

**Games of piracy and fandom: technology, copyright and industry [abstract only]**

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**Copyright and re-use policy**

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## **Games of Piracy and Fandom: Technology, Copyright and Industry.**

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Game of Thrones has been the most pirated TV series of 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 (Ernesto, 2014; Ernesto, 2015; and Parsons, 2016). For Time Warner CEO, Jeff Bewkes, “that’s better than an Emmy” (Ernesto, 2013). For director David Petrarca, “illegal downloads did not matter because such shows thrived on ‘cultural buzz’ and capitalised on the social commentary they generated” (The Sydney Morning Herald, 2013). This ‘throne’ of piracy enhances the series as a cultural product that embodies important timely tensions in the creative industrial landscape.

This paper results from the critical analysis of focus groups with faithful viewers of Game of Thrones conducted in Vienna (AT) and Sheffield (UK) in 2016. Viewers watch online sourced material, build strands of complicity and understanding, and perceive anti piracy regulation conveniently as less strong in areas with more generalised illegal downloading.

The analysis presented in this paper connects audiences, creativity and business. Viewers actively contribute with, user generated content, download illegally, and deal with a vague idea of anti piracy measures. Meanwhile, a blossoming creative drive grows complex characters and narratives, hundreds of hours of digitally post-produced worlds in a new golden age of TV-series. Opposite, the industrial sector makes efforts to curb the digital piracy by intervening at supra-national and local levels, with policies, intermediaries and stakeholders, while dramatically helps criminalising illegal practices of cultural consumption. These three lines of tension grow across technological conditions, economic imperatives and a buzzing thirst for stimulating stories, between viewers, creators and producers.

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### **Short Bios**

**Kinga Jakabffy, MA.** is based in Vienna (Austria) and has studied Game of Thrones as part of her dissertation. She is interested in further exploring the common grounds of hacking and piracy particularly related to cultural consumption.

**Joan Ramon Rodriguez-Amat, PhD.** is Senior Lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University (UK). He has published pieces on fandom, copyright regulation and transmedia narratives around Game of Thrones.