

**EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON
THE PROLIFERATION OF DIGITAL MEDIA PIRACY
IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE**

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Exploring the Impact of Technology on the Proliferation of Digital Media
Piracy in Harare, Zimbabwe

BY

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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER
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Abstract

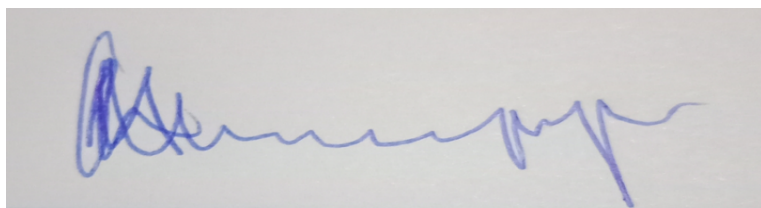
This dissertation seeks to examine the impact that increased access to technology has had to making copyright infringement easier, and how it has allowed piracy to become more rampant in less economically developed countries (LEDCs), with Harare, Zimbabwe as a case study. This study will take into account the socio-economic reasons for the rise of piracy and how they relate to the technological reasons for the prevalence of this phenomenon.

By using findings given to use by through the use of an anonymous questionnaire and briefly interviewing some anonymous content creators in Zimbabwe, this study seeks to understand how increased access to technology is a double edged sword allowing for easier access and production of media, which unfortunately includes accessing works illegally, in a way that disenfranchises creators. This study finds that people's attitudes to piracy are very relaxed, mostly due to bad economic conditions, and a lack of proper law enforcement, as examined by the strain theory of deviance and the technological acceptance theory.

key words: piracy, copyright infringement, illegal

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my original work except where sources have been cited and acknowledged. The work has never been submitted, nor will it ever be submitted to another university for the award of a degree



28/03/2025

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I would also like to thank my supervisor, Mr. Lorence Dhlakama, who served as a sounding board for the ideas and structure presented in this dissertation.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, my Mum and Dad, and most importantly, my little sister, Anisha. Thank you for watching movies and TV shows with me, and I look forward to watching many more in the future.

Also special mention goes to my friends, especially the SU movie night gang. Discovering eclectic cinematic offerings with you has been the highlight of my college life.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

IP - Intellectual property

TV - television

MEDC - more economically developed country

LEDC - less economically developed country

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Copyright.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Dedication.....	vi
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	vii
Table of Contents.....	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the Study.....	2
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	2
1.4 Research Objectives.....	2
1.5 Research Questions.....	3
1.6 Assumptions/Hypotheses.....	3
1.7 Significance of the study.....	4
1.8 Delimitation of the study.....	5
1.9 Limitation of the study.....	5
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	7
2.1 Introduction.....	7
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	7
2.3 Relevance of the Theoretical Framework.....	12
2.4 Summary.....	13
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	14
3.1 Introduction.....	14
3.2 The Research Design.....	14
3.3 Population and Sampling.....	15
3.4 Data Collection Tools.....	15
3.5 Data Collection Procedure.....	16
3.6 Analysis and Organisation of Data.....	16
3.7 Ethical considerations.....	17
3.8 Summary.....	17
CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION.....	18
4.1 Introduction.....	18
4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis.....	18
Demographic information of respondents.....	18
Technological Access.....	21
Media Consumption Habits.....	23

Motivation for Piracy.....	25
Legality and attitudes towards piracy.....	32
4.3 Discussion and Interpretation.....	34
4.4 Summary.....	36
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	39
5.1 Introduction.....	39
5.2 Discussion.....	39
5.3 Conclusions.....	39
5.4 Implications.....	40
5.5 Recommendations.....	41
5.6 Future Research.....	42
List of Figures.....	43
References.....	45
Appendices.....	47
Appendix 1: Informed consent statement.....	47
Appendix 2: Questionnaire.....	48

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, the digital art landscape has experienced an unprecedented influx of production. The increased accessibility of technology and the widespread use of the internet have revolutionized the creation and distribution of all forms of art. As a result, anyone can now write a book, record a song, make a movie, create graphic art, or even program a video game. The proliferation of internet-connected hardware—such as smartphones, laptops, smartwatches, smart TVs, and other smart home appliances—has made accessing art easier. Additionally, the rise of software programs like streaming platforms, video sharing services, music and audio sharing sites, social media applications, and online libraries has further facilitated this access. Tools like VPNs have expanded access to otherwise restricted work, allowing it to reach a wider audience.

While technological advancements enable media to reach a global audience, they also increase the risk of unauthorized distribution. Despite copyright protections, the challenge of policing the vast internet leads to media being shared and accessed in less regulated corners, resulting in increased instances of copyright infringement, commonly known as piracy. This study examines the rise of digital media piracy in low-income economies, with a focus on film, television, software, music, and books, using Harare, Zimbabwe as a case study. It explores the impact of distributing works local and international works illegally, investigates the reasons for its prevalence, and considers potential solutions for policing online content distribution while facilitating legal access.

1.2 Background of the Study

In the information age that we are currently living in, sharing media has become easier than ever. The steps taken to get media from one person to another have become shorter and easier. This means that it is possible to cut out the “middleman” when getting content, which unfortunately, more often than not, means cutting out the holders of intellectual property holder, whether this is the original creators, the financiers, arts and culture committees, or agencies and representatives of artists, this leaves all of these people at a disadvantage when it comes to gaining financial compensation for creating artworks or other forms of media and software. This leaves local arts spaces stifled and severely underfunded. However, a hypothesis that the issue is much larger and much more nuanced than just not wanting to pay fairly for access to this content or services, or simply wanting to break the law. This study seeks to understand the socio-economic factors that lead to copyright infringement.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Digital media piracy poses a problem primarily because the intellectual property rights of creatives are not being respected, especially the IP rights of local artists as they are the ones who suffer the most. It ends up destroying creative industries. When intellectual property rights are not enforced, artists can no longer afford to create art which then affects their ability to continue creating, which in turn, means that the Zimbabwean arts industry suffers.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To investigate the socio-economic factors that lead to the rise of piracy.
2. To investigate how the current technological landscape has allowed for media piracy across different platforms and different media.

3. To assess how digital piracy affects content/media creators.
4. To assess current legal measures being taken to combat copyright infringement and how effective they have been so far.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the socio-economic factors that drive people to piracy?
2. How has the current technological landscape facilitated the increase in the rise of media piracy?
3. How has piracy affected the creative output and livelihoods of people involved in the arts industries?
4. Have current legal measures been effective in reducing or altogether eradicating piracy?

1.6 Assumptions/Hypotheses

1. People lower on the socio-economic ladder are more likely to engage in piracy.
2. Piracy has been facilitated by the increased access to technology.
3. Increased media piracy has severely affected the livelihoods of the creatives in this country.
4. Current legal frameworks that exist have not been all that effective in combating piracy.

1.7 Significance of the study

The significance of this study is to highlight the intentions behind copyright infringement and piracy in Zimbabwe. This study seeks to examine the underlying issues behind piracy by

considering the socio-economic factors that lead to piracy and the technological factors that inevitably enable it. This study also seeks to examine how this issue affects creatives in Zimbabwe and their input when it comes to releasing content that could easily be digitised and shared across the internet. This study aims to do the following:

- Examine regulatory frameworks and how best to use them to assist policy makers and other law enforcement officials to help curb issues related to piracy. By shedding light on the mechanics of piracy, it can be used to efficiently combat the issues that cause piracy and how best to address them.
- Address issues with local creators as they are the biggest group affected by having their work consumed through improper channels and thus, lose out on potential revenue. This could lead the rights of various creative people such as filmmakers, authors, musicians, software developers, etc to be sufficiently compensated for their work when it is put out.
- Potentially guide how technology is used in the future and how to adequately develop it to protect from the risks posed by piracy. Content and media hosted on certain sites, may not have the best protections and could cause significant digital harm to users, such as downloading embedded malware, identity theft, unauthorised location sharing, and so on.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The study will be mainly focused on Harare, as it is the central hub of Zimbabwe and the centre of most of these enterprises. The urban setting makes it perfect for exploring just how intricate the web of piracy goes. There is more traffic in terms of customers, easier access to the internet and other related technologies and there is a wider market. People in the centre of Harare are the ones looking for software, music, books, TV shows and movies. This study

will focus on the prevalence of this issue from the late 2010s to present day and will possibly examine and changes in trends due to the COVID-19 pandemic, changes within the political space within Zimbabwe, the phasing out of the Zimbabwean bond dollar and the introduction of the new Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) currency, and other such factors. This study will also examine how the proliferation of piracy has been facilitated by changing technological trends globally and within Zimbabwe.

1.9 Limitation of the study

This study will be heavily limited geographically, mainly focused on Harare in Zimbabwe, and may not present a definitive representation of what goes on in other regions in and around Zimbabwe, even in countries with similar economic, political, social, or demographic structure to Zimbabwe. Also, as Harare is mostly urbanised, it may not accurately reflect the patterns of piracy in rural areas. Resource limitations will not allow a holistic view of piracy across Zimbabwe. Another limitation this study may face is that it very heavily relies on good faith participation of the participants, meaning that there is no way of proving that people will be honest about their participation in an illegal endeavour. Some people may exaggerate or underplay their participation in piracy. Another limitation presents this study are the rapid and at times, almost instantaneous changes of technology. New trends may or may not come out by the time this study is completed.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The issue of digital media piracy is prevalent within Zimbabwe due to various socio-economic factors. With Harare ranking as the 3rd most expensive African city to live in (Agbetiloye, 2024), people may not see media such as books, movies, music, and software, as being priority purchases despite these things being used in everyday life for education, work, and in some cases, leisure. In coming up with a theoretical framework for this study, it is important to consider said socio-economic factors and any other relevant reasons for digital piracy, the kinds of media that are most often pirated, and how media piracy ultimately affects both creators and consumers.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Over the years, there has been an attempt to study the phenomenon of copyright infringement. The main consensus is that it usually is most prevalent in emerging economies (Karaganis, 2011; Eckstein & Schwarz, 2014). Zimbabwe being a country that is considered a “low-income country” and an “emerging economy”. We see that this issue of illegally obtaining media is exacerbated by the economic hardships that people face. In fact, studies have shown that cybercrime is prevalent in lower income countries due to a lack of funds to invest in cybersecurity and a lack of proper cyber protection laws (Ghelerter, Wilson, Welch, & Rusk, 2022; Świątkowska, 2020). This means that the issue of digital piracy is a lot harder to police properly in a country like Zimbabwe. There may not be adequate resources to really look into the issue if it is as prevalent as this study hypothesises.

In order to really understand why piracy is such a big issue, we need to look at what would compel someone to try to illegally obtain media. We can use the example of music. In the late

1990s and early 2000s, music piracy became increasingly common, leading to billion-dollar losses within the global music industry. In 1999, the global music industry made \$25 billion dollars, but made less than that in the mid-2010s due to piracy. However, in the mid-2010s, as streaming began to gain traction, it significantly reduced the frequency of music piracy and the industry began to see profits once again. The biggest contributor was Spotify, a Swedish music streaming platform that was launched in 2006, and subsequently introduced to the United States of America in 2011 and became available worldwide in the mid-2010s (Hern, 2021). Spotify's introduction changed the way music was shared worldwide by making it easily accessible and cheaper, which removed the need for piracy and drastically reduced piracy efforts. Although music piracy is still an issue, it is not as big of an issue as it was before the rise of convenient and cheap streaming services. Nowadays, an upcoming artist doesn't even need to be signed to a major record label to distribute their music. They can easily do so on these platforms; Spotify, SoundCloud, Apple Music, etc.

However, it is still not as easy in other industries, for example the film industry. The only way to get a film on a major streaming platform is to get the backing of a major or minor distributor, which can be hard and almost impossible for young and upcoming filmmakers. Not only that, but unlike music, where you can find almost any album on most major streaming services, movies can only be found on specific streaming services, and sometimes for very specific periods of time. Movies and TV shows can easily be deleted by the streaming services with no warning to creators or audiences, which means that streaming only exclusives can become inaccessible. For example, Netflix, arguably the largest film and TV streaming service available today, will periodically remove or add films to their libraries constantly. Platforms such as the whats-on-netflix.com website can be used to let viewers know what content will no longer be available on the platform after a specific window has

passed. This can incentivise people to then pirate media if it is no longer available in a convenient place.

The other major issue that leads to film piracy is the sheer number of streaming services available today. Ten years ago, if you were looking to watch a movie or TV show, you could almost be guaranteed that it would be available on Netflix, in spite of who the original production company or distribution company behind it. Now, if you want to watch content specifically made under the Walt Disney Studios umbrella, you need a Disney+ subscription. If you want to watch content under the Paramount Studios umbrella, you need a Paramount+ subscription. If you want content made by A24, you need to subscribe to Netflix, Apple TV+, Amazon Prime Video, etc. The number of services and the content they offer is no longer fully localised, and with recent efforts by most of these streaming services to remove password sharing and increase the monthly subscription fees, it leads to most people, especially those in lower income economies, to turn to piracy for their film and TV content.

Another issue that arises in the issue of film piracy is that a lot of the content on these streaming platforms is also geolocked. This means that you can only access certain movies and shows, or in some cases, whole streaming platforms if you are in a certain area. For example, if someone in Zimbabwe wants to watch a Marvel movie, which is under the Disney umbrella, they need a Disney+ subscription. However, they cannot access Disney+ if they are in Zimbabwe. A person, who wants to do so, would have to use a very powerful VPN connected to a powerful internet connection to change or mask their IP addresses. However, most good VPNs cost money to effectively use and these VPN fees are on top of actually paying for the Disney+ service. So, a person in this situation might choose to cut out the middle man, or in this case, both middle men, and simply just use their preexisting data connection to simply torrent the film or download it on another website free of charge.

These are just a few examples of just how far reaching the issue of copyright infringement truly is. It also happens with software, video games and books. For example, the Microsoft suite is constantly pirated every year, and the Adobe Creative Suite is one of the most pirated pieces of software today, with several millions of downloads of jailbroken software being downloaded every year. Other pieces of software like video games, are also pirated to be made available for digital download even in the absence of specific consoles or supporting computer software. Books, especially textbooks, are constantly being shared as PDFs among students globally, due to how expensive they are. This is most prevalent with textbooks meant for higher learning, as they tend to be incredibly expensive and unattainable for most students due to the fact that the majority of university students do not have jobs that pay well enough to purchase these textbooks.

The prevailing theory across the board of why copyright infringement is so rampant is that for many people, they see it as a victimless crime. However, we see that these global costs amount to almost \$230 billion in the film, TV and sports streaming industries, and \$300 million every year to publishers, and costs people over 70000 jobs annually in the United States of America (Vuleta, 2023). Globally piracy affects millions of people worldwide who could potentially see themselves out of jobs due to the billions of dollars' worth of revenue that is supposed to flow to them failing to reach them. It ends up creating an ethical dilemma for most people, they do not piracy media out of genuine malice but the effects of piracy can have malicious effects for those behind the creation of said content. When we specifically consider that minimum wage in Zimbabwe is only \$150 a month, just about 80 cents an hour, we see that for most people, paying \$10 a month for a Netflix subscription is not feasible for most. In fact, according to a Deloitte report published in March 2024 on the changes in digital streaming trends, most people are opting out of streaming services due to increasing prices and oversaturation of streaming media (Westcott, Arbanas, Arkenberg, & Loucks, 2024).

Although this study will be mainly focused on Zimbabwe as a lower income country, it is important to note that lower income countries are not the only perpetrators of this crime. In fact, according to a report published by legaljobs.io in May 2023, the United States of America is the country with the most visits to illegal pirate sites worldwide, with over 17 billion visits to pirate websites. This is closely followed by Russia with 14 billion visits, France and Turkey with 7 billion and Ukraine, the United Kingdom and Indonesia, the country with the largest visits to pirate websites in Asia, with 6 billion each (Vuleta, 2023). Most of these are considered to be more economically developed than Zimbabwe. Therefore, we see that this is not just an issue within lower-income countries or less economically developed countries. However, what this study aims to bring out is to determine whether or not this is caused by disparities in the technological sphere. All of the above-mentioned countries are more technologically developed than Zimbabwe, but Zimbabwe itself is becoming more technologically advanced. Many people now have access to smartphones and now have access to powerful internet connections. It is part of Zimbabwe's Vision 2030, a plan made by the Government of Zimbabwe to become an upper middle-income economy by 2030, to become more industrialised and more technologically advanced (Government of Zimbabwe, 2018). Could there be a day wherein countries like Zimbabwe could one day overtake more economically developed countries (MEDCs) on the global piracy market?

If we take into account all of the above factors, we can come up with several theoretical frameworks that all feed into each other. We can surmise that the lack of availability and accessibility coupled with the increased access to information and technology will lead us to consider the Strain theory and the Technological Acceptance theory. The strain theory is used to explore the correlation between social structure and crime. (Merton, 1938) As mentioned above, the lack of availability of streaming services at affordable or easily accessible geographical locations will lead people to commit piracy. The aspect of the technological

acceptance model comes in when we consider how the model is used. This particular model posits that the acceptance of particular technologies has to do with perceived usefulness and ease of use therefore influencing attitudes, intentions and finally, the actual use of these technologies (Davis, 1989). In the case of this study on digital media piracy, because of the social factors that lead to limited access to copyrighted material, people will be led to engage in copyright infringement and because of that, will recognise the utility of technologies such as smartphones, laptops, computers, and software such as torrents, cloud services and many more. By exploring these frameworks, the researcher hopes that a much clearer understanding of the issue at hand will be achieved.

2.3 Relevance of the Theoretical Framework

By studying the trends of how piracy works globally, it helps this study gain a macrocosmic view of the issue of piracy before diving into the microcosm of the issue of digital media piracy and other related forms of copyright infringement. By closely observing both the hows and the whys of copyright infringement, we can properly understand this phenomenon. The above theoretical framework seeks to explain possible causes of piracy by studying first the potential whys, which is the foundation of any good study, seeking to understand the reason for certain phenomena occurring, and the how, by exploring the potential reasons for how this phenomenon becomes so rampant and widespread throughout the population. By understanding both the strain theory and the technology acceptance model, a clearer picture can be painted to help understand the factors that lead to copyright infringement. These are the foundations of how to properly understand the complex dynamics at play in this situation without unnecessarily vilifying or victimising any of the parties in this situation, in line with the purpose of this study, to hopefully provide a middle ground wherein media creators and IP holders are fairly compensated for their work, consumers can access said media for a

convenient and cheap price, and hopefully, increase accessibility to media through the correct channels and also, institute policies wherein people who infringe on these protections are properly but also fairly prosecuted.

2.4 Summary

The main objective of this chapter was to highlight all the possible theories of why people may be compelled to illegally access media. It also seeks to understand the role that increased industrialisation and technological advancement have provided the necessary physical and digital infrastructure to make this issue more prevalent as time goes on. By applying this framework, this study seeks to properly provide insight into this issue, which is more complex and multifaceted as it may seem at face value.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to outline the methodology of how the phenomenon of digital piracy within Harare, Zimbabwe is to be studied. This methodology seeks to look in depth at the major reasons that people have for illegally copying or using digital content and will include the various tools required to make that possible. By studying the link between technology and piracy, this study seeks to create a thorough investigation of the various factors that ultimately lead to digital piracy and how the ethical, financial and legal implications of copyright infringement.

3.2 The Research Design

This study requires that the researcher use a mixed method approach, that is using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative aspect will involve getting information from stakeholders through questionnaires, interviews, et cetera. This will help to properly understand how piracy affects copyright and intellectual property holders, artists, and media creators in their artistic endeavours, and their income generation. The researcher will also look at people who have made their livelihoods through digital piracy, as there is an influx of people who make their livelihoods out of selling illegally downloaded movies, books, software, games and music. The final group to be observed are those who consume pirated media, and properly examine their motivations and justification for doing so. The quantitative aspect of it will be focused on getting numerical data on the metrics of piracy but conducting surveys. This will allow the study to properly depict a holistic view of the phenomenon.

3.3 Population and Sampling

This study will be focused on three main demographics of who interact with piracy the most:

1. Creatives who make the media or hold the intellectual property rights that are exploited by copyright infringement
2. The people who make money by selling illegally obtained copyrighted material
3. The people who consume and buy copyrighted material.

These will be mainly focused in Harare. The design will primarily use stratified random sampling. By dividing the population into these 3 sections, it will provide a diverse sample across different demographics that will include age, gender, socio-economic class, occupation, and so on, within Harare. The proposed sample size for this study will be approximately 100 participants across age groups and economic strata.

3.4 Data Collection Tools

This study will be facilitated using questionnaires and guided interviews. The questionnaire will provide information from the consumers, presumably the largest of the sample population, and will hopefully allow for full transparency by making the questionnaire anonymous. The questionnaire will seek to examine the major reasons why people would rather go for pirated content obtained through third parties instead of going straight to original creators or through IP holders, the ways in which people pirate content, and just how prevalent this issue is in the cultural zeitgeist within Harare. Interviews will be mostly focused on IP holders and people who make a business out of the issue of piracy. They will

provide a proper insight into the true consequences of piracy and just how it creates ripple effects that end up harming some but benefiting others.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

In order to ensure that the relevant information is collected, a questionnaire in the form of a Google form will be created. This will allow the researcher to collect all relevant information from participants anonymously and in a manner that is not time consuming. The interviews will be done with relevant intellectual property rights bodies, artists and business people in order to gain an insight into the mechanics of piracy, and when consent has been rightfully given, recordings of the interviews will be used to ensure accuracy of given information.

3.6 Analysis and Organisation of Data

Using Google forms, it will be easy to come up with diagrammatic representations of the collected data, allowing for easier analysis of findings. Interviews can be easily transcribed into a document or an excel sheet wherein the relevant information can be extracted and used to substantiate or nullify the hypotheses proposed by this study in its earliest stages. Collectively, these will then be used to come up with proper analyses of this phenomenon.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The researcher will ensure that the study is conducted in a way that does not endanger any of the participants of the study. Due to the sensitive nature, the researcher will make careful considerations to keep all participants anonymous and to avoid using any company names in this study. All participants will be given the right to withdraw their consent at any point during the study. The researcher will also make very careful concessions to not violate any

rules or guidelines put forward by the Africa University Research Council. This study will be conducted with integrity and the utmost respect for all participants.

3.8 Summary

This chapter serves to illustrate the careful steps that will be taken to make this study as factual and accurate as possible. This chapter seeks to give a true picture of the steps that will be taken to approach the study, giving a proper picture of the data collection methods, tools, analysis methods, procedures and ethical considerations. The aim is to make sure that this study gives an accurate picture of piracy in Harare without any biases.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the empirical findings of this study and aims to provide a detailed analysis of data compiled over the past few months, whilst also seeking to interpret if increased and easier access to technology does indeed contribute to the proliferation of digital media piracy in Zimbabwe. This section of this dissertation will be focused on uncovering the major reasons for why piracy is so rampant in Zimbabwe.

4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

Demographic information of respondents.

Majority of the respondents of the questionnaire sent out seem to be within the 18 - 24 age range. This supports the idea that the majority of the people who engage in media piracy are people who are young adults. Young adults tend to be knowledgeable of technology and how to use it effectively. (Cece & Nambeka, 2025)

Age

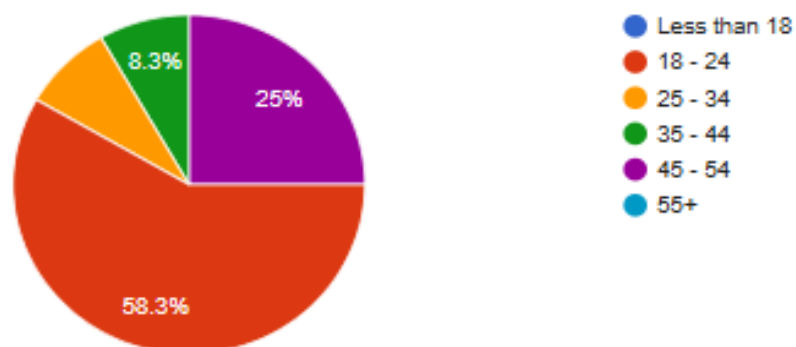


Fig. 4.1

Gender

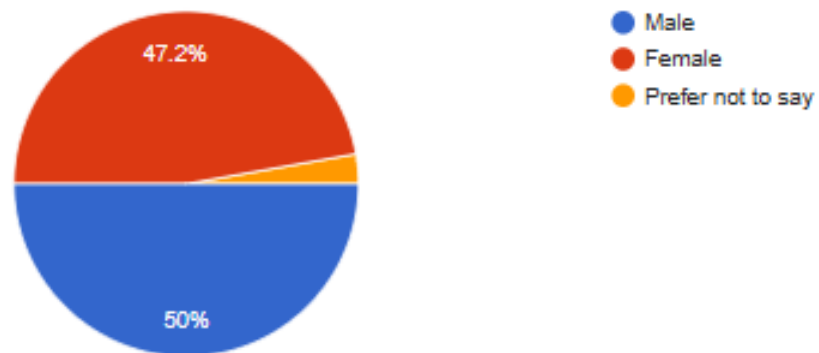


Fig. 4.2

Another trend of note is the economic status of most of the respondents. Most of them are currently enrolled in undergraduate studies, with the next largest group belonging to those who have already finished undergraduate studies, matching the age demographics as well.

Level of Education

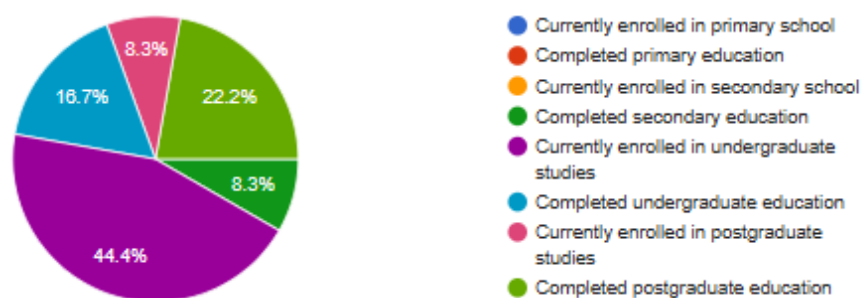


Fig. 4.3

However, what is interesting to note in the study is that most of the respondents are full time employed. It is possible that the percentages are being influenced by people who are employed whilst pursuing their studies, or they have recently graduated and have now entered the workforce full time. 38% of respondents also fall into the \$100 - \$499 income bracket, the largest of the study, with the second largest being less than \$100 a month.

Employment Status

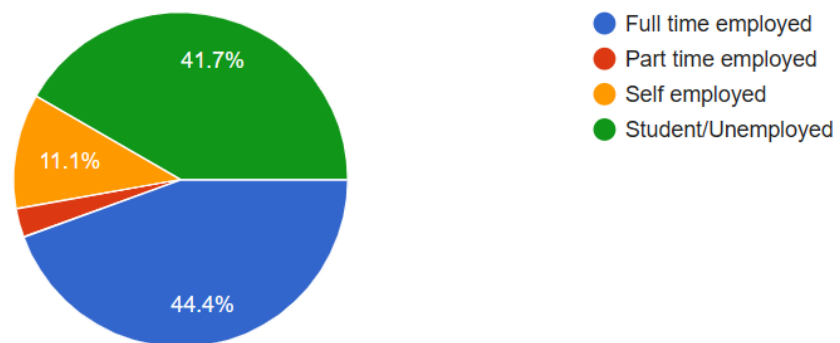


Fig. 4.4

Income Bracket per Month (USD)

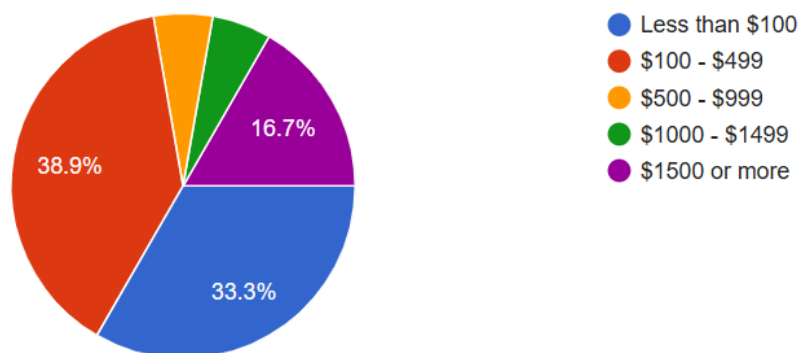


Fig. 4.5

41% of respondents work in media and content creation spaces, with most respondents being creatives in the literature space and the digital art space. The next largest categories consisted of games developers and musicians, with others working in film, visual art, and social media content creation.

Are you a media creator?

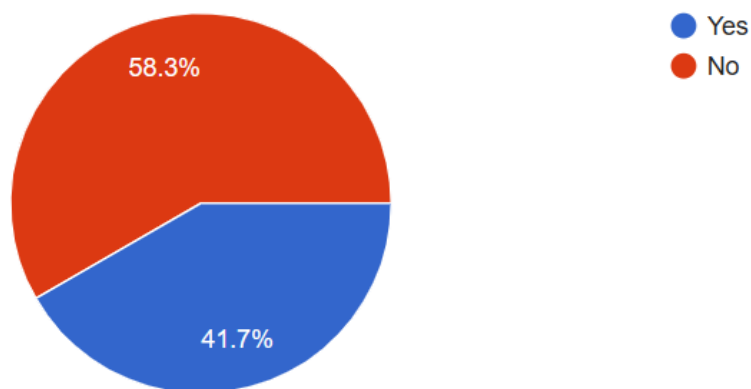


Fig. 4.6

If yes, what type of media do you create? (Select all that apply)

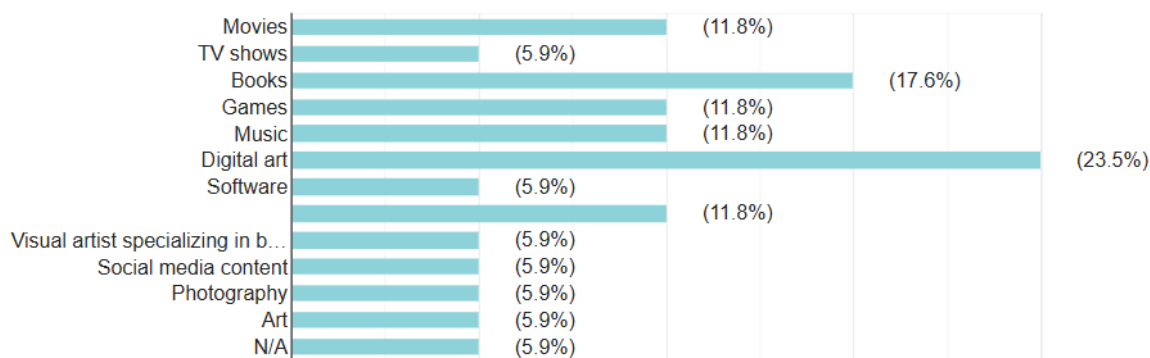


Fig. 4.7

Technological Access

In terms of technological access, the majority of users have access to at least a smartphone, and most have access to a laptop. Some also have access to tablets, smart TVs and desktop computers. Technological access has been steadily increasing in the country with mobile and internet penetration reportedly reaching 97% in 2023. (Zimpapers, 2023)

Which of the following devices do you own or use on a regular basis? *(Select all that apply)*

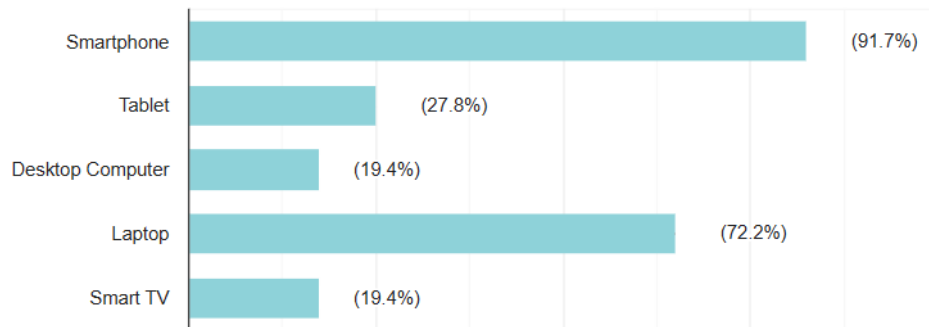


Fig. 4.8

A majority also have access to the internet, primarily via home Wi-Fi, with the next largest group accessing the internet via mobile data, then work and school Wi-Fi.

How do you primarily access the internet?

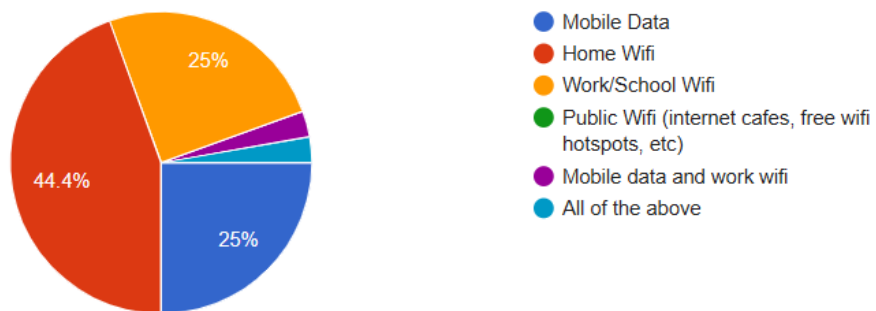


Fig. 4.9

Most have access to between 10 and 49 GB worth of internet data every month. However, a significant number of respondents have access to more than 100 GB per month.

How much data do you have access to every month?

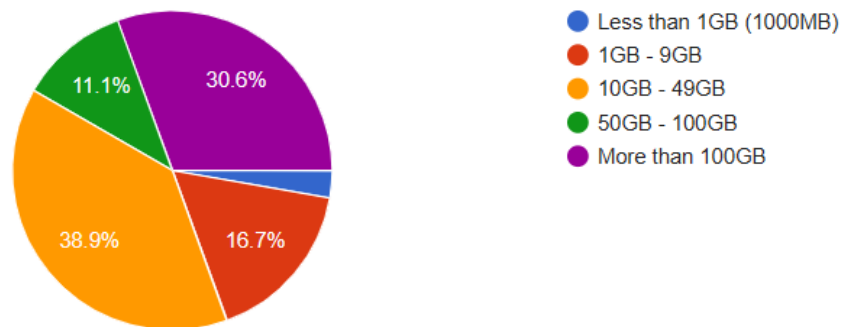


Fig. 4.10

Media Consumption Habits

In terms of media consumption, most of the participants of this study have reported that they consume media often, at least once a week.

How much do you consume digital media?

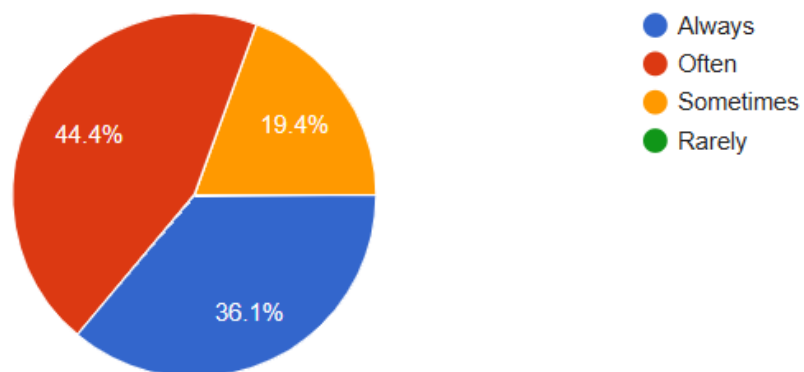


Fig. 4.11

This includes music, which is consumed the most across the board, followed by TV shows, the movies, books, games, digital art, and finally software.

Which type of digital media do you consume the most of? *(Select all that apply)*

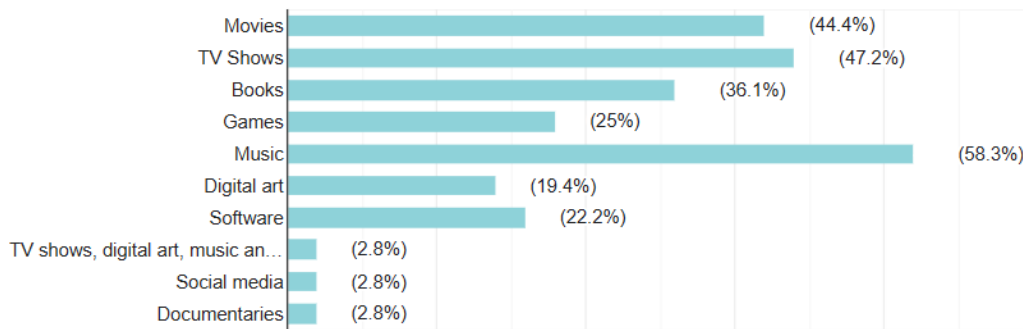


Fig. 4.12

Most media are used for school purposes, with over 69% of respondents using different types of media for school and then entertainment and leisure at 63%, and closely followed by social networking at 58%. There is also a significant portion of people that use media for work and business related ventures as well whilst the last section use media for the news and current affairs.

What do you primarily use digital media for? *(Select all that apply)*

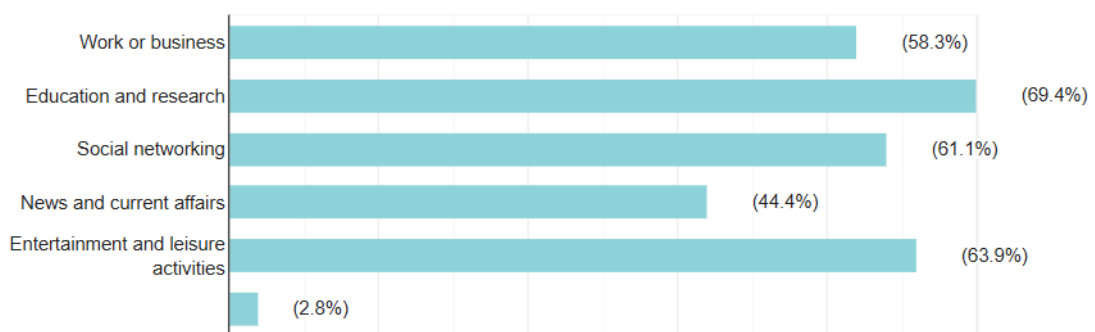


Fig. 4.13

When it came to accessing different forms of media, most reported that their primary source was social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram. It is easy to share files on such

platforms, and as seen below, with most people having access to a smartphone, makes it easier to gain and share media. Legal and free websites are also popular when it comes to sharing or gaining media. 52.8% of respondents claim that they use at least one legal service to gain access to media, such as Netflix or Spotify, but most seem to do so alongside other methods of media access. Torrent sites and file sharing sites seem to be the least popular, however they still have a significant number of users, with at least 25% of respondents admitting to using both at some point.

How do you typically access the digital media you consume? *(Select all that apply)*

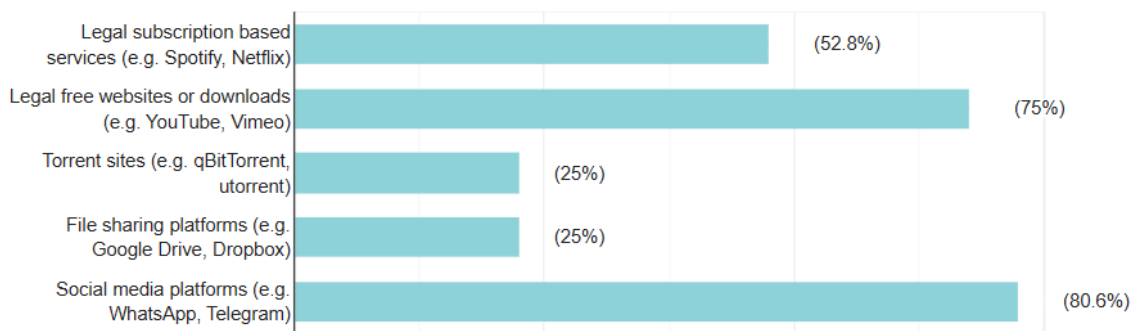


Fig. 4.14

Motivation for Piracy

Within this study, at least two thirds of the respondents have admitted that they have definitely have or may have come into contact with pirated material, with the majority of those who have, saying that they engage with pirated material on a semi-regular basis.

Have you ever knowingly streamed, downloaded or in any way accessed pirated digital media content?

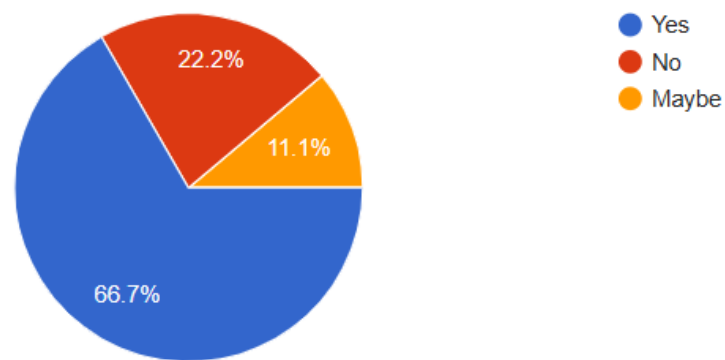


Fig. 4.15

If yes, how frequently you engage with or access pirated content?

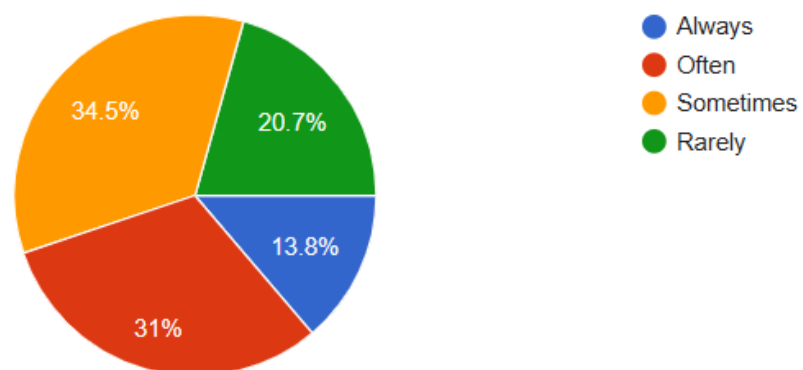


Fig. 4.16

One of the major motivating factors for piracy is limited disposable income. It seems that due to most people earning less than \$500 a month, having money to dedicate to buying media or subscribing to streaming companies is difficult. Another motivator is the lack of availability of certain media that people want to consume. Other reasons include convenience of finding

pirated media, lack of awareness on the legality of piracy, privacy concerns, creative self-expression and peer influence.

What are the major reasons that you have for engaging with pirated media?

(Select all that apply)

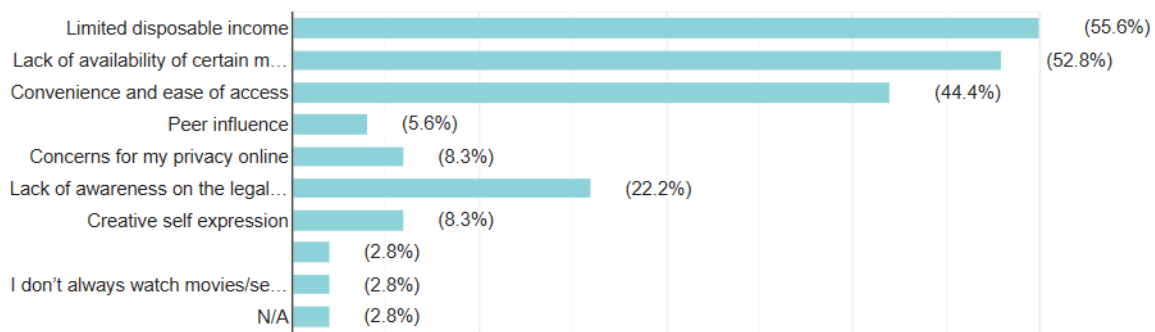


Fig. 4.17

Based on the questionnaire that was sent out, we can come to the following conclusions.

1. Lack of disposable income is one of the major contributing factors to digital media piracy. Most respondents in the study strongly agree that their financial situation is the biggest motivating factor, with most participants also agreeing that if they had more money or if media cost less, they would pirate less. In the following chart representing the answers to the questions, 1 means “Strongly Disagree” and 5 means “Strongly Agree”.

My current economic situation influences my decision to pirate content, as it is more financially viable for me.

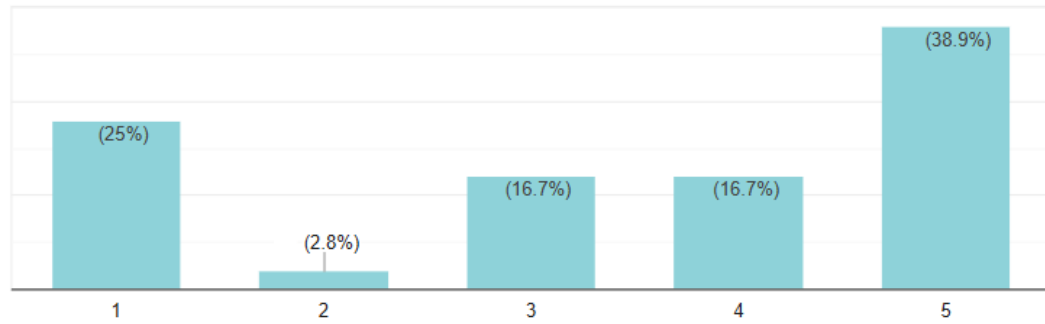


Fig. 4.18

If I had more money, I would pirate less and instead access media through legal channels.

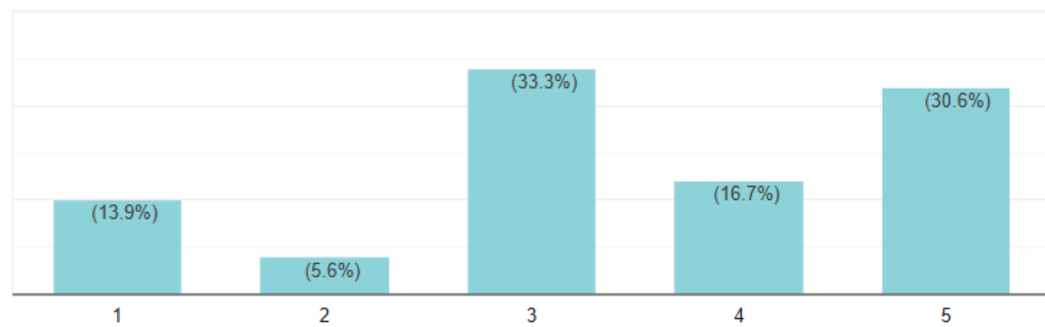


Fig. 4.19

If media cost less, I would pirate less and instead access media through legal channels.

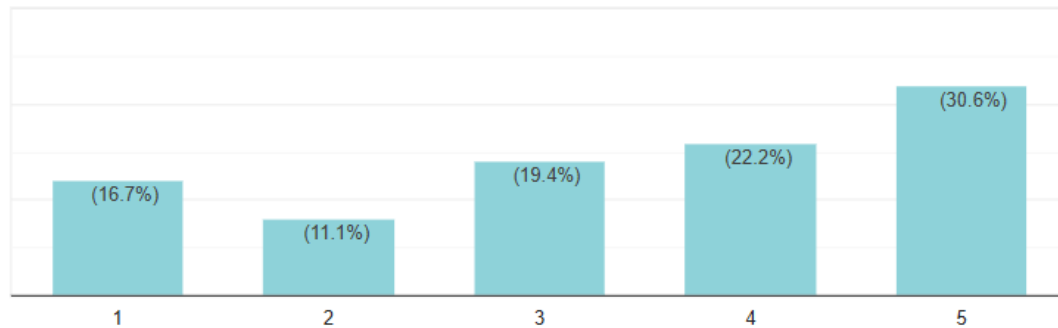


Fig. 4.20

2. Availability and convenience of access to media also influences decisions to pirate media. Most people report that the media they seek out is not available in Zimbabwe. This can include but is not limited to geo-locked content, censorship laws, and lack of a sizable market for creators. For example, certain streaming services such as Hulu are not available in Zimbabwe, therefore, if someone wants to watch a show or movie on that streaming service, they have no choice but to pirate. Most participants have even agreed that if this media was made available, they would pirate less. Others have also agreed that if media were more convenient to find, they would reduce their access to pirated media and instead seek it out through legitimate channels or sources.

Media in Zimbabwe is heavily censored or restricted.

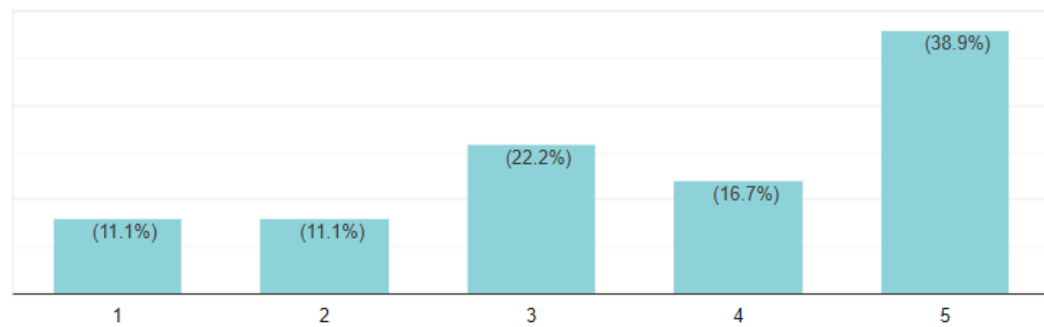


Fig. 4.21

Piracy offers me more diverse and niche media options without restrictions than what I would have access to if I were to access media through more legal channels in Zimbabwe.

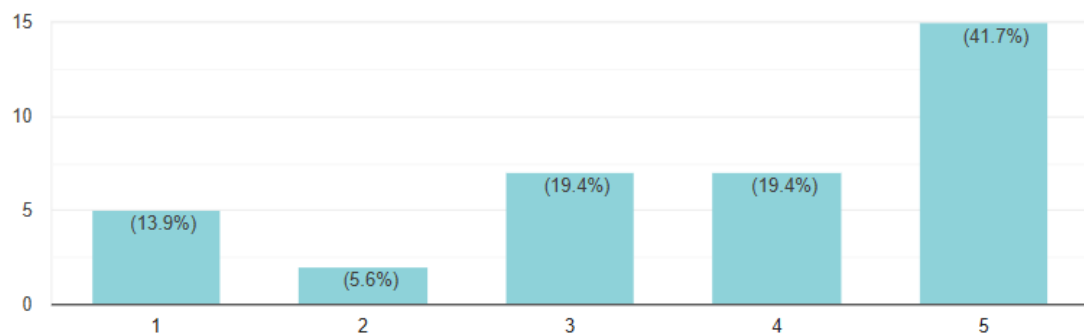


Fig. 4.22

It is more convenient for me to pirate media than to wait for its availability through legitimate channels.

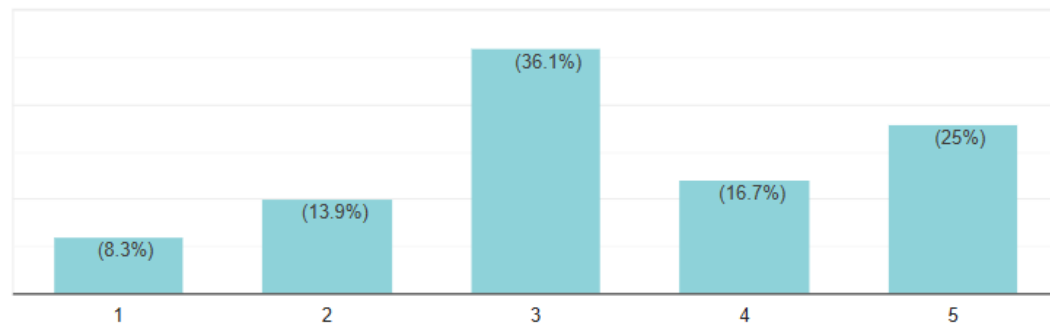


Fig. 4.23

- Privacy concerns also drive people to piracy. Most times, when you buy or subscribe to a service online, you are required to give up email addresses, credit card numbers or social media pages. When media is being pirated, this is not usually the case., and it ends up being the biggest draw for most people. In fact, most pirate websites advertise that there is “no sign up or login required” and this gives people peace of mind where their data protection is concerned.

I prefer to use pirated content because it provides me with anonymity and security online.

(I do not need to create accounts or give up credit card information to access pirated content)

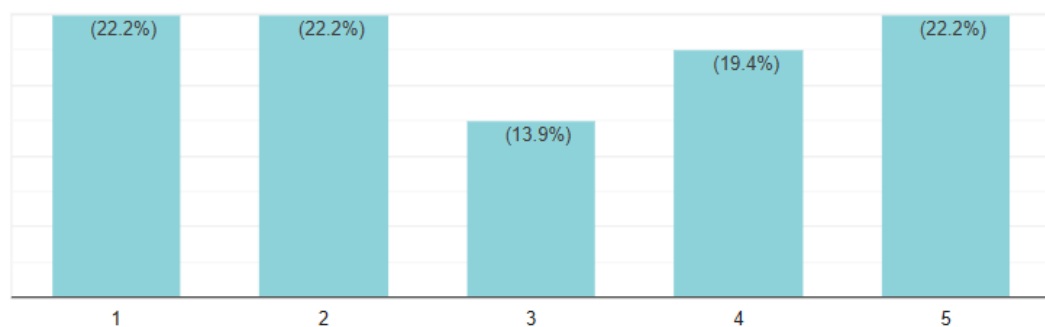


Fig. 4.24

Legality and attitudes towards piracy

According to most participants, piracy is not something frowned upon in their social circles, therefore giving people more incentive to pirate content online. However, that may be because people are unaware of the legality of piracy. Most people report that they are only marginally aware of the copyright and intellectual property rights laws.

Digital piracy is not frowned upon in my social circle(s).

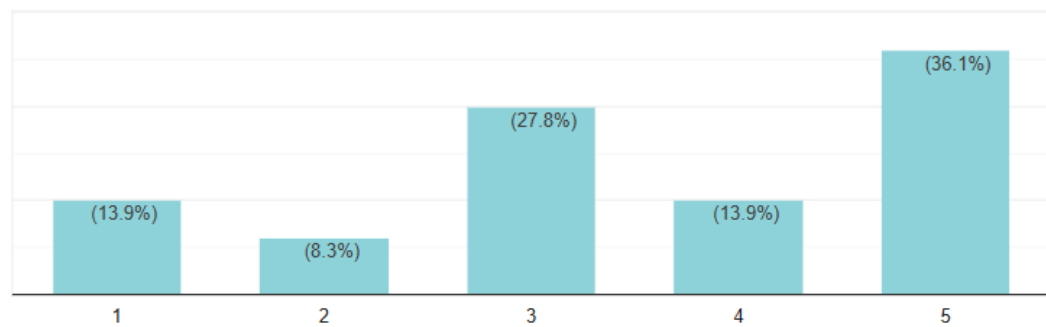


Fig. 4.25

How do you perceive the morality of digital media piracy?

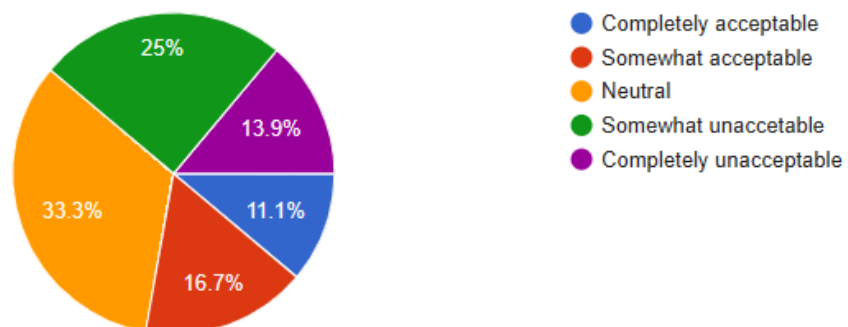


Fig. 4.26

Most participants report that they have no strong feelings that are pro-piracy or anti-piracy, being rather neutral. However, it seems that some people believe that pirating from big companies is somewhat immoral, but most agree that pirating material from smaller or independent creators is definitely wrong morally.

Most people within this study are not convinced that law enforcement is doing enough to make sure IP laws are not violated, although most believe that if harsher penalties and stricter monitoring are introduced then it would minimise piracy to an extent.

How confident are you that law enforcers in Zimbabwe are doing their best to make sure copyright laws are being respected?

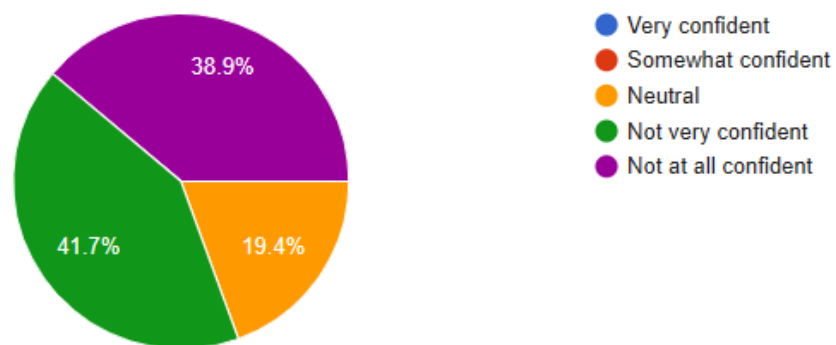


Fig. 4.27

It is morally wrong to pirate media when the copyright holders are smaller creatives (e.g. musicians not signed to labels, crowdfunded movies and shows, indie games, etc)

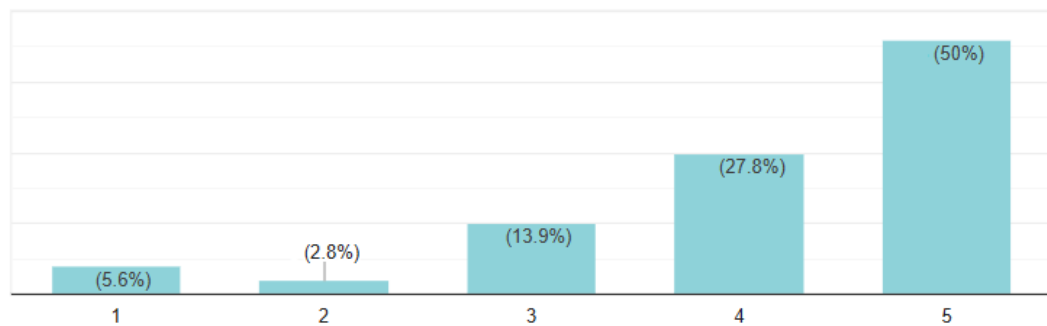


Fig. 4.28

It is morally wrong to pirate media when the copyright holders are smaller creatives (e.g. musicians not signed to labels, crowdfunded movies and shows, indie games, etc)

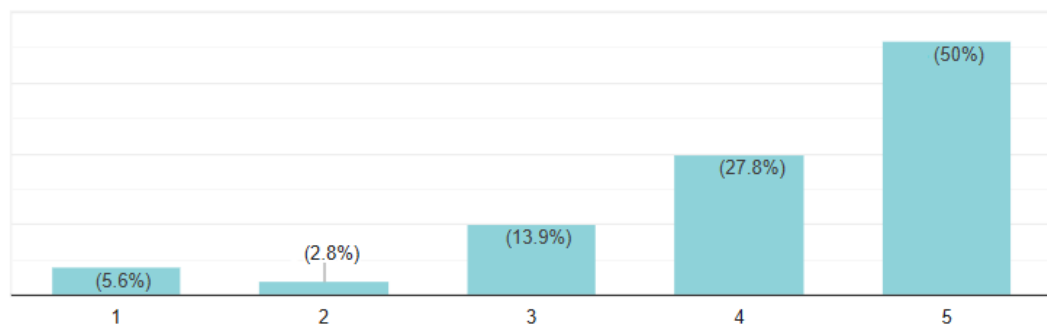


Fig. 4.29

4.3 Discussion and Interpretation

When looking closely at the data from the questionnaire sent out, the conclusion is that piracy is rampant in Zimbabwe mostly due to low income. Zimbabwe's economic situation makes it such that people do not earn much and therefore do not have a lot of disposable income to spend in terms of accessing media. In this particular economic landscape, it means that when

people earn money, they are likely to use it for other essentials such as food, clothing, utilities, bills and so on. However, because media and software have other free alternatives, they opt for those free or cheaper alternatives. After all, if one needs a textbook for school, why must they pay hundreds of dollars to buy the textbook, when they can just download a free pdf online and get the exact same information? To most people, spending money on books, movies, music, software and games is simply not a worthwhile investment.

Interestingly enough, some people make money off of these piracy ventures. People all over Harare and other parts of Zimbabwe run businesses wherein they sell bootleg movies, books, software, and music. This is being exacerbated by the above economic issues in Zimbabwe as a whole. People make their livelihoods selling copyrighted material due to high unemployment rates, when they cannot get jobs elsewhere in the formal sector. It ends up causing a catch 22 situation, wherein people pirate because they cannot afford to go through legal means, but by feeding into the piracy market, money is not going to the economy, which continues to deteriorate and leaves people with no money, which leads to more piracy. This in turn ends up driving people who want to do business legitimately may be discouraged or driven out of the market because consumers can get the same product much cheaper elsewhere with little to no regard to its legality. A struggling economy means that people become accustomed to paying lower prices for goods, regardless of quality, only in service of utility.

The increased access to technology has also facilitated the rise of piracy. Devices that allow access to the internet are becoming more and more widespread in Zimbabwe, and internet access itself is becoming easier and easier with the introduction of new technologies, such as fibre optics and Starlin. This facilitates piracy as most people already own a smart device and have access to the internet for unrelated reasons, such as research, communication, business, or entertainment. With these technologies being at people's disposal, it makes it easier for

them to be used for piracy as well, even if that was not the original intention of the use of these technologies.

This directly ties into the frameworks discussed earlier, particularly the routine activity theory and the technology acceptance model. The strain theory as defined by Merton explains the disconnect between appropriate values or goals within a society and the means to said goals. Therefore, because of the low income of most Zimbabweans and the need to access various forms of digital media and content means that most people will have no qualms about accessing media illegally. The technology acceptance model additionally explains that more and more technology means that people find other uses for it, including piracy. Piracy is now as easy as doing a google search. If the technology is there anyway, people will find ways to use it to maximise utility.

Overall, these two main factors, with some other ones included as stated above are what lead to piracy. However, the onus now lies with law enforcement to not only educate the general public on issues to do with violating IP and copyright laws, but it also effectively enforces penalties. As seen with most respondents, most are not aware of the existence of these laws or the existing penalties for violating them, and those who do, are not confident enough that everything is being done to enforce said laws.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has presented findings of this study and has attempted to answer why piracy is so rampant in Zimbabwe. The major reasons why it has become so rampant recently is because of easier access to hardware such as smartphones and easier access to the internet, and because of economic constraints. Social constraints can be considered as well, especially when they tie into economic issues as well, such as cost vs utility, income bracket, and

general attitudes towards piracy. This chapter also discussed how theoretical frameworks can be used to determine why piracy is so rampant.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter will summarise the findings of this study, discuss any conclusions reached on the basis of this studies findings and if possible, offer recommendations for the mitigation of the problem and also recommend further study.

5.2 Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to understand why the issue of piracy has risen rapidly in the past few years. This is not a topic that has extensive studies conducted within Zimbabwe, and this study was constructed with that gap in mind. It sought to understand from consumers why piracy is so rampant. The data collected supports the hypothesis that greater access to technology has proliferated the rise of piracy, with economic constraints being the major motivator for piracy, a phenomenon that is observed in other less economically developed countries aside from Zimbabwe. The theoretical frameworks discussed also can be used to interpret these findings, as they highlight the behaviours that lead to piracy and the role of technology is doing so. Media is becoming so much easier to create and access due to rapid changes in technology, however that has also lowered barriers to its access, as policing all spaces of the internet becomes more and more difficult.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the results of the study above, we can come up with conclusions about how and why piracy has increased over the years.

- Access to technology. Digital devices are now more accessible than they have ever been in Zimbabwe, coupled with the increased access to reliable internet across the country. This has led to making piracy easier.
- Financial/economic constraints. Low income, coupled with high cost of media influences people to pirate.
- Social attitudes. Piracy is one issue that is often overlooked morally, as most people don't see anything wrong with it, or are willing to look the other way, even at the cost of creatives.
- Enforcement. People are either unaware or they simply do not care about laws regarding piracy. Coupled with the clear lack of robust frameworks to enforce piracy means it runs rampant.

5.4 Implications

The issue of piracy has several stakeholders and they each need to be considered when discussing issues to do with piracy

- Consumers. Consumers deserve to be able to access media they need without overblown prices that they are not able to pay within their means. They also deserve to access media safely, as piracy can be dangerous if done incorrectly, for example, downloading malware.
- IP holders. When people pirate, they pirate all content from all corners of the globe, which unfortunately hurts local IP holders the most. Zimbabwean creatives lose out the most, as our economy is not set up in a way that properly protects artists and creatives, which hurts them further when they lose out on royalties, subscription fees, licencing

fees, etc. by understanding this phenomenon, creatives can be guided on how best to create media that appeals to the average consumer, especially economically.

- Policymakers: more effective regulatory measures are needed in order to fully mitigate issues surrounding piracy. Proper mechanisms need to be put in place that enforce copyright law and protect IP holders without alienating the consumer.
- Future researchers: the intention of this study is to hopefully start a conversation on how and why the issue of piracy is so widespread within Zimbabwe. It is not enough to just give people more money or charge less for media with hope to reduce piracy, this phenomenon must be studied in order to understand all aspects of it, and hopefully in future, get rid of it altogether.

5.5 Recommendations

The most immediate solutions that can be offered short of a complete restructuring of the Zimbabwean economy would be to create policies that help IP holders maximise on profits from their work. The proposed solution would be to find a way to make their media more accessible financially, lower costs will motivate people to support local creatives. One such way could be to restructure the way content can be accessed by coming up with more flexible payment models for access to media, whilst also offering more diverse media libraries to meet consumer needs.

Another solution would be to properly educate the public on what IP law is, why it is wrong to infringe on copyright protections, and how to access media legally. Informing the public on penalties can also help drastically reduce the likelihood of piracy.

The last thing to consider is stronger enforcement of such laws, by coming up with stronger mechanisms to enforce IP laws and curb the issue of piracy.

5.6 Future Research

Future research into this area must include a very thorough exploration on how trends shape behaviours around piracy, especially overtime. If this issue is not studied and dealt with, it will continue to rise until there comes a time in which working in media creation will no longer be a viable option in this country. The arts must be allowed to thrive without the fear of piracy or stealing people's livelihoods.

List of Figures

Chapter 4

4.1 Age	18
4.2 Gender	19
4.3 Level of education	19
4.4 Employment status	20
4.5 Income bracket	20
4.6 Media creator status	21
4.7 Type of media creations	21
4.8 Access to electronic devices	22
4.9 Type of internet access	22
4.10 Amount of data access	23
4.11 Frequency of media consumption	23
4.12 Types of digital media consumed	24
4.13 Uses of digital media	24
4.14 Methods of media access	25
4.15 Consumption of pirated media	26
4.16 Frequency of piracy	26
4.17 Reasons for piracy	27
4.18 Finances as motivation for piracy	28
4.19 Increased income and piracy	28
4.20 Decreased cost of media and piracy	29
4.21 Censorship of media in Zimbabwe	30
4.22 Diversity of media with piracy	30
4.23 Convenience of piracy	30

4.24 Anonymity of piracy	31
4.25 Piracy among social groups	32
4.26 Perceived morality	32
4.27 Confidence in lawmakers	33
4.28 Piracy from large corporations	34
4.29 Piracy from independent artists	34

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Informed consent statement

My name is Makanaka Marewangepo, a final year Computer Science student from Africa University. I am kindly asking you to participate in this study by filling in the questionnaire. The purpose of the study is to explore how advancing technologies have made it easier to copy information on the internet. If you decide to participate, you will answer questions in this questionnaire. It is expected that this will take about 5 - 10 minutes.

There is no harm or risk whatsoever expected from this practice. The research aims to examine trends on the access of copyrighted material that may be otherwise inaccessible to certain people for various reasons. Your name and personal information will not be shared as all of the responses in this study will be strictly anonymous. All information regarding responses to this study will be confidential. If at any point in time before the submission of this thesis the participant wants their consent withdrawn, they may do so without penalty.

If the participant has any questions, they are free to contact the researcher to gain any clarification. If consent has been given to participate in this study, kindly fill in the details below

Name of Research Participant (please print)

Date

Signature of Research Participant or legally authorised representative

If you have any questions concerning this study or consent form beyond those answered by the researcher including questions about the research, your rights as a research participant, or if you feel that you have been treated unfairly and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, please feel free to contact the Africa University Research Ethics Committee on telephone (020)60075 or 60026 extension 1156 or via email at aurec@africau.edu.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Exploring the Impact Technology has on the Proliferation of Digital Media Piracy in Harare, Zimbabwe

Good day.

I am currently conducting a study on the above topic. The purpose of the study is to explore how advancing technologies have made it easier to commit copyright infringement and violate intellectual property (IP) laws, more commonly known as digital piracy, on the internet.

I am kindly asking you to participate in this study by filling in the questionnaire. It is expected that this will take about 10 - 15 minutes of your time.

Your cooperation and participation is greatly appreciated

NOTE: Any and all responses recorded in this survey are strictly for academic use and will be confidential, and therefore no legal action will be taken against any anonymous third party participants in this study.

** Indicates required question*

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Less than 18
- ☐ 18 - 24
- ☐ 25 - 34
- ☐ 35 - 44
- ☐ 45 - 54
- ☐ 55+

2. Gender *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

3. Level of Education *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Currently enrolled in primary school
- ☐ Completed primary education
- ☐ Currently enrolled in secondary school
- ☐ Completed secondary education
- ☐ Currently enrolled in undergraduate studies
- ☐ Completed undergraduate education
- ☐ Currently enrolled in postgraduate studies
- ☐ Completed postgraduate education

4. Employment Status *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Full time employed
- ☐ Part time employed
- ☐ Self employed
- ☐ Student/Unemployed

5. Income Bracket per Month (USD) *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Less than \$100
- ☐ \$100 - \$499
- ☐ \$500 - \$999
- ☐ \$1000 - \$1499
- ☐ \$1500 or more

6. Are you a media creator? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. If yes, what type of media do you create? (Select all that apply)

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Movies
- ☐ TV shows
- ☐ Books
- ☐ Games
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Digital art
- ☐ Software
- ☐ Other: _____

TECHNOLOGICAL ACCESS

8. Which of the following devices do you own or use on a regular basis? (Select all that apply) *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Smartphone
☐ Tablet
☐ Desktop Computer
☐ Laptop
☐ Smart TV
☐ Other: _____

9. How do you primarily access the internet? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Mobile Data
☐ Home Wifi
☐ Work/School Wifi
☐ Public Wifi (internet cafes, free wifi hotspots, etc)
☐ Other: _____

10. How much data do you have access to every month? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Less than 1GB (1000MB)
☐ 1GB - 9GB
☐ 10GB - 49GB
☐ 50GB - 100GB
☐ More than 100GB

11. Do you utilise tools such as VPNs, or other kinds of proxy software to bypass restriction when accessing information or content online? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

MEDIA CONSUMPTION HABITS

12. Which type of digital media do you consume the most of? (Select all that apply) *

Tick all that apply:

☐ Movies

☐ TV Shows

☐ Books

☐ Games

☐ Music

☐ Digital art

☐ Software

☐ Other: _____

13. How much do you consume digital media? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Always

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

14. What do you primarily use digital media for? (Select all that apply) *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Work or business
- ☐ Education and research
- ☐ Social networking
- ☐ News and current affairs
- ☐ Entertainment and leisure activities
- ☐ Other: _____

15. How do you typically access the digital media you consume? (Select all that apply) *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Legal subscription based services (e.g. Spotify, Netflix)
- ☐ Legal free websites or downloads (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo)
- ☐ Torrent sites (e.g. qBitTorrent, uTorrent)
- ☐ File sharing platforms (e.g. Google Drive, Dropbox)
- ☐ Social media platforms (e.g. WhatsApp, Telegram)
- ☐ Other: _____

16. Have you ever knowingly streamed, downloaded or in any way accessed pirated digital media content? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

17. If yes, how frequently you engage with or access pirated content?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Always
☐ Often
☐ Sometimes
☐ Rarely

MOTIVATION FOR DIGITAL MEDIA PIRACY

18. What are the major reasons that you have for engaging with pirated media? *
(Select all that apply)

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Limited disposable income
☐ Lack of availability of certain media
☐ Convenience and ease of access
☐ Peer influence
☐ Concerns for my privacy online
☐ Lack of awareness on the legality of copyright infringement
☐ Creative self expression
☐ Other: _____

19. How much do you agree with the following statements? *

My current economic situation influences my decision to pirate content, as it is more financially viable for me.

Mark only one oval.

- 1 2 3 4 5
Strongly ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

20. If I had more money, I would pirate less and instead access media through legal channels. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly agree

21. If media cost less, I would pirate less and instead access media through legal channels. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly agree

22. Media in Zimbabwe is heavily censored or restricted. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly agree

23. Piracy offers me more diverse and niche media options without restrictions than what I would have access to if I were to access media through more legal channels in Zimbabwe. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly agree

24. If the media that I want is readily available in Zimbabwe through legitimate channels, I would pirate less and instead access said media through legal channels. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Strongly agree

25. It is more convenient for me to pirate media than to wait for its availability through legitimate channels. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Strongly agree

26. I rely on the recommendations of peers for choosing media to pirate. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Strongly agree

27. Digital piracy is not frowned upon in my social circle(s). *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Strongly agree

28. I prefer to use pirated content because it provides me with anonymity and security online. *

(I do not need to create accounts or give up credit card information to access pirated content)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Strongly agree

29. I see piracy as a form of self expression and as a way to exercise my creative rights and freedoms. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Strongly agree

30. I pirate media because I prefer to own media as opposed to subscribing to a service wherein that media can be taken away at any time with no prior warning or consent. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Strongly agree

31. I am aware of intellectual property and copyright laws, both within Zimbabwe and internationally. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Full	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Not at all aware

ATTITUDES TOWARDS PIRACY

32. How do you perceive the morality of digital media piracy? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Completely acceptable
- ☐ Somewhat acceptable
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat unacceptable
- ☐ Completely unacceptable

33. How much do you agree with the following statements? *

It is morally wrong to pirate media when the copyright holders are big media companies. (e.g. Disney, UMG, Microsoft, Nintendo, etc)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly agree

34. It is morally wrong to pirate media when the copyright holders are smaller creatives (e.g. musicians not signed to labels, crowdfunded movies and shows, indie games, etc) *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly agree

35. I am not opposed to people pirating media when I am the copyright or intellectual property holder. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Strongly agree

LEGALITY AND ENFORCEMENT

36. How confident are you that law enforcers in Zimbabwe are doing their best to make sure copyright laws are being respected? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not very confident
- ☐ Not at all confident

37. Do you think harsher legal penalties for digital media piracy in Zimbabwe would discourage people from engaging in piracy? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

THE FUTURE OF PIRACY

38. Do you think the amount of pirated material online will increase or decrease over the next 5 - 10 years? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Increase
- ☐ Stay the same
- ☐ Decrease
- ☐ Unsure

39. Why do you think the rates of piracy will increase or decrease over the next 5 - 10 years? *

40. Do you think the number of people who turn to digital piracy will increase or decrease over the next 5 - 10 years? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Increase
- ☐ Stay the same
- ☐ Decrease
- ☐ Unsure

41. Why do you think the number of people who turn to digital piracy will increase or decrease over the next 5 - 10 years? *

42. Do you think media creation of any kind has been delegitimised as a viable career path for anyone in Zimbabwe currently due to piracy? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

43. Do you think media creation of any kind could become a viable career path for anyone in Zimbabwe if piracy is drastically reduced or eradicated? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

44. What do you believe are the negative effects of media piracy on media creators? *

45. What suggestions would you offer in order to curb issues to do with piracy in Zimbabwe? *
