

Online piracy: Europeans consume more pirated TV shows and live sports

- The downward trend in piracy of previous years has been reversed, new EUIPO study finds
- TV content is the most pirated type of content in the EU, accounting for nearly half of all piracy
- Piracy of live events, such as streaming of sports games, is also on the rise
- Greece has one of the highest rates of piracy of live sports, well above the EU average, just after Cyprus and Portugal
- Piracy of anime and manga also increased in 2022

A report published today by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) revealed that digital piracy increased by 3.3% in 2022. Pirated TV shows, series, films, and *manga* publications are largely behind the increase.

This is one of the main findings of the study 'Online Copyright Infringement in the European Union, Films, Music, Publications, Software and TV, 2017-2022'.

The report shows that piracy, as measured by the number of monthly accesses per internet user to illegal content, had slowly declined over the years until 2021, when the trend was reversed.

Pirated content: What Europeans consume

This change in trend was mainly due to the **growth of TV piracy**, which represents nearly half (48%) of all accesses to infringing sites in the EU in 2022. Other types of pirated content include publications (28%), films (11%), software (7%) and music (6%).

Pirated TV content experienced a 15% increase in 2022. The most pirated genres are **television shows and series** and on-demand **movies**, followed by **anime** productions (series and films) and **live streams of sports events** and dedicated sports channels.

Illegal access to **publications**, the second most important source of piracy after television, has also increased since January 2021, with **manga comic books** as the top genre in this category, followed at some distance by audio books and e-books.

Despite a considerable decline during the first months of the Covid-19 pandemic, **film** piracy has slightly increased in 2021 and 2022. According to an earlier [EUIPO title-level study](#), the majority of pirated films are **Hollywood blockbusters**.



Software piracy, such as games and software for mobile devices, has also been slowly increasing, albeit at a lower rate. While all categories saw an increase last year, **music** piracy decreased and remains low.

On average, each internet user in the EU accessed websites offering copyright-infringing content about **10 times per month at the end of 2022**. There is significant variation among Member States. The countries with the highest piracy rates are **Estonia and Latvia**, with almost 25 accesses per user per month, while the lowest rates are found in Germany, Italy and Poland with around 7.5 accesses.

The Executive Director of the EUIPO, **Christian Archambeau**, said:

Copyright infringement in the digital era remains a very serious concern and a direct threat to the creative industries in Europe. The new study shows that there is still much work to do to tackle piracy. Stopping this phenomenon is complex as piracy is continuously evolving with technology. This is why understanding the underlying mechanisms of piracy is essential to adopt effective policies and measures that contribute to reducing it.

The rise of live sports events and streaming

According to the study, **streaming** has become the most popular method to access illicit TV content. 58% of piracy in the EU occurs via streaming and 32% **through download**.

The study also analyses, for the first time, the illegal access to **live sports events**. This type of piracy shows an upward trend in 2021 and 2022, with a 30% increase in only one year. In some countries such as **France and Spain**, this type of content accounts for more than a third (34%) of the total illegal accesses.

Moreover, piracy of live events shows some **peaks in April and September-October** as well as minimum values in June-July each year, possibly reflecting the active periods and summer breaks of the main European football leagues.

In this context, the European Commission adopted a [Recommendation](#) on combating online piracy of sports and other live events in May 2023, which aims to stop unauthorised retransmissions of such events. The EUIPO is working together with the European Commission and interested parties to monitor the impact of the Recommendation.

Among the factors that could influence the consumption of pirated content within the EU, the report points out that economic and social factors, such as GDP per capita, income inequality or the proportion of young people in the population may have an impact on piracy. The increasing volume of legal offer also contributes to reducing piracy of music, films and TV.

NOTE TO EDITORS

This is the third study published by the EUIPO on the evolution of online copyright infringements in the EU Member States and the UK. The study examines the number of accesses to pirated films, TV, music, software and publications from January 2017 to December 2022, using a variety of desktop and mobile access methods, such as streaming, downloading, torrents and stream ripping software. The new edition includes two content types not previously studied, publications and software, although only for 2021 and 2022.

ABOUT THE EUIPO

The [EUIPO](#) is one of the largest decentralised agencies of the EU, based in Alicante, Spain. Ranked as one of the [most innovative IP offices in the world](#), the EUIPO manages the registration of the European Union trade mark (EUTM) and the registered Community design (RCD), both of which provide intellectual property protection in all EU Member States. It also carries out cooperation activities with the national and regional intellectual property offices of the EU and hosts the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights. Additionally, the EUIPO organises the [DesignEuropa Awards](#) every two years to recognise outstanding industrial designs and their designers.

The [European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights](#) was established in 2009 to support the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights and to help combat the growing threat of intellectual property infringement in Europe. It was transferred to the EUIPO on 5 June 2012 by Regulation (EU) No 386/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The Observatory maintains [Agorateka](#), a free European portal for online content designed to make it easier for consumers to locate legal offers in their countries.

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