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The Nexus Between Malware and Piracy – Enforcement Tools and Opportunities For Government To Take Action

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IFPI is the voice of the recording industry worldwide, representing over 8,000 record company members across the globe.

We work to promote the value of recorded music, campaign for the rights of record producers and expand the commercial uses of recorded music around the world.

IFPI is a not-for-profit international organisation registered in Switzerland. We have offices in London, Brussels, Singapore, Miami, Nairobi and Abu Dhabi plus a representative office in Beijing.

70 IFPI has more than 70 offices, National Groups and Affiliated MLCs

70 Our members operate in more than 70 countries worldwide

IFPI Engaging with Music 2023: Three in ten respondents pirated music regularly – stream ripping was the main piracy form and cyberlockers the main source for pre-release content

GLOBAL MUSIC PIRACY RATE

29%
PIRATED MUSIC
(IFPI MUSIC CONSUMER STUDY 2023)

23%
STREAM RIPPING

11%
CYBER-LOCKERS

20%
UNLICENSED APPS

9%
P2P / BITTORRENT

GLOBAL PIRACY VISITS AND DOWNLOADS

11.0bn
VISITS TO DOWNLOAD MUSIC FROM PIRACY WEBSITES

8.3bn
VISITS TO STREAM RIPPING SITES

383m
VISITS TO CYBERLOCKERS

=

36.6bn
TRACK DOWNLOADS

Source: IFPI MUSIC CONSUMER STUDY 2023
Base: All respondents in core 18 aged 16-64 (n=28,487)

Source: IFPI analysis of Similarweb data
for over 1,000 web sites

Piracy & Malware Nexus: Policy Challenge

- Online piracy of copyright protected content remains a global challenge for all creative sectors, including for music
- Increasing convergence of IP infringement and cybercrime
- Piracy services lure users with free content – free content is used as bait (e.g. included in audio files downloaded from cyberlockers, or in connection with pre-release content).

Piracy & Malware Nexus: Why It Matters

- Illegal content and visits to pirate sites expose users to cybersecurity risks and data theft. E.g. ransomware, spyware, trojans, credential theft and botnet recruitment
- Implications for consumer protection and public security
- Anecdotal evidence that malware is also linked to streaming fraud

The scale of malware threats on pirate services

Various public studies available to illustrate the scale of the issue

- For users in Southeast Asia, there is a 22% higher malware threat on pirate sites vs. mainstream sites *alliance4creativity, 2025*
- In India, pirate sites carry a 59% risk of malware infection *Watters/Matri/Gangwar, 2024*
- IFPI study for Latin America: 33% out of 174 mp3 download sites were connected to malware distribution
- A study for Poland found that users are 38.5 times more likely to encounter cyber threats on a P2P site, compared to mainstream sites *MPA, 2024*
- EU consumers could be attacked within 71 seconds of landing on a piracy site *AAPA, 2022*

80%

Of analysed pirate sites served malware-ridden advertisements (Digital Citizens Alliance, 2022)

Why governments should act

- Not only for protection of right holders, but to combat other major societal risks due to malware threats
- Piracy-linked malware reflects poly-criminality – significant links to fraud, identity theft and wider cybercrime
- Mobile apps and “side-loading” increase exposure for consumers
- AI likely to scale and automate the threats
- Automated tools available to facilitate malware checks on websites and apps

How governments should act:

- Recognise malware–piracy nexus as a policy priority
- Provide a legal framework for right holders to take meaningful action against online piracy (e.g. intermediary injunctions including website blocking)
- Engage all intermediaries and encourage greater cooperation e.g. from advertisers, payment providers, domain registrars / registries, mobile app stores to tackle online pirate sites
- Strengthen cross-agency and international coordination, e.g. via WIPO ACE.
- Increase consumer awareness of malware risks
- Further study: mobile apps, AI, poly-criminality

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Thank you

Questions? Elena.blobel@ifpi.org