

## Abstract

With increased bandwidth and transmission speed, the Internet allows digital copyrighted works to be distributed and transmitted with high efficiency, thus providing vast opportunities for the growth of pirating activities. Internet piracy – the unauthorized copying or sharing of digital copyrighted works online – is a growing concern in the information age as it is inflicting a significant impact on the well-being of businesses and individuals. Hong Kong has a high rate of Internet piracy despite its status as an economic and technological hub in Asia. However, the existing law and technologies cannot effectively curb the proliferation of pirating activities. The HKSAR government is a pioneer in criminalizing infringers who upload files for sharing, but enforcement actions seemed to have backfired and the government is now calling for public views to address the problem.

This dissertation looks at some root causes of piracy by exploring psycho-behavioral factors that influence individuals' pirating activities despite their knowledge of the illegality of such activities. It develops a conceptual model of Internet pirating behavior of Hong Kong Internet users based on psycho-behavioral theories (i.e. the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior), communication theory (i.e. uses and gratifications), literature on piracy (especially software piracy), and peer discussions that map out motivating factors influencing Internet pirating behavior.

The final data was collected in May 2006 using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology. A two-step Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique was used to validate the measurement model and test the model fit. Findings indicate that perceived personal advantages and subjective norms have a statistically significant influence on individuals' attitude towards Internet piracy, and the relationship found between perceived normative beliefs and subjective norms is also significant. The hypothesized relations between the intention to pirate and the four constructs - attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and perceived needs for Internet piracy - are all supported. Finally, both intention and past offline piracy behavior are found to have a significant role in explaining the actual piracy behavior.

Identifying reasons why people pirate on the Internet from the user behavior perspective not only enhances the scholarly understanding of the problem but also offers valuable insights to government or regulatory bodies and the entertainment and software industry about the pirating scene (and the pirates' mentality) to help them plan or implement relevant and reasonable policies.