Assignment II.5: Student Attitudes towards Internet Piracy
3/8/12 | 36-303 | Junker
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Research Question: The purpose of our survey is to measure how prevalent internet piracy is among Carnegie Mellon students. In conjunction, we hope to learn how aware students are of recently proposed changes to internet piracy laws and what views students hold with respect to piracy activity. Specifically, we want to know what proportion of students have engaged in piracy, how often they do it, what types of content they download, and what types of web resources they typically use. People who claim to not engage in piracy are also of major interest. We want to gain insight into what attitudes people hold towards piracy and what prevents them from downloading pirated content. Our survey hopefully will establish whether the people who do not pirate feel compelled to refrain because of some ethical or legal obligation, or because of other less principled reasons. Of course, we are collecting demographic information from our respondents to prevent any confounding, and we may even learn about piracy behavior differences between demographic groups. Boiled down to a question, our survey hopes to answer: "To what extent do CMU undergraduate students engage in internet piracy and what are their views on related copyright enforcement legislation?"

Pretesting: We handed out our survey with the questions we submitted in part II.4 ('Old Questions') to six undergraduates we approached in the library. We initially approached 9 students, but three chose not to participate; the uniform reason of rejection among non-respondents was that they did not have time to spare to complete the survey. Our observed 66% response rate is far higher than we expect to achieve when administering the survey electronically, but in-person administration allowed for more direct and effective feedback, so any disparity between pretesting response rates and actual response rates is acceptable to us. Out of the six respondents, one was a freshman, two were sophomores, one a junior, and two were seniors. Since our population is undergraduate students at Carnegie Mellon, these six students were highly representative of the population (missing only 5th year undergrads, who comprise a comparatively small population subset). There were no overwhelming ethnic/political majorities among the six that may have created an inconsistency with the population. Based on Professor Junker's feedback and the feedback from our pretest subjects, we made appropriate changes to our questions (see 'Revised Questions').

> great to approach people in the lib

Some of the respondents suggested that the order of the questions was not optimal. With our old order, respondents who put 'no' for the question asking about their piracy history were excluded

from answering many questions in the rest of the survey. Based on this suggestion, we changed the order of some of the questions and also changed the phrasing to accommodate for those who have not engaged in piracy. For example, Q7 is now worded 'What type of content do you, or would you,….'. Including the "would you" phrase enables people who do not pirate to answer this question.

To ensure that people who respond 'No' to Q1 understand the subject matter our survey addresses, we have included simple summaries of the bills in question. In order to maintain consistency, respondents who respond 'Yes' to Q1 will also see these summaries. However, the summaries will appear after Q1, so we will still hopefully receive accurate responses to our initial query measuring preexisting awareness of the proposed legislation.

Regarding question 5, we received feedback from one respondent that "less socially acceptable" seemed leading. Revision: "If the US adopted a tougher stance on internet piracy enforcement, would your attitudes about using pirated content change: not at all, a little, somewhat, or a lot?" Here, we are assuming that changes in official policy will reflect (or enact) some change in social opinion of a behavior, allowing us to measure a similar effect as the original question, but without the risk of conditioning a respondent's thinking. This also helps assess whether people feel there is some connection between piracy laws and their individual behavior.

One respondent reported Question 7 to be confusing, complaining that the meaning of the question was "ambiguous". The respondent originally thought that if one knew the content was being reproduced illegally, then this question was irrelevant and did not measure anything. After explaining the logic behind the question, the respondent quickly understood what we were aiming to discover. That said, the initial confusion the respondent experienced led us to believe the question required rewording.

Another suggestion addressed the ambiguity of the word 'usually', which led us to replace it with more precise language in a few questions. We also received criticism that questions 8-10 on our old survey are very similar and we needed to make them more distinguishable. As a result, we changed the language for those questions (now 10-12), and also included a series of example scenarios to test respondents' attitudes towards different types of piracy.

Old Questions (used in pretest):
1) Have you heard of the recently proposed SOPA/PIPA bills?
2) Do you support these policies? (Scale ranging from 'strongly oppose' to 'strongly support')
   Learning about their piracy behavior
3) Have you ever downloaded/streamed pirated content? (Examples: Downloading a movie from PirateBay, streaming a TV show)
If the answer is no, skip to the demographic section.
4) How often do you download pirated content? (daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly, once a year, few times a year, only once)
5) What type of content do you download most frequently? (music, movies, TV shows, books etc.)
6) Do you use streaming sites (e.g. sidereel.com)/torrent trackers (thepiratebay.org)/Peer-to-peer file-sharing clients (e.g. Dtella, LimeWire)/direct download sites (e.g. rapidshare.com)? (check all that apply)
7) Do you usually know whether the content you are viewing/using/listening to is being reproduced illegally or not?
8) Do you consider downloading pirated content to be?
- illegal
- unethical
- I've never thought about it/don't have an opinion
9) Do you consider viewing/using/listening to unlicensed content that someone else has posted.. (check all that apply)
- illegal
- unethical
- I've never thought about it/don't have an opinion
10) Do you consider viewing/listening to music on YouTube that has NOT been posted by the original artist (i.e. via a VEVO or official artist account) to be illegal?
11) Do you think the frequency with which you download/use pirated content would change if the behavior was considered less socially acceptable?
12) Have you ever been banned from the CMU network for downloading?
Yes or No

Revised Questions:
Questions for the survey to find out about major issues:
  SOPA/PIPA Awareness and Opinions

1) Have you heard of the recently proposed SOPA/PIPA bills?
   Yes or No

Then present summary information:
The SOPA Bill involves the following:

good

- Expand the ability of U.S. law enforcement to fight online trafficking in copyrighted intellectual property and counterfeit goods
- Expand existing criminal laws to include unauthorized streaming of copyrighted content, imposing a maximum penalty of five years in prison
- Provisions include the requesting of court orders to bar advertising networks and payment facilities from conducting business with infringing websites, and search engines from linking to the sites, and court orders requiring Internet service providers to block access to the sites

The PIPA Bill involves:
- - 'Preventing Real Online Threats to Economic Creativity and Theft of Intellectual Property Act'
- - Stated goal of giving the US government and copyright holders additional tools to curb access to "rogue websites dedicated to infringing or counterfeit goods", especially those registered outside the U.S.

2) Do you support the policies outlined in the above definitions of the proposed bills?
 'Strongly oppose', 'Oppose', 'Neutral', 'Support', 'Strongly support'

3) Do you fell changes need to be made with respect to copyright protection in the internet era?
Yes, No, Maybe, No Opinion

 Learning about their piracy behavior
4) Have you ever downloaded/streamed pirated content? ('Pirated content' being copyrighted material used/reproduced without the consent of the copyright holder. Examples: Download a movie from a torrent, stream a TV show from Megavideo)
Yes or No
If the answer is no, skip to question 7.
5) How often do you download pirated content?
Daily, Weekly, Biweekly, Monthly, Once a year, Few times a year, Only once
6) If the US adopted a tougher stance on internet-piracy enforcement, would your attitudes about using pirated content change: not at all, a little, somewhat, or a lot?
7) Have you ever been banned from the CMU network or faced negative repercussions for downloading pirated content?
Yes or No
8) What type of content do you, or would you, download most frequently?
Music, Movies, TV Shows, Books, Other
9) Do you use streaming sites (e.g. sidereel.com)/torrent trackers (thepiratebay.org)/Peer-to-peer file-sharing clients (e.g. Dtella, LimeWire)/direct download sites (e.g. rapidshare.com)? (check all that apply)
10) Do you usually know whether the content you are viewing/using/listening to is being reproduced illegally or not?
Yes or No
11) Do you consider downloading pirated content to be...? (Check all that apply)
- Acceptable
- Illegal
- Unethical
- Both illegal and unethical
- I don't have an opinion/have never thought about it
12) Do you consider viewing/listening to/streaming unlicensed content (without downloading) to be...? (Check all that apply)
- Acceptable
- Illegal
- Unethical
- Both illegal and unethical
- I don't have an opinion/have never thought about it

13) For example, do you consider viewing/listening to music on YouTube that has NOT been posted by the original artist (i.e. via a VEVO or official artist account) to be...? (Check all that apply)
- Acceptable
- Illegal
- Unethical
- Both illegal and unethical
- I don't have an opinion/have never thought about it

Potential Scenario
Suppose you want to watch a movie that you have anticipated for a long time.

14) You download this movie from dtella (or another peer-to-peer file-sharing network) and watch it on your computer.
Do you consider this to be (check all that apply):
- Acceptable
- Illegal
- Unethical
- Both illegal and unethical
- Neither illegal nor unethical
- You do not have an opinion on the ethics or legality of this action
15) You cannot find the movie on dtella, but you notice it has been uploaded in multiple parts to YouTube. You watch the movie in its entirety on YouTube.
Do you consider this to be (check all that apply):
- Acceptable
- Illegal
- Unethical
- Both illegal and unethical
- Neither illegal nor unethical
- You do not have an opinion on the ethics or legality of this action
16) After watching the movie on YouTube, you rip it to a file on your computer and upload the file to a sharing website. You personally do not profit in any way from this activity. Do you consider this to be (check all that apply):
- Acceptable
- Illegal
- Unethical
- Both illegal and unethical
- Neither illegal nor unethical
- You do not have an opinion on the ethics or legality of this action
17) Do you think there is a way to watch the movie that is as convenient as the methods above but requires payment (potential sources include iTunes, Netflix, etc.)?
Yes or No

This looks pretty good. I might add an open-ended question 18 for any other comments or clarifications that the respondent wants to give.

Demographic Questions

18) Gender: Male or Female?
19) What ethnicity are you? (Please select the closest option)
White/Caucausian, African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American Indian, Other
20) What class year are you?
Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Super Senior
21) Do you live on-campus or off-campus?
On or Off
22) What is your political affiliation?
Republican, Democrat, Independent, Other, None, Do not wish to share information.
23) What school are you in? (If you are in multiple schools, please select the school of your primary major.)
CFA, MCS, CIT, HSS, Tepper, SCS
24) If you are from the United States, or have lived in the United States for the majority of your life, what region are you from? If not please write down where you consider yourself from.
Northeast, Midwest, West, South, not from the US/other:_____