



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

Could AI be a turning point in the fight against Internet piracy?



The triumph of the movie Oppenheimer at this year's Academy Awards was not a big surprise. However, the fact was that after the Oscars, the demand for Oppenheimer on pirate platforms skyrocketed.

For years, there has been a regularity that following the Oscars, the interest of users of illegal piracy platforms in award-winning **films surged**.

Oppenheimer has already been watched legally by more than a billion people globally, and it has been available on pirate platforms since last November, so it seemed that everyone interested had already seen it.

However, in the days following the awards, viewing of Christopher Nolan's masterpiece on pirate platforms increased by more than 130% from the week before.

The piracy market has been growing at high rates

The illegal market for movies, music, broadcasting of sports events, and everything we have been calling piracy for decades is still significant and growing despite the constant progress of measures to suppress it.

According to the global consulting firm Kearney, **piracy annually takes** as much as \$75 billion in revenue from the legal industry. Moreover, this illegal market will grow by 11% annually and reach about \$125 billion in 2028.

It is difficult to make a more accurate assessment of the size of the piracy market. However, its dimensions are frightening, particularly in the US as the global leader in the entertainment and sports industry, which is also the most pirated.

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The US Chamber of Commerce estimated 5 years ago that the American film and television industry would suffer between \$29 billion and \$71 billion in annual losses. If we consider that the simultaneous rise of the pirate underground coincides with the steady growth of this legitimate industry, the damage could be substantially bigger now.

In the UK alone, there are **estimates** that as much as a quarter of the population has used pirated content in some way, in an estimated amount of close to 10% of the total amount they spend on communication and Internet services.

Live broadcasts of sports events are by far the most popular (about a third of all pirated content), followed by illegal downloading of music and video material.

Regulators are slower than technological change

Anti-piracy fighters, particularly government regulators, are still at a crossroads where they simultaneously apply traditional ways to combat piracy and new technological advances that facilitate the fight.

Traditional forms of defence, such as registration and protection of intellectual property, copyrights and trademarks, are still the first level of defence, but it has long been insufficient.

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Legal actions are limited. They are always reactive and usually come late when content through illegal channels is already widely available.

Also, prescribed technological solutions in the constantly changing regulations are usually introduced slowly, through lengthy

procedures, so that when they come into force, they are often outdated because faster and more dynamic creators of pirate platforms take over.

That is why AI appears as a historic step forward, even as a possible game-changer in the fight against Internet piracy.

AI – a new weapon in the anti-piracy fight

Its principal advantage compared to previous technological methods is the speed with which it reacts to an attempt to illegally transfer protected content.

AI algorithms pre-analyse online data and timely detect platforms where copyright infringement is possible. By scanning numerous platforms, AI processes the language used in pirate channels and flags cases of abuse. It also recognises images, music and video material and rapidly detects their authenticity and misuse.

The power of AI in detecting pirated content lies in its ability to analyse databases and scan numerous newly posted content rapidly, which it selects first according to the binary principle – allowed-not allowed.

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Also, to make this distinction, there is a solution that preventively "equips" the original content with a record that separates it in the digital data forest with a stamp that it is authentic, which helps the AI to easily recognise it later.

As for the user's side, AI can easily analyse and recognise their habits, including those of using content from pirated providers, notifying them through various warnings that they are in an illegal zone.

Such warnings have proven to be quite effective and reduce the number of downloaded pirated content and consumers' habits for using piracy.

AI is also used by pirates

Adopting technological innovations, such as AI, in the fight against piracy is the way regulators will achieve more than just adjusting their regulations (which has proven to be slow). But even technology will not help much if it is not constantly updated, at least at the same speed that the "dark side" does.

AI is available to them, so pirates could also employ AI methods to avoid detection, manipulate the content they broadcast without authorisation, and find loopholes in the protection systems put in place by regulators or companies that produce legal content.



Decisive in this race with an invisible opponent could be a faster and more dynamic change in countries' regulations – US Patent and Trademark Office

Decisive in this race with an invisible opponent could be a faster and more dynamic change in countries' regulations, particularly in the international market, considering the cross-border reach of piracy.

National legislations in some places see this need, such as Italy, for example, which amended its Anti-Piracy Law in August last year, refreshing it with the technological aspect, for example, by speeding up the procedure for blocking providers that

broadcast content illegally.

Given the size of the global piracy market and estimates of its high growth over the next decade, the adversary will not surrender easily. But AI use in combating piracy could be leading to a tipping point.

Of course, only if its advantages are incorporated into all existing legal and human potentials for the fight against piracy.