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# The Modern Context of Digital Piracy

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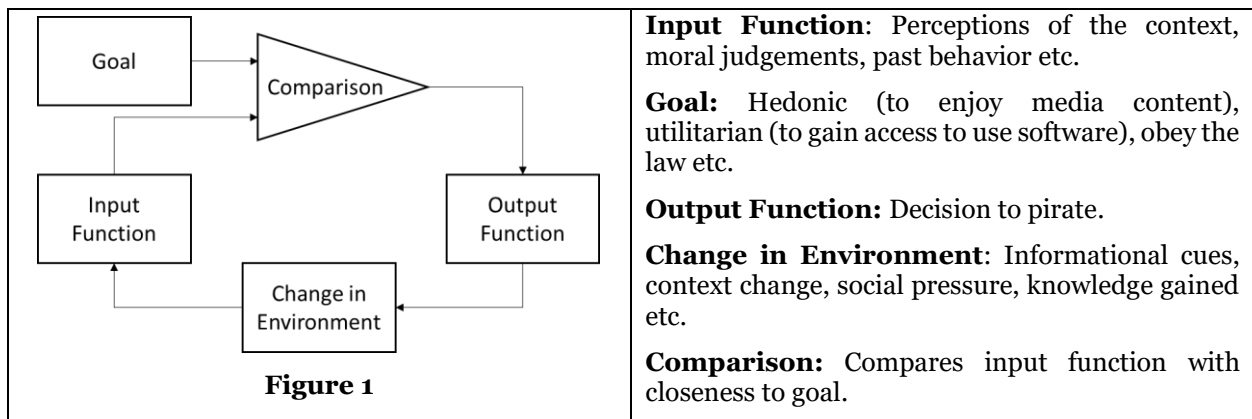Oklahoma State University
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## Abstract

Digital piracy has adapted to utilize new aspects of the internet. What used to be the act of downloading copyrighted content has grown to encompass many other behaviors – unlicensed streaming, cyber lockers, image galleries, and password sharing among others. These actions may not seem to fit under the umbrella term of digital piracy to the individuals evaluating them as options, but the outcomes are the same to copyright holders (Spangler 2022). Modern realities of digital piracy demand a look at digital piracy not just as a planned behavior with discrete outcomes but as a process. From the first evaluation (moral or otherwise) of digital piracy to the reinforcement and experience from past behavior affecting future behavior. While the methods for digital piracy have evolved, the research on digital piracy has lagged.

The feedback cycle used for goal-oriented behavior (Carver and Scheier 1998) (Figure 1) is a good fit for digital piracy as it is an evaluation that is updated and responds to changes in the environment and changes in goals motivating the behaviors. Understanding the different contexts of each method of digital piracy will provide a deeper understanding of the justifications at the individual level, but also the impacts of social norms, perceived difficulty, and other behavioral predictors.

We propose a study that involves multiple scenarios in a survey where the output is intention to pirate. As goal importance and context changes in the scenarios, the subjects will process another feedback cycle and the output is changed. With this study we will be able to better understand the factors that can corrupt the moral judgements of individuals as they go from not pirating media to deciding to pirate a specific media.

Viewing digital piracy as a behavioral process also answers the calls for researchers to explore the reinforcement aspect of the behavior – how past behavior informs the perceptions and framing of future behaviors and habits (Eisend 2019). Explore how knowledge of these methods is spread online and the creation of more effective interventions to curb the behavior.

**Input Function**: Perceptions of the context, moral judgements, past behavior etc.

**Goal:** Hedonic (to enjoy media content), utilitarian (to gain access to use software), obey the law etc.

**Output Function:** Decision to pirate.

**Change in Environment**: Informational cues, context change, social pressure, knowledge gained etc.

**Comparison:** Compares input function with closeness to goal.

**Figure 1**

## References

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