Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

# Digital Piracy It's the wrong fight!

Tony Rappa · Wednesday, February 19th, 2014

I'm not pissed off at creators for wanting to keep the rights to their creations. I'm not upset that those making something would like to make some money from the something they make. I'm one of those people – I get it. What really gets my blood boiling is the unbelievable ignorance, no – arrogance of the high-and-mighty. You know who you are. You're the guys running things at some of the biggest entertainment companies in the world. You sit at your CEO desks and seem to think you're gods. You think you're above the fray. The problem with that attitude is that it keeps you so out of touch that you really have no idea what's going on down here on the ground.

It wouldn't get me so steamed if you'd just stay up there. I'd be OK with you sitting on your throne making whatever money you can. But you don't do that, do you? No, you spend oodles of your money trying to get legislation passed that will adversely affect the rest of us. You give speeches that the responsibility should rest on my shoulders to ensure you keep your massive money streams.

Don't misunderstand me; I don't have a problem with the rich among us. I'm not talking to all of you. In fact, I'm working hard to get there some day. I truly believe that the only problem with income classes in our country is the fact that the middle and lower classes are told the upper class is a horrible place to be; that you have to be evil to get there. No, you don't have to be evil to get there. I'm talking to the entertainment executives that don't have a clue as to what's happening in this new online world.

I just spent over an hour at DEW (Digital Entertainment World) listening to your definition of the problem. I looked at your little charts telling me why it's such a big problem and the slides explaining how you think it should be fixed. I'm not falling for it guys. I'm not buying your snake-oil. You started off by telling me that the real problem is illegal sites like Pirate Bay that offer all of your material for free. Wrong. You then told me that you don't release shows and movies digitally because digital piracy spikes when you do. Wrong. You tried to tell me that it's my responsibility to protect you. Wrong. Lastly, you tell me that we just need to tame the wild west of the internet. Wrong, wrong, wrong!

Let me first address your contention that sites like Pirate Bay are the problem. Um, have you ever heard of the Deep Web or what is sometimes referred to as the Dark Web? If not, let me put in terms you can understand. Think about the saying; just the tip of the iceberg. Seriously, it's been reported that there are more than 7.5 petabytes in the deep web. In case you're wondering how that compares – it's about 500 times of what you find on the surface web. If you're wondering what the

Deep Web is; simply put, it's all the content that you'll never find in a search engine.

Now, let's talk about the reasoning behind not releasing your shows and movies to digital. Really? You really want me to believe that the core reason is a spike in digital piracy when you do the release? Your own charts showed that the spike only lasted a short time and then piracy went back down to the norm (of your chart).

Do you think I didn't catch what you said about the complexity of rights management? Perhaps the reason you don't release to digital is the sheer amount of money it takes to do so; the ridiculous amount of manpower it takes to navigate the sea of rights management that exists. About 30 seconds into your explanation of what it takes to get your material out on the different digital channels my head was swimming. Did you ever think that maybe your system is too complex? You tell me that it takes you months to get it released because of the complexity and yet it never occurs to you that maybe the system needs to be changed.

Maybe – because you're in the jungle – you can't see that the system needs to be changed. On second thought, perhaps you don't want to change the system because it's how you keep artists by the throats. I suppose it's possible that you wouldn't make as much money if rights management wasn't such a nightmare. Make your content easily and readily available to the general consumer at a reasonable cost and just watch the digital piracy go down.

I'm sorry you're losing money and I'm sorry that you can't buy another three cars for your fourteen-car garage. But don't make it my responsibility to protect you. Certainly don't restrict what I can do on the internet or make the small internet companies suffer because you refuse to gain a better understanding of the problem and explore different business models. You sit here and tell me that free is impossible to compete with. Have you ever heard of Amanda Palmer?

Amanda Fucking Palmer (if you know her, you know) rose to fame as the lead singer for the Dresden Dolls, and has had an amazing solo career. How does she do it? She puts on shows in peoples homes and makes money from the events through crowdfunding. She's built a dedicated following that cares about her and cares about her music. In the past she's even released some of her music with the pay-what-you-want model. Amanda Palmer and artists like her are exploring ways to be successful in this new online everything world.

By the way, your plea against going back to a system of patron supported artists is so much BS it just about made me sick. Please don't push that garbage on me and expect me to buy it. It's simply ridiculous to paint this picture of the famous and starving movie or TV star.

Stop complaining about the new world we live in; learn about the people that live in it and what they want; and find a new way to get our money. I promise that if you don't leave our internet alone; we'll build a new internet that you can't find; it's already started. Is that really what you want?

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This entry was posted on Wednesday, February 19th, 2014 at 1:49 pm and is filed under Technology
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