Risks & Rewards

The opportunities before media and entertainment are unprecedented.
So too are the threats.

OUR CHANGING INDUSTRY
The roadmap to media and entertainment's future is paved with innovation

LOCALIZATION
Content localization is a worldwide, need-it-now business. Here's how to keep pace

WORKFLOWS AND THE CLOUD
Cloud workflows are proving crucial for media productions today

SMART CONTENT
It's a data-driven content reality, and all the tools are there to realize success

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WIN THE BATTLE AGAINST CONTENT PIRACY: IT'S IN YOUR CONTROL

Everyone — rights holders, broadcasters and distribution platforms — needs to work together to make anti-piracy work

ABSTRACT: As the entertainment industry evolves and technology advances, the value of content increases and paths to large-scale content theft are more numerous and ubiquitous. With piracy a constant threat, implementing content protection solutions from the ground up must be considered a best practice and integral to a company's value proposition.

By John Ward, Executive Vice President, Americas, Friend MTS

Piracy has been around as long as media and entertainment has existed. As these industries evolve and content becomes more valuable, the stakes only increase. As technology becomes more advanced, the paths to content piracy become more numerous and ubiquitous.
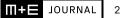
Statistics back up what we all know: that video pirates are the greatest threat to content, revenue and brand for streaming services, live-sports organizations and media companies. By 2023, revenue lost to pirates for pay TV and non-pay TV video is expected to exceed $67 billion worldwide.

Yet if you ask industry executives — from content rights holders to distribution partners — what they can do about piracy, you get no clear answer. There's a tendency to sidestep the issue, look to others to take responsibility, or claim you're doing "your part."

ASSET PROTECTION IS SERIOUS BUSINESS

Media, sports and entertainment businesses need to take content security seriously and commit to taking action to do so. That means investing money and resources.

Think about it this way: in any industry, shareholders and board members expect business leaders to protect their assets and undertake appropriate risk mitigation efforts. If you're a business making and selling furniture, you'd have an abundance of locks, alarms and security cameras in place every step of the way — from materials receiving to the shipping dock — to thwart thieves from

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breaking in and stealing your assets.

The only thing different in the media and entertainment industry is the nature of the asset. Instead of a tangible armchair or table, it's content. Every year, hundreds of billions of dollars are spent on the production, distribution and sale of content. If you're a content developer, owner, distributor or platform, and you're not securing your content, you're not securing your assets. And when you aren't protecting your assets, you're undermining your business.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Admittedly, content protection can be complicated, because of the multiple points where content is handled. That makes for plenty of opportunity for theft, and we all know that a system is only as good as its weakest link.

Content protection is also challenging because, simply put, it's not always a priority with every individual who touches that content along the way, or with leaders at the top. But given the core responsibility to safeguard assets – and the opportunity to improve financial performance by doing so – executives today can step up and make it happen. Integrating anti-piracy measures from the ground up, in program and revenue planning, should be viewed as a normal course of doing business to reduce churn and acquire new customers who might otherwise utilize pirate services.

And businesses need to do it together. To get the best results possible, rights holders, broadcasters and distribution platforms must deploy anti-piracy technology in a practical integration. For instance, at Friend MTS, we work with major sports leagues to implement content protection technologies in conjunction with platforms. We've found these measures extremely effective.

Every part of the media and entertainment ecosystem must be involved in the effort. There's no room — or time — for pointing fingers. Just as all the homeowners in an HOA need to come together and pool resources to fix a deteriorating neighborhood street, all the entities involved in your content need to join forces and act as a team to effectively combat piracy.

The growth of streaming services can facilitate the incorporation of content protection from the bottom up, as direct-to-consumer (D2C) platforms proliferate. Since these services own the content from end to end — from production to distribution to the end user — it becomes even easier to implement systems that protect the entire distribution chain. They can't point fingers at someone else.

The bottom line really is the bottom line. Executives must make the call to protect it.

IT'S IN YOUR CONTROL

The landscape of live sports, media and entertainment is changing at break-neck speed, and content pirates are constantly evolving with it. That's a reality. Companies' commitment to implementing continually innovating, scalable, flexible content protection technology is no longer an option, but a mandatory part of doing business. And when done right, it works extraordinarily well.

Piracy is a threat to the bottom line, and protection measures should be built into any business planning as a best practice. There is a solution, and with the right content protection partner, it's very much within your control to tackle in an effective way. After all, it's taking control of the health of your business. ⊞

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