

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW RESEARCH: FILM & TV PIRACY INCREASING - MORE PIRATES, STEALING MORE FREQUENTLY

Majority of Australian adults support increased regulation of the internet

GOLD COAST – Wednesday, October 15: Research officially released today shows online film and television piracy is increasing in Australia, with 29% of Australian adults admitting to being active pirates.

The study also shows active pirates are increasing their frequency of downloading pirated film and television content.

Lori Flekser, Executive Director of the IP Awareness Foundation, shared findings of the independent study conducted by Sycamore Research and Newpoll, at the 69th Australian International Movie Convention on the Gold Coast with an audience of industry delegates representing cinema exhibition, distribution, production and allied trades.

This national online quantitative study was conducted with Australians aged 12-64, from June – August 2014.

What does the research tell us about the behaviours of Australians in relation to film and television?

- **29% of Australians aged 18-64 are active pirates**, compared with 25% in 2013.
- **Of the most active pirates, 55% are downloading pirated movies weekly**, an increase of 20% since 2013.
- **Piracy activity increases with age** (14% of 12-13 year-olds pirate, 36% of 16-17 year-olds). Activity peaks in the 18-24 year-old group, with 54% admitting to actively accessing pirated films and television shows.
- The **majority of Australian adults agree that the internet requires more regulation** (52%) to prevent individuals from downloading or streaming pirated content. Far more 12-17 year-old Australians agree with the proposition than disagree (43% agree/23% disagree).
- The majority of illegal downloaders (68% of 12-17 year-olds and 61% of adults) agree that search engines such as Google and Bing make it easy to find pirated content. **Around half of all Australians agree that search engines such as Google and Bing should take more responsibility for promoting legal content ahead of illegal content.**
- **Australian adults and teens, including active pirates, agree that there is an increasing number of options for people to legally obtain and watch TV series and movies** (adults 72%, adult active pirates 69%, teens 67%, teen active pirates 64%).
- Pirating is still **not the social norm** amongst Australians (despite the assertion that "everyone does it") – 60% of Australian adults and 66% of Australians 12-17 say they have never downloaded or streamed pirated content.
- **73%** of those who would choose piracy as their preferred option for watching a new release movie say that if the pirated version was not available, they would go the cinema (23%) or wait for the film to be available online or on DVD/Blu-ray (50%).



- Piracy still predominantly happens in the home (88% of 12-17 year-olds and 98% of the most active adult pirates). **35% of the most active adult pirates are downloading at work and 20% of pirate teens are downloading or streaming at school.**
- Parental influence is a key factor in the behaviour of Australians aged 12-17. In households where parents are pirating, the children appear likely to do so as well. 85% of kids who don't pirate say their parents have spoken to them about piracy. **Parents have the power to influence teen pirates.**

Flekser says this research shows a disturbing trend towards an increasing disregard for the value of content.

"This builds on what we know of Australia's profile as a nation of avid online pirates. With the issue of copyright reforms now very much on the table, our research reinforces the urgency for a clear legislative framework that guides online behaviours and restricts access to unauthorised or unlicensed content".

"I agree with acclaimed filmmaker Lord David Puttnam, who has said that society should focus on the idea of digital citizenship. He suggests that whilst there is wide discussion about the desired freedoms of those who use the internet, there is little debate about the responsibilities one should take when going online."

Lord Puttnam, who was in Brisbane last week for the Asia Pacific Screen Awards, could not attend the AIMC but filmed a message which played as part of Flekser's presentation, in which he referred to the need for "intelligent legislation, a lot of education, a lot of engagement by the people who use the audio visual media in understanding what its economics are."

"We've got to encourage a respect for copyright and we've got to encourage the sheer self-interest that the audience can develop in making sure that the economic cycle that creates good new material is being funded by the ability to pay for it. If we can do that, we have a future", Puttnam said in the recorded message.

Flekser added: "IP Awareness supports the notion that we all share the responsibility. Industry, government, online businesses, parents, schools, individuals and communities all have a role to play to ensure that the creative industries remain viable and sustainable".

She was joined on stage at the Australian International Movie Convention by two Australian content creators, John Jarratt and Jeremy Sims, both of whom have directed theatrical features for release in Australia in 2015.

In the previous AIMC session Jarratt shared a sneak peek of his new film *Stalker*, shot on the Gold Coast with a local crew and in which he stars and makes his directorial debut. Jarratt said he feared the impact of piracy on the future of Australian independent filmmaking and described the situation as 'urgent'.

"You know it's almost a year since *Wolf Creek 2* played in cinemas and there's still a substantial number of pirates on torrent sites every week downloading it without paying. This film took years to finance and make and it did good box office but it has struggled to recoup money for the investors and the creative team."

"I think people who download films illegally often don't think about the consequences of their actions, like the possibility of investors losing out and then not wanting to risk financing another project and how that can affect jobs of the people who make a living from this business."



Filmmaker Jeremy Sims also lent his voice to the IP Awareness Foundation presentation. His latest theatrical feature, *Last Cab to Darwin* is due for release in August 2015 and as co-writer, director and producer, he has invested a huge amount of time, effort and passion into the project. Like Jarratt, Sims is alarmed by the high rates of piracy in Australia and the impact on the industry.

Sims' film *Beneath Hill 60* was released more than four years ago in Australia but is still being pirated.

"If you contemplate even some of that foregone revenue, it may well equate to the difference between a filmmaker's next feature being funded, or not", said Sims.

"I think parents can do a lot to help by teaching their kids how downloading films and television without paying for them threatens people's livelihoods and an industry's wellbeing and is basically just stealing. That's the message I teach my kids".



Note to Editors

More than 600 respondents aged 12-17 and almost 1200 respondents aged 18-64 participated nationally in this quantitative study. The research was conducted online with national coverage, anonymous participation and upweighted to ABS data to be representative of the total population.



About IP Awareness

IP Awareness Foundation is a not-for-profit industry initiative committed to raising awareness about the value of screen content and the impact of piracy through research, consumer campaigns and education.

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