, why would you do it online? Online piracy is a severe issue that the government is neglecting. Piracy causes great economic losses, as well as a reduced amount of quality digital content. The U. S.

needs to actively seek out and punish those who commit these crimes, and treat it like any other theft would be treated. Voters should support political campaigns that stop internet piracy, They should all avoid encouraging piracy in any way. Theft is a crime, regardless of how it is executed, be it physically or digitally.