

M+E

JOURNAL

It's Showtime!

Innovation explodes across every workflow as technology emerges from the pandemic.



Where are you in this accelerated evolution?

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

In the office, behind the camera, and on the screen, diversity is crucial

SECURITY

Remote productions create new security concerns, with assets under siege

SMART CONTENT

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NEW WORKFLOWS

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M&E INDUSTRY CALL TO ACTION: YOUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET IS UNDER SIEGE

While the piracy problem might be complex, implementing a solution is not

ABSTRACT: Here we offer our insights on the current state of piracy, the pandemic's impact on the media and entertainment industry and consumer behavior, address the increase in piracy in online screening for virtual cinema and early release windows, and examine how the industry is working to address all of these challenges.

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While the pandemic has undoubtedly impacted all segments of business across the world, the media and entertainment industry could be one area that has seen the most transformation.

There have been monumental shifts in everything from production, to distribution business models, to consumer expectation and behaviors. So much change has taken place, it will never go back to the way things used to be. And, knowing that it has been extremely challenging, this digital transformation is not entirely a bad thing.

The industry continues to adapt and succeed in so many ways. The pandemic kept audiences from gathering in person, forcing film debuts, festivals, sports and other live events to adjust their distribution models. At the

same time, with social distancing measures in place, there was — and continues to be — an increasing demand for in-home content from consumers. Delivering content through online channels is now the norm.

To adjust to this new environment, studios and other content owners have embraced premium VOD and SVOD services for early release windows, allowing their newest blockbuster movies to launch direct to viewers' living rooms. Film festivals have shifted strategies to reach audiences through online digital cinema platforms. At the same time, consumers have embraced this new world and now hold the control of where their experiences take place.

When geography and physical limitations are no longer an issue, new opportunities can be achieved. For

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example, film festivals are no longer bound by location. They can now expand their reach to showcase great content to audiences around the world. New release movies can also reach larger audiences, that compliment, not detract from the movie theater experience option when things completely open up.

But, while much of this digital transformation has been positive, all of this does not come without consequences. Unfortunately, this online, digital, global approach means valuable content is more susceptible to piracy than ever before. And with piracy comes a significant threat to the entire industry.

Commercial pirates are taking advantage of this new media landscape and they are very sophisticated in their delivery of stolen goods. The most valuable asset — content — is given away to consumers at a free or significantly discounted price. If action is not taken, finding illegal services that deliver whatever content viewers want online, without paying for it, could gain traction and is at risk of becoming a cultural norm. This is a snowball effect that cannot be ignored. Once this cultural shift happens, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to bring viewers back into the legitimate value chain.

This is why it is imperative for the industry to come together to prioritize anti-piracy efforts. If content is not properly secured, then the M&E ecosystem's survival is at risk.

GET READY FOR THE TAKEDOWN

One of the steps being taken to combat this issue is consumer education and awareness. Unfortunately, because of the sophistication of commercial pirates, many consumers can't distinguish between pirate services and legitimate ones. This is why there are consumer-based campaigns in place to showcase the dangers of piracy. Consumers need to understand that it is not possible to get thousands of channels, all the sports and VOD content in the world, all for a minimal price. If it looks too good to be true, it is too good to be true.

While reminders like this are extremely helpful, the

fact of the matter is: it's the studios and distributors that are tasked with taking real action for impactful results.

Content owners, including the major Hollywood studios, and distributors need to understand that they are competing against pirate services. It's the pirates, not other legitimate businesses, that should be the No. 1 priority when considering competition.


The first, and most impactful step is to cut off the supply of content to pirates. Forensic watermarking, multi-DRM and anti-piracy solutions and services are all essential to increasing the security of digital cinema virtual screening packages and premium VOD and SVOD content.

Forensic watermarking identifies the source of a content leak quickly and efficiently so that effective anti-piracy action can be taken. At the same time, a multi-DRM solution delivers content protection by leveraging both platform DRM and advanced features to maximize service reach and achieve operational efficiency. When used together, you have a strong starting point to guard against service and content piracy.

By layering on anti-piracy services, such as monitoring, legal services, take-down and IP-blocking, as well as data-driven security analytics, you have a comprehensive solution to seriously take on the pirates.

DON'T WAIT TO TAKE ACTION

The fact of the matter is, while the piracy problem might be complex, implementing a solution is not. There really is no legitimate reason for studios and distributors to not take steps to protect the great content that is the lifeblood of the industry. With the right provider and experts on your side, integrating the right anti-piracy solutions and services is a seamless and easy experience that will undoubtedly pay off in the long run. Not only for content owners, but the entire M&E ecosystem.

It's up to the industry to demand that pirated content is not acceptable. Taking action now against piracy must be one of the highest business priorities, and if you don't take action now, you're essentially giving away the keys to your castle. 



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