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The article discusses people's attitude to digital piracy, which depends on two factors: moral and economic. The aim of the article is to determine the causes of unethical behavior of people in the field of digital piracy using quantitative and qualitative methods.

Keywords: piracy, digital products, illegal content

In the past, people associated piracy with sea robbers. In the age of digital technology, this term has acquired a completely new meaning, which has nothing similar with maritime robberies and raids on ships.

To become a pirate in the 21st century, you do not even need to have your own ship and an eye patch. Modern pirates surf the waters of the World Wide Web in order to get someone else's intellectual property without paying money for it. Such digital content as music, movies, e-books, software is subjected to illegal use by Internet users. The purpose of this article was to study the attitudes of people using pirated content. The study was conducted with the help of qualitative and quantitative methods to identify the motives that influence the decision to consume digital content illegally.

The original meaning of the term «piracy» comes from pirate thieves who seize other people's ships and take everything they want. Piracy means stealing someone else's work or ideas. Piracy originated before the digital age, but its popularity has increased with the advent of the Internet. The development of IT also gave rise to digital piracy, which means the illegal consumption of copies of digital products such as music, movies, software, e-books [1]. Illegal distribution of copyrighted media content has emerged since the birth of new technologies and platforms that allow for quick and unlimited access to content. It is important to note that copyright infringers are not only intruders who engage in piracy, but also end users who view and download such content.

Some studies indicate that people's intentions to use pirated content depend on two factors: moral and economic ones [7]. As for moral factors, people who feel guilty and morally responsible for pirated use of media content are less susceptible to illegal behavior [3]. Other studies indicate that if a person has the possibility and resources to download copyrighted content, the likelihood of piracy increases [4]. In addition, if a person ever uses or enjoys illegal content, his intention regarding piracy increases. Many consumers of pirated content believe that stealing a real object and intellectual property is not the same thing. This opinion is explained by the fact that the Internet provides anonymity in the network, so copyright violators do not perceive the likelihood of punishment. Thus, some people tend to believe that if piracy is not punishable, the use of illegal channels is acceptable [8]. It is also important to note

that the popularity of pirated content results from lack of intellectual property protection [9]. Other authors think that piracy is a crime, emphasizing that the violation of copyrighted content negatively affects every person working in these industries, so it is necessary to respect the work of people [4].

Considering the economic factor, it is possible to identify a growing trend in the use of pirated content due to the high price of authorized products and low income in developing countries. Some researchers claim that price is a key motivational factor that influences the purchase of music by illegal downloading [7]. On the other hand, the high price of legal products is not the reason for the popularity of pirated content since piracy is widespread both in rich countries, such as Saudi Arabia & Iceland, and in impoverished South Africa & Slovakia [7].

There are quite a few studies indicating that the distribution of pirated content leads to serious losses in the income of media producers [2], [5], [6]. Piracy is a serious problem for various industries as it leads to losses in the income of producers of media products due to the substitution of sales of licensed goods. The entertainment business loses billions of dollars every year because of the theft of digital content. Moreover, the distribution of illegal content harms not only creators, but also consumers as the economic incentives that creators should invest in high-quality entertainment projects are decreasing. As a result of such illegal consumption, the quality of digital products decreases [4].

In this article, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to ensure reliability. The purpose of this study was to identify factors that positively or negatively affect the illegal use of digital content. The experience and attitudes of 16 people of different ages, who use pirated content, were analyzed, 15 of whom took part in the survey and 1 gave an interview.

To study the attitudes of people to the consumption of illegal content, an online questionnaire was conducted in a Google form, which consisted of 9 questions on the topic of piracy. The main advantages of the questionnaire research method are tracking statistics and conducting a thorough analysis by studying successive clarifying questions. The online questionnaire included such items as demographics, negative or positive attitudes of people to piracy, reasons for using pirated content, experience of illegal use of content, the impact of piracy on the entertainment

industry, punishment for piracy, as well as the experience of illegal use of movies, music, books, software and games. Moreover, that this survey was compiled in order to find out which of the three factors, such as economic, cultural and moral ones, have a greater impact on copyright infringement. The priority target audience of the study was the youth since this social group is the most active on the Internet. Older people also took part in the study.

An expert in the field of music and film industry was invited to the interview in order to study in more detail the factors influencing the behavior of consumers of illegal content. Due to the fact that the quantitative method is conducted with consumers of media content, for greater objectivity, it was decided to conduct an interview with the creator of media content. The interview was used to identify the causes of copyright infringement and the impact of piracy on the entertainment industry. Particular attention was paid to issues related to the frequency of illegal use of media

content, the attitudes of people to the concept of «copyright» and the social group of people most devoted to the illegal use of content. In addition, there were questions concerning a legal and economic issues: Will the legislation on copyright protection be tightened? How much does the pirated content market earn per year? How much money does the industry lose annually due to the pirate activity market? The interviewing method makes it possible to conduct an in-depth study of an expert opinion, obtain unique information about the problem under study, refine data and get a more detailed answer to questions.

The questionnaire included 9 questions concerning different aspects of copyright infringement. 17 people took part in the survey, of whom 58,8 % are young people aged 17–30 years and 41,2 % are adults aged 31+ years. The age ranges helped to reveal the difference in attitudes towards piracy between generations. The chart below summarizes survey results.

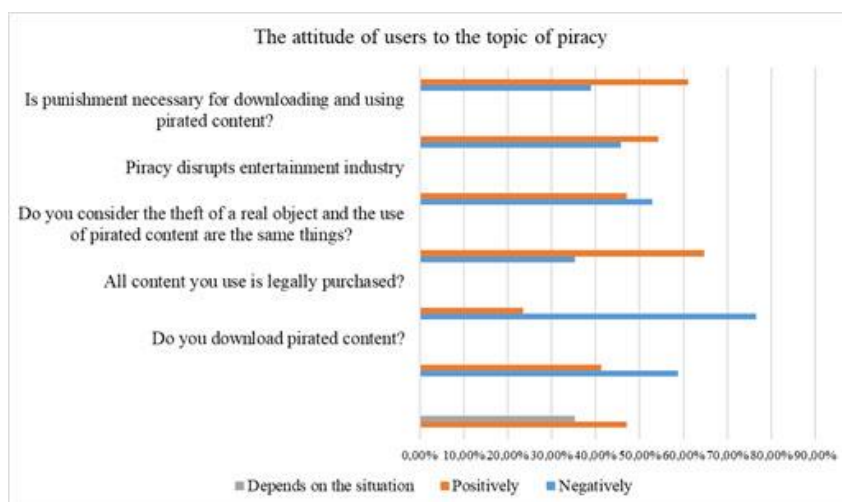


Fig. 1. Online survey results

There were more younger respondents, as this is the most active social group on the Internet. Analyzing the survey data, it can be understood that the largest part of the audience considers the consumption of pirated content acceptable. More than 70 % of respondents use pirated content. 64,7 % of respondents answered positively to the question «Do you use only licensed products?». In addition, 47 % of respondents believe that the theft of a real object and the use of pirated content are the same thing. Furthermore, that 54,2 % of respondents believe that the use of pirated content does

not negatively affect the entertainment industry and consider the punishment for downloading unlicensed content unfair.

According to the survey, the most popular object of illegal downloading from the Internet are movies (50 %). The next most popular object of illegal use is software (47 %). Books and games are not very popular among illegal content downloads. Only 9,5 % of respondents answered that they do not use any of the listed types of pirated content.

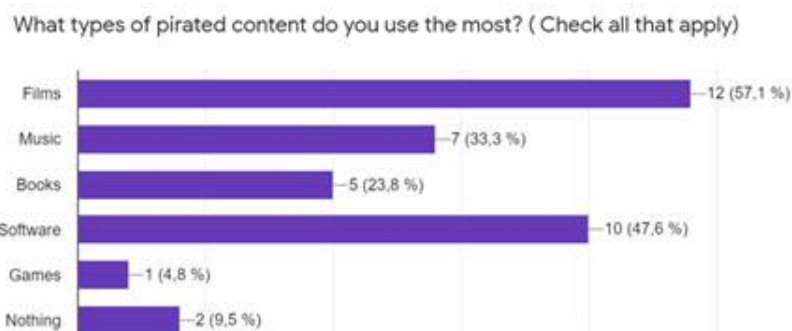


Fig. 2. Online survey results

The most popular answer to the question «Why do you use pirated content?» was the high cost of licensed content (68,8 %). A smaller proportion of respondents said that pirated content is quite common on the web and has easy access to download (37,5). Only 25 % of

respondents believe that the use of content is fine in terms of moral aspects.

Fewer people said that they had not previously thought about the reason for the illegal use of author's content (12,5 %). As a result, the main reason for using pirated content is the high price of licensed content.

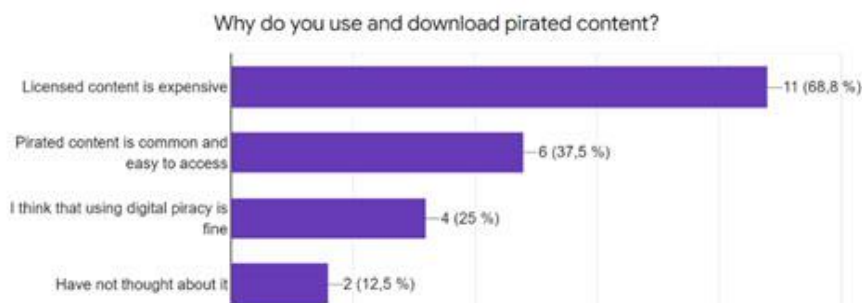


Fig. 3. Online survey results

As for the interview that was conducted with the creator of the media content, it was revealed that music, animation, video content ideas and plots are subject to copyright infringement as people think that stealing digital content is acceptable. Users don't treat digital content the same way they treat physical things. Moreover, copyright infringement is considered as a habit. If people have used illegal content, they will continue to use it. The interviewee believes that people are used to having free access because, unlike physical objects, it is very easy to get digital content. In addition, because there is no direct personal contact with the seller, digital piracy makes it possible to avoid penalties associated with participation in illegal activities. Unfair treatment of digital content is mostly determined by the habit of copying someone else's content, and not by the financial situation. The interviewee also noted that there is no difference in behavior regarding digital piracy in terms of age and social groups. About 65 % of consumers are not aware that piracy is illegal. Despite the fact that recently the adoption of anti-piracy laws has created a powerful legislative framework to combat piracy, content creators understand that piracy cannot be eradicated and copyright will not stop facing problems of ensuring protection. Over the past five years, the pirate market has grown catastrophically fast. The interviewee points out that if the media industry did not face monetary losses, piracy would not be perceived as

a big problem for the industry. However, piracy has a negative impact on the economy, reducing sales in the music and film industries and many other aspects. The study confirmed that economic and moral factors are the cause of unethical behavior of people using pirated content. Media content creators charging money for their developments is the most common reason why people engage in piracy, and this leads to the emergence of pirate websites. Copyright violators don't want to pay for the content that they want to consume, or it is too expensive. Besides that such an unfair attitude towards the creators of digital products poses a threat to the entertainment industry. At the same time, people believe that the use of pirated content does not negatively affect the entertainment industry and consider the punishment for downloading unlicensed content unfair. This opinion is erroneous, many studies indicate that there is a direct relationship between the level of piracy and the volume of sales of licensed content (Pham, Dang, & Nguyen, 2020). Experts in the entertainment industry believe that piracy has a negative effect on the global economy as it reduces sales of entertainment content. Moreover, piracy reduces the incentive to develop a quality product since creators do not want to lose income due to illegal competition. The analysis showed that films are most heavily exposed to illegal consumption. According to the data, pirated copies of films have led to a strong decline in box office sales and even to the loss of jobs in

the industry. The study confirms the fact that the availability of free content influences people's decision not to pay for licensed products. However, economic factors do not explain the reason for the high prevalence of pirated content in digital channels and beyond. According to a study (Pham, Dang, & Nguyen, 2020), there is a high level of illegal downloading in developed countries such as Saudi Arabia, (52 %) Iceland (49 %). Thus, there are also well-to-do people who do not see anything wrong with downloading copyrighted content, which refers to the moral factor. People download illegally, but justify their actions by saying that other people also download illegal content. Despite the fact that recently the adoption of anti-piracy laws has created a powerful legislative framework to combat piracy, content creators understand that piracy cannot be eradicated.

In the age of digital technology, it is impossible to completely eradicate piracy since any security system can be hacked. However, while content creators cannot stop digital piracy, it can be countered. It is necessary to combat the positive attitude of people towards copyright infringement, as the creators of media content suffer from piracy. The most important aspect of the fight is to draw the consumer's attention to the fact that piracy is morally wrong and it is a crime. The participation of government in the issue of copyright infringement is necessary. Much stricter legal sanctions aimed at copyright infringers can significantly stop the growth of piracy. When stricter penalties for the use of pirated content are introduced, the demand for illegal content will decrease, and people's attitudes will change with the time. ■

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Отношение людей к пиратскому контенту

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В статье рассматривается отношение людей к цифровому пиратству, которое зависит от двух факторов: морального и экономического. Целью статьи является определение причин неэтичного поведения людей в сфере цифрового пиратства с использованием количественных и качественных методов.

Ключевые слова: пиратство, цифровые продукты, нелегальный контент
