



Stanford eCorner

Product Innovations Can Reduce Piracy

Daniel Ek, *Spotify*

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A few people will always pirate content, says Spotify Co-Founder Daniel Ek, but the vast majority just want convenient access to digital content. Ek credits Spotify as bringing to market a legal and enjoyable alternative to pirating content, and he identifies other media industries that need to address this challenge.



Transcript

So, the question I guess was, how do you see piracy evolve over the next five years? Well, I don't think you can ever stop piracy, to begin with. And there is always going to be a certain segment of people that want to take stuff and want to pirate stuff, but that segment luckily is pretty small. What most people do want is they want convenience and easy access, and if they can get it for free, of course, more people will do that than not. But if something is easy enough, and this is again, the big innovation around Spotify is not the fact that it was like, oh it's this Hail Mary moment where something was really, really different. Innovation, for me, is taking two things that are already known and putting them together and creating something new. So the new thing with Spotify was, basically imagine iTunes, but you put it in the Cloud, and you put all the world's music behind it that you can access within half a second. So it feels like you have all the world's music in your iTunes fiber library. That was the innovation with Spotify. So, you're asking me how I think it will evolve, well, I think there is a lot of media types that still haven't found the right service to match it. I think it's still obvious for me that, especially in Europe where, I'll give you one example, Game of Thrones, I just recently read this article that says the Game of Thrones is the most pirated TV show ever.

And in Europe, I can understand it, because, and I've all my American friends when I'm in Europe talking about, oh, did you see the last episode, etcetera, etcetera. And it turns out, no, because it takes me one year before I can get it here. And that sucks. So I have to go through VPMs and put it on my subscription account, and I have to have an actual Slingbox, and I have to do many, many, many things in order to get it legally where, in all honestly, it could have taken me three minutes, on hit up Pirate Bay and I got the same thing. So, unless the video industry or movie industry or TV industry solves that problem, I think it's still going to exist and it might even become more rampant. I just think, again, this is something where eventually the business opportunity will become so big that they will have to change. I think, again, as a consumer, I want all the world's content to be readily available at the moment they release it. I'm not going to accept in the future that it takes a year for a great TV show like Game of Thrones to make it over to Europe if I'm there. I'm not going to accept that it's - there is all this content that I want to access, if I'm a German guy living in the U.S., and I can't. And at the end of it - what - the way I think about it as a user is the fact that, hey look, if I'm willing to pay for it, what's the argument against giving it to me? So I think we're going to head in that way and hopefully if we do that, the reason for piracy will be less.