Piracy Killed the Radio Star: A System Archetype Analysis of Digital Music Theft

Authors : Marton Gergely

Abstract : Digital experience goods, such as music and video, are readily available and easily accessible through a sundry of illegal mediums. Furthermore, the rate of music theft has been increasing at a seemingly unstoppable rate. Instead of studying the effect of copyright infringement on affected shareholders, this paper aims to examine the overall impact that digital music piracy has on society as a whole. Through a systems dynamics approach, an archetype is built to model the behavior of both legal and illegal music users. Additionally, the effects over time are considered. The conceptual model suggests that if piracy continues to grow at the current pace, industry shareholders will eventually lose the motivation to supply new music. In turn, this tragedy would affect not only the illegal players, but legal consumers as well, by means of a decrease in overall quality of life.

Keywords : music piracy, illegal downloading, tragedy of the commons, system archetypes
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