Dear Editors of PLOS ONE, Dear Professor Glänzel,

We would like to submit this original research article to PLOS ONE for publication.

Library Genesis (LibGen), is the largest a piratical scientific library on the internet. The article uses a unique dataset, the download log of LibGen from 2014-15, to analyze illicit flows of knowledge around the globe. Sci-hub, the piratical journal article library, and Library Genesis comprise two fundamental components of the global knowledge access infrastructure. Our dataset and article provide an unprecedented global insight into the use of a 2M+ piratical library.

We test the following hypothesis: do global and European peripheries use piratical knowledge resources to compensate for their limited legal access options? We find that that is not the case: richer regions use piratical resources more, even if we control for the number of researchers. Piratical open access is an important resource, but in itself cannot overcome the complex income and infrastructure related factors, that set the upper limit to knowledge demand through freely accessible channels.

The study fits into the larger discourse on the role of open access in general, and on the use of piratical knowledge resources in particular. The study provides an in-depth discussion of empirical studies on digital book piracy, and on our earlier empirical and historical studies on Library Genesis.

Apart from the topic, this article is unique for us because this is the first time that we publish all underlying data and code related to a research article. Such empirical study is rare in the domain of information law, and publishing code and data is even less frequent.

At the moment, the main github code repository, which contains all datasets and R code, is private. We make it accessible for reviewers before publication, and fully public in time of the publication.

The full download dataset is also embargoed for the duration of review, and will be published fully after conclusion of the review process.

Since this is our first venture into these domains, we appreciate suggestion on the details of code and data publishing, and apologize for any mistakes we made in our effort.

We would like to invite Professor Wolfgang Glänzel to guide this manuscript through the review process. This is our first interaction with PLOS.

We do not oppose anyone as a reviewer.

Yours,

Balázs Bodó, PhD

Associate Professor

Institute for Information Law

University of Amsterdam