

### **Task3B: Freedom of Information**

Various cases of legal and technical barriers being circumvented have resulted from the conflict between the need to protect intellectual property and the idea that knowledge should be freely accessible. Digital Rights Management (DRM) and Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) are two protecting techniques that are examined in this paper along with real-world examples of their circumvention. The insights gained from this investigation include the reasons for these violations of the law and technology, as well as the organizations and individuals involved.

#### **1. Digital Rights Management (DRM) Bypassing: The Spotify Case**

is a popular technological protection that limits how digital information can be accessed, shared, and distributed in order to prevent unauthorized copying or piracy. Despite being widely used to safeguard digital assets such as software, music, and movies, DRM systems are routinely targeted for circumvention, notably in the music streaming business. One noteworthy example is Spotify, which uses DRM to prevent consumers from downloading music without a subscription.

Since 2018, many software programs have developed to circumvent Spotify's DRM and allow users to unlawfully download music. These programs, typically discussed on piracy sites, exploit holes in Spotify's DRM mechanisms to allow users with access to free music, so bypassing the subscription-based business. This vulnerability poses a big challenge to Spotify, which relies on DRM to enforce its business model and earn income from subscriptions and adverts (Mueller, 2021).

The motivation for these bypasses is mostly related to the information liberation movement, which argues that businesses should not control cultural content such as music. Many DRM circumvention advocates contend that, although providing inexpensive access to music, streaming services limit user freedom by prohibiting downloads and offline access. Some consumers see DRM bypassing as a form of protest against corporate control over creative material and price patterns that they consider exploitative (Antonopoulos & Polychronakis, 2019).

For these acts are sometimes portrayed as part of a larger digital rights campaign. The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) has long opposed DRM as a device that limits consumer rights, claiming that it inhibits customers from legitimately using the content they acquire, such as generating personal backups (EFF, 2020). Those who avoid DRM commonly use this argument, stating that they are restoring consumer liberties and resisting restrictive business practices (Antonopoulos & Polychronakis, 2019).

#### **2. Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) Bypassing: The Apple Leaks**

Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) are legal contracts that prohibit workers or partners from disclosing sensitive firm information to unauthorized third parties. Despite the legal

consequences of breaking an NDA, high-profile incidents of NDA breaches have emerged, notably in the technology industry. One such example involves Apple, a business known for its strict use of NDAs to protect its product designs and internal processes.

In 2020, an Apple employee breached their non-disclosure agreement by revealing proprietary product blueprints and internal discussions to a technology news publication. This breach happened before to an official product introduction, giving competitors and the public early access to information about Apple's new technologies (Friedman, 2020). Personal grievances and ideological ideas are sometimes used to justify such disclosures. In this example, the leaker defended their actions as a way to highlight what they viewed as Apple's suffocating control over innovation while also providing transparency to customers and the larger tech community.

NDA breaches are commonly cited as acts of whistleblowing. Leakers say that by breaking NDAs, they are benefiting the public by exposing unethical business practices or encouraging greater openness in product development. In the Apple case, the leaker claimed that the company's excessive control over information limited open competition and innovation, which might benefit both the tech sector and customers (Friedman, 2020). This explanation is consistent with larger concerns in the IT sector that NDAs are frequently used to stifle not just sensitive material but also public conversation about business practices (Liebman & Reynolds, 2022).

#### Sources

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