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ACADEMIC RESEARCH FINDS VAST MAJORITY OF BITTORRENT TRAFFIC ILLEGAL

At least 89.9% of all torrents analysed found to be infringing

Sydney: The Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (AFACT) has welcomed the release of a research paper by the University of Ballarat into the extent of infringing content on BitTorrent networks stating it gives a clear insight into the nature of traffic on Bit Torrent network.

The academic research is the first to quantify the percentage of infringing BitTorrent (BT) traffic. Previous research only looked at the overall percentage of BT traffic across the internet, but not the legality of the traffic packets.

The key finding was that at least 89.9% of all torrents to be infringing.

The research analysed a sample of 1,000 unique torrents taken from 19 of the most popular BT trackers. The research objective was to investigate the percentage of shared files which are infringing, both by number of files and total seeders, as well as to evaluate the most popular categories of shared files. The results found that the percentage of legitimate BT traffic being shared.

A summary of key findings included:

1. 89.9% of all torrents within the sample were found to be infringing both by the number of files and total downloads. This was excluding all pornographic torrents whose legality could not be verified. If all pornographic titles were classified as infringing this overall figure would rise to 98.1%.
2. The top two categorized torrents were movie and TV shows making up 72.4% of all torrents. There were no legitimate movies or TV torrents in the sample.
3. The top two movie files were being seeded more than 1 million times each. The third most popular movie file was being seeded more than 500,000 times.
4. 9.9% of torrents were responsible for 90% of the total seed population.
5. Only 1 non-infringing torrent (an open source program) was found in the most popular 100 torrents.

Paul Watters, Director of the Internet Commerce Security Laboratory, said: "As part of an ongoing project looking into monitoring P2P network traffic, we have developed a methodology to objectively answer some simple questions about copyright infringement. We

have been able to detect the percentage of shared files that infringe copyright, and what percentage of shared material belongs to different categories. Using our sample of trackers we discovered that a total of 117 million downloads had been completed across more than one million torrents.”

Neil Gane, Executive Director of AFACT, said: “All it takes is an internet connection and the BitTorrent software to efficiently distributing large files amongst users. It may be a legitimate software but, as we have always maintained, it is the preferred software for sharing unauthorised copyright content. The research found that movies and TV shows made up 72% of all torrent traffic yet not one copy was legitimate.”

Actor Roy Billing, the star of Charlie and Boots and Underbelly, said: “Illegal file sharing is becoming increasingly rampant and it’s having a detrimental effect on the movie and TV industry, with no returns going back to the Australians who worked so hard to make the films and TV shows, or to the cinemas, DVD stores or back to the investors, including the Australian tax payer.”

A full copy of the University of Ballarat research can be found by going to <http://www.afact.org.au/>

Notes about the research

The research was undertaken by the Internet Commerce Security Laboratory (ICSL) which is a joint project between the University of Ballarat, Victorian Government, IBM, Westpac and the Australian Federal Police and was launched at the 2nd Cybercrime & Trustworthy Computing Workshop 2010 held between 19 - 20 July in Ballarat

About AFACT

AFACT works closely with industry, government, police and educational institutions to address copyright theft and protect the interests of the film and television industry as well as the interests of Australian movie fans.

Australia’s copyright industries are the 3rd largest contributors as a percentage of GDP in the world, second only to the US and UK.

In 2006/07 they contributed 10.3% GDP to Australia’s economy [up 66% since 1996], represented 8% of our employment and generated 4.1% of total exports.

The film and TV industry in Australia alone contributed \$4.4 billion to GDP and supports 50,000 jobs, including small businesses under threat from movie and TV piracy, and independent cinemas, video rental stores and film and television producers across the country.

In 2007, the film and TV sector contributed an estimated \$1.8 billion in tax to the Australian Government.

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