

# How to stop illegal downloads

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Pay TV's *Game of Thrones*' phenomenal paid download and on-screen ratings success sets an example all entertainment companies should follow, if they want to slow illegal downloads of their shows.

QUT [Business School](#) PhD candidate Paula Dootson said HBO network, makers of the smash-hit show, have taken game-changing measures to dissuade people from illegally downloading it this year from file-sharing sites using software such as BitTorrent.

This month's Season Three debut episode was screened in Australia a mere hour after it was shown in the US, and was made immediately available on Australian iTunes for the reasonable price of \$3.49. For just \$33.95 viewers can purchase the entire series in advance, episodes of which are automatically downloaded to their iTunes account as soon as they are screened in Australia.

That is comparatively cheap as other popular series - some screened on free-to-air channels first - cost upwards of \$60.

Game of Thrones is described as the most illegally downloaded show to date by [BitTorrent](#) monitoring blog TorrentFreak. [HBO](#) introduced the new measures this year after more than 4 million [illegal downloads](#) of the series occurred last year - equalling the audience that watched it legally on TV.

Ms Dootson said her research into the behaviour of show stealers revealed that the high price of legal downloads in Australia and the

lengthy wait for sale of their favourite shows made people feel justified in breaking copyright laws. She found consumers were setting up fake US iTunes accounts or turning to risky [file sharing sites](#) to get their fix.

"Australian consumers feel like they are being held to ransom because they either don't get access to products available in the US, or are charged exorbitant prices when they do," she said.

"Consumers felt that creating a fake US [iTunes](#) account was a legitimate response to overcome the seemingly unjustified constraints placed on Australians. They actually see this behaviour as more acceptable than illegal downloading, because the organisation receives payment.

"At the end of the day, consumers believe responsibility for their illegal actions lies with the organisation, believing it is the organisation's fault their business model failed to deliver what they wanted."

Ms Dootson is making sure the entertainment industry takes notice of this consumer trend, by co-submitting a paper to the Inquiry into IT Pricing, being held by the Commonwealth Government. Co-author is Dr Nicolas Suzor, senior lecturer at QUT's School of Law. The submission explains why the government should repeal parallel importation restrictions, free up digital distribution models from anti-circumvention laws, and introduce the right of digital resale in Australia.

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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