

Social transformations and distribution of pirated media content on the example of video games

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the history of the distribution of pirated content and methods of combating it using the example of video games. The ambivalent impact of the phenomenon of piracy on sociocultural processes in societies, especially those that radically changed their social structure at the end of the 20th – beginning of the 21st century, is demonstrated. The author proceeds from the fact that piracy arose on the basis of the absence of the so-called “copyright culture” transformed societies, allowed individual economic actors to get rich illegally and quickly, but at the same time acted as a massive display of technical intelligence, a creative impulse to create one’s own video content in these societies and the formation of relevant regional markets, and also contributed to the development of many technical talents currently working on digitalization of socio-economic processes around the world.

According to the examples of piracy described in the article, four main motives for its spread are highlighted, namely: economic, activist, archival and creative motives. As demonstrated in the study, these motives shape relevant social patterns and change over time, as can be seen in the example of creative piracy, which was widespread in the pre-Internet era and has almost disappeared in the modern one. Although in most cases of piracy the main motive is economic, which leads to great losses for copyright holders and authors, not all methods are unequivocally harmful. For example, activist piracy is a form of social protest and allows to demonstrate one’s dissatisfaction with the policy of rights holders through the practice of “wrong” consumption; the archival motive often works in the “gray zone” of copyright and allows preservation of those products, the rights to which were handed over to the rights holders that actually no longer exist.

KEYWORDS

video games, pirated content, transformative societies, motives for the spread of piracy, information age

Introduction

The digital way of representing data has led to great changes in our understanding of the world. The very nature of the digital product, which reduces the information of most media known to us to arrays of binary data, has become a real revolution in the manipulation of this information. The technical reproducibility of a certain work was not a problem even before the digital era, but digitization became another step to simplify and speed up the process. One of the simplest digital data manipulation operations is copying. And where there is unlicensed copying of intellectual property, there piracy, that is, the unauthorized distribution of works that are protected by copyright, appears (Yar, 2005).

D. Todd, M. Aiken, C. Mc Mahon, C. Haughton, L. O’Neill, E. O’Carroll, E. de Kosnik, N. Fukugawa and others wrote about the social nature of piracy. D. Todd’s book “Pirate nation” talks about the features of modern copyright, the authors of laws in the field of which are not so much interested in the fight for authors’ rights as in the opportunity for copyright holders to receive money from old projects as long as possible. Another important topic analyzed by the author is the topic of piracy as a cultural

practice, which includes, for example, remixing in popular music (Todd, 2011).

In the article by M. Aiken, C. Mc Mahon, C. Haughton, L. O’Neill, E. O’Carroll, which is dedicated to the social impact of cybercrime, one of the chapters is devoted to digital piracy. They emphasize that this is the most common type of cybercrime, punishment for which is considered improbable, and the crime is not felt to be immoral. In addition, the rights holders themselves show inconsistency in condemning such activities. An example is the behavior of the rights holders of the series “Game of Thrones” in 2013, when they said that such popularity of piracy is “better than the Emmys”, and two years later, when the series was at the peak of popularity, they sent official letters to users who were suspected of downloading episodes of the series (Aiken *et al.*, 2015).

E. de Kosnik draws attention to the changing nature of digital platforms, which are constantly modified, becoming incompatible with their predecessors. In more than forty years of the existence of public computers, a lot of software appeared that could have disappeared if it were not for the efforts of archivist fans. The fact is that formally many of these saved products were copied in violation of copyright. Another topic raised by the author is a col-

lapse, a crisis of incredible force that can destroy the existing digital infrastructure. And in this case, digital archivists could come in handy, bringing many intellectual property products back to life (*Kosnik de, 2019*).

M. Tsotsorin addresses the topic of piracy in video games and claims that with the advent of accessible Internet, the level of piracy for popular titles reaches about 90%, but a well-balanced approach to combating piracy could solve this problem (*Tsotsorin, 2012*). An illustration of the solution to such a problem is the Japanese experience of combating piracy, which N. Fukugawa writes about in the article "How Serious is Piracy in Videogame Industry" (2011). In the article, the author conducts a survey among users of portable consoles and comes to the conclusion that piracy does not have a significant impact on the sale of original games – despite the fact that about 40% of respondents know about the methods of piracy of consoles, only 5% resort to piracy. However, here it is worth noting that console platforms, which traditionally suffer less from piracy than computer platforms, were taken into account.

The digital society of Ukraine clearly demonstrates how transformations in society and public consciousness are reflected in the attitude towards the consumption of pirated content. Back in 2013, Ukraine was a priority pirate country on the list of the United States Trade Representative Office. This list demonstrates the unsatisfactory state of work regarding the protection of intellectual property and the implementation of anti-piracy measure (*Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2013*). This list is updated from time to time, and as of 2021, some progress has already been noted in our country combating the problem of piracy (*Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2021*). After all, from 2013 to 2021, several large Internet resources that allowed the distribution of pirated content were closed here, the most famous of which was ex.ua. In addition to the direct fight against pirated resources, the creation of a legal base, etc. (which is written about, for example, by V. Bykovnia, D. Marits, O. Gubanov, etc.) there were certain shifts in public consciousness, the development of which will be followed in this article.

Research methods

To achieve the purpose, the author used the method of diachronic analysis, which allowed to single out the stages of the appearance and distribution of pirated video productions in the post-Soviet space and, at the same time, to track the meaningful changes in social reality and public consciousness in these territories. Previous works of the author of this article (2016), as well as studies by D. Botz, P. Vasiak and M. Reunanen (2015), Good (2015), and A. Lysaichuk (2022) served as the source and methodical basis for the research.

The use of statistical data on the ratio of Internet users and the world population (World Internet Users Statistics) shows the natural increase of the official and pirated video production markets and allows us to consider the natural factors of the decrease in piracy.

The typology method made it possible, based on the consideration of certain examples of piracy in the field of video games, to identify four main motives that form different types of piracy and lead to changes in social consciousness regarding interaction with a product that is protected by copyright. This classification does not divide the object into equal parts, rather these elements of the classification overlap with each other to some extent.

Results and Discussion

To study any transformation in culture means to trace certain changes over time. The mid-1980s should be taken as a reference point for the study of Ukrainian consumers, because it was then that the first video games appeared on the territory of Ukraine. Even at the level of creation, a large number of video games were "clones", that is, games that copied already known projects from other platforms. However, at the distribution level, most of these products were not commercial and were distributed within the circle of enthusiasts who could afford to purchase or assemble a suitable computer (*Maliuk, 2016*). In addition to developments in the field of home computers, many of the existing platforms were based on the popular British ZX Spectrum computer. Obviously, the games that were imported unofficially for these platforms from the West were copyrighted. Audio cassettes were usually the media for such computers. Even without specialized equipment, having only a household two-cassette tape recorder, the user could copy licensed programs. Some of the programs were protected from copying, but most of such systems were eventually disabled by technical specialists. In the conditions of a planned economy, judging by the situation with video games, no one was interested in establishing market relations with foreign publishers, which led to the fact that piracy was the main way to get acquainted with products outside the "iron curtain". On the other hand, if the internal product was distributed for money, it was most likely done unofficially, and the product itself could still be copied. For the first Ukrainian gamers, piracy was the norm for intellectual property consumption.

In case the digital product was copy-protected, specialists removed this protection. Removing copy protection was often a non-trivial task and a source of pride for those who hacked the program. Very often, such a person or group of people would add a cracktro to the cracked product – a screen that precedes the launch of the main product which displays a message left by the hacker. It was a kind of signature of the author, their message to colleagues, competitors and users. This practice was spread all over the world. D. Botz, P. Wasiak and M. Reunanen consider this phenomenon as a communicative practice popular in the 1980s and 1990s (*Reunanen M. et al., 2015*). Not having access to a licensed product, Ukrainian users had the experience of interacting with a similar phenomenon. Sometimes such screens did not simply display the name of a group of enthusiasts who had overcome copy protection, but represented certain dynamic scenes that used advanced display techniques and had a distinct aesthetic value. This can be compared to graffiti on culturally significant objects, which serve as both a comment on the object (a cultural product) and a self-worth message. Copyright infringement occurs not only at the level of copying the program. Another common culturally significant practice is, for example, copying famous Hollywood screen images in games. The most famous examples of such a violation can be found in Japanese video games of the 1980s. For example, the iconic game designer H. Kojima not only used the visual image of Snake Plissken, the hero of director J. Carpenter's films "Escape from New York" and "Escape from Los Angeles", for his Metal Gear series of games, but also borrowed the name and some habits from it. The American director was offered to go to court, but J. Carpenter, who liked H. Kojima's work, decided not to do so (*Good, 2015*). For the late Soviet period, an

example of such infringement can be found in the large number of video games on the BK-0010-01 computer, where a loading screen of games could exploit similar images. At the same time, the content of the games was often original and related to these images only at the level of associations (for example, Indiana Jones in the main menu and the game itself is about a journey through a labyrinth). Similar techniques that were used in computer games on various platforms in the 1980s and early 1990s still wait their turn to be studied.

The problem of piracy in developing countries in those days was not only the lack of agreements with rights holders, but also the level of income of the population. We do not find a single developed country on the United States Trade Representative's list of countries of concern. The most developed country in such lists is China, the presence of which can be explained by the complexity of the procedures of foreign games' reaching the market through official channels, when there is a great demand for them. In the 1990s, there were severe crises in the post-Soviet countries, and few people could afford licensed games, although they appeared on the market. Licensed games were in collector's boxes with a number of bonuses and an increased price. In fact, it was an attribute of prestigious consumption that was not available to most people, which is why pirated video games were very popular in the 1990s.

At that time, compact discs became the main means of storing and transmitting large volumes of information. Like an audio cassette, it was easy to copy discs at home. If we consider the situation in Ukraine, we can see that the licensed product gets on the shelves of stores in big cities, but this product is premium one – the games in the boxes cost a lot of money. In addition to the disc itself, such a box often contained souvenirs related to the game and a paper version of the manual. Piracy was able to become a convenient and cheap alternative to the official delivery of game products at the end of the last century, because the discs did not have any additional materials, plus the absence of the need to pay to developers made the cost of such a product minimal for pirates. It was simply unprofitable for official publishers to publish most of the games, so this niche was occupied by pirates.

Familiarity with post-Soviet thematic press and television programs of the 1990s gives a clear idea of the degree of use of pirated products. Among the official console titles, pirated copies like the Kenga and Dendy can be seen, and if you have come across one of these titles, chances are the other one should not be in the release, as they are actually both clones of the Nintendo's Famicom console that were made by competing companies. Distributor of the Dendy, Steepler, had considerable media influence. In addition to the Russian-language popular magazines "Dendy – the new reality" and "The Great Dragon", television also contributed to the spread of this console. This pirated console was advertised on state TV channels, and even more, on UT-2, for example, the program "Everyone Plays" was broadcast, the name of which coincides with the Dendy slogan, and the mascot of the program was a gray elephant, just as the mascot of the Dendy. Not only games officially released on the Famicom could be seen on the air of this TV program, but also Chinese unlicensed products, such as Mortal Kombat, which was never officially released on this console.

In addition to not being able to purchase a licensed game, most players were not aware of whether they were using a licensed or pirated product. A number of pirated products were labeled as licensed, and some of the pirates even copied the designs of the original editions.

Another factor in the spread of piracy is the availability of a translation into a language that users understand. Games on consoles Nintendo Famicom (Nintendo Entertainment System in America), Sega MegaDrive (Sega Genesis in America), etc. did not require much translation because most of them did not have a complex plot and the gameplay was intuitive, however, games for later consoles and personal computers often contained a complex plot that was impossible to understand without translation. Another factor in the popularity of such products was promptness of a release of the localized version, while the release of an official edition with translation could be delayed. The speed factor also played a negative role, because some projects that needed to be released as soon as possible did not receive a high-quality translation.

Sometimes pirated games did not match the content of the original game. At a certain point, a trend appeared for "creative" translations that changed the plot of the game. Usually, such translations had a humorous, parodic character. An example of such a game is the remake of Neverhood, which is known under the name "Ne-ver-v-hudo" ("Do not believe in bad", by the Kharkiv team "Dyadyushka Rysyoch". Over time, this trend was preserved for licensed products, an example of which is video games based on the so-called "goblin" (as the nickname of the most famous "translator") translation. But not every "creative" translation is pirated. Here we can mention an alternative translation of the Wildlife Park game called "Melkiy snegir solit 2 kg" ("Small Snowbird Salts 2 kg") – the zoo manager received an absurdized plot with an obvious allusion to the second part of the spy thriller Metal Gear Solid by Konami, which was published by "Russobit-M".

Publishing video game mods was another way for pirates to release the same popular game multiple times. Back in the days of consoles, pirate developers from China created "hacks", i.e. modified versions of games, for popular games, replacing their characters with characters from movies, video games and TV shows popular at that time. Sometimes pirates went even further and created their own video games on platforms for which the original products were not released. One famous example of this approach is the creation of a whole series of low-quality Mortal Kombat clones for the Nintendo Entertainment System console, which was originally released on the later Sega Genesis platform. However, pirate developers did not always spend a lot of effort to create a new game. Some popular games had tools for their own modification and creation of new content "out of the box". Fans created a lot of modifications, and such projects were interesting for pirates. In most cases, such projects did not have any goals other than to increase publishers' profits, but the case of the modification of the Ghost Recon game called "Operation Galicia", which demonstrated the developers' fantasies about Russia's war against Ukraine, stands out from the rest for its ideological content.

It is worth noting the fact that some large game studios in the post-Soviet space, for example, GSC Game World and "Akella", began precisely with the creation of

pirated content (*Lysaichuk, 2022*) It should be accepted that the history of video games in developing countries at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries was inextricably linked with piracy.

Regarding the reaction of developed countries to the situation with piracy in developing countries, a textbook example was the measures taken against the distributors of counterfeit products – a bunch of pirated discs confiscated from manufacturers are destroyed by special equipment. An example of another approach is formulated during B. Gates' speech, which he expressed speaking at the University of Washington: "As long as they're going to steal it, we want them to steal ours. They'll get sort of addicted, and then we'll somehow figure out how to collect sometime in the next decade" (*Todd, 2011*). Microsoft follow this policy to this day, not preventing users from having non-activated versions of Windows. In this sense, the year 2000 became a turning point for the Ukrainian market of licensed products, because it was then that the "Buka" company agreed with the rights holders on the sale of games in the post-Soviet space in the form of cheap "jewel" boxes, that is, in ordinary cases for CDs. A. Lysaichuk claims that the game in the USA cost 50 dollars and the publisher received 20-25 dollars from it, while in order to master the new market, publishers had to reduce the cost of the game by ten times. Taking into account the profit of the "Buka" company, American publishers received only 20 cents from one game. At first glance, such a strategy seems unjustified, but taking into account the level of wages in Ukraine in 2000 (230 UAH, and the exchange rate of the dollar was 5.45 UAH), the sale at the full American price could allow a licensed game to be sold only to customers that had already found a way to get boxed versions of games. Because of low regional prices, publishers tried to get their share of the market to stop the hegemony of piracy (*Lysaichuk, 2022*).

However, even with the policy of regional prices, it was difficult for official publishers to conquer the market. Pirates often resorted to tricks, making the process of copying games even cheaper. For example, in case a licensed game was released on two or three discs, pirates could archive and sometimes remove certain content so that the game could be recorded on as few discs as possible. The content that suffered because of this was the sound and videos, which were sometimes completely removed. When players had an alternative to these limited editions in the form of regionally priced official editions that contained exactly the full content, pirates gained a competitor. However, promptness and relevance of requests were on the side of disk pirates. Alternative methods of product distribution, such as shareware, did not work in developing countries on the edge of the 20th and 21st centuries. The peculiarity of this distribution is that the player is given a demo version of the game, and everything else is unlocked after purchase. However, this required a bank card and access to the Internet or at least an international telephone line. Players usually did not have such opportunities, so these distribution schemes did not become popular in developing countries.

The availability and popularity of the Internet, the increase in data transfer speeds and the emergence of a large number of affordable or even free media products from rights holders in the form of promotions to attract new audiences make a significant part of licensed products more attractive than pirated ones. With the development of high-speed Internet, the disk format began to lose

relevance. Now there is no point in stamping modifications of famous games and making money from it. Pirate publishers lost their assets. However, piracy did not disappear, but passed into a network form, which is more difficult to fight, because now the responsibility for distributing the product is not a specific publisher, but anyone who downloads an unlicensed product.

As K. Doctorow points out, many media tycoons claim that "poor countries simply lack a 'copyright culture' that can be strengthened through education and coercion", but in fact such a strategy does not work due to economic reasons – high prices for goods that are protected by the copyright law (*Doctorow, 2011*). In 2011, there were slightly more than 2 billion users with access to the Internet, while as of March 2022, there were 5.3 billion such people (*Internet World Stats, 2022*) and the increase in the number of users can primarily be traced in developing countries. For example, compared to 2000, the increase in users in Africa was 13,220%, in Latin America, where there are also many developing countries, it was 2,851%. For comparison, in North America, which consists of developed countries, the number of users increased by 222% during the same period (*Internet World Stats, 2022*).

With this growth in users in developing countries, there is an obvious increase in piracy. On the other hand, this is an increase not only in piracy, but also in the consumption of licensed products. Despite the industry's reported problems with piracy, especially on personal computers, the video game market continues to grow in revenue. In 2011, the video game industry generated about 75 billion dollars in revenue (*Statista, 2011*) In 2021, this amount is approaching 200 billion dollars (*Mordor Intelligence, 2021*). B. Depoorter notes in the article "What Happened to Video Game Piracy?" that "In light of these numbers, the attempts of video game trade groups to portray video game piracy as an existential threat can be seen as an example of a boy lobbyist crying 'Wolves!'" (*Depoorter, 2015*).

Even though a product that is protected by copyright remains protected for 70 years, video game software becomes obsolete much faster. Many programs, even thirty years old, are very difficult to run on contemporary platforms, moreover, it is a common case that the publishers who owned this intellectual property have disappeared from the contemporary market. This gives rise to the phenomenon of abandonware, which means forgotten software, the distribution of which is formally piracy. Due to the fact that it is almost impossible to officially purchase abandonware (the exception is stocks in warehouses), sites that distribute such software often avoid problems with copyright owners by operating in the "gray zone" of copyright.

In developed countries, the practice of using pirated products is currently spreading as a demonstration of a form of social protest. Sometimes this protest concerns the controversial behavior of developers or their attitude towards users. However, it is still unknown whether such actions were considered successful. Usually, such mass actions are held for large video games, and the number of those who protest in this way against millions of copies of the game is so small that the publishers simply do not notice them. And even in the case of a successful boycott, it is much easier to blame everything on piracy in general than to solve the problem which activists want to raise. A related phenomenon, but without copyright infringement, is review bombing, when users take a game,

write a negative review on it and return money for it. This becomes possible due to the policy of some modern video game distribution platforms – for example, Steam, where a trial period is given, until which money can be returned without unnecessary bureaucratic procedures.

In Ukraine, since the end of the 2000s, video game piracy has taken a more or less unified form in relation to world piracy. Of course, there are translation communities, etc., but with the spread of the Internet and the influence of communities, game translations are becoming not so much a tool of pirates, but a tool of accessibility for a wide audience, because there are many amateur translations, especially for games of small studios that cannot afford full translation, become official, thus ceasing to refer to a product that may infringe copyright.

While copyright experts think about new laws, major video game distribution sites are beginning to use “soft power” on their users, allowing some video games to be picked up for free. Recently, a large number of similar promotions have been observed in the online store Epic Game Store. For the youngest of the big video game distribution platforms, marketers have chosen a tactic to engage their audience by giving them a few free video games a month. Competitors of the Epic Game Store, such as Good Old Games and Steam, sometimes use similar promotions. The Good Old Games site has its own way of “soft power”, which is designed for people who fundamentally do not want a video game with DRM (digital rights management) systems. Another way to distribute access to video games is through sites selling digital keys for the above sites. Keys are usually cheaper than video games even with a discount and regional prices, while services such as Humble Bundle donate part of the money received from sales to charity, which can serve as an additional factor of attracting a specific audience to purchase a licensed product. Steam, in turn, offers regional prices and the largest functionality of the store.

Having analyzed the studied examples of video game piracy, we can identify four main motives that shape different types of piracy and lead to changes in social consciousness regarding interaction with a product that is protected by copyright. This classification does not divide the object into equal parts, rather these elements of the classification overlap with each other to some extent. These motives are sorted by prevalence from most to least common.

1. **Economic motive.** The most common motive, which to one degree or another applies to any case of piracy. Money is lost by the authors, the corporations they serve, in return users may receive a not so good product, or this product will be tied to an online service, which usually makes the game unavailable in case of closure.

2. **Archivist motive.** A motive that works in the “grey zone” of intellectual property, which allows preservation of digital projects that are not distributed by modern commercial video game distribution platforms. The subject of archiving can be not only licensed, but also pirated products as important artifacts of the corresponding cultural stage.

3. **Creative motive.** This power allows modifying video games, creating a new product based on them, or modifying an existing one. Developers who value the principles of hacker ethics make it possible to create new content without violating copyright by providing access to game creation tools or even opening its source code. This empowers the fan communities that make their games,

but at the same time allows pirates to sell the product (mods are usually free). Creative piracy can also include pirated translations. The described situation is typical of disc piracy, while today most of the products that would be part of “creative” piracy are legally distributed for free on Internet modding resources.

4. **Activist motive.** It leads to the use of piracy as an expression of protest. There is consumer piracy activism, where disgruntled players “pirate” a video game. The work of hackers who “remove” protection from programs can be considered somewhat activist, somewhat anarchist. But it is worth saying that sometimes such programs represent dangerous files for users, since it is not always clear for what purpose this protection was removed and the files were distributed.

We can observe social transformations that occur through the consumption or creation of pirated content related to the above four driving forces. As for the economic driving force, the statistics show a significant advantage of the concerned developing countries compared to the developed countries (*Statista, 2017*). The demand for such a product creates the prerequisites for the operation of the pirate market and, together with that, forms a specific type of entrepreneurs who work to ensure the market for counterfeit services. However, with the help of the “soft power” of constant promotions with free or very affordable games, there are more and more users who are ready to consciously consume copyrighted goods. According to statistics, 1.96% of the site’s users are Ukrainian users (*StatInvestor, 2022*). If, for example, we compare the situation with Turkey, which has a population almost twice as large, the number of users there is 2.38% of the total number, which is more than the Ukrainian indicators by only 21.4%.

The creative driving force requires additional research on country representation, the authors often do not demonstrate belonging to one or another country or are a collective of like-minded people from different countries. In the past, creative piracy was more common in developing countries and this was due to the need to serve their pirated market, and in the case of video games, as demonstrated in this article, they also resorted to creating television programs that promoted pirated goods. With the advent of accessible Internet, the pirate market has become globalized, focused on original editions, bright ideas and high quality of execution. Unlike economic piracy, creative piracy is not always condemned by copyright holders. Today’s creative pirates, unlike their colleagues from the 1990s, do not demand money for their products. There is an example of the Nintendo corporation forcing the removal of fan-made free games of their franchises (*Craddock, 2021*). On the other hand, in some cases, the authors of similar products can reach agreement with the rights holders on the commercial distribution of their own product. An example of this is the game Black Mesa, which is a commercial remake of Half-Life based on Half-Life 2. Such ambiguity in the attitude of rights holders can put representatives of creative piracy in a difficult position.

The need to archive video games that were abandoned by rights holders or released on non-standard and outdated platforms began to develop as the video game industry developed. Judging by the large number of products that belong to abandonware, the life of many games is much less than the rights that protect them. Video game archivists are a kind of subculture with its own

values, which is forced to exist in parallel with the official video game market. A certain part of it is made up of collectors who actually become pirates only after the game is released to the general public. Although such activity has a local specificity (for example, rare games of national developers are easiest to find in the respective country), it cannot be said that this type of piracy is widespread, for example, only in developed countries. Archivists find their niche wherever there has been a market for video games.

Conclusions

Thus, having studied the history of the distribution of pirated content and methods of combating it using the example of video games, we should note the ambivalent impact of the phenomenon of piracy on sociocultural processes in societies, especially those that radically changed their social structure at the end of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st centuries. In particular, we can see that piracy arose on the basis of the absence of the so-called “copyright culture” in transformed societies allowed individual economic entities to get rich illegally and quickly, but at the same time acted as a massive display of technical intelligence, a creative impulse to create one’s own video content in these societies and the formation of relevant regional markets, and also contributed to the development of many technical talents currently working on digitalization of socio-economic processes around the world.

According to the examples of piracy described in the article, four main motives for its spread are highlighted, namely: economic, activist, archival and creative motives. As demonstrated in the study, these motives shape relevant social patterns and change over time, as can be seen in the example of creative piracy, which was widespread in the pre-Internet era and has almost disappeared in the modern one. Although in most cases of piracy, the main motive is economic, which leads to great losses for copyright holders and authors, not all methods are unequivocally harmful. For example, activist piracy is a form of social protest and allows demonstration of one’s dissatisfaction with the policy of rights holders through the practice of “wrong” consumption; the archival motive often works in the “gray zone” of copyright and allows preservation of those products, rights to which were handed over to the rights holders that actually no longer exist.

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Соціальні трансформації та розповсюдження піратського медіаконтенту на прикладі відеоігор

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У статті досліджено історію поширення піратського контенту та методів боротьби з ним на прикладі відеоігор. Показано амбівалентний вплив явища піратства на соціокультурні процеси в суспільствах, особливо тих, які кардинально змінювали свою суспільну структуру наприкінці ХХ – на початку ХХІ століття. Автор виходить з того, що піратство виникло на ґрунті відсутності в суспільствах, що трансформувалися, т.зв. «культури копірайту», дозволило незаконно та швидко збагатитися окремим економічним суб'єктам, але одночасно виступило масовим проявом технічної кмітливості, творчим імпульсом до створення власного відеоконтенту у цих суспільствах та формування відповідних регіональних ринків, а також сприяло розвитку багатьох технічних талантів, які зараз працюють над цифровізацією суспільно-економічних процесів по всьому світу.

За описаними в статті прикладами піратства виділено чотири основні мотиви його поширення – економічний, активістський, архівістський та креативний. Як продемонстровано у дослідженні, ці мотиви формують відповідні соціальні патерни, змінюються з часом, що видно на прикладі креативного піратства, яке було поширене в доінтернетну епоху і майже зникло в сучасну. Хоча у більшості випадків піратства головним мотивом є економічний, що призводить до великих втрат правовласників та авторів, не усі способи є однозначно шкідливими. Приміром, активістське піратство є формою соціального протесту і дозволяє через практику «неправильного» споживання демонструвати своє незадоволення політикою правовласників; архівістський мотив часто працює у «сірій зоні» авторського права та дозволяє зберегти ті продукти, права на які опинилися у правовласників, яких фактично вже не існує.

Ключові слова: відеоігри, піратський контент, трансформаційні суспільства, мотиви поширення піратства, інформаційна епоха.

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