

Debunking Myths on Piracy

By Dax0Lotl

Digital piracy is one of the most demonized things in all of electronic media. Companies despise it with every fiber of their being, and squash those who even attempt to steal their intellectual property. However, all is not as it seems, as while these companies may detest piracy, the act of piracy is not inherently bad. Studios like Nintendo and Microsoft hate it because it takes control of a product away from them and puts it into the consumer's hands. Let's debunk some common myths perpetuated by these corporations.

1. Piracy leads to financial losses.

This is a joke of an argument against piracy. For one to lose money one would have to possess it in the first place. Nintendo did not own the \$60 it would have gotten had you purchased a game from them. If they did, that would mean you already bought the game. Piracy is free, so no money was lost or gained. What's really happening is Nintendo felt *entitled* to \$60, and is complaining that its profit margins went down because it couldn't force you to buy the game. It's like if you asked a stranger for \$1,000, and after they refused you began to claim you lost \$1,000. Just because someone decided not to spend money on you does not mean you suffered a financial loss.

2. Piracy keeps developers from getting paid.

This is false information. The vast majority of video game companies big and small pay their individual developers *before* a game is made. This is called an "investment in labor." If the game sells, the money the company receives is their return on that investment. For money spent on a game to go directly to a developer's pockets, that developer would also have to be the publisher. Toby Fox created Undertale entirely with one other person. Money spent on the game goes straight to his pockets. Super Mario Odyssey was created by a corporate workforce. Money spent on the game goes into Nintendo's corporate bank account, and is distributed accordingly every pay period. Purchasing a game as an individual has no effect on that game's developers' paychecks.

3. Piracy is wrong because it is illegal.

The law as we know it is dictated by the opinions of law makers. Slavery was legal, and so was colonialism, and apartheid. None of these things are morally acceptable, yet at the time of their prevalence they were legal nation-wide. Likewise, lawmakers can outlaw things like gender-affirming care, bodily-autonomy, and minority rights. In no way does legality dictate morality. In contrast, the inverse is true, as lawmakers are dependent on their twisted moral code to guide them through the lawmaking process. And lawmakers notoriously act in the interest of corporations rather than the people they claim to serve. The law is an opinion turned fact, and should not be used as guiding principles.

4. Piracy is a threat to the video games industry

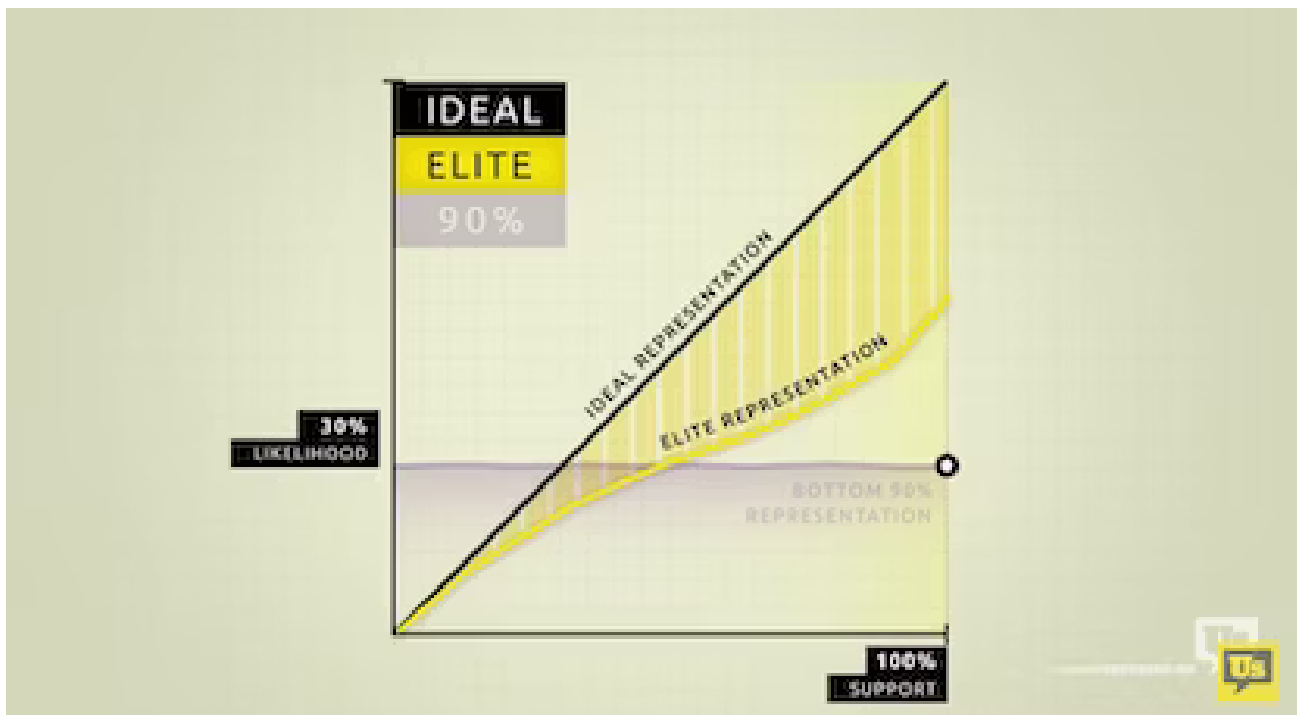
When you download a music file and copy it, share it, and keep it around forever it doesn't hurt the music industry. Quite the opposite, the music industry is thriving. Sharing downloaded files of games would be no different, but companies don't want to give up control of their intellectual property. Piracy can also be used as a benchmark. Most pirates have been shown to be willing to purchase consumer friendly games, so companies could use piracy as a way to gauge what is and isn't satisfactory to their customers. Unfortunately, companies aren't willing to give up their profit-first attitudes, and instead criminalize those who simply want a better product. And they especially do not want you to keep a game forever and share it with friends because their business models hinge on getting you to buy the latest games they make. They need you to lose access to your games so they can have you pay for new ones, even if those new ones are worse than what you had before.

5. People who pirate games are just cheapskates

Perhaps some pirates are freeloaders. That's a given. But some people who pirate have no access to games whatsoever. Some people in countries like Germany or China, where censorship laws are tight and approval processes are lengthy and tedious might not be able to obtain games in any legal way. For them, piracy is their only option and it allows them to enjoy things they may not have without it. Even in countries that see regular game releases like Brazil, some people are simply too poor to buy video games. The cost of a PlayStation 5 in Brazil is near equal to that of, if not more than the monthly cost of living. You would either have to spend years of your life saving up for one, or simply just pirate.

Sources:

1. I mean I dunno why this would need a source, it's common sense tbh.
2. [An explanation on developer payment from an industry insider](#)
3. [A graph taken from a Princeton study revealing voter influence on laws passed](#)



4. Haruvy, Ernan, Vijay Mahajan, and Ashutosh Prasad. “The Effect of Piracy on the Market Penetration of Subscription Software.” *The Journal of Business* 77, no. S2 (2004): S81–107. <https://doi.org/10.1086/381520>. Haruvy, Ernan, Vijay Mahajan, and Ashutosh Prasad. “The Effect of Piracy on the Market Penetration of Subscription Software.” *The Journal of Business* 77, no. S2 (2004): S81–107. <https://doi.org/10.1086/381520>.
(the link won't work for this one for whatever reason)
5. 1 Brazilian Real = \$0.2 USD = €0.18 Eur
 1. [Cost of Living in Brazil](#)
 2. [Cost of a PlayStation 5 in Brazil](#)