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FIVE BEST PRACTICES FOR **PROTECTING PREMIUM VIDEO CONTENT**

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OTT video streaming is experiencing a boom, accompanied by an increase in piracy, especially for premium content. Piracy types are both growing in number and becoming more easily accessible, with illegal redistribution and password sharing among consumers' favourite ways to unlawfully watch content.

In order to protect revenues and investments in proprietary, premium content, service providers must take a holistic approach to combating piracy. An anti-piracy approach with dynamic watermarking, monitoring, and AI technologies allows content and service providers to efficiently identify and take down pirated content. Moreover, it can help service providers isolate the accounts responsible for pirating content. Other unique service and content offerings, such as built-in watch together capability and a diverse library of proprietary programming, can also be used to combat piracy by encouraging viewers to subscribe and obtain content legally. By understanding current consumption and piracy trends, including a rise in AVoD subscriptions, password sharing, new-release movie streaming, and the proliferation of devices, service providers can gain insights into how to stop illegal video distribution.

CURRENT VIDEO CONSUMPTION AND PIRACY TRENDS

Changes in video content consumption are creating new piracy threats for service providers of premium content. A closer look at global content piracy identifies distinct contributing factors, including:

- AVoD consumption is rising: a shift from SVoD to AVoD consumption is underway. Omdia found that in the US and APAC region in particular AVoD revenues have overtaken SVoD, generating $40 billion compared with $32 billion for SVoD in those areas
- Password sharing is growing: today, 82 per cent of households have at least one streaming video service and more than half of all households subscribe to three or more. While this growth is exciting for the video streaming industry, password sharing has become prevalent among consumers. Leichtman Research Group found that 27 per cent of all direct-to-consumer streaming services are used in more than one household, with 13 per cent

of services paid by one household but also shared with an outside household. Given that competition in the OTT space is intensifying and massive budgets are spent annually on producing premium content, password sharing must be restricted

- New films are being released direct to consumer and illegally restreamed. During the Covid-19 lockdowns, the film industry began releasing new movies directly to video streaming platforms. Now that premium content is available globally on video streaming platforms and not only in cinemas, pirates are finding it easier to distribute high-quality copies
- Proliferation of devices: today's video consumers are watching live and on-demand content on a variety of devices, including connected TVs, smartphones, tablets, and PCs. The proliferation of device environments and the worldwide scaling of broadband access have increased security threats to premium video services. Traditional conditional access techniques are no longer sufficient to secure broadcast and OTT video services. Multiple digital rights management (multi-DRM) and dynamic watermarking are needed to secure video streams

ANTI-PIRACY BEST PRACTICES

Implementing a robust anti-piracy strategy is crucial for service providers with premium content, as is encouraging legal consumption of their content and services. Here are five best practices for service providers to consider to protect the value of their content:

- Dynamic watermarking: with dynamic watermarking, service providers can identify the source of a leak in the video delivery chain within minutes. Content is marked with an invisible watermark, and algorithms can be modified dynamically to add counter measures, ensuring advanced protection against any type of piracy
- Monitoring: employing 24/7 monitoring of social media channels, niche websites, search engines, pirate apps, and more, service providers can quickly identify and remove piracy sources. Recent improvements in AI technology are helping to automate and speed

Marvel's *Black Widow* was released both in cinemas and on PVOD

up the monitoring process, enabling service providers to use a combination of dynamic watermarking, advanced algorithms and web crawlers

- AI and data techniques: AI-powered anti-piracy solutions help speed up the process of removing illegal content. Through AI, service providers can detect illegal credential sharing in real time, observing the location, consumption, and devices being used. Data also aids service providers in blacklisting subscribers who have pirated content before and prevents them from re-subscribing.

- Multi-DRM: multi-DRM content protection is a necessity in today's connected world and can be utilised to protect premium content on IPTV and OTT services. A multi-DRM solution provides support for multiple types of DRMs, including Microsoft PlayReady, Apple FairPlay, and Google Widevine, to secure content on any device

- Driving viewers to legal alternatives: offering unique content that is worth subscribing to, with advanced features like watch party, is another way to deter piracy. Watch parties are a major draw for viewers during the premiere of a popular TV show or movie. They allow viewers to watch the video live with friends outside of their own home, while simultaneously using chat features. By offering exclusive content with watch party features that are starting to become an expectation, premium service providers can entice subscribers toward actually paying for their service as opposed to pursuing illegal means

IN CONCLUSION

Video piracy can only be combated with a holistic, robust anti-piracy solution. By employing content protection techniques, such as dynamic watermarking, 24/7 monitoring, multi-DRM, and artificial intelligence, service providers can defend the exclusivity of premium content and their revenue streams. ∎