

Research article

# EFFECT OF PIRACY ON PUBLISHING AND SPREAD OF KNOWLEDGE IN NIGERIA

**UDUAK U. ENANG PhD, CLN**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND LIBRARY SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF UYO  
AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA  
+234 808 7664 102, +234 703 1081 626  
E-mail: [manasseh.ue@gmail.com](mailto:manasseh.ue@gmail.com)**

**MBUOTIDEM O. UMOH Esq., CLN**

**LAW LIBRARIAN NYONG ESSIEN LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF UYO  
AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA  
E-mail: [manasseh.ue@gmail.com](mailto:manasseh.ue@gmail.com)**

---

## ABSTRACT

This work examines piracy as it affects publishing and the spread of knowledge. Piracy is the activity of manufacturing unauthorized copies of protected material and dealing with such copies by way of distribution and sale, while knowledge is the basis for many if not all decisions, and an asset to individuals or firms. All kinds of knowledge are relevant knowledge, all are considered to be vehicles for sharing information. This can be done through printing (books, periodicals, and newspapers), photography and phonography, stage and cinema, broadcasting (radio and television), advertising and public relations, telephone, telegraph and postal services, convention and even the internet. Knowledge cannot be spread without publishing be it traditional or electronic publishing. Publishing helps to send knowledge to all across the globe. From the reviewed literature, it could be deduced that piracy has both negative and positive effect on both publishing and the spread of knowledge. Copyright © [www.acascipub.com](http://www.acascipub.com), all rights reserved.

**Key Words:** Piracy, Publishing, Spread of Knowledge, Nigeria

---

## Introduction

Book piracy is predominantly high in the country. An average Nigerian salary is incapable of sustaining the earner, while the country's poverty level and illiteracy is high. As posited by Petroich (2001) prevailing problems in the country pave way for the alleviation of book piracy. This problem of piracy has grown to the extent that it is now understood as a worldwide phenomenon. Although on the other hand, the low income earners maintain that original books are expensive to purchase as posited by Kuntz (2001).

Books have suffered from piracy for centuries; it is nothing new rather the question is how can we curb this biting problem? Piracy has remained a massive problem in the developing world and it is thriving very high (Cohen, 2009). In a country like Nigeria, primary and secondary school students are expected to purchase their textbooks, so it is common place to see quite sophisticated and good quality printed and bounded copies available for purchase. Interestingly, even wealthy and financially capable citizens still buy pirated books. It could therefore be deduced that book piracy is not an issue of poverty but an option to spend more on other commodities (Anctil, 2002). Presently, books tend to be pirated indiscriminately regardless of the author or title. Book pirates earn more than the publishing industry. Here, the publishing industry is operating at a severe loss compared to its pirate competitors. Historically, copyright laws were established to keep publishers from "pirating" works already published by other publishing companies' thereby keeping them from "robbing the author of the profit (Black, 2012). Since then, the law has moved from only regulating publishers and other commercial entities to a law that no longer distinguishes between republishing someone's work on the one hand and building upon or transforming that work on the other (Lessig, 2004).

Piracy positively and negatively affects the spread of knowledge. As posited by Randhawa (2009) exploration on the impact of piracy on cultural rights and minorities, on the spread of knowledge (including access to pirated software for non-profit organisations), on the open source movement and on the spread of information that can be harm or help improve the status of women is on. According to the author, pirated software can enable groups to have access to technology they could otherwise not afford, but often the same groups involved in the piracy of software are involved in the making and distribution of pornography for male consumers. Any form of piracy does not justify the negative impact it has on the spread of knowledge. Based on the above stated, this work seeks to find the effect of piracy on publishing and the spread of knowledge.

## Publishing

Publishing is important not only because it supplies reading materials to society; it has role gone beyond this. The infrastructures of publishing are absolutely central to the growth of intellectual culture. Publishing is the intersection between intellectual life and commerce. It provides business experience to intellectual pursuits to those involved. Publishing provides employment to creative people (Altbach,1993). People have been publishing information for thousands of years and there is no way one could possibly illustrate every innovation in publishing since prehistoric man painted on cave walls.

In Nigeria, book publishing is one of the oldest businesses in the nation's history. Before the 1914 amalgamation of the diverse peoples on the geographical entity named Nigeria, publishing had been in existence some 68 years earlier. In 1846, that is, 165 years ago (2011-1846), the first printing press in Nigeria was established in Calabar, the present Cross River state capital, by Reverend Hope Waddell of the Presbyterian church of Scotland Mission. The primary aim of this press was to print Bible lessons but it was later used to print arithmetical books for schools (Ajibade 2003). Much later, Henry Townsend of the Church of Missionary Society (CMS) established another press in Abeokuta, the present Ogun state capital, to print the first newspaper in Nigeria which was known as '*Iwe Iroyin*,' (a dialect newspaper) in 1859, five years after the establishment of the first printing press in Calabar. CMS

Press, which has published thousands of books in Nigeria, is a product of that seed planted by Henry Townsend. From that time, publishing started growing in Nigeria with different objectives for the business. Sometimes, these objectives define the genre of books some publishers publish while others undertake general publishing without bias.

The 21st century has brought a number of new technological changes to the publishing industry. These changes include e-books, print on demand and accessible publishing. E-books have been quickly growing in availability in major publishing markets such as the USA and the UK since 2005. Google, Amazon.com and Sony have been leaders in working with publishers and libraries to digitize books.

## **PIRACY**

The English word 'Pirate' comes from the Latin word “pirata”, which loosely means "sea robber". Sea pirates have existed for thousands of years. They have been in operation for as long as sea travel itself has existed, just as robbery on land has been around since men began to walk the Earth. Intellectual content owners use the term Piracy to equate copyright infringers with thieves. It was shortly after the invention of the Mechanical Printing Press in 1439 that the term 'pirate' came to be applied to those who made unauthorized copies of publications. The press revolutionized the spread of knowledge in all fields of human endeavor, as well as increasing literacy in the broader community. However, it also introduced an entirely new problem for authors: prior to the press, it was difficult for people to duplicate an entire book without permission, and most certainly not on any scale worth worrying about. The press instantly changed all that, and both the printers and the authors of works soon sought protection, both for economic reasons, as well as to ensure that their works remained unaltered and authors were duly credited (Ghazi, 2012)

Piracy equals Copyright Infringement. Modern Copyright is an international legal concept as specified by the Berne Convention first signed in 1886, an agreement to which almost every country in the world is now bound as part of their World Trade Organization membership. Copyright is intended to ensure that those who create original works can maintain exclusive rights over how those works are reproduced and distributed. However this effective monopoly only applies for a fixed period of time after the creator's death, generally from fifty to a hundred years, after which the work can then usually be distributed and used without requiring permission. There are also Fair Use provisions that allow people to use protected copyrighted works at any time without the creator's explicit permission in a limited range of scenarios, such as in reviews, or for use by educational institutions.

The practice of piracy is widespread in all regions of the world. Any publishing and related industries of countries that have not acceded to the international intellectual property agreements have traded in pirated products on a particular large scale. Piracy is not concern with only print format of information but also with non – print format. Today, internet piracy has cost the publishing industry heavy loss in sales. It is believed that nearly 10,000 copies of every published book is downloaded for free, with business and investing books being the genre of books pirated the most (Association of American Publishers, 2010). O'Leary (2012) reported that as digital book publishing continues to expand at a rapid pace to meet reader demands, piracy rears its head at the forefront of many a discussion in publisher circles. Many publishers respond to the perceived threat with strict Digital Rights Management (DRM) software. Using the internet to “improperly” download copyrighted material continues to be a major issue for a number of industries. The easy availability of pirated works online affects the entire book publishing community, including authors, readers, publishers, agents and booksellers. The effects of piracy can range from the tangible (lost sales, lower author royalties) to the intangible (decline in the perception of the value of a book) as posted by Macmillan's anti-piracy initiatives (2013).

Today, as asserted by Schweidler & Constanza-Chock (2006) the battle against “piracy” is being fought in the realm of commoditized knowledge, and the law and rhetoric of illegitimate use, distribution, and production of goods revolves around increasingly protectionist policies governing intangibles, such as trademarks, patents, and copyright. Piracy is an outright disincentive to intellectual productivity in any nation. This is because the book publishing industry in Nigeria loses about \$200 million per annum to piracy; this could lead to the collapse of the book industry if allowed to continue at the present rate.

Downloading has moved beyond the pleasure of securing one’s favorite song into the world of college textbooks. As reported by Bray textbook prices add to the issue of piracy. It was indicated that textbook piracy has become particularly ‘seductive’ because often times students have extreme difficulty finding the cash to pay for academic books which often cost more than \$100 per individual text. This situation is equally true in Nigeria, where most of the publishing materials used in the industries are imported. This induces inflation from the part of the publisher based on the cost of production. This makes it impossible for the students to acquire the original text. Given such circumstance, the student opts for the pirated version because which seems good and affordable. Textbook piracy is on the rise, spurred by the expense of course materials and the popularity of computer tablets and e-readers (Arden, 2012). Academic publishing remains lucrative, generating more revenue than consumer trade presses.

According to Okwilagwe (1997) the problem of piracy is enormous in Nigeria and has attracted a great deal of attention and comments from various levels of publishing professionals. It is stated that virtually all the Nigerian publishers have fallen victims of piracy, pointing out that about 50% of the publishing companies in Nigeria had one or more of their titles pirated, while about 20% of annual turnover is lost to the pirates by the affected publishing houses.

The book publishing industry in Nigeria losses about \$200m/n per annum to piracy, the problem of piracy has only grown and has been understood as a worldwide phenomenon often involving the most advanced forms of organized crime. In addition, piracy has in the past decade revealed entirely new aspects through its emergence and unprecedented growth over the internet (Panethiere, 2005). The problem of piracy has attracted repeated and sustained attention from government policy makers and from law enforcement officials. It has revealed an entirely new trend through its emergence and unprecedented growth over the internet. Panethiere pointed out that the cultural industry with the longest history of dealing with piracy is, of course, book publishing. The author maintained that piracy continues to plague authors, particularly in poorer countries where trade in pirated books often exceeds the legitimate market, but also in established market.

Piracy is the activity of manufacturing unauthorized copies of protected material and dealing with such copies by way of distribution and sale (Sterling, 1999).

## **Spread of Knowledge**

The spread of knowledge started with Johann Gutenberg when he invented the printing press. Ideas were literally put in the general public's hands in the form of the printed word, and book publishing enabled knowledge, thoughts and culture to spread at a rate faster than ever before, unlike when they were hand copied which took longer period to produce. Knowledge industry consist the whole range of commercial activities which underline and facilitate the compilation, distribution and sales of such products as books, databases and broadcasts. Individuals are the primary producers of knowledge that is generated through intellectual activity based on experimentation, empirical research, observation, experience, reading or imagination. Knowledge is classified by a combination of the process of creation and the topology of the knowledge itself (Feathers & Sturges, 1998). Knowledge is further reputed to be the basis for many if not all decisions, and an asset to individuals or firms.

According to Machlup (1962) knowledge has been classified as scientific and ordinary knowledge and both production and distribution knowledge with operationalization being grouped under four components: education, research, development, communication and information. The author argued that there are other types of knowledge in addition to scientific knowledge and there is also knowledge of an unproductive type for which society allocates ample resources: schools, books, radio and television. The author also pointed out that the concept of knowledge includes all kinds of knowledge, not only scientific knowledge, but ordinary knowledge as well. Any knowledge or spread could only be done through the secondary producer which is the knowledge industry. These industries are the only channel through which knowledge could be communicated by the creator to the consumer. The publishers are seen as the secondary producers. The role of the publishers is essentially that of a capitalist and organizer of the communication of information and knowledge. The publishers' business is to provide a means by which authors can spread this information and knowledge to the audience. The process involves accepting unsolicited work of commissioning work for publication, editing, production, marketing, sales and distribution.

Typical products of knowledge industries are books, magazines, newspaper, television and radio programmes and databases. This product of knowledge industries come in different formats but print remain the most common format for the spread of knowledge throughout the world, although it has been replaced for some purposes in the more advanced countries.

All kinds of knowledge are relevant knowledge, all are considered to be vehicles for sharing information. This can be done through printing (books, periodicals, and newspapers), photography and phonography, stage and cinema, broadcasting (radio and television), advertising and public relations, telephone, telegraph and postal services, convention and even the internet. The spread of knowledge is a significant consequence of the process of globalization. Knowledge is used to tackle very diverse issues such as development challenges charging markets or the perplexity of corporate decision makers in the business world.

Knowledge is reputed to be the basis for many if not all decisions, and an asset to individual and firms. According to Godin (2008), knowledge is looked upon as both scientific and ordinary knowledge and both production and distribution (spread). Machlup (1962), he asserted that information is knowledge only if it is communicated (spread) and used. All kinds of knowledge are relevant knowledge and all knowledge is considered a vehicle for distribution. Distribution can be done through printing, photography, cinema, broadcasting, advertisement and public relations, telephone, telegraph and postal service and conventions. Knowledge covers the entire spectrum of activities, from the transporter of knowledge up to the original elevator, for operationalizing knowledge activities, some industries were selected, among them was the knowledge industry (go to knowledge industry).

The printing press and public libraries did more to democratise knowledge than arguably anything else in history. Without the collection of resources both in print and non-print, many people according to Ezekwe & Muokebe (2012) will find it virtually impossible to lay hands on the essential publications of the day. People may not even be aware of certain publications, hence, the library pulls ideas and thought control of others together for the maximum accessibility and usability by the potential users. Just as people go to the bank to withdraw money, so do people go to the library to harvest knowledge. Idea and arts once only accessible to the wealthy and privileged became available to everyone. Print made for a broadening of reader access to knowledge and enabled later generations to build on the intellectual achievements of earlier ones. Print created a sustained and uniform reference for knowledge as well as allowing for companions between incompatible views (Briggs, Asa & Burke, 2002). The internet is landed for spreading information to help people (Liebhardt, 2013). Makor educational publishers like Longman, Oxford, Nelson, Macmillan and Evans Brothers in the late 50s fostered an explosion in educational publishing in Africa, set up branches of their firms in the continent for the purpose of spreading knowledge among the populace.

The spread of knowledge is a significant consequence of the process of globalization. Knowledge is used to tackle every diverse issue such as development challenges in emerging markets or the perplexity of corporate decision-making (Menhoff, Evers & Chay, 2005).

### **Effect of Piracy on Publishing**

The cultural and information industries now form important and well-recognised contributory components of the economic and cultural development of any country. They add considerably to national wealth, and therefore pirates activities which undermine these industries, have a corresponding negative effect on national wealth. Publishing Industry is discussing piracy: as digitalisation is becoming more important, publishers have to face issues that other industries already know quite well since years (Sechi, 2012). Various forms of piracy take place in Nigeria. Nothing that is reproducible is spared both electronic and paper base. The problem of piracy is enormous in Nigeria and has attracted a great deal of attention. Okwilagwe (1997) stated that virtually all Nigerian publishers have fallen victim of piracy, pointing out that of more than 30 publishing companies in the country, about 50% have had many of their titles pirated, while about 20% of annual turnover is lost to the pirates by affected publishing houses. Adesaneye (1992) described book piracy as one of the greatest problems facing the publishers. The expansion of book piracy started in the 1960s, and increased through the 70s and 80s. Technological improvements in the offset of printing and binding equipment have been put to use by pirates to reduce their production cost as asserted by Smith (1990).

Important to note is that printer' activities enhance piracy in Nigeria. Unscrupulous printers have become such adepts to book piracy that one could hardly differentiate between the original and the pirated copies except perhaps for the colour illustrations which appear in black and white in the pirated copies. Nwafor (1996) as cited in Okwilagwe (1997) advanced three reasons responsible for piracy in the developing countries as follow:

- Very high cost of books in relation to average income;
- The scarcity of publishing materials like paper, machinery, ink, etc; and
- the infant state of the publishing industry which has resulted in the over-dependence of developing countries on their industrialized counterparts for meeting their educational and research needs.

Publishing is seen as money making business just like any other business. Some publishers go as far as launching books to raise money. Piracy is severely deteriorating the state of the economics of the third world countries. In the same vain Nwafor (1991) stated that widespread unemployment, unprecedented increase in anti-social behavior, strikes and workers' agitation for higher wages, food riots, severe dearth of books leading to high cost of up to 50 % and parents' inability to purchase same for their children pave way for piracy to thrive. This adversely affects publishing in Nigeria. The effect of piracy cannot be seen only on the part of print materials; even non-print materials are pirated on daily basis around the world. In Nigeria, especially, one will end up seeing movies that are only previewed to be out within a stipulated period of time in the market. Obasi (2000) reported that one in 5 music CDs sold throughout the world in 1999 was pirated version and that at least 25 million pirate files are available for trading on the internet. He also pointed out that legal music sales are outnumbered by illegal ones in 19 countries. Cary Sherman, chairman and CEO of the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) lamented that the music industry is the canary in a coal mine when it comes to content piracy issues and the effects that it can have on a creative industry — and that canary is gasping for air as reported by Greenfield (2012). He maintained clearly that e-book piracy has not had the same effect on book publishing as online music piracy has had on the music industry. This is true even in Nigeria. On why there is increase in e-book piracy, Savikas (2009) asserted that because there is increase on e-book demand.

## Effect of Piracy on Spread of Knowledge

It is a well-known fact that before the invention of writing, knowledge was spread from generation to generation orally. Later people started to express themselves through picture writing which in time metamorphosise into writing. The libraries which were then regarded as archives play a major role in the spread of knowledge by making the little resources that were accessible to the populace. With the invention of the movable, it was very easy to spread knowledge better than before. The libraries become well stocked than before and more people gained access to the available resources. Then came what we now know to be information explosion, one can sit comfortably in his house and get all the needed information within the four walls of his home. The major challenge to this effect, which tries to slow down the flow of information, is piracy. Piracy affects the spread of knowledge negatively and positively. Negatively because there will be a breach to the spread of knowledge. It affects publishers in the sense that for every pirated copy of a product, there is some potential loss of income to the producer of that product. Positively, because piracy gives opportunity for the majority of the populace to purchase those texts they would not have been able to afford due to high cost in price. Pirated products are convenient, they are published with speed and they are always available when needed, they are cheap and help in strengthening the book publishing industry and educate the rapid expanding reading public. Piracy had created audiences and large scale publishing operations, including the elaboration of editorial, production, and critical functions according to Bender & Sampliner (1996). Pirate publishers according to Balazs (2011) play two key roles: they print censored texts, and introduce cheap reprints that reach new reading publics. These actions fueled the development of a deliberative public sphere in different countries and the transfer of knowledge between more and less privileged social groups and regions.

## Conclusion

Piracy, though stamped badly, has positively affected the lives of people. According to some Nigerians, because of the high cost of the originally published materials, they prefer purchasing the pirated ones. It is believed that piracy would not lead to the dearth or the death of creativity. The history of copyright has indicated that satisfaction and fame are the ideas behind man's creative efforts rather than money. Piracy occurs because there is want, scarcity and inaccessibility of the publishers to serve the market.

## REFERENCES

- [1]Altbach, P., Perspectives on publishing in Africa, 1993 Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2F978-0-268-0632-2#page-1>
- [2]Anctil, E., Copyright and book piracy: the bookwarez phenomenon and beyond., 2002 Retrieved from <http://sis-webspace.mcgill.ca/marginal/mar9-2/bookwarez.htm>
- [3]Association of American Publishers, Book Publishers not immune to Internet piracy 2010 <http://www.einnews.com/pr-news74619>
- [4]Bender, T. and Sampliner, D., Poets, pirates and the creation of American literature, New York Journal of international Law and Politics (1996/97). 29
- [5]Black, J. G., Finding the middle ground for copyright control: Kopimism vs. Corporations. 2012 Retrieved from <http://tkbr.ccsf.sfu.ca/pub802/papers-2/finding-the-middle-ground-for-copyright-control-kopimism-vs-corporations/>
- [6]Balázs, B., Coda: A short history of book piracy 2011 Retrieved from <http://piracy.americanassembly.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/MPEE-PDF-Coda-Books.pdf>

- [7]Bray, H., Textbook prices add to the issue. The Boston Globe. 2010 Retrieved from <http://www.openeducation.net/2008/07/24/textbook-piracy-book-publishers-making-inroads/>
- [8]Briggs, A. and Burk, P., A social history of the media: from Gutenberg to the internet. (Polity; Cambridge) 2002.
- [9]Cohen, B., How can publishers limit e-book piracy? 2009 Retrieved from [http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/arts\\_entertainment/books](http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/arts_entertainment/books)
- [10]Ezekwe, F. A. and Moukebe, B. O. (Introductory studies in the use of library and information technology. (Rhyce Kerex Ltd.; Enugu) 2012.
- [11]Feathers, J. & Sturges, P., Encyclopedia of information and library science (Routledge; London) 1997.
- [12]Ghazi, K., PC game piracy examined, 2012 Retrieved from [http://www.tweakguides.com/Piracy\\_4.html](http://www.tweakguides.com/Piracy_4.html)
- [13]Godin, B., The knowledge economy: Eritz Machlups construction of a synthetic concept. Project on the history and sociology S & T statistics. Working paper, 2008.
- [14]Golding, P., The international media and the political economy of publishing: Publishing, media & political economy. Library Trends, (1978) 453-467
- [15]Greenfield, J., Take Heart, Publishers: Music Industry Has Only Shrunk by Half, 2012 Retrieved from <http://www.digitalbookworld.com/2012/take-heart-publishers-music-industry-has-only-shrunk-by-half/>
- [16]Kuntz, L. I., Pirates and the paper chase. The UNESCO Courier 54 (3), (2001), 41-42
- [17]Lessig, L. Free culture, How big media uses technology and the law to lock down culture and control creativity. Penguin Press; New York), 2004.
- [18]Liebhardt, J., ICT and the spread of indigenous knowledge 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.apo.org.au/research/>
- [19]Machlup, F., The production and distribution of knowledge in the United States. (Princeton University Press; Princeton) 1962.
- [20]Macmillan's anti-piracy initiatives (2013).  
<http://us.macmillan.com/content.aspx?publisher=macmillansite&id=25699>
- [21]Menhoff, T., Evers, H-D. and Chay, Y. W. (Eds.), Governing and managing knowledge in Asia. Series on Innovation and Knowledge Management 3 (2005).
- [22]Nwafor, B. U., Copyright and the developing countries. Journal of Library and Information Science 1(1) , (1991), 5-8
- [23]Obasi, K., The news 15(1), (2000), 61-66
- [24]Okwilagwe, O. A., Book publishing in Nigeria: An introduction. (Stirling-Horden Publishers (Nig.) Ltd; Ibadan), 1997.

[25]O'Leary, B., Book piracy: Less DRM, more data. Why publishers should tackle book piracy with open minds and lots of data., 2012, Retrieved from <http://toc.oreilly.com/2011/01/book-piracy-drm-data.html>

[26]Panethiere, D., The persistence of piracy: The consequences for creativity, for culture, and for sustainable development. e-Copyright Bulletin, 1-19, (2005). Retrieved from [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/28696/11513329261panethiere\\_en.pdf/panethiere\\_en.pdf](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/28696/11513329261panethiere_en.pdf/panethiere_en.pdf)

[27]Petrovich, F., Chile: a judge steps in. The UNESCO Courier 54 (3), (2001), 43

[28]Randhawa, S., Access to knowledge and gender. GenderIT.org. 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.genderit.org/content/access-knowledge-and-gender>

[29]Savikas, J., Ebook piracy is up because Ebook demand is up, 2009, Retrieved <http://toc.oreilly.com/2009/05/ebook-piracy-is-up-because-ebo.html>

[30]Sechi, L., Hot topics: Piracy, 2012, Retrieved from <http://www.ifbookthen.com/hot-topics-piracy/>

[31]Smith, D. C., A guide to book publishing, (University of Lagos Press; Lagos), 1990.

[32]Sterling, J. A. L., World copyright law (Art; London), 1999.

[33]Schweidler, C. & Constanza-Chock, S, Piracy, 2006, Retrieved form <http://vecam.org/article694.html>