Let the online pirates eat cake

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The battle between pirates and mega-corporations rages on as media conglomerates launch a major assault on a Russian social media platform similar to Facebook for copyright infringement. Media corporations claim losses in the billions and spend billions more trying to reclaim them. In my opinion they are making a mistake; let the pirates eat their cake. The people in headquarters are intelligent people. I have no doubt for a second that the corporations know me better than I know myself sometimes. However, from my side of things it looks like they're missing some key points about the future of product development. Let's break it down.

The majority of people who use your software are the ones who stole it. Piracy is huge. One of the most popular games in app stores right now is Game Dev Tycoon which was created thanks to some indie developers. Their clever way of combatting piracy was to release their own pirated version of the game, but with a tweak.

After a few levels of advancing your video game tycoon your revenue would slowly be eaten away to nothing as "pirates" stopped buying your work: "Boss, it seems that while many players play our new game, they steal it by downloading a cracked version rather than buying it legally. If players don't buy the games they like, we will sooner or later go bankrupt."

The irony was thick. Shortly after the release the forums were a buzz about how difficult the game was. After one day, and of 3,300 users, only 214 (6.4%) actually had purchased the game. This is heart breaking to hear about, especially when it's a struggling indie developer getting hurt, but there's something that's very clear. The people who determine your reputation stole your product and the people who use your product, stole your product.

There are ways of preventing, stalling, and fighting piracy, but it's like a nuclear defense program; for every developer you waste on designing protections, there are ready to tear it apart. Electronic Arts (EA) has been rated the worst company in the world, two years in a row. They are known for not caring about their community, their content, or anything but the bottom-line.

Regardless of whether this is true, it's how they are seen and will be seen for years to come.

EA games are some of the more difficult to crack, and feature every piece of digital rights management (DRM) this side of the Mississippi. There have been examples where downloading EA games illegally was faster and easier than buying and downloading from their site. I'll let you research the aftermath of the SimCity.

Let the public have your games, music, and movies. Put up a weak defense, but ultimately you want as many people enjoying as much of your product as possible. Trying to use DRM you are hurting and inconveniencing those who love your product, wasting energy better spent making a better product, and not preventing piracy in the slightest. If the internet wants your product, they're going to get it whether they have your consent or not. Why not make this an easier process for everyone and enjoy the good will of the people?

Electronic media has had this funny problem where people's opinions are largely made up before they purchase your software. People have to like your product before they buy it. There is no returning a software package once you've opened it. People have to be convinced of the value of the nonexistent product.

The way to create a great digital company is to give a nod to those who would take it and let them use it. Let them generate the publicity of how great your product is. The usability of your product has less to do with the outreach you receive than the ease of access. The value of your product is arbitrary, but the value of your company is determined by the number of people using it.

Sports cars are valuable because you can say any version of: "nah nah you don't have one." Tools are valuable because you can use them to be productive. Music, games, movies are valuable (especially in an electronic form) because you said so. Giving the pirates less protected software makes more people use it, they show their friends, and soon everyone is using your product. There is no shortage of how many people who can use it, so why object to letting all of them use it?

"But! My shareholders will disapprove of giving away our products with gaining remuneration!"

False.

Twitter filed for a $30 billion IPO float, Facebook was valued at $104 billion, and Google has a market cap of $290 billion. These companies offer free products and are valued on the number of users you have. You can talk all you want about advertising dollars and in service revenue generation, but the fact of the matter is, Tumblr was purchased for $1 billion because it was the equivalent of buying the users. Why do you think Zuckerberg is pushing to bring internet access to one billion more people? It's not because he wants to advertise local singles in their area, but because he wants more people to use Facebook. Your product is not valuable to a consumer in a measurable way. Ten thousand dollars for SolidWorks? Two hundred dollars for Adobe Photoshop? Sixty dollars for the latest AAA title? One dollar for a given song? Where are these numbers coming from? Your company is more valuable to shareholders and investors in your clout and outreach and in physical sales. Why not boost the numbers?

Ultimately, when people bring up numbers of lost revenue they assume that every "stolen" copy is a lost purchase, which isn't true. Similar to how if you buy something on sale, you haven't saved money unless you had intended on buying the item at higher price.

Companies are fighting for earnings that can't be recaptured because they never existed to begin with. Not only is this a wasted effort, it produces detrimental results in terms of popularity, publicity, and quality.

Until a better, more standard model of valuations are created for digital goods the concepts of worth and stealing will continue to be vague and there will be little to no progress against digital piracy.

They name of the game right now is to garner users and brand recognition. Worrying about your product is not going to resonate with your users and alienating ninety-five percent of your base of value is a worse than bad decision.

Let the pirates eat their cake, because in the end you're the one who controls the way they live through their use of your product.

Reputation of Pakistan precedes realities, accomplishments

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I come from the land of pure, where we are told on every step to live your life for others.

But unfortunately recently my homeland Pakistan, is known as a place where people are not safe and they are being killed for no reason. And trust me it hurts me to see my country name like this because my country is "my country" after all, I belong there and I can't hear anything against it. We all hear and read about how people criticize and insult Pakistan, and unfortunately there are times when we cannot blame most of the reasons due to the increasing violence. But if there's one thing I've been taught, it's never to generalize. The good points of Pakistan have been hidden in this layer of violence.

But what we can do is that at least change our perception and try to look for positivity in it. Let me point out some good and interesting facts about Pakistan; in the last five years, Pakistan's literacy rate has grown by 250 percent, the trend of early and arrange marriages has almost vanish and women have started to come out of their boxes and grow.

Abdul Sattar Edhi is running the world's largest ambulance network, we produce about 50 percent of the world's footballs, we are known as world's seventh largest pool of scientists and engineers and we are ranked as the second largest gas infrastructure in the world.

In medicine, not only have we produced world class doctors that now practice all over the world, we also have state-of-the-art medical facilities that offer services at a fraction of the cost that is charged for similar facilities elsewhere. To name a few, these facilities include Aga Khan, South City Hospital, Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT), Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital, Burns Center, Kidney Center, Services Hospital Lahore and Indus Hospital among others.

On the other hand, we also have some of the South Asia's master musicians in every genre. Whether it is the world famous qawwali of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, the ghazals of Iqbal Bano, Farida Khanum or Mehdi Hassan. The pioneers of pop music in the subcontinent such as Nazia and Zoheb Hassan or bands such as Junoon, Fuzon, and Atif Aslam all come from Pakistan.

Apart from this, Pakistan has produced master artists such as Sadeqain, Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Ustad Allah Baksh, Shakir Ali and others' whose work is not only recognized in this part of the world but is the predominant feature of many art auctions all over the world at Sotheby's and Christie's.

Our artists are the product of a rich cultural heritage that dates back thousands of years. We are the one who value our families and relations more than ourselves. For us our parents always come first and no matter where we are we never forget our culture and tradition. Because that is our identity and that is what makes us a Pakistani.

Despite all the mishaps, destruction and loss, we've shown a lot of progress. One of the most amazing facts which we are seeing is that a majority is protesting against the violence.

We still have time to improve more, and I know we can if we try to look for motivation and positivity within ourselves not others.

We should get united, and stand up for one cause, and that is that we want to change. And guess what since we're still living let's bring out the best of us and our country. Long live Pakistan.